



Mark Atwater  
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How long have you been at your current school?  
3 years

What was your coaching path to your current school?  
2016 Coe College - Assistant Coach  
2017 Estherville Lincoln Central High School - Head Coach  
2018-present Beckman Catholic - Head Coach

What is an earliest memory that helps us understand how you fell in love with football?  
I don't have one single memory but rather a lot of memories growing up around the Coe football team. It was truly a blessing to get to be so close to football from such a young age. I was able to stand on the sidelines, go to practices, and ride the bus with the team after games. All of those players took great care of me and always made me feel a part of something bigger. That's when I started to love the game and understand why football is the greatest team sport there is.

Which coach had the greatest impact on you growing up?  
The easiest answer is my dad. Growing up watching your dad do something he loves and is so passionate about sparked my love for coaching.  
The other one that has shaped me is Coach Steve Staker. Steve had an unbelievable ability to connect with everyone he met. The way players cared for him and respected him was amazing. I don't think there is a single person who had a bad word to say about him. I took so much from him about how to build relationships with players and what effect that has on your team and program. At the end of the day Coach Staker always knew it was about those bonds you formed with kids that meant the most.

If you could pick one aspect of your coaching career that you are the proudest of, what would it be?  
I have been so proud of how our football program has grown at Beckman since coming here. We came in with high expectations for our kids and they have taken those to heart. It is awesome to see kids rise up to expectations. I have been proud of how our numbers have continuously grown each summer in the weight room and at 7 on 7. It is just a testament to the quality of kids we get to work with. It also shows that kids still want to play football these days and how important it is in shaping young men.

We are in the middle of clinic season, how do you approach an upcoming clinic?  
I love being able to go to clinics, watch tape, or anything to talk football with our peers. We always try to be realistic with these things though. Our staff always says if we can come away with one thing that may help us out in the season then that clinic was a success. Some of the things you will listen to will be great but just might not fit your kids, program, scheme, or style. We always try to make a list of some of our biggest deficiencies and hit talks or sessions that may address these. If we can come up with one thing that may help with those deficiencies, even if you have to adapt it to what you do, then that is a successful clinic in our eyes. We try to meet up with other staffs and talk about what they do. Some of our most productive time has come from conversations with other staffs. Those sessions can be even more beneficial than talks because of the ability to ask questions and go into detail about what they do. It also is a great way to network and meet great coaches in our state.

Which coaches are on speed dial for help and why?

My father is always my first call. I have been lucky to have him be a part of our program at Beckman for the last 3 years.

It's been great to have some Coe connections and will often call some of their current staff or previous. Coach Tyler Staker has been a great resource. Myers Hendrickson who was our OC when I coached in 2016 and is now at Nebraska Wesleyan. Joe Freitag who is now the OC at Monmouth College.

The coaches in Northeast Iowa have been great as well. Being a young new head coach, it is nice to have other coaches who are welcoming and supportive. Coach Stanton at Solon, Coach Penner at Western Dubuque, Coach Wink at West Delaware. It is fun to get to know other coaches around the area.