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THE FIGHTER

ONCE OVERLOOKED AS AN UNDERSIZED LINEBACKER, DEREK LANDISCH'S IMPACT ON WISCONSIN'S UNDERRATED DEFENSE IS NOW HARD TO MISS



COVER STORY

INSIDE LOOK

Now a centerpiece of the Wisconsin defense that leads the Big Ten, senior ILB Derek Landisch was once an undervalued recruit just hoping to get his chance in college football.



LUCAS AT LARGE

FAMILIAR FORMULA

A Final Four berth won't change Bo Ryan's tried and true approach as Badgers begin practice this week.

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TESTED, TOUGH

Lessons of a year ago have shaped the Badgers as they head into the stretch run of the Big Ten season.



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Megan Miller (WHKY)

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VARSIITY

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Ryan is ready for another run, surely

Surely, there will be a different approach to Wisconsin basketball now that the Badgers are coming off a Final Four appearance. Surely, there will be different expectations with four returning starters, including two Big Ten Player of the Year candidates in Frank Kaminsky and Sam Dekker.

Surely, all of this is true.

Not so fast my friend — and don't call me Shirley.

"Airplane," said UW coach Bo Ryan, "is one of my favorite movies."

And it was one of the highlights of Ryan's offseason that he got a chance to film a television commercial for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism with David and Jerry Zucker and Jim Abrahams, the creative geniuses behind the movie "Airplane" and so many other successful ventures.

As far as the Badgers, a pre-season top 10 team, taking a different approach when practice gets under way Friday at the Kohl Center? Surely, you don't know Ryan. "When we get them together for the first time," he said excitedly, "the first thing we're going to do is partner passing."

Ryan chuckled. Partner passing? "That's what I look forward to," he said. Really? "OK, guys," he plans on telling his players, "as old school as this might

seem, if we take care of the ball, it's extremely important. So we'll start with partner passing. The guys will get the message. I've got smart guys."

Most of them are back with the exception of one starter, Ben Brust. Ryan admitted that he will miss the energy that Brust brought to the gym. "He never stopped, he was always moving away from the ball," he said. "He came from an affluent background but he always played like a junkyard dog."

sophomores. Each saw varying degrees of playing time as true freshmen last season. "I'm hoping defensively we improve," Ryan said, "and I think the younger guys will be the difference-makers there."

He tossed Dekker's name into that category, too. Dekker, Kaminsky, Jackson and Gasser got summer exposure in a variety of camp settings in the company of some NBA superstars. "They had a chance to have some experiences that were unique," Ryan

said, "and, hopefully, they learned some things."

In addition to being ambassadors for the

“

Lending their seasoning to the new mix will be Kaminsky, Josh Gasser, Traevon Jackson and Duje Dukan. "We've got four guys who have been around and been through an awful lot," said Ryan. "So the personality of this team will be the four seniors and the effect that they have on the younger guys."

Nigel Hayes, Bronson Koenig and Vitto Brown are not so young anymore, relatively speaking. They're





program, they kept their edge competitively and stayed in shape. The results from the Elver Hill climb reflected as much. “Because we can be with them in the summer now,” Ryan said, “they’re in better shape in September than they’ve ever been.”

The NCAA has changed the offseason landscape by giving the coaches more access to their players and allowing limited practice time. “It works for us,” said Ryan. “Our staff is made up of teachers. And the more time we have for hands-on experience, it’s better for our team.”

Ryan made a point of saying, “I’m proud of the way our assistants develop players.” That was on display last season when the Badgers made their run to the Final Four. Since then, the national pundits have picked up on the storyline and have ex-

panded the narrative, elevating the program’s profile.

Surely, Ryan has discussed the expectations with his players. “We have too much work to do,” he said, suggesting that he wasn’t about to waste practice time on such things. “They understand what’s going on. I’ve got guys who have figured that part out. I haven’t seen anyone resting on their laurels.”

Surely, it’s a fair game — wondering, that is — if anyone might be spoiled by success. “For a competitor, it’s hard to answer,” Ryan said. “You’re in something to try and do the best that you can. If what you did last year looks good now, well, then maybe you haven’t been doing much.”

Last Saturday, Ryan went back to his roots, his alma mater, Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre,

Pennsylvania. After watching the Homecoming football game between Wilkes and Lycoming College, he was the guest speaker at a formal event that featured past letterwinners and graduates.

“I talked about the tumultuous times of the late ’60s,” he said. “I talked about how as college students we all did some things between 17 and 21 that we can say we learned from. Some things we would do again, some things we wouldn’t. They all laughed and pointed fingers at each other.”

And don’t call me Shirley. He was in mid-season form and ready for the start of practice and another season, his 31st overall.

Partner passing never goes out of style. “It’s what we do,” he said. ■





Picture gets clearer with conference play

I always felt like the players followed the coaches' lead when we were getting ready to enter the Big Ten season. So I always used to encourage our assistants to have a little extra bounce in their step.

I wanted them to pick up their intensity a little bit at practice and to be a little more excited. When that happens, the players will realize that there's a different tempo needed for league games.

I didn't talk to our team leaders, I just talked to the team. I talked about how the games are more meaningful now, how they count more and how there will be more intensity because of rivalries.

It's only natural to have familiarity with Big Ten opponents. At the same time, good coaches change what they're doing according to their personnel because everybody is looking to improve.

Teams change from year to year. Just because we've played against Pat Fitzgerald teams for a number of years, this is a different team. It's even different now than it was at the start of the year.

When I was coaching, I always had a hard time with Northwestern. It was a small stadium and it was usually a gray day and the wind was coming off the lake. Maybe it was a personal thing for me.

I just had a hard time getting up for some of those games there. I probably had a better record against Ohio State. Sometimes that's the way it is. It's about style, how you match up and how you play.

Matt Davenport kicked a game-winning field goal in the final seconds of one of our most memorable games at Northwestern. The kids nicknamed him "Money" for a reason.

They beat us the year before in Madison when Ronnie Dayne fumbled when we were icing the game. They threw an out-and-up and scored when the game should have been put away.

The next year, we go down to Evanston and they're icing the clock in the finals seconds. We knock the ball loose and we take it down the field and Davenport kicks a 48-yarder for the win.

He told me before the game that he was good from 52. The week before, he kicked the game-winner against Indiana from 43. There was the same time left on the clock: six seconds.

The funny thing about Matt is that when he got here, he could barely get the ball over the crossbar on extra points. But he worked hard at it. And he was the most dependable kicker we ever had.

Right now, they're a lot of teams that look alike in college football. That also goes for our

conference. What you're seeing is more and more spread offenses rather than power offenses.

And when everybody is spread out, it's hard sometimes to judge how good some of these teams are defensively. One bad matchup on defense and the offense can exploit and take advantage of it.

If you don't tackle well in the secondary, you're not going to play well against the spread. But you may match up well against a power offense that runs two backs.

You have to have interesting athletes today. You have to have a bunch of Michael Caputos.

In the back end, you have to have guys who can tackle in open spaces and can run with skill players. But the next week, they may have to play physical football and take on power and isos.

When you look around all the leagues — which I've been doing for the College Football Playoff committee — you're starting to see how teams match up and play against one another.

The picture is crystallizing a little bit.

When you're not playing quality opponents, you don't know how good some teams really are. But I'm starting to get some answers.

Conference play helps that way. Starting Saturday we'll find out more about ourselves, too. ■



The Big Ten's best? It's anybody's guess

No matter the sport, comparing scores can be a dangerous exercise. In the last couple of weeks, that has been especially true. Trying to figure out who is good, who is bad and who is anything in between can be an exercise in futility.

Yes, it is still fairly early in the season. The College Football Playoff committee has yet to release its first rankings. That group will have its work cut out for it. Finding the four best teams in the nation will be a chore. Closer to home, it might not be all that easy to identify the four best teams in the Big Ten.

Take a look at what has happened in the last couple of weeks. On Sept. 20, Indiana traveled to Columbia, Missouri, and stunned the Tigers. One week later the Hoosiers returned home, seemingly riding a wave of momentum — and lost by 22 points to Maryland.

Meanwhile, Missouri went on the road and knocked off South Carolina.

Penn State had looked impressive in winning its first four games, which included a dramatic field goal in the closing seconds against Central Florida, and a hard-fought victory at Rutgers before a raucous crowd for the Scarlet Knights' first home Big Ten game.

On the other hand, Northwestern was struggling, losing its first two games to California and Northern Illinois. Finally, the Wildcats beat Western Illinois 24-7. They did so despite the fact that the Leathernecks had nearly 100 more yards of offense.

So Penn State fans had reason to believe last Saturday would be a good day. Bright sunshine in Happy Valley, and the Nittany Lions were hosting Northwestern.

The game was not even close. Northwestern was dominant in route to a 29-6 victory.

So who is the real Indiana? Of more immediate concern to the Badgers, who is the real Northwestern?

No doubt Gary Andersen and his group will plan on playing a Wildcats team that looked more contender than pretender in last week's effort at Beaver Stadium.

The Badgers will be making their first visit to Evanston since 2009. While no current UW player has appeared in a game at Ryan Field, you can be sure the boys will be reminded that Wisconsin has not beaten Northwestern on its home turf since 1999. Yes, it has been 15 years since a Badgers football team enjoyed a happy bus ride home from the north side of Chicago.

To be fair, that stat needs a bit more context. Wisconsin has played at Ryan Field just three

times since Ron Dayne, Jamar Fletcher and company beat the Cats — 2003, 2005 and 2009. Still, it is a long drought that the Badgers are hoping to end.

Since we are asking who is the real Indiana or Northwestern, the same question can be posed to several other conference teams, including the Badgers.

Bumpy starts have made a couple of games closer than expected — at least for a half. The good news is the Badgers have been able to pull away, as was the case last Saturday against South Florida.

The young defense has had its bright spots, but it has been vulnerable to giving up big plays.

The offense has demonstrated an ability to score quickly. It also has been able to grind out long drives, such as the 90-yard, 9:33 march to seal Saturday's game.

Still, the passing game remains a work in progress.

In early October, it is unlikely that any team is a finished product. Coach Gary Andersen likes the resiliency of this team, and he loves the effort.

NU coach Pat Fitzgerald might have similar thoughts about his group.

While there is room for improvement, both teams have reason to believe they can be factor in the West Division race. It is part of what makes conference play so much fun to watch. ■

WHO ON YOUR TEAM IS THE KING OR QUEEN OF SELFIES?



DOMINIQUE THOMPSON
Senior • Volleyball

“ I would say **Deme Morales** is our queen of selfies. She always takes the team selfie wherever we are - like Saturday when we were announced on the field at the football game, Deme snapped the photo. Because of her, we have memories of all of the things we have done throughout the year.”



JOHN ZORDANI
Sophomore • Men's Tennis

“ Over the summer two teammates (**Lamar Remy** and **Michael Sinha**) and I would take Snapchat selfie videos from the car (at stop lights of course) of us casually covering radio songs like ‘Rather Be’ by Clean Bandit. Our teammates got to know our vocal talents very well those few weeks! Or lack of.”



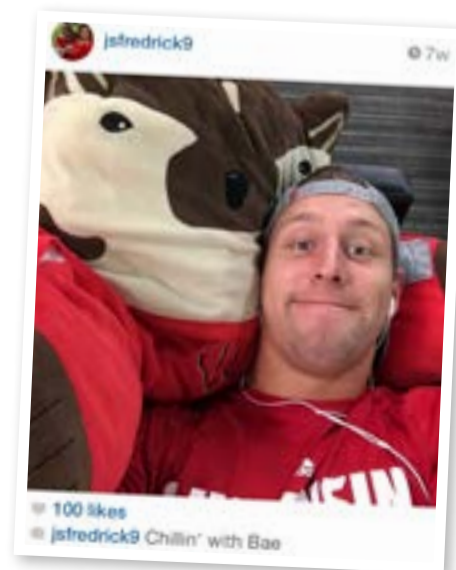
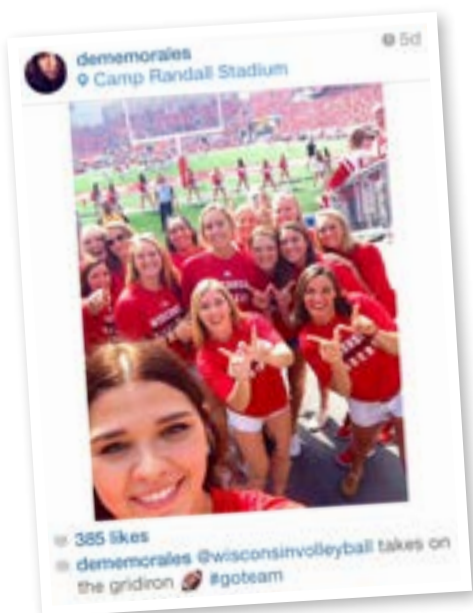
KODEE WILLIAMS
Senior • Women's Soccer

“ I would say **Caitlyn Clem**, without a doubt. She’s just shameless with them. It doesn’t even matter if she’s wearing makeup or if she’s not. It’s just selfies all the time on Snapchat. We actually have friendly team fines for them for putting selfies on Instagram.”



DEREK WATT
Junior • Football

“ **Jordan Fredrick** is definitely the king of selfies. He loves checking himself out and then posting selfies or sending them out to everyone. In reality, we already have to see his face more than we'd like every day in the locker room, but then he hits us with a bunch of selfies on Snapchat.”



MEGAN MILLER

Junior goaltender Megan Miller impressed in her Wisconsin debut last weekend at Lindenwood, allowing only one goal as the No. 2 Badgers started their season with a 5-1 win over the Lady Lions. A transfer from Boston College, Miller is the second member of her family to play hockey at UW — her brother, Adam, is a goaltender on the men's team.

What drew you to Wisconsin?

"I think that the tradition of both academic and athletic excellence brought me here. The combination of both, along with the setting of Madison — I think it is an awesome town with a great school and great athletic programs. I wanted the full package, which drew me here."

How is it to play under Wisconsin head coach Mark Johnson?

"Playing under Coach Johnson has been an honor. He is a terrific coach, and the experience he has really shows. He definitely runs the team very professionally and I think it is a true honor to be a part of the program."

What are your expectations for your first year at Wisconsin?

"First of all, I think this team is very special. Coming in as a new player but with some previous experience in college

- SCROLL FOR MORE -

QUICK QS WITH MEGAN

Favorite season?

"Fall, so I'm a happy girl right now."

Any superstitions?

"I have a piece of lucky chocolate before every game. It is something I have done since I've been 5 or 6. I usually have one square of it before the start of every game."

Favorite hobby?

"I like to bake and decorate cakes."

Favorite athlete?

"Novak Djokovic."

Favorite book?

"*The Will to Win* by Robert Herjavec."

Favorite TV show?

"Shark Tank."



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FROM UNHERALDED RECRUIT TO SENIOR LEADER,
HARD-WORKING LINEBACKER **DEREK LANDISCH** IS
THE FACE OF THE BADGERS' UNDERRATED DEFENSE

BY MIKE LUCAS ■ UWBADGERS.COM

T DIDN'T MATTER IF HE WAS PLAYING FOR Arrowhead High in the Classic 8 or Wisconsin in the Big Ten.

Conference openers have always held a special meaning for linebacker Derek Landisch.

Two, in particular, still impact Landisch, even now in his senior year with the Badgers.

One scarred him, the other touched his heart.

"I've always carried that chip on my shoulder," Landisch said, "to prove people wrong."

That chip goes all the way back to his junior year of high school.

In Hartland Arrowhead's conference opener against Kettle Moraine, Landisch caught his foot in the turf on the first defensive play of the game, felt it bend awkwardly and "I heard a snap."

It was an unforgettable sound and unforgiving injury. Landisch was carted off the field with a broken bone in his ankle and missed the rest of the season, casting doubts about his future.

"It was pretty demoralizing," he remembered, "because I was a young kid hoping to play col-

lege football and it was looking grim because you know how important junior year recruiting is."

Nobody knew that better than Arrowhead High School coach Tom Taraska, whose teams won four Division 1 state championships and finished runner-up four times.

On the odds of Landisch earning a scholarship, he said, "We still felt that he would have a chance. But he was going to have to perform very well at the (summer) camps and the combines.

"Historically if you get hurt that early in your junior year, you don't have great junior tape and that was probably our biggest fear because we definitely felt that he was a college football player.

"Luckily we've had some success at Arrowhead getting kids to those levels," said Taraska, a Hall of Fame coach who sent Tyler Donovan, Donny Eicher and Nick Hayden, among others, to the Badgers.

"But Derek became one of the more difficult



ones initially because it (the injury) made us have to pick the right camps and combines to get his numbers out there and show people what he could do.”

Throughout this process, this period of uncertainty, Landisch drew support from home.

“My parents stuck by me through thick and thin,” he recalled. “When I was healing, they were always positive with me. They always said, ‘You’ll still have a chance to play college football.’”

Robert and Nancy Landisch’s encouragement helped in many ways during his rehab. “My mom was an occupational therapist,” Landisch said, “and she let me know some of the things I needed to do.”

But he still needed to convince college recruiters that he could play. Some shied away because he didn’t have prototypical linebacker size. Minnesota, for one, thought he was too short.

“I understood that,” said Landisch, then listed at 5-foot-11. “But that was the way I was made.”

Years later, he would have “too short” conversations with linebacker Chris Borland, also 5-11.

“I never looked at it that way,” Landisch said of the suggestion that he wasn’t tall enough. “And Chris never looked at it that way, either. We always kind of joked about it.

“You have to have confidence that you can play at this (college) level. I never thought I was too small. But if someone tells you that you are, you just say, ‘That’s your opinion, thank you for your time.’”

“And, then, you move on and go somewhere you’ll be appreciated.”

A transfer quarterback, fellow named Wilson, Russell Wilson, had heard the same things.

“It’s funny how it works,” Landisch said. “If you can play football, you can play football.”

That was the message that he wanted to de-

liver at the summer camps and combines.

“People thought he was vertically challenged,” Taraska said. “But he was an exceptional athlete. If they didn’t like him at linebacker they should look at him as a safety or fullback. He had the speed.”

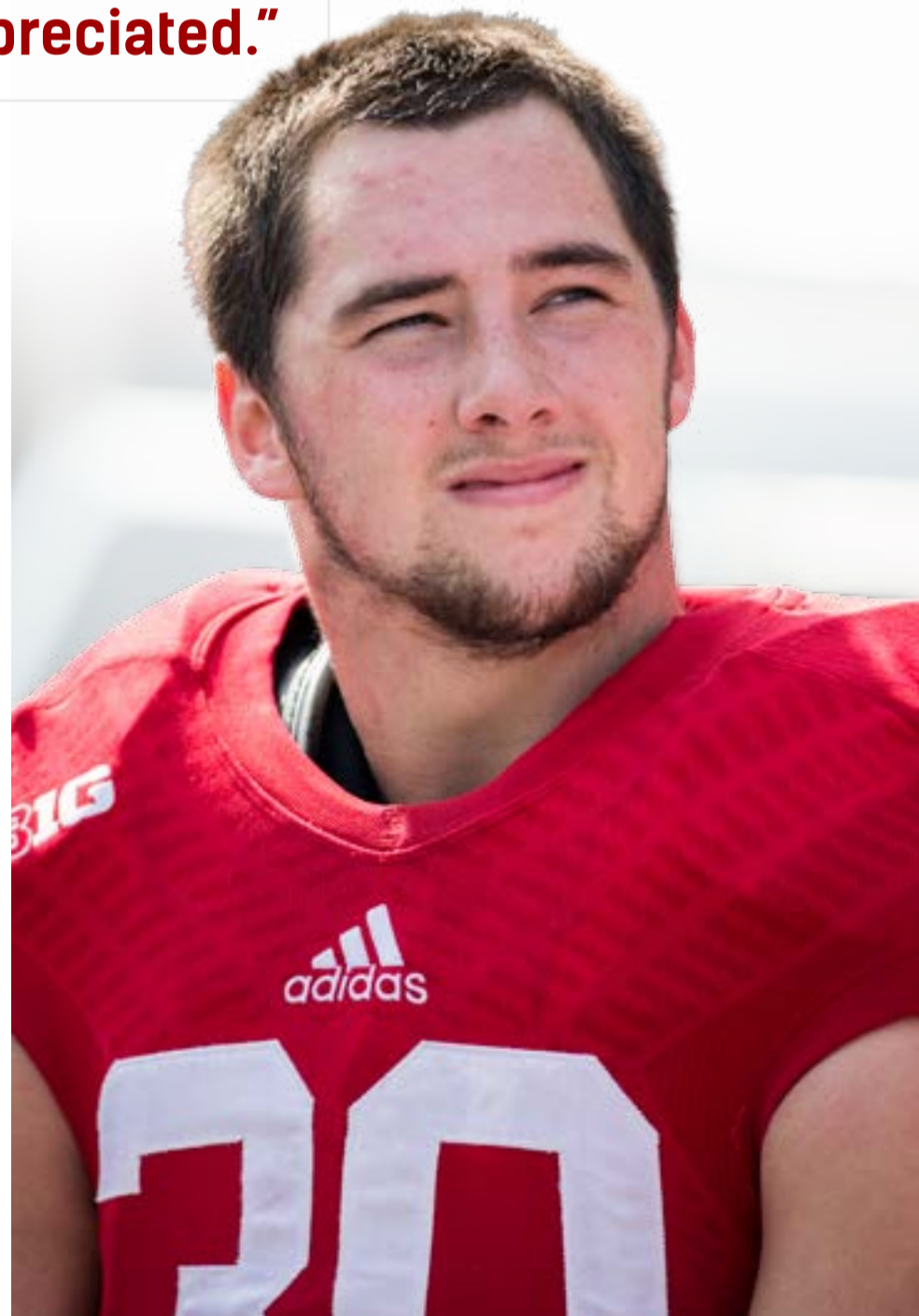
That’s what Taraska told the recruiters about Landisch, a two-way player at Arrowhead.

“He’s not a 6-3 or 6-4 kid, but he’s explosive,” he said. “We used him as a pass rusher off the edges and we could put him in the nickel and dime packages to cover anybody.”

Landisch began turning some heads the summer before his senior year at Arrowhead. He attended two Nike combines, one in Columbus, Ohio, in early June and the other in Chicago.

During the latter, he

“I never thought I was too small. But if someone tells you that you are, you just say, ‘That’s your opinion, thank you for your time.’ And, then, you move on and go somewhere you’ll be appreciated.”





ranked the second highest among 986 campers in the areas of speed, power, agility, reaction and quickness. In late June, the Badgers offered a scholarship and Landisch accepted.

His other offers were from Bowling Green, Northern Illinois, Illinois State and South Dakota. Landisch was just beginning to draw interest from other Big Ten schools, including Northwestern.

“Going into those camps as an unknown actually helped me, looking back on it,” he said. “No one knew me but I kind of liked that. It made me who I am — carrying that chip on my shoulder.”

It motivated him to prove the doubters wrong.

“Did he have a chip on his shoulder?” Taraska posed. “Always. There were doubts.”

Not that Taraska had any. Because of Landisch’s versatility, he compared him to Borland.

Landisch wore No. 44 at Arrowhead. That was Borland’s number at Wisconsin.

“Derek was a natural,” said Taraska, connecting the dots. “He was an impact hitter.”

And with his track record — he won 76 percent of his games (248-76) before retiring after 29 years at Arrowhead — Taraska’s opinions carried some weight. They still do today.

Taraska is in the midst of his 40th season in coaching. He’s currently serving as the secondary coach at UW-Oshkosh under Pat Cerroni, a former Taraska assistant at Arrowhead.

“I’m just back trying to help kids,” Taraska said.

Landisch was one of his favorite kids, too.

“I’m so proud of him,” said the 62-year-old Taraska. “He’s just a great representative of Arrowhead High School, our community and the state of Wisconsin.”

Following Saturday’s win over South Florida, Taraska heard Landisch on a postgame radio interview and he couldn’t have been happier with the way Landisch directed the praise to others.

“Derek has never been about Derek,” he said. “He’s always been about everybody else. He’s just a really humble kid. He’s one of the most exceptional human beings I’ve ever coached.”



Former UW head coach Bret Bielema touted the upside of three linebackers in the 2011 signing class: Landisch, Jake Keefer and Derek Watt, who had initially committed verbally to Northwestern.

Of the three — Keefer is now a backup defensive lineman and Watt is the starting fullback, though he's presently injured — Landisch was the only one who played and lettered as a true freshman.

Prior to the 2011 conference opener against Nebraska — which was making its Big Ten debut under the lights at Camp Randall Stadium — Bielema wanted to utilize Landisch as a pass rusher.

Concerned with the mobility of Cornhuskers quarterback Taylor Martinez, Bielema came up with a sub-package that featured Borland rushing from one edge and Landisch from the other.

Landisch didn't play much in the Big Ten opener. And he probably won't remember the night — a rousing Wisconsin victory in primetime — as much as he will remember the days leading up to that game.

That Sunday he learned that his cousin, Mike Landisch, had lost his battle with kidney cancer. Mike Landisch, the former boys' basketball coach at Wauwatosa West, was 31.

The funeral was on the Friday before the Nebraska game. Derek Landisch, who's from Neshotah (10 miles from Waukesha), was there along with his family. They drove him back to Madison afterwards.

Landisch will never forget the fight that his cousin put up — dating to when Mike Landisch was diagnosed with cancer in January of 2010. A number of fundraisers were held to defray medical costs.

"Fight like a champion — that was his motto," Landisch said.

This past week, he couldn't help but think of those words. The Badgers played South Flor-



ida last Saturday and he was reminded that it was three years ago to the day that his cousin passed away.

"To me," Landisch said of the motto, "it means to fight and never give up no matter the circumstances, no matter how big or small the problem is. That's what he always preached.

"You can control your attitude and effort and how you approach things. As long as you have a positive attitude, do everything with crazy effort and keep fighting, that's the biggest thing."

Mike Landisch continues to bring perspective to Derek Landisch.

Watching him fight cancer left him to ponder, "Why shouldn't you fight every day?"

After that 2011 Nebraska game, Bielema singled out Landisch.

"Here's a true freshman who was playing in his first big game after a personal tragedy," Bielema said. "It just shows me that he's kind of mature beyond his years."

• • • •

Landisch doesn't look like someone who carries a chip on his shoulder. While he may have a mischievous Dennis the Menace twinkle in his eye, he's very reserved, very soft-spoken.

Then, again, he does listen to heavy metal bands — Five Finger Death Punch and Disturbed — to get in the right frame of mind for games. It's something that he has done since his days at Arrowhead.

Much has been written and said about how tailback Melvin Gordon felt like he personally needed to play and run with more anger. Did Landisch feel the same way about his own game?

"That's how we want to play all the time," he said. "We want to play with a lot of emotion."

It was something that he picked up from former UW linebacker Mike Taylor, who was back on the UW sideline Saturday as a fan, watching Landisch record a pair of tackles for loss and snag an interception.

Landisch picked up a lot from Taylor "just seeing the way he played football," he conceded.

"He was always in the right spot at the right time," said Landisch, citing his instincts and film study. "It showed me that you don't have to be the most athletic guy or the biggest guy to play here.

"You just have to know what you're doing. In practice, he would always help me with the scheme. Coming in as a wide-eyed freshman you don't know what the heck you're doing.

"He also always helped me in the locker room as far as handling all the stress of football and academics. Backing him up, he was definitely an influence on me. He was a great example."

So obviously was Borland — Landisch's roommate for road games during his freshman year. Beyond his athletic feats, Borland's energy and

leadership skills always stood out.

"It was just the way he approached and played the game," Landisch said. "Just watching great players, you might not be at that level, but you can always strive to be at that level."

Landisch will be taking that attitude into another conference opener — Saturday at Northwestern — which will be memorable, if for no other reason than it will be his final one at Wisconsin.

"Their offense is really dynamic and they're going in very confident," he said of the Wildcats, who are coming off an upset win at Penn State. "Their quarterback (Trevor Siemian) can sling the ball."

Siemian will face a Wisconsin defense that leads the Big Ten in scoring and total defense.

"We want to be a big-play defense and we don't want to give up big plays," said Landisch, who leads the conference in tackles for loss (averaging 1.5 per game) and ranks fifth in sacks (3).


"We're not a bunch of big name guys. We don't have all that much experience. But a lot of us have played in a lot of football games."

As a result, he said, there's an understanding of the importance of communication and paying attention to the details in building and sustaining a winning defense.

That doesn't change whether you're playing in the Classic 8 or the Big Ten.

"Once the ball is snapped and you get hit," Landisch said, "It's just football."

But the intensity picks up, and so does the physicality in conference play, he confirmed, because "each game means that much more as far as the standings and what we want to accomplish as a team."

You have to fight like a champion, and prepare like one. "Once we know what we're doing," Landisch said, "we can cut it loose and go out there and play with that chip on our shoulder." 

"We're not a bunch of big name guys. We don't have all that much experience. BUT A LOT OF US HAVE PLAYED IN A LOT OF FOOTBALL GAMES."



true grit

*CARRYING LESSONS
FROM LAST YEAR'S
DISAPPOINTMENT,
BADGERS RIDING HIGH
WITH RENEWED SPIRIT*

BY MIKE LUCAS ■ UWBADGERS.COM



KODEE WILLIAMS AND CARA WALLS both agreed on the operative word. Grit.

What better way to describe the difference between last season and this season?

Grit.

By definition, it can be viewed as persistence, a determination, a resolve.

Grit has thus become part of the discussion for the Wisconsin women's soccer team.

"To me, it means doing the hard things every time," said Williams, a senior from Toronto. "It's a mindset. To be gritty on the field, you have to be willing to do the things that you don't want to do."

The things, she added, that will help your team win.

"It's a very admirable quality that a lot of teams strive to have," Williams went on. "I think we're getting better and better at it every day."

Pausing to let it marinate in her mind, she said, "The word just sounds nice coming out of your mouth. You want to be gritty."

She didn't get any argument from her teammate.

"Grit is when things get tough, when they aren't easy or they aren't going according to plan," said Walls, a senior from Wauwatosa. "You can toughen up through the hard times."

Especially, she noted, when "the odds aren't in your favor and you still pull out the win."

On the field, Walls said, "It's just having the grit to persevere and be resilient — all these words that we use a lot in tough conditions and situations — to push through whatever is going on."

The Badgers will put their 10-1 record on the line Friday night against Ohio State at the McClimon Complex. That will be followed by a Sunday showdown with first-place Penn State.

But nobody is looking past the Buckeyes.

“In order to be the team that we want to be, we have to come into every game with the same mentality,” Walls said. “We’re not so good where we can show up and beat teams without trying.

“We have to respect Ohio State knowing that they have good players. We definitely can’t overlook them. That would be something that we did last year.”

Although last season is in the rear view mirror — the Badgers struggled to a 10-7-2 record overall (5-5-1 in the Big Ten) — the players are more determined than ever to learn from the mistakes.

“Just the fact that we have the same personnel and are doing so much better this year shows how we’ve grown,” said Williams, alluding to the returning cast (10 starters,

86 percent of the scoring).

“Last year, we were supposed to be good but we weren’t willing to put in the extra amount of effort that it actually takes to be winning games.

“Our attitude has completely changed in terms of our focus on and off the field. It’s a mindset change. Last season was a huge learning experience.”

Maybe it had something to do with the old axiom: you’ve got to lose to know how to win. It certainly wouldn’t be the first time, or the last, that a group of players experienced what they have.

“You can say that,” Walls responded. “We weren’t as unified. We didn’t have the same grit.”

That word again.

“Grit comes from what we went through last season,” Walls said. “It was the feeling we had after the season and knowing we don’t want that feeling again, so we’re willing to go the extra mile.”

The Badgers’ only detour this season came in the closing seconds at Michigan, a 2-1 loss. It was one of the games that Walls missed after spraining her ankle in early September against Portland.

“It was an awful feeling,” Williams said of the Sept. 14 defeat. “It’s a driving force in what keeps us going. You never want to have that feeling again that you could have done something different.”

Something different, she explained, that could have changed the outcome, especially because the players felt like they didn’t play up to expectations against the Wolverines, a lingering regret.

The Badgers have been rallying, in part, around the “have no regrets” theme which has been emphasized by eighth-year coach Paula Wilkins, a five-time Big Ten Coach of the Year.

“You don’t want to look back on your season,”

“Grit comes from what we went through last season,” Walls said. “It was the feeling we had after the season and knowing we don’t want that feeling again, so we’re willing to go the extra mile.”





Williams suggested, “and say, ‘I wish I would have run harder this time or I wish I would have played the ball in a different spot.’”

Williams subscribes to another cliché, “You don’t win silver, you lose gold.”

That’s a by-product of her extensive international experience with youth teams in Canada.

“I also like, ‘second is the first loser,’” Williams offered.

In application, she said, “It’s about the process, it’s about the journey. You’re doing all the things right but in the end if you don’t get the result, it really means nothing.

“The quote also implies that you’re not settling for anything less than the best. We have a lot of high expectations for ourselves. We’ve al-

ready exceeded some of our goals and set higher standards.”

What the Badgers need is a healthy Walls, who has played in seven games and has produced seven goals, second most in the Big Ten, including four game-winners, tops in the league.

“She’s just a natural born goal-scorer,” Williams said. “She has that touch where she just knows where to place the ball. It’s really something special about her. We were definitely missing that.”

Walls has discovered how much soccer means to her during the time she has been sidelined. “Seeing my teammates fighting for wins without me,” she said, “really kind of fueled something in me.”

“You definitely have to be confident and you have to be really tough. Grit is a word that we use a lot. But you have to be gritty, you have to be willing to do what that other player is not going to do.”

Others have filled the void in her absence, particularly Williams.

“Kodee has been a key player for this program,” Walls said. “She has worked her butt off since her freshman year to get where she is. Every game she has been one of the best players on the field.”

A renewed commitment to defense has led to more scoring chances for Williams.

“We have really focused on our defending a team and individually,” she said. “That was always one of my weakest points. But she (Wilkins) always encourages us to win games with good defense.”

The other part of that equation is “score goals from defending well” Williams pointed out.

“Being a forward, you’re the first line of defense and that’s something I’ve never really put a lot of thought into before,” she said. “Defending is the part where you really get to be tough.”


You really get to be gritty, she implied. And it applies to goal-scorers, too.

“A big part of it is being proactive,” Walls said. “It’s always being confident and aggressive and kind of forcing your will on the defenders — making them react to you, making them keep up with you.”

The Badgers are relying heavily on that controlled aggression.

“I think Cara said it best when she said everybody is reacting to what you’re doing,” Williams volunteered. “So if your mindset is hesitant, you’re going to get the ball stripped right away.

“You definitely have to be confident and you have to be really tough. Grit is a word that we use a lot. But you have to be gritty, you have to be willing to do what that other player is not going to do.”

Whether that player is from Ohio State or Penn State. True grit. 





Northwestern a new adventure for Badgers

UW making its first trip to Evanston since 2009

Whether traveling by land or air, Wisconsin's itinerary is largely the same from road game to road game in that the Badgers head directly to the team hotel.

That won't be the case in advance of Saturday's Big Ten opener at Northwestern.

"The crazy thing is there's not a kid on our team that's played a game there," UW head coach Gary Andersen said.

The Badgers' first stop upon arrival in Evanston will be at Ryan Field, a venue new to every player on the roster. The stadium also will be new to most of UW's staff, save a couple of coaches.

Cornerbacks coach Ben Strickland played in a 51-48 loss at Ryan Field in 2005 and was in his first year on UW's coaching staff as a defensive quality control coordinator when the Badgers made their last trip to Evanston in 2009, a 33-31 setback to the Wildcats.

Tight ends coach and special teams coordinator Jeff Genyk has a more intimate knowledge of Ryan Field after spending 12 seasons on the staff at Northwestern from 1992 to 2003.

"It's a Big Ten venue that none of us have been to," Andersen said, speaking for the majority of the Badgers. "So we should

SCHEDULE (3-1)

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

Aug. 30	vs. LSU	L, 28-24
Sept. 6	Western Illinois	W, 37-3
Sept. 20	Bowling Green	W, 68-17
Sept. 27	South Florida	W, 27-10
Oct. 4	at N'western	2:30 p.m.
Oct. 11	Illinois	11 a.m.
Oct. 25	Maryland	11 a.m.
Nov. 1	at Rutgers	11 a.m.
Nov. 8	at Purdue	TBA
Nov. 15	Nebraska	TBA
Nov. 22	at Iowa	TBA
Nov. 29	Minnesota	TBA

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-SCROLL FOR MORE-



Bounce Back: UW learns from defeats

Wisconsin responds well to losses to top teams

It was a tough week for the Badger volleyball team. In a much anticipated NCAA title game rematch against Penn State on Sept. 24, Wisconsin was swept by the third-ranked Nittany Lions.

“We started out getting our butts kicked by Penn State pretty good at our own game,” head coach Kelly Sheffield said. “I think when you get it handed to you, you don’t play the way you want to play, I think you’re able to really look closely, especially when you’re playing a really talented team. You get to go back and get to evaluate.”

And evaluate they did.

After a tough video session watching the Penn State match, the Badgers came out strong and swept Ohio State on Sunday.

“I was really happy with how the team responded coming out of that,” explained Sheffield. “I thought our captains especially got the team together and had them moving forward.

“Against Ohio State, I thought we responded the right way against a team that’s very difficult to prepare for and I thought the team was ready to go. I thought our coaching staff, the assistants did a really, really good job of having the team prepared

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (11-2, 2-1)

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

RECENTLY

Sept. 24	#3 Penn State	L, 0-3
Sept. 28	Ohio State	W, 3-0
Oct. 1	at Northwestern	W, 3-0

COMING UP

Oct. 4	at #16 Illinois	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	Rutgers	7 p.m.
Oct. 12	Maryland	1 p.m.
Oct. 15	at #18 Minnesota	6 p.m.
Oct. 18	#18 Minnesota	7 p.m.
Oct. 22	Iowa	7 p.m.
Oct. 26	#8 Nebraska	4 p.m.

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STEVE GOTTER

Full-strength Badgers travel to Duluth

Five players return to UW lineup this weekend

When the No. 2 Badgers hit the ice this weekend for their second season series of the year, the team will look slightly different from the squad that swept Lindenwood last weekend.

Wisconsin traveled to Wentzville, Missouri, to face Lindenwood without five players, as Mellissa Channell, Emily Clark, Ann-Renee Desbiens, Sarah Nurse and Blayre Turnbull spent last week at Hockey Canada's National Fall Festival. The five were among 58 players invited to train, practice and scrimmage as members of the Canadian national team.

"It is going to be nice to have them back," said UW forward Sydney McKibbon, who scored two goals last weekend. "They are all top players, they can put the puck in the net. It will be nice to have them back on the bench after they had a great camp in Canada."

"It will change the look of our team," UW head coach Mark Johnson said. "They played a lot of games and had a lot of ice up there and it was a great opportunity for them. They got back Monday at 4 p.m., so we will try to get them up to speed as quickly as we can. We will try to get some lines together and

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

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

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

RECENTLY

Sept. 26	at Lindenwood	W, 5-1
Sept. 27	at Lindenwood	W, 6-0

COMING UP

Oct. 3	at #10 Minn. Dul.	6 p.m.
Oct. 4	at #10 Minn. Dul.	6 p.m.
Oct. 10	Ohio State	7 p.m.
Oct. 12	Ohio State	1 p.m.
Oct. 17	#1 Minnesota	7 p.m.
Oct. 18	#1 Minnesota	3 p.m.
Oct. 24	at Bemidji State	7 p.m.
Oct. 25	at Bemidji State	4 p.m.

[> View complete schedule](#)

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Badgers ready to race in Louisville

UW starts switch from training to racing mode

With the Big Ten championships just over a month away, the Badgers are starting to switch from training mode to racing mode as the teams will compete at the Greater Louisville Classic on Saturday.

“I always say that September is for training, not for racing,” Wisconsin Director of Track and Field and Cross Country Mick Byrne said. “The process started back in July and in August and then into September, where we have been just putting the finishing touches to just one phase of our training.”

Wisconsin has raced only two times this cross country season, as both Badger teams won their first meet of the year, the Badger Opener. Two weeks ago, the women finished second at the Iowa Big Ten Preview, behind only No. 1 Michigan. The men’s team, without a few of its top performers, placed third and were keyed by top-10 finishes by Joe McAsey and Ryan Kromer.

“On the women’s side, I certainly thought they did a great job down in Iowa,” Byrne said. “It was about keeping the pack together and running as a team. They did a great job with that. They weren’t focused on Michigan that was down the road. You can only put in so much effort into the season. The message

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE

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

RECENTLY

Sept. 20 Big Ten Preview
M: 3rd, 64 pts
W: 2nd, 70 pts

COMING UP

Oct. 4 Greater Louisville Classic 8:30 a.m.
Oct. 17 **Wisconsin adidas Invitational** 11 a.m.
Nov. 2 Big Ten Championship 10:45 a.m.
Nov. 8 **Wisconsin Open** 11 a.m.
Nov. 15 **NCAA Great Lakes Regional** Noon

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DAVID STLUKA

Young Badgers learning from close defeats

Coach Trask knows he has a confident bunch

It's often said that football is a game of inches.

That then must make futbol a game of centimeters.

The margin of error is a thin one in the game of soccer, which is one of the lessons that the Wisconsin men's soccer team is learning this season. One mental mistake, one error, one bad bounce of the ball, and just like that, you can find yourself down a goal and suddenly facing the threat of defeat.

Three of the five losses suffered by the Badgers this season have come in matches decided by one goal. To show just how crucial tight games can be to a team's success, last season UW was 10-2 in games that were decided by one score. Last season's Badgers went on to make their first NCAA tournament appearance in nearly two decades.

That's the beauty, and the curse, of the game of soccer.

Or, as head coach John Trask has said, it's an example of how "soccer can be a cruel game."

While Wisconsin fell in a 2-0 loss last Friday at Maryland, again, the group was right in the game after playing to a scoreless first half. It wasn't until the Terrapins scored a pair of goals in the 53rd and 59th minute that victory seemed out of reach.

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (1-5-1)

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

RECENTLY

Sept. 5	at George Mason	L, 1-2
Sept. 7	at Georgetown	L, 1-4
Sept. 12	Rutgers	L, 2-3 (OT)
Sept. 19	St. John's	T, 1-1 (2OT)
Sept. 26	at Maryland	L, 0-2

COMING UP

Oct. 1	at Marquette	7:05 p.m.
Oct. 4	Michigan	7 p.m.
Oct. 7	Green Bay	7 p.m.
Oct. 11	at Michigan State	1 p.m.
Oct. 15	Loyola	7 p.m.

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DAVID STLUKA

Badgers back home to defend McClimon turf

Key matchups await UW in Madison this week

After taking to the road and earning two more shutout victories against Indiana and Purdue, the Wisconsin women's soccer team has its sights set on defending home turf in Madison.

So far this season, playing at the friendly confines of the McClimon Soccer Complex has served the Badgers well, to the tune of a perfect 5-0 record. In those five home games, the Badgers have combined to score a total of 14 goals and conceded just one goal.

To finish the regular season, UW will play five of its remaining eight games in Madison. The remaining home contests will be crucial in what figures to be a tightly contested race for the Big Ten championship.

The Badgers return home at a key time, with some of their biggest matchups to date on the horizon. Wisconsin hosts a pivotal three-game homestand, beginning this weekend against Ohio State on Friday night.

Just two days later, conference favorite Penn State visits on Sunday afternoon in what will be a showdown of top-15 teams. The Nittany Lions are the only team that sits in front of the

-SCROLL FOR MORE-

SCHEDULE (10-1-0, 4-1-0)

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

RECENTLY

Sept. 12	at Mich. St.	W, 2-1 (OT)
Sept. 14	at Michigan	L, 1-2
Sept. 20	Nebraska	W, 3-0
Sept. 26	at Indiana	W, 1-0
Sept. 28	at Purdue	W, 1-0

COMING UP

Oct. 3	Ohio State	7 p.m.
Oct. 5	#7 Penn State	Noon
Oct. 8	IOWA	7 p.m.
Oct. 12	at Northwestern	1 p.m.
Oct. 18	at Minnesota	1 p.m.

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GOOD RECEPTION

OCTOBER 3, 1970: Junior Larry Mialik set the UW single-game record for average yards per reception with 47.3 against No. 19 Penn State. The wide receiver had three receptions for 142 yards and two touchdowns in a 29-16 upset of the Nittany Lions. The Clifton, New Jersey, native still holds the UW season record of 21.3 yards per catch.

-MORE THIS WEEK-



START OF SOMETHING BIG

SEPTEMBER 29, 1982: National rankings for volleyball began in 1982 and the volleyball team lost to a ranked team for the first time, falling to No. 12 Northwestern 3-1.



STOP THAT SHOT

OCTOBER 4, 1981: Junior Mark LaPorte set a school goalkeeping record for the most saves in a single game for the men's soccer team. The Milwaukee native had a record-breaking 17 saves against Saint Louis.



SCORING SPREE

OCTOBER 5, 1986: Senior Julie Angevine set the women's soccer single-game record with seven points against Macalester. The Madison native scored two goals and added three assists in a 16-0 win over the Scots.