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POINT TAKEN

WITH THEIR FLOOR GENERAL SIDELINED, THE BADGERS TURN TO BRONSON KOENIG TO CALL THE SHOTS — BUT HE WON'T GO IT ALONE

COORDINATORS ARANDA, RUDOLPH RIGHT AT HOME



DAVID STLUKA

COVER STORY

PUSHED TO THE POINT

Making up for the absence of Traevon Jackson will require a team effort from the Badgers, but no one will be asked to step up more than new starting point guard Bronson Koenig.



DAVID STLUKA

FOOTBALL COACHING STAFF

COORDINATED EFFORT

New football head coach Paul Chryst found comfort in hiring coordinators Dave Aranda and Joe Rudolph to the Badgers' top assistant positions.

LUCAS AT LARGE

READY TO GROW ROOTS

Thomas Brown has been retained, meaning the coach can return to his work of maintaining the Badgers' running back tradition.



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Brown ready to establish roots at UW

With five different mailing addresses in four years, Wisconsin running backs coach Thomas Brown was in no hurry to pack his bags again. So he made sure that new head coach Paul Chryst was aware of his intentions of “me wanting to be here and the reasons I wanted to be here.”

Brown left nothing to chance. “Every time I saw him, I continued to reiterate that, whether it was a 30-second conversation or a 15-20 minute conversation,” he said. “There was not much he could tell me at the time. But I wanted to make sure he knew where I stood and where I wanted to be.”

Once he retired from the NFL, a short career that was limited by injuries, Brown bounced from Georgia (his alma mater) to Chattanooga to Georgia State (for only a few months) to Marshall to Wisconsin. He so enjoyed last season he wanted to come back even if Melvin Gordon didn't.

From the standpoint of his position group, Brown said, “It's one of the best places in America to coach tailbacks. I'm really excited with what we're building here and the success we had this year and with the guys coming back and recruits coming in, it will enable us to be successful in the future.”

That was guaranteed when

Chryst opted to retain Brown on his coaching staff. “I expressed my interest from the get-go that I wanted to stick around,” Brown said. “And I'm very thankful to Coach (Barry) Alvarez and Coach Chryst and Coach (Joe) Rudolph for keeping me here.”

The UW running backs, according to Chryst, endorsed Brown during the bowl practices

RUDOLPH ON BROWN:
THOMAS IS EXTREMELY IMPRESSIVE, SMART. YOU CAN TELL THAT HE'S GOT A TRUE CONFIDENCE AND WISDOM. HE'LL BE A LOT OF FUN TO WORK WITH



when Chryst was an observer and evaluating personnel. “The kids would come up and talk to me about Thomas,” said Chryst, who got a chance to sit down and visit with both Gordon and Brown.

During these same practices, Alvarez, who was the interim coach, also got a better feel for Brown's coaching, which complemented some of the things that he already knew about him. “He's a stabilizing force,” Alvarez said. “He's an excellent recruiter and he has a nice way about him.”

During his Wednesday news conference, Chryst talked about how he has been around some really good running back coaches at the pro and collegiate level. “Actually some great ones, so you have a sense that's a pretty high bar,” he said, adding that Brown “has some of those core principles.”

It didn't take long for Rudolph to draw some of the same conclusions about Brown. “Thomas is extremely impressive, smart,” said Rudolph, who will serve as the offensive coordinator and O-line coach. “You can tell that he's got a true confidence and wisdom. He'll be a lot of fun to work with.”

Brown felt like he hit it off with Chryst and Rudolph in separate interview situations. “(Chryst) is easy to talk to and we enjoyed some conversations outside of



football,” he said. “(Rudolph) is laid back in some ways but very direct. He’s a football mind and a great personality overall.”

Once he knew that he was returning, Brown felt a sense of relief.

“There was a lot of uncertainty just trying to figure out what the future holds,” he admitted. “That I couldn’t control. But I could control my effort and my attitude every single day that I approached my job and I did the best that I could.”

Brown couldn’t say enough good things about experiencing Gordon’s record-setting season. “I probably learned as much from Melvin as he learned from

me,” he said. “He taught me a lot. Just being around an elite player who conducts himself that way, it’s something I’ll never, ever forget.”

Now the baton is in Corey Clement’s hands. “I’m looking forward to Corey taking on more of a leadership role as he gets older and thrust into a different spot,” Brown said. “We have to get the rest of the guys to press him as much as he did with Melvin last year.”

Brown said that he loved the fact that Clement “did a great job about not caring what Melvin’s status was — and obviously he was a great player and he’s going to be a great player for

years to come — but Corey was still going to show up every day and try to beat him out.”

So who will push Clement this spring? The fullbacks — Derek Watt, Austin Ramesh and Derek Straus — will have their own competition.

“Taiwan (Deal) did a great job on the scout team and I was pleased with how he developed,” Brown said. “And Dare (Ogunbowale) did a good job of competing.”

Nobody may have competed harder for their position than Brown, and he has been rewarded.

“I’m definitely excited to be back,” he said. ■





First College Football Playoff a big win

Everyone felt that the excitement generated from the semifinal games and the championship game of the College Football Playoff was second to none. I think we got it right. We had the right teams.

The playoff was scrutinized and torn apart over such a long period of time. Everybody seemed to know something about it. Everybody had an opinion.

There was constant change throughout the season, which made it interesting. It kept a lot of people in the hunt for one of those four playoff spots and all of us were pleased with that.

We'll have some serious selection committee meetings as we move forward. We've all been jotting some things down, different ways to improve things.

Do we need to have as many weeks of rankings? Do we need to start as early as we did with the rankings? Those are some of the things that we need to talk about.

But everyone was very happy with how it turned out. There was a lot of energy in the stadium Monday night. And the TV ratings were off the charts.

If anyone told me beforehand that Ohio State would turn it over four times and win the title game going away, I would have had a hard time believing that. Ohio State just kept getting bet-

ter and better. That was a team that was really peaking as the season went on. They were on a roll and I thought it was going to be a tough matchup for Oregon.

Cardale Jones was unbelievable. What he did was unheard of. There have been backups that have won games, but nobody has ever had a third guy of that quality at quarterback.

His size and arm strength are impressive. As the game went on, he gained more and more poise. He just showed that he could handle the big stage and make plays.

Ohio State was really physical and fast. On defense, they could get pressure with four rushers. On offense, their line blocked the heck out of them. That tailback, Ezekiel Elliott, really ran hard.

I've said all along that it's important for our league for our brand schools to be strong. Ohio State winning the national championship was good for our conference.

You want the Ohio States, the Michigans, the Penn States, the Nebraskas and the Wisconsin to be strong. It's up to everyone else to upgrade their program if they want to compete.

You wouldn't believe how many people came up to me in Dallas and congratulated me on how we got it all started for the Big Ten with our win over Au-

burn.

I ran into a CEO of a national company that was in New Orleans for the Sugar Bowl. He said that he was at a huge bar that was half-filled with Alabama fans and half-filled with Ohio State fans. During our game, Alabama was rooting for Auburn and Ohio State was rooting for us. He said the place was just crazy from start to finish, especially when we won in overtime. That's real healthy.

Paul Chryst is now in the midst of completing his coaching staff. Retaining Dave Aranda as his defensive coordinator is good for Paul and it's good for us. Dave is an excellent coach and very creative.

You also keep some continuity and consistency for the kids on defense. They're familiar with the coaching and the 3-4 scheme, and that's a good thing.

It's great to have one of our own coming back, too, in Joe Rudolph. I thought a lot of Rudy as a player and I've watched him progress as a coach.

I hated to see him leave when Paul got the Pitt job and I tried to talk him into staying. I'm really glad to get him back. That's a good move.

Rudy understands our program and how we've built it. And he understands what it takes to win and who we are. It's a win-win with Dave and Joe. ■



As always, Ryan focused on who's on floor

By late Monday afternoon, fans knew the Badgers would be without Traevon Jackson for the next few weeks. The foot injury he suffered Sunday night at Rutgers required surgery four days later.

It took a little more time to get word that Frank Kaminsky was cleared to play in Thursday's game against Nebraska.

Slowly but surely word got out. But it wasn't via some big announcement from Bo Ryan at a news conference. During the season, injuries and illness are topics the Badgers head coach rarely discusses. Other coaches take a different approach. If someone has a head cold, there is good chance the media will be informed.

Bo Ryan just doesn't roll that way. It has nothing to do with being cold-hearted. It has nothing to do with playing games with reporters. It has everything to do with keeping his players as positive as possible.

Ryan's philosophy of focusing on the players who are on the floor goes back to when he first started playing organized ball.

"I always figured there was somebody who wanted to take my spot," said Ryan. "There is always somebody ready to step in. It's somebody else's opportunity."

Nobody likes the thought of Jackson being hurt. Nobody enjoyed seeing Kaminsky on the

bench last Sunday. While it is obvious those two could have made a difference in the last game, you did not hear Ryan go down that path.

"We just say, OK, we've practiced with these other guys. That is their chance to get in there and make something happen," said Ryan. "If you get down, or if you think you don't have other guys that can play ... they'll get that message too." The coach adds, "I just stay positive about the guys who will be filling in."

"I JUST STAY POSITIVE ABOUT THE GUYS WHO WILL BE FILLING IN," RYAN SAID OF HIS APPROACH TO INJURIES.

"Having done this a few years, I've seen guys that, because of opportunities that they have been able to get, end up becoming much better."

So the Badgers move on. Yes, this team will miss Jackson while he recovers. His toughness, leadership and clutch shot-making capabilities have earned him respect throughout the locker room.

Hopefully he can return and help this team late in the regular season and on into postseason play. But in the meantime, the Badgers will hit the practice floor knowing there is much work to be done.

Much of that work is on the

defensive end. In the loss to the Scarlet Knights, Ryan admits a couple of his players were "abused" defensively. The coach wants better footwork, specifically lateral movement.

In three of their first four Big Ten games, the Badgers have allowed their opponents to shoot better than 50 percent from the floor. Yes, this team can score, but the Badgers are fully aware that in order to realize their goals, they will need to lower that number.

We are still early in the conference season, but there are signs that business is picking up. Michigan State is improving. Maryland, even with a recent loss at struggling Illinois, seems to be for real.

While it is true that some teams remain difficult to figure out, it is becoming more evident by the day that — 1 through 14 — anything can happen. Call it a cliché, but it also happens to be true.

Perhaps that is another reason Bo Ryan has little to say about injuries. There simply isn't time. The league race is on, and the Badgers plan to be in the thick of it. Even without one of their key players.

This is a very good team. While Jackson is out, others can show their improvement. When Jackson returns, a very good team might have a chance to be special. ■



WHAT IS YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?



DAKOTA WHYTE
Junior • W. Basketball

“My New Year’s resolution for this year would be to do everything with a touch of love in my heart and think positively.”



BRAD NAVIN
Senior • Men's Hockey

“We want to finish out the rest of this season on a high note and keep building on what we have going on right now. Finish school strong and get that college degree.”



NIGEL HAYES
Sophomore • M. Basketball

“Watching what I eat and trying to reshape my diet would be my New Year’s resolution. I want to eat healthier in general, but specifically completely cutting out sugar, desserts and red meats. Sadly, no more cookies.”



KATARINA ZGRAJA
Senior • Women's Hockey

“My New Year’s resolution is something I renew every year because I don’t completely fulfill it. My goal this year is to floss my teeth, as oral health is very important.”



KELSEY CARD

An All-American as a freshman and sophomore, Wisconsin junior thrower **Kelsey Card** redshirted during the 2014 indoor and outdoor seasons as she continued to refine her technique. The results showed during the summer, as the Plainview, Illinois, native finished fourth in the shot put and sixth in the discus at the USA Outdoor Championships while setting Big Ten records in both events in the process. Card and the Badgers open their season Saturday by hosting the Wisconsin Open.

How did redshirting last year help you?

“From a team standpoint, it will help me. I have another year of training under my belt and I think the team has also grown stronger the last year with who we have and who we have new. Individually, I had just switched to the ‘spin’ technique the previous year, so I had been practicing it for one season, and I was throwing in it while practicing and learning it. It was nice to have that time to really work on my technique.”

What did you learn from competing at the USA championships and NACAC Under-23 championships last year?

“Indoor nationals wasn’t so hot, but I think it was a really good learning experience because I don’t think I was all together with my mental focus and goals. It was good to have the experience and know what not to do. At the USA outdoor meet, I had been training for it all year. We went into it

- SCROLL FOR MORE -

ALL ABOUT KELSEY

Year: Junior

Events: Shot Put, Discus

Hometown: Plainview, Illinois

High School: Carlinville

QUICK Qs FOR KELSEY

Favorite childhood movie?

“Ferris Bueller’s Day Off.”

Favorite pre-meet meal?

“I usually get a sandwich from Subway — salami and lettuce on white bread. I have eaten it for the past 12 years before athletic events.”

Favorite board game? “Trouble, the really old version with the dice popper.”

Favorite throwing event?

“Both the shot put and discus have their merits, but I would pick shot put since you don’t have to go as far to retrieve it.”

Favorite TV show?

“The Big Bang Theory.”

Favorite place you’ve competed at?

“At last year’s USA Outdoor Championships we did a shot put in front of the California State Capitol that was super cool.”

ON POINT



AS TRAEVON JACKSON HEADS TO THE SIDELINE TO REHAB A FOOT INJURY, BRONSON KOENIG COMES OFF THE BENCH TO BECOME THE BADGERS' STARTING POINT GUARD. BUT HE WON'T BE GOING IT ALONE.

BY MIKE LUCAS ■ UWBADGERS.COM



WHEN WISCONSIN POINT GUARD

Traevon Jackson jumped and landed awkwardly on the foot of Rutgers' Myles Mack — while attempting to close out the 3-point shooter — Jackson heard a “crack” and feared the worst. “I kind of had an idea,” he said.

At first, Jackson thought that he had injured his ankle. But after he was helped to his feet, exited the game and left the court, he went to a backstage area behind the bleachers. Out of sight of everyone, he tried to do some light running. “And I really couldn't run,” he said. “So I knew something was up.”

Jackson went down with 12 minutes and 17 seconds remaining in the second half of Sunday's game at Rutgers. The Badgers, who were already playing without Frank Kaminsky, were in the process of going cold from the field when Jackson contested a shot by Mack who made the triple for a 46-all draw.

While his UW teammates struggled offensively to make baskets and defensively to slow down

Mack and Kadeem Jack — Mack and Jack wound up combining for 41 points — Jackson sat helplessly in the visitor's locker room at the Rutgers Athletic Center in Piscataway, New Jersey.

He didn't need a radio or a television to tell him what was happening on the floor. “I really didn't get a chance to see the end of the game,” said Jackson, who was nonetheless painfully aware of the results; a stunning 67-62 loss to the Scarlet Knights. “I was hearing the crowd.”

Jackson had his right foot in a boot afterward and used crutches to get on the team bus.

“I talked to him right after the game on the bus,” said redshirt junior guard Zak Showalter. “I looked at him and told him, ‘Don't tell me it's as bad as what I've heard it is.’ And he said, ‘I don't think it's the best.’ And then I just told him, ‘I love you and we're praying for you.’”

Jackson admitted that the two-hour and 40-minute flight back to Madison was “painful.” But there was some reassurance being in the company of the people that mean the most to

him. “It was good to be with the team again,” he said “and not be isolated (like he was in the locker room).”

On Monday, it was announced that Jackson would have surgery on his injured right foot Thursday and the rehab would begin within two to three weeks. Jackson, a senior from Westerville, Ohio, had started 84 straight games. Throughout his career, he has been an inspirational leader.

“Trae is such a great leader out on the court and it really can’t be replicated what he does for this team,” Kaminsky said. “I know he takes a lot of criticism for a lot of different things. But he’s also probably the biggest motivator that we have on this team. We’re going to miss him a lot.”

While Kaminsky was talking to the media Tues-

day at the Kohl Center, Jackson was sitting with some teammates in the locker room. “Mentally,” he said, “I’m getting prepared to come back stronger and better; I’m going to be ready to finish off my career here however long it takes to get ready.”

Jackson has heard from many different people since the injury and he has appreciated their kind words and encouragement for a speedy recovery. Among those well-wishers was Indiana coach Tom Crean. “Coach Crean reached out to me and that was cool,” he said. “I’ve never talked to him really.”

One of the earliest texts that Jackson received was from Bronson Koenig, who will now be entrusted with taking over the point guard responsibilities. Koenig, a sophomore from La Crosse, made his first career start at Rutgers in a three-

KAMINSKY ON JACKSON:
Trae is such a great leader out on the court and it really can’t be replicated what he does for this team ... He’s also probably the biggest motivator that we have on this team. We’re going to miss him a lot.



guard lineup that was necessitated by Kamin-sky's absence.

"I texted him and told him how bad I felt for him and stuff like that," said Koenig who has appeared in 54 career games. "I kind of asked for his guidance along the way and he texted me back and said that he was going to be with me every step of the way."

There was another supportive, heartfelt message that Jackson had for Koenig, who up until now has been the first guard off the bench for the Badgers. "He said that it's my turn to lead these guys," Koenig related, "and that we're going to do it together when he gets back."

When asked Tuesday about what he has shared with Koenig, Jackson smiled and said, "Go out there and play and have fun. It would be wrong if he didn't go out there and enjoy the moment and the opportunity that has been presented to him, so he has to take advantage of it."

He also emphasized a phrase, "Short-term memory" to Koenig. It's more commonly associated with defensive backs who realize that at some point in a football game, a receiver is going to catch the ball on

them. But they can't dwell on that catch. "Short-term memory," Jackson reiterated.

Jackson's translation for Koenig: be aggressive, stay aggressive, no matter what.

Josh Gasser concurred.

"He's going to have to be (aggressive), there's no way around it really," said Gasser, a fifth-year senior from Port Washington. "As the point guard in this system, you're given a lot of opportunities, a lot of freedom to make decisions and be a leader on the court.

"A lot of time the ball is in your hands

and you have to make plays for yourself and others. Bronson has shown me that he can do that. But now he has to do it more consistently and for a longer period of time ... all the guys have to step up and I'm going to have to be one of those guys."

Jackson has promised to do whatever he can to ease Koenig's transition into the starting lineup along with schooling him on things that he has to know about the vagaries of the position. "Absolutely, I will try to help him as much as I can," he said. "I'll be there for him, I'll be with him the whole way."

He also has the utmost confidence in Koenig getting the job done. "It's just a matter of this happening a couple of months earlier than it would have happened next season," Jackson said of the changing of the guard, the point guard. "He'll be fine and this will help him in the long run."

If you're wondering how Jackson is handling all of this, he's fine, too.

"I don't feel sorry for myself at all," he said.

JACKSON ON KOENIG:
"I will try to help him as much as I can. I'll be there for him, I'll be with him the whole way."



“The world doesn’t feel sorry for you, so there’s no point in me being down. I’m just looking to really stay focused and how I can learn from this. The biggest thing is learning from it and not getting down from it and being here for my teammates.”

Faith is one of Jackson’s greatest assets.

“However much time it takes (to recover), it’s like a meditative state now, me and God,” he said. “He’s going to help me get stronger and conquer some things that I need to conquer and allow me to come back even more re-energized to finish out the season.”

That Jackson can still get back this season can be a powerful motivating force.

“It’s really difficult to sit there and watch knowing you can’t do anything,” said Gasser,

“It’s really difficult to sit there and watch knowing you can’t do anything,” said Gasser, who missed the 2012-2013 season with a knee injury. **“But he knows that he’s coming back ... That will make it easier on him to stay focused and stay positive with everything.”**



who missed the 2012-13 season with a knee injury. “But what he can take from this is that he knows that he’s coming back. He gets to come back and play at the end of the Big Ten season and tournament time.

“That will make it easier on him to stay focused and stay positive with everything. With mine, I knew I wasn’t playing that year, so it was really hard for me to give what I needed to give (back to the team). I think Trae will have an easier time. He’s really mentally strong.”

Could there be a temptation for others to try and do too much while Jackson is sidelined?

“We have to stay within ourselves,” said Gasser, who leads the Badgers in career games (125) and starts (121). “We have to stay within the system. That’s when we’re at our best — when we’re moving the ball, everyone is touching it, we’re screening for each other and we’re playing unselfishly.

“Nothing is going to change that way. Trae is usually the guy who ends up with the ball in his hands a lot. With this situation, it’s going to have to be other guys. But we’re going to do the same things. We’re going to still defend and still move the ball. It’s just going to be a little different look.

“I have to continue to be a better leader, even more so now,” Gasser went on. “I told him (Jackson) to rehab hard and that when you get back

we're going to be a better team overall than we were before and then we're going to go out there and win the thing."

Gasser will be one of the teammates that Koenig will rely on.

"He has always been like a brother to me," Koenig said. "He's going to help a lot."

Koenig has never lacked confidence, a product of his success in high school. But he has been more of a role player than a playmaker at Wisconsin because of limited minutes. Kaminsky pointed out, "It's definitely tough going from sixth or seventh man to playing starters minutes literally overnight."

Koenig couldn't disagree. "It's definitely going to be an adjustment going from playing 15 minutes a game to playing 30 or 30-plus," he said.

"It's going to take me a couple of games to get adjusted to playing that much. But I'm sure I'll be all right."

So is Kaminsky. "He's ready for it," he said. "I know he'll figure everything out."

What about the pressure of the moment?

"THERE'S ALWAYS GOING TO BE PRESSURE TO PERFORM," KOENIG SAID. "BUT I'VE BEEN HERE LONG ENOUGH TO LEARN HOW TO PUT THAT PRESSURE TO THE SIDE AND PLAY MY GAME."

The pressure of replacing Jackson? The pressure of leading a title contending team? "There's always going to be pressure to perform," Koenig said. "But I've been here long enough to learn how to

put that pressure to the side and play my game."

Managing the game is something that Koenig can identify with. "I feel like the point guard is the game manager, the quarterback of the team, the catalyst," he said. "He kind of gets everything going. Trae was a good playmaker and I have to take my playmaking skills now and



“TRAE IS SO GOOD AT THAT,” SHOWALTER SAID. “HE’S SO GOOD WITH HIS WORDS AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE. THAT’S JUST A GIFT THAT HE HAS. OTHERS ARE GOING TO HAVE TO STEP UP.”

nig becomes the starter and Showalter becomes the first guard off the bench. “I just have to take what I get and make the most of it,” said Showalter, who appeared in 22 games as a freshman, redshirted last year and is averaging 6.3 minutes this season.

In making the most of it, namely his opportunity, Showalter also said, “I have to be ready to contribute to this team. Our goals haven’t changed. We still want to win the Big Ten and make a run in March. And I just have to do what I can do to contribute to those goals.”

Like everyone else, Showalter wasn’t about to underestimate Jackson’s loss and the urgency in filling the leadership and motivation void.

“Trae is so good at that,” he said. “He’s so good with his words and encouraging people. That’s just a gift that he has. Others are going to have to step up.”

Others are going to have to lead. “And lead by example,” Showalter said.

Koenig will be the focal point. “And he’s ready to step into that role; he has been waiting and now it’s his turn to come in and produce for this team,” said Showalter, who has the same challenge to whatever degree. “I’ve been waiting for this for three years now. I’m definitely ready.”

Koenig won’t have to do it alone until Jackson returns. Neither will Showalter.

Take it from Jackson.

“I’ll be there helping,” he promised. 

show them off.”

As a backup, one of Wisconsin’s top reserves, Koenig averaged 15.5 minutes as a freshman. He was up to 19.8 before his first start at Rutgers where he played 31 minutes, scored 12 points and had three assists to just one turnover. His best outing last year was against Kentucky in the Final Four.

“I’ve always tried to tell myself, ‘Stay ready, stay prepared because anything can happen,’” said Koenig who had 11 points in the first half of the national semifinals. “Unfortunately, something did happen to Trae. But I know that I’m ready to step in as the starting point guard.”

Especially, he added, “With him (Jackson) helping me and everyone else having my back.”

There’s a domino effect with the injury: Koe-

*DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
DAVE ARANDA AND NEW
HEAD COACH PAUL CHRYST
MESHED IMMEDIATELY,
WHICH MEANS
ARANDA IS STILL*

FEELING RIGHT AT HOME

BY MIKE LUCAS • UWBADGERS.COM



DAVE ARANDA REMEMBERED WALKING walking into his first meeting with Paul Chryst and thinking, “I had heard so many good things about coach, I just wanted to see his personality for myself.”

Aranda remembered walking out of his first meeting with Chryst and thinking, “I was impressed with how thoughtful he is; he’s a thinker. And I believe he has a great heart.”

Aranda remembered going home that night and telling his wife Dione, “How I was really excited about the future and where we can take this program from where it is now.”

In sum, Aranda remembered how that first meeting with Chryst left him. “That visit really energized me,” he said. “And once the job was offered, I jumped on it.”

That job — as Wisconsin’s defensive coordinator — was something that Aranda wanted to hold on to more than anything else after his former head coach Gary Andersen left for Oregon State.

There were many things influencing Aranda’s desire to stay in Madison and it started with the players; something which he voiced publicly before he even got a chance to meet Chryst.

“I love the kids here,” he said. “They’re so unique; they’ve got a gym rat mentality. They love football; they love studying football like no other — on top of studying for other things.

“When you come to meetings and you’re prepared, they’re prepared as well. It’s a great environment in that classroom (meeting room) and I love that part of it.”

Aranda likes a good story, too; a player who has achieved or even overachieved by overcoming certain odds and obstacles. He mentioned two by name, Ethan Armstrong and Marcus Trotter.

“Those types of guys fire me up,” he said. “I love coaching them.”

During his coaching journey, Aranda has taken jobs to enhance and advance — enhance his knowledge of the game and advance in the pro-

“ANYTIME YOU GET NEW COACHES IN THE FOLD, THERE WILL BE NEW IDEAS,” ARANDA SAID. “I’M EXCITED ABOUT SEEING WHERE THAT GOES IN TERMS OF LOOKING AT THINGS FROM NEW ANGLES AND VIEWPOINTS.”



fession — at whatever sacrifice to the family.

That just comes with the territory. But this stop has been different on many fronts.

“My family loves it here, it’s a great place to live,” said Aranda, who noted that his two daughters and a son “love the schools that they’re in and they love the teachers.”

Along with his wife, a former school teacher, Aranda gave high marks to their neighborhood, a quality of life thing. For a recent Packers game, he said that they had more than 20 people at their house.

“So when you have that opportunity to not put up a ‘For Sale’ sign, you’re in a good place,” he said, “and you definitely want to be able to stay as long as you can ... (just) to see my kids feel at home.”

Aranda was quick to single out Andersen for the impact that he has had on his professional career — for getting him back on track and bringing him to Wisconsin a couple of seasons ago.

“He offered me a job at Utah State and took a chance on me when no one else did,” he said. “He let me be me and let me coach. Gary has been a big part of whatever success I’ve had.”

And he’s grateful. But he’s also looking at the growth potential with Chryst. “Coach Chryst makes you feel at home,” he said. “He makes you feel comfortable. He’s a great guy.”

In many respects, they’re the same guy as far as their study habits and the freshness that they bring to their respective labor of love — on offense for Chryst and defense for Aranda.

“He comes at it from a very comprehensive view,” Aranda said of Chryst’s football concepts. “You can tell he has thought his things through. I’d like to think I do the same.”

On Tuesday morning, Aranda was alone in the defensive meeting room and writing down plays on a white board. But don’t be misled, he cautioned, by the strategizing. Don’t overanalyze, either.

“What’s on the board is what’s on the board,” he said, adding that so much of what happens in here is really about “the guy in the room or

the people in the room” more so than the Xs and Os.

“It’s the energy that you bring to the room, the personality that you bring to a bunch of guys (players) and how they interact with you and how they take that to the field.”

By getting the players to take that step, the right step, Aranda said, “It’s about them wanting to hunt for you and fight for you and fight for each other. That’s the trick (to get them to do that).”

Going into next season, the Badgers will return an experienced defense, minus only three starters; defensive tackle Warren Herring and inside linebackers Marcus Trotter and Derek Landisch.

Such personnel losses can be best measured in quality if not quantity. To this point, Aranda is excited about getting two young linebackers ready for the 2015 season opener against Alabama.

“That energizes me, I’m fired up about that,” he said of grooming replacements. “I’m also excited about working with the Vince Biegels and Joe Schoberts and, hopefully, the Tanner McEv-

oys.”

It has yet to be determined if McEvoy will stay on defense at safety. But that’s Aranda’s wish. He’s fully expecting more growth out of his 3-4 defense in Year 3, especially with the staff turnover.

“Anytime you get new coaches in the fold, there will be new ideas,” he said. “I’m excited about seeing where that goes in terms of looking at things from new angles and viewpoints.”

Aranda is already sold on the view from the top; the head coach.

He remembered their first meeting and “hearing Coach Chryst speak on the relationship that he has with his players and his commitment to academics.”

And he remembered walking out of there and thinking, “I just know he cares a lot for his players and coaches and all the things that I know everyone here believes in.”

It doesn’t hurt to be the same guy or a facsimile thereof.

“There are a lot of similarities,” Aranda said, “and a lot of ideas.” 



DAVID STLUKA

**YOU CAN
GO HOME
AGAIN**

DAVID STILKA

WISCONSIN

***A FORMER UW PLAYER AND COACH, JOE
RUDOLPH RETURNS TO MADISON WITH
A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE
BADGERS' TRADITION AND IDENTITY***

BY MIKE LUCAS ■ UWBADGERS.COM

PULL UP A CHAIR AND LISTEN TO JOE Rudolph rhapsodize about the offensive line and you will understand what makes Wisconsin's new offensive coordinator and O-line coach really tick.

"It's what you grew up on, it's what you were a part of," said the 42-year-old Rudolph. "In a lot of ways, it's how you live your life today. It's a group that you're obviously passionate about."

Rudolph, after all, once played his heart out for former UW head coach Barry Alvarez. He was a pulling guard who made up for anything that he might have lacked athletically with grit and smarts.

"The foundation of the O-line is ingrained in the foundation of the (Wisconsin) program," said Rudolph, a strong-willed native of Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania. "Those things run in symmetry.

"And that's important to maintain and continue to grow. I couldn't feel more passionate about any group being an old lineman myself. There are special qualities that I will enjoy coaching."

Along with being a member of Alvarez's first recruiting class, Rudolph was one of the mainstays on a UW offensive line that cleared run-

ning paths for tailbacks like Brent Moss and Terrell Fletcher.

Given this backdrop, he's also somewhat of an historian, someone who can connect the dots between different generations of Wisconsin football; a valuable quality to possess for perspective.

So when you suggest that the 1993 offensive line that helped carry the Badgers to the Rose Bowl was the trend setter for all of those O-lines that have followed, Rudolph will tap the brakes.

"During our time here, we knew about the great O-lines that had played at Wisconsin," he said. "That was always taught to us. We knew the names and tradition. And it was there for us to uphold."

Names like Dennis Lick, Ray Snell, and Paul Gruber. All three were first-team All-Americans. Rudolph played with two others — Cory Raymer and Joe Panos — so he has a wide frame of reference.

Moreover, Rudolph was the tight ends coach at Wisconsin (2008-11) when the Badgers were represented on these honor lists by Kraig Urbik, Gabe Carimi, John Moffitt, Peter Konz and Kevin



RUDOLPH ON CHRYST:

“We get each other. When you do that and when you trust in one another, you end up working with a sense of confidence and you end up doing a pretty good job.”

the other is thinking without saying a word.

“Any type of relationship is a great one when you know how to complement: me to complement him and him to complement me. That’s what makes teams and coaching staffs successful.

“We get each other. When you do that and when you trust in one another, you end up working with a sense of confidence and you end up doing a pretty good job.

“The thing that you really appreciate about Paul is that he values people’s opinions. He wants them to be engaged and involved in the decision-making. He’s a listener and a learner.”

Rudolph couldn’t help but listen when ESPN and every other sports outlet in the nation was reporting that Wisconsin’s Gary Andersen was leaving for Oregon State.

“It obviously surprised you,” he said, knowing that Chryst would likely be atop Alvarez’s wish list. “Somewhere in the back of your head, you know something could or may occur (with Paul).

“But you’re working so hard at what you’re doing (coaching the Pitt players), you kind of don’t have the time to entertain the thought.”

After Alvarez hired Chryst, Pittsburgh named Rudolph as its interim coach; a responsibility that he took seriously and cherished because of those players that were looking for answers.

“It was a challenge. The biggest thing was how much they all liked Paul,” Rudolph said. “It’s a neat group of kids and they’ve grown to appreciate our approach.

“But anytime you have change, you have uncertainty and uncertainty leads to, ‘Are you going to be able to make the decisions in the times of stress?’

“For me, it was an opportunity to talk about

Zeitler.

Because of Rudolph’s deep-seeded investment as a Badgers player and assistant coach, it made it very difficult for him to leave for Pittsburgh in 2011 when Paul Chryst got the head coaching job.

“A part of that was knowing you needed to grow a little bit,” Rudolph said, “and a part of that was creating challenges for yourself. There are a lot of times when you don’t want to but you need to.”

In retrospect, Rudolph was thankful for the Pitt experience because it gave him three years to “learn and grow as a coach” under the tutelage of Chryst. Together, they’ve always been a good team.

“We’ve always had a great relationship. It has been one where you kind of get each other,” said Rudolph, accenting the “get” as you get what

those things and I was glad to be there with them and help them through it. I care a lot about those guys and I enjoyed getting them ready for the bowl.”

But he didn't enjoy a nightmarish fourth quarter during which Pitt squandered a 31-6 lead and lost, 35-34, to Houston in the Armed Forces Bowl in Fort Worth, Texas.

“Boy, I don't know if that one leaves you anytime soon just because it's such an oddity,” he said. “You had the ball three times in the second half: touchdown, touchdown and field goal.

“And you don't get it for a fourth time until there are 50 seconds left on the clock. It just reminds you how important every play is and how it truly comes down to making plays.”

Unless Pitt was going to offer Rudolph the head coaching position, it was pretty hard for anyone to imagine Rudolph doing anything else but rejoining Chryst at Wisconsin.

“I don't know if he (Chryst) would have left there (Pitt) for anyplace else,” he said. “It was one of those unique scenarios to come back here and continue to build on the tradition and foundation.”

Joe and Dawn Rudolph have three sons and he

said that “she was really excited and extremely supportive” of the move back to Wisconsin. You didn't have to guess how he felt about it.

“It's just the feeling that I have for this place,” he said of his unbridled passion. “Without question, you could not feel stronger about an institution, a program and what this place is all about.”

And that extends to working for Chryst. Or rather working side-by-side with Chryst.


“Paul was obviously a huge factor also,” he said. “Just the belief that I have in him and, hopefully, that relationship goes both ways and I think that it does.”

Is Rudolph a better coach today than when he left Madison?

“Absolutely,” he said, “and hopefully you'll be a little better tomorrow than you are today.”

Despite being raised in Western Pennsylvania, some 30 miles from Burgettstown, where Alvarez went to high school, does Rudolph consider Madison as home?

“I do consider it home,” he said. “This place has been incredibly good to me.”

Once again, there was no shortage of passion in his tone. 





DAVID STLUKA

Carrying his weight: Kaminsky returns

Senior's value underscored in loss at Rutgers

Frank Kaminsky's All-America resume is littered with big performances. Just last week the senior forward poured in 21 points against Purdue — 19 of which came after suffering what was later determined to be a concussion in the first half.

But the game in which he didn't participate may have underscored his impact more than any of his Big Ten-best seven double-double efforts.

In UW's surprising 67-62 loss at Rutgers, the Badgers missed their frontcourt anchor at both ends of the floor. Offensively, Wisconsin equaled its second-lowest scoring output of the season. At the other end, Kaminsky's absence in the middle of the defense might have had something to do with the Scarlet Knights shooting a season-high 54.3 percent from the field.

"You take an All-American out of anybody's lineup and it's going to have an impact," UW associate head coach Greg Gard said this week. "Unless you're Kentucky, then you just replace him with another one. It was evident. The list is very long in terms of what Frank gives to this team."

Sports Illustrated's David Gardner agrees. "Kaminsky scored

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (15-2, 3-1)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

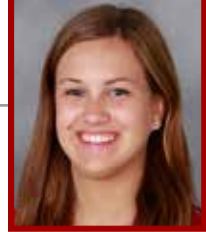
Dec. 28	Buffalo	W, 68-56
Dec. 31	Penn State	W, 89-72
Jan. 4	at N'western	W, 81-58
Jan. 7	Purdue	W, 62-55
Jan. 11	at Rutgers	L, 62-67

COMING UP

Jan. 15	Nebraska	8 p.m.
Jan. 20	Iowa	8 p.m.
Jan. 24	at Michigan	3/6 p.m.
Jan. 31	at Iowa	11 a.m.
Feb. 3	Indiana	6 p.m.

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JACK MCLAUGHLIN

Badgers getting stronger on the boards

Wisconsin finds strength in other areas

Just five games into the conference season, Wisconsin already finds itself only one win shy of matching last year's total of Big Ten victories.

The next chance for the Badgers (6-9 overall, 2-3 Big Ten) to build on its improving conference resume comes Thursday in West Lafayette, Indiana, as UW takes on Purdue before returning home to face two tough conference opponents in Rutgers and Nebraska.

The Badgers have struggled on the road this season, going 1-5, with their lone win away from home coming at Florida.

Wisconsin split in action last week, routing Penn State 65-46 at home before dropping a road contest at Indiana on Sunday, 69-52.

In order to prepare for the challenging games ahead, Wisconsin must capitalize on its strength and find consistency.

UW has matched or outperformed its last seven opponents on the glass, and Wisconsin is now outrebounding its foes by an average of 37.9-37.2 boards per game.

The Badgers have recorded 40-plus boards in their last two games, grabbing 42 against Penn State and 47 at Indiana. Their

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (6-9, 2-3)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Jan. 1	at Northwestern	L, 68-46
Jan. 4	Minnesota	L, 72-60
Jan. 6	Penn State	W, 65-46
Jan. 11	at Indiana	L, 69-52

COMING UP

Jan. 15	at Purdue	6 p.m.
Jan. 18	Rutgers	2 p.m.
Jan. 22	Nebraska	7 p.m.
Jan. 25	at Michigan State	1 p.m.
Jan. 29	Ohio State	8 p.m.

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Zulinick, Hughes, Soleway line emerging

Line showing signs of something good

The Badgers have battled a pair of tough teams the last two weekends with No. 5 Michigan Tech and No. 2 Boston University coming to the Kohl Center. If you look at the records, Wisconsin had no business being in those games. However, UW managed a split against Michigan Tech and were within seconds of a victory over BU before settling for a tie.

One reason is the developing line of redshirt sophomore Morgan Zulinick, Cameron Hughes and Jedd Soleway.

Zulinick has produced in the last seven games, dating back to Nov. 29 against Ferris State, the start of a team-best seven-game point-scoring streak (four goals, three assists). The point-scoring streak also included a four-game goal-scoring string.

Now it appears his linemates are trying to match Zulinick. Sophomore forward Soleway may have had his best weekend as a Badger last weekend against Boston University, firing a team-high nine shots and scoring goals in both contests to double his career output. Freshman center Hughes also chipped in with six shots on goal and an assist. The trio combined for five of UW's eight points on the weekend.

"I think the biggest thing we've been better at as a line and

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (2-12-2, 0-2-0)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Jan. 2	#5 Mich. Tech	L, 8-1
Jan. 3	#5 Mich. Tech	W, 2-0
Jan. 9	#2 Boston U.	T, 3-3 (OT)
Jan. 10	#2 Boston U.	L, 6-1

COMING UP

Jan. 16	at #16 Minnesota	8 p.m.
Jan. 17	at #16 Minnesota	5 p.m.
Jan. 23	Michigan	8 p.m.
Jan. 24	Michigan	7 p.m.
Jan. 30	Minnesota	8 p.m.
Jan. 31	Minnesota	7 p.m.

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Badgers begin homestand with Beavers

No. 3 UW welcomes Bemidji State to LaBahn

After playing 10 of its last 14 games on the road, No. 3 Wisconsin plays 8 of its final 12 regular season contests at LaBahn Arena, a stretch that begins this weekend when Bemidji State rolls into Madison.

The Badgers are coming off of a 4-1 loss and a 1-1 tie last weekend at No. 2 Minnesota. The draw on Sunday ended a 14-game losing streak against their Border Battle rivals, but after playing one of their best games of the year, the Badgers were hoping for a better result.

“We played well on Sunday,” UW head coach Mark Johnson said. “If you look at the 60 minutes and the effort we put in, we had to kill a penalty in overtime, we did a lot of good things and they found a way to tie it up there. I was very happy with the effort, but I think we deserved better than we came away with.”

“We looked at the video, and it was clear that there were a lot of positives from the series,” senior assistant captain Katarina Zgraja said. “We watched opportunities upon opportunities of chances that we had throughout both games, especially the second game.

“We know that next time we play them it’s going to be another

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (17-3-2, 13-3-2)

Home games in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Dec. 5	North Dakota	W, 2-1 (OT)
Dec. 7	North Dakota	W, 2-0
Jan. 10	#2 Minnesota	L, 4-1
Jan. 11	#2 Minnesota	T, 1-1

COMING UP

Jan. 16	Bemidji State	7 p.m.
Jan. 17	Bemidji State	3 p.m.
Jan. 24	#8 Clarkson	2 p.m.
Jan. 25	#8 Clarkson	Noon
Jan. 30	Minnesota State	7 p.m.
Jan. 31	Minnesota State	3 p.m.

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Wisconsin opens indoor season at home

Badgers host Wisconsin Open on Saturday

A new year brings a new season for the Wisconsin track and field program, as the Badgers open their 2015 indoor campaign at the Camp Randall Memorial Sports Center with the Wisconsin Open on Saturday.

The meet, which features competitors from Marquette and Tennessee State, will be the first of three home meets for the Badgers during the indoor season.

“Since the holiday season, we have been back at it now for two weeks,” UW Director of Track and Field and Cross Country Mick Byrne said. “It has been interesting to see where everybody is at. It is always nice to start off with a low-key meet because the season is long and it’s going to be a long year.”

“It is important that we keep things in perspective. January is basically for getting our feet wet and getting us back into our competitive arena and getting us focused on the year ahead.”

The men’s program enters this season ranked No. 15 in the nation according to the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association, and returns the reigning NCAA indoor weight throw champion in Michael Lihрман.

The women also enter the season ranked, as the Badgers are

SCHEDULE

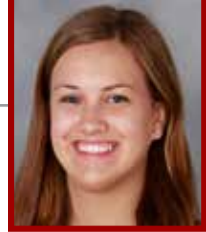
Home meets in **bold**.

COMING UP

Jan. 17	Wisconsin Open
Jan. 24	vs. Minnesota
Jan. 30-Feb. 1	Armory Collegiate Invitational
Feb. 13-14	Iowa State Classic
Feb. 20	Red & White Open
Feb. 20-21	Alex Wilson Invitational
Feb. 27-28	Big Ten Championships
March 13-14	NCAA Indoor Championships

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JACK MCLAUGHLIN

Badgers proving to be tough competition

Wisconsin improves to 5-0 in conference duals

After suffering its first and only loss on the road at Rider earlier in the season, some counted out the No. 20 Wisconsin wrestling team. The Badgers have worked feverishly to prove the doubters wrong, and they have succeeded.

Wisconsin (7-1 overall, 5-0 Big Ten) has been blazing past opponents since the loss at Rider. The Badgers answered in a big test at No. 19 Northwestern with a 30-16 victory over the Wildcats.

That's not UW's first conference upset of the season. UW topped the eighth-ranked Nebraska squad in Lincoln a month earlier.

Wisconsin also routed Purdue with a 22-13 win in the UW Field House on Sunday. UW has only one more home dual, and it comes against new conference member Rutgers (9-3 overall, 0-3 Big Ten) on Feb. 6 for Senior Night. Before that, the Badgers take to the road to battle Michigan State (3-6, 0-3) and Michigan (3-2, 1-1).

Junior Connor Medbery faced his toughest rival this season against Northwestern last Friday and the highly-anticipated top-five matchup did not disappoint. No. 5-ranked Medbery put

SCHEDULE (7-1, 5-0)

Home events in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Dec. 11	Indiana	W, 45-0
Dec. 13	at Nebraska	W, 23-14
Dec. 29-30	at Midlands	7th place
Jan. 9	at N'western	W, 30-16
Jan. 11	Purdue	W, 22-13

COMING UP

Jan. 23	at Michigan	6 p.m.
Jan. 25	at Michigan St.	1 p.m.
Feb. 6	Rutgers	7 p.m.
Feb. 7	at Blugold Open	All Day

[> View complete schedule](#)

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DAVID STLUKA

Badgers set to play host at UW Natatorium

Wisconsin scheduled to host pair of tri-meets

The foundation for a successful season was laid during the fall by the Wisconsin swimming and diving program. The Badgers now get the chance to return home and build on that success from the comfort of the UW Natatorium, beginning this weekend.

With championship season approaching — the Big Ten meet begins Feb. 18 for the women and Feb. 26 for the men — there’s perhaps no better place for the Badgers to prepare than right at home in Madison. They’ll get the opportunity to do so, beginning with the first of two tri-meets remaining on their schedule, as Indiana and Notre Dame visit the Nat on Friday and Saturday.

With both the No. 14 Wisconsin men and No. 22 UW women finishing the fall nationally ranked by the College Swimming Coaches Association of America (CSCAA), the Badgers proved last weekend that their early success was no fluke.

The UW men captured a dramatic one-point, come-from-behind victory against No. 16 USC under the lights last Friday night in Los Angeles. Coming down to the final event, Nick Caldwell, Cannon Clifton, Brett Pinfold and Damon Zito stepped up and

SCHEDULE

Home meets in **bold**. All times CT.

RECENTLY

Dec. 4-6	Texas Invitational	
		M: 6th (80)
		W: 3rd (177)
Jan. 10	at USC	M: 131.5-130.5
		W: 115-142

COMING UP

Jan. 16	Indiana	5 p.m.
Jan. 17	Notre Dame	10 a.m.
Feb. 6	Milwaukee	TBA
Feb. 7	Green Bay	11 a.m.

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FREAKY FAST

JANUARY 22, 2000: Kelly Kegley scored two goals in a 10-second span of the third period against Ohio State, recording the fastest two goals in Badgers history en route to her first hat trick. The Badgers won the game 6-2.

-MORE THIS WEEK-



POLL POSITIONING

JANUARY 23, 1993:

Down 12 in the second half, the Badgers rallied for a 67-66 win at No. 21 Michigan State. Following the win, UW joined the national rankings for the first time since 1974 (at No. 24).



FLEET FEAT

JANUARY 27, 1985:

Cathy Branta set the Wisconsin and Big Ten Conference indoor record by racing to a time of 4:18.74 in the 1500 meters.



TAKE FIVE

JANUARY 26, 1980:

Ron Vincent scored five seconds into the second period against Michigan State, recording the fastest UW goal to start a period as the Badgers beat the Spartans 9-2.