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Sports

New coordinator looks to bring balance to MSU

Zweifel brings 'ton of knowledge, experience'

By Chad Courrier
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MANKATO — Stan Zweifel's simple words will be sweet to a Minnesota State football fan: "We'd like to be as balanced as we can. We want to run the ball when we can, throw the ball when we need to. We want to keep the defense off-balance."

Zweifel was hired this week as Minnesota State's offensive coordinator, replacing Dan Ragsdale, who resigned after holding the position the last two seasons. Zweifel is the fifth offensive coordinator at Minnesota State in the last six seasons.

Zweifel has Minnesota State roots, working on his master's degree here in 1980 and 1981, then served as offensive coordinator under Dan Runkle in 1982. He has since made stops at Northern Colorado and Minnesota-Morris before spending 16 seasons as assistant head coach and offensive coordinator at Wisconsin-Whitewater. He left there after 2007 when



Stan Zweifel was previously the Mavericks football team's offensive coordinator in 1982 under Dan Runkle.

he was passed over for the head coaching job and spent last season as the athletic director at a high school in Beloit, Wis.

"Every single day, I'd think about what was going on at the field," Zweifel said. "The recruiting, the student-athletes. I knew I had to go back to being a football coach."

Minnesota State coach Todd Hoffner said he competed against Zweifel for many years in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, and he thinks Zweifel's Midwest connections and balanced offense are a perfect fit for Minnesota State, which has leaned heavily on the passing attack the last two seasons.

ZWEIFEL: Had prolific offense at Whitewater

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"He brings a ton of knowledge and a ton of experience," Hoffner said. "I have a lot of respect for him."

Zweifel said he was surprised to return to the campus and see all the changes to the university and the city.

"There's such a dynamic change in the facilities, for the better," he said. "That basketball arena is a Division I facility, and the national (indoor) track meet was going on at the field house. It's very exciting."

"I went downtown for lunch, and how that has changed. It used to be kind of a sleepy, quiet town in the 1970s, but it's exciting to see the changes that have taken place. When I was here (in the 80s), we were just bringing back the football program, and now to see a strong plan in place and all of the programs having success, it's exciting."

Zweifel said he was proud of the balanced attack he coached at Wisconsin-Whitewater, where in 2005 he had a 3,000-yard passer,

a 2,000-yard rusher and two 1,000-yard receivers.

"We want to be excellent at (rushing and passing)," he said. "You don't want to be predictable. You can't be a physical team unless you run the ball, and we need to develop that mental and physical toughness to do both."

Zweifel has been putting some of the players through offseason workouts. He said he likes the look of the offensive linemen, and he thinks the receivers have play-making ability.

One of his first tasks will be developing a starting quarterback. There are only two in the program, junior Ryan Fick and freshman Marcus Brumm, with Taylor Bennett — a transfer from Iowa State — coming in this summer. Zweifel said he'd like to add one or two more quarterbacks before the team begins next season.

"There was a lot of pressure on (Ben King) last season, and we want to spread that out by balancing the offense," Zweifel said.

The Mavericks begin spring practice on Saturday, March 29.

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