

## This Time Things Should Be Different

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Tuesday, December 21 2010 12:39 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, December 21 2010 8:30 AM

---



After hearing who Kent State was considering for its vacant head coaching position this writer was hoping his alma mater would go with Ohio State assistant head coach/receivers coach Darrel Hazell. There are many reasons for feeling this way.

Hazell will bring a few things to the table Curt Cignetti from Alabama or Bobby Kennedy from the University of Texas could not, and a couple of these things should be pointed out.

One of the big secrets of major college football is that the head coach does not do much of the grunt work when it comes to the cutthroat world of recruiting. It is a fascinating process of flattery, cajoling, ego stroking, promises and relationship building that mostly falls into the hands of position coaches and/or recruiting coordinators. The head coach identifies the players he wants to target, and then leaves most of the leg-work up to his underlings.

If a certain highly-touted recruit is on the fence the head coach might be called in to make a visit, phone call or write a letter to close the deal, but by that time the large majority of leg-work has been done.

At Ohio State Hazell was an outstanding recruiter. He worked Florida well as well as Ohio, bringing many top recruits to Columbus. And once the recruit was on campus well, Hazell's relationship with his recruits only grew stronger.

## This Time Things Should Be Different

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Tuesday, December 21 2010 12:39 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, December 21 2010 8:30 AM

---

Last year I covered Ohio State football as the beat writer for two newspapers. Over the course of the season, including spring ball, summer camp and the regular season, one thing became abundantly clear when dealing with the Ohio State receivers...they loved their position coach. They spoke about him with a combination of affection/awe/respect/fascination. And, occasionally, with a touch of fear. While Jim Tressell is the coach at Ohio State, the position coaches do most of the hands-on work with the athletes. And Hazell certainly had the respect and attention of his guys.

That is one of the reasons Hazell will be such a great addition to Kent State University, not just for the football program but for the entire athletic department. Ohio's high school coaches, who have dealt with him during the recruiting process numerous times, have a very high opinion of him. I doubt you could find a coach in the Buckeye State that would say, "No, I do not want one of my players playing for Darrell Hazell." If you do find one, let me know.

He is the kind of hire that reflects well on the athletic department and Kent athletic director Joel Nielsen. Monday, Dec. 20 could be a day that changes athletics at Kent State. They brought in a high-profile, character guy that is hell-bent on turning the football program around. And, other than a couple states, a school's overall athletic reputation is earned on the gridiron in this country.

Hazell will get the athletes he wants, of this there is no doubt. Kent is not exactly the Harvard of the Midwest, but it isn't a terrible academic institution. The facilities for the football program are slightly above par for the Mid-American Conference and he seems to have the full support of administration.

Hazell cut his teeth under some great coaches. He has been studying, taking notes, formulating in his mind and waiting for the day when he would have his own program to run. He has it now, and the rest of the conference should probably take notice. Kent returns a ton of talent from a team that severely underachieved last season, so the good times at Dix Stadium might be coming sooner than everyone thinks.

In his press conference today, Hazell talked about the importance of winning immediately. I wonder if he fully knows exactly how important this will be. Kent State is a school that has not been successful on the football field for many, many years. If they stumble out of the gate the

## **This Time Things Should Be Different**

Written by {ga=mikeperry}

Tuesday, December 21 2010 12:39 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, December 21 2010 8:30 AM

---

student body, a student body that has not exactly been rabid football fans in recent years, will probably shrug their collective shoulders and say, "Hey, that's Kent for you." It comes from years of false hope and dashed expectations. Will this be different? My money says it will, but only time will tell.