

Kicking it with Coach

FSU FOOTBALL GETS A NEW HEAD COACH AND HE'S HERE TO MAKE

By Brandon Davis

To say new head football coach Lawrence Kershaw has big goals for Fayetteville State's football program is an understatement comparable to saying a lion is a cat.

Both claims are true, yes, but it just doesn't quite capture the whole picture.

An All-Conference lineman who spent part of his collegiate career playing for CIAA rival Virginia State, coach Kershaw has already won a conference championship once before in the 17 years he's been coaching football, but he has bigger plans for FSU.

Kershaw is the 15th head man in the school's history and even though he's barely been on campus for a month, even spending a short amount of time in his presence will make

you swear he's been bleeding Bronco blue blood his whole life.

He speaks of national powerhouses like Oregon and Texas A&M when he reaches for analogies to use when explaining his wide-open, spread offense, he admits he already has a game or two circled on next season's schedule and calmly exudes that he didn't just take the head coaching job to win games and turn around the program, but rather to make history. You have to believe coach Kershaw talks with such confidence because he has a resume to back it up.

The Voice sat down with Kershaw as a way to welcome him to FSU and also as an ongoing series to spotlight athletics, and other leaders amongst the Broncos family.

So, the man that you were hired to replace (Coach Kenny Phillips) had been the head coach for the past 13 seasons and led us to a Division II national playoff game as recently as 2009. What's it like to fulfill a position of a man who was so well-respected on this campus?

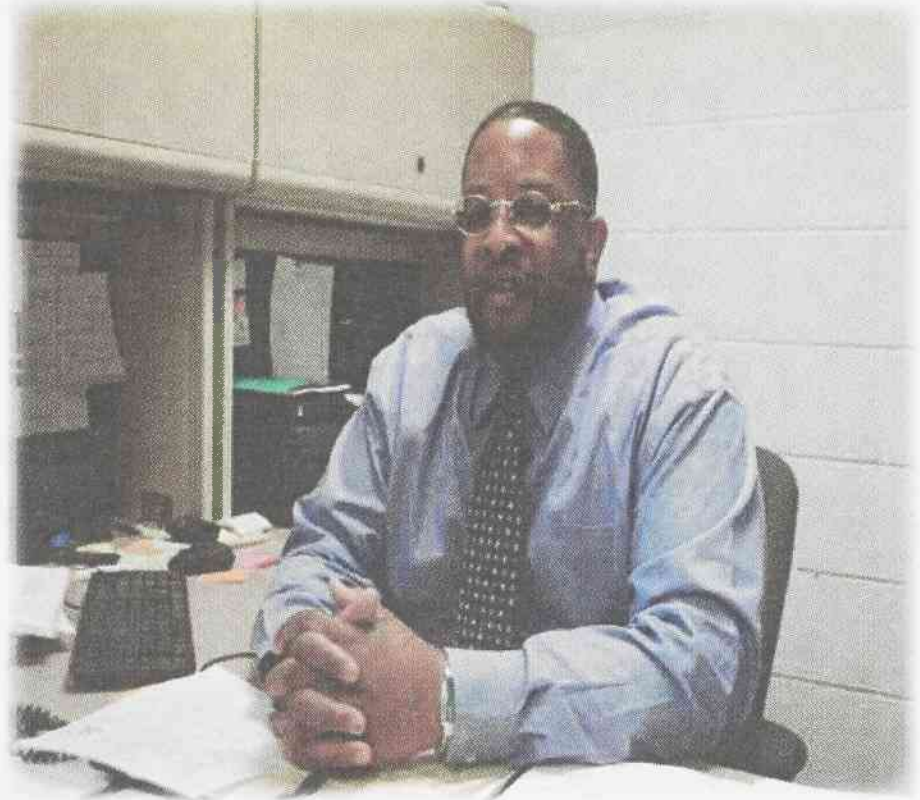
As I stated at my welcoming press conference, I have a lot of respect for Coach Phillips and what he did for this program. I went against him a couple of times as a young coordinator while I was at Virginia State and I watched him from afar develop this program and I thought he did a great job. When this job became available that's why I applied for it. His prior success proved to me that this was a place you could get things done and win. It was proven by him.

I know the CIAA conference well and there was a point in time when [FSU] wasn't a very good program. They were the team you wanted to play for homecoming [laughs]. But as long as the administration is behind this football program, which I know it is, then you've got a good chance to get things done here.

What was your reaction to being hired?

I didn't celebrate too much. I mean obviously I was happy because I had reached a lifetime goal of mine but I really

8we kind of have a "24 hour rule". You've only got 24 hours to either enjoy a victory, or get over a loss, and then you have



to move on to the next thing. This is a non-stop, everyday profession where there's always something you've got to do [to be successful].

My ultimate goal was always to be a head coach. This will be my 18th season coaching and everything I've done in those past 18 years was in preparation for this. I've worked with and learned from some great head coaches. I took notes from them. I go to [coaching] clinics all the time and I listen to other head coaches speak on the various things they're doing with their programs. So it's a lot of information gathering and working to put your own stamp on a program.

Does that mean you're approaching this job like a challenge? I mean, does it seem like a major obstacle to rebuild this program?

My goal is to build the Broncos' football program into a national championship program. That's my goal, to lead us to that. I was glad Winston-Salem State made it to the championship because it did a lot for our conference. (Note. Fellow CIAA conference member Winston-Salem State reached this past 2012 season's Div II National championship game, ultimately falling to Valdosta State 35-7). It also did a lot for HBCU's, but I also was glad that they lost because MY goal is to lead a HBCU to a national championship win [laughs]. The only one to ever do it was Florida A&M back in 1978 and it hasn't been done since. My goal is to get this program to that game and make history by winning it.

You've only been in the position for three weeks and National Signing day was Feb 6th. What type of recruits were you able to bring in in such a short amount of time?