

# Too busy to retire

Long-time principal, official, coach, Brand still serving Dutch players

by Matt Miller '08

He's had more retirement ceremonies than Roger Clemens. But Darrell Brand isn't ready to walk away from the Iowa sports scene or from the athletes at Central College.

After coaching numerous sports at Harmony and Prairie City high schools, for 27 years Brand was head football coach at Montezuma High School, where he also served as principal and athletic director. He retired from those duties in 1995 and was

inducted into the Iowa High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Following retirement at Montezuma, he became an assistant football coach for running backs at Central, where he had graduated in 1959. After the 2004 campaign, Brand decided it was time to hang up his whistle and announced his retirement from that as well.

But about two weeks into the next football season, Brand was feeling a bit restless. So he made the 28-mile drive from Montezuma to Pella, just to check out a Central practice.

He noticed the kickers and punters off working by themselves. Central's kicking coach was Dr. David Roe, the college president, and he was unable to attend that day. Soon Brand found himself offering the players a few pointers.

Worried that the kickers weren't getting enough attention, he told coach Jeff McMartin he'd be willing to help out on days that Roe had to miss. So Roe and Brand shared the duties the next few years and when Roe decided last spring that the demands of his job as president required him to reduce his coaching role, Brand stepped in again. He doesn't endure staff meetings or arrive bleary-eyed from dissecting game tapes, but he seldom misses a practice or game.

And he's no longer making any promises about when he'll retire.

"If they need me and I can be of assistance, I don't see any reason I can't continue," he said.

That's not all that fills the alleged retiree's days. He continues working a full slate of high school track meets as a starter. His name was added to the Drake Relays Wall of Honor in 2001 for his service as an official there. He's a high school softball and baseball umpire. And when he somehow has an hour to fill in the summer, he mows lawns.

"It pays a whole lot better than when I was a kid," he laughed. "I used to think getting paid 75 cents for a lawn was a big deal."

Touching the lives of young people is an even bigger deal to Brand.

"Working with the players, staff and coaches is very enjoyable for me," said Brand. "There are great players with great work ethics and Central really has a family atmosphere here which contributes to the success of the program.

"If these kids were a bunch of jerks, I don't think I'd be doing this. But they're great kids and it's a joy to work with them."

"Coach Brand is a super-positive person to be around," said McMartin. "He brings a lot of energy and has great knowledge about the game. He takes the pressure off the kids, which allows them to have fun."

Brand also understands the significance of special teams in football.

"The punting and kicking aspect is very important to the game," said Brand, a former running back, kicker, punter and outside linebacker for the Dutch in the late '50s. "If our offense or defense isn't doing well, a great punt or kick can really get our guys going."

But Brand wants his players to learn other lessons as well.

"There are going to be times in the game when things don't go their way," said Brand. "They need to fight through those times and learn to deal with adversity. I want consistency from them and that's no different in life. The best is expected from them each and every time."

Several of Brand's freshman pupils are playing key roles for the nationally ranked Dutch. Freshman punter Kurtis Brondyke pinned opponents at the 1-yard line five times in a three-game stretch, earning D3football.com team of the week honors twice as well as Iowa Conference player of the week recognition.

"Coach Brand has helped me with a lot of the little things," said freshman punter Kurtis Brondyke, who averages 37.6 yards/punt this season. "He brings a lot of knowledge to the game and shows confidence in me, which helps me believe in myself."

Freshman kicker Jason Goulden, who is averaging 54.1 yards on kickoffs, credits Brand with helping to improve his game.

"Coach Brand brings a different personality to the program," said Goulden. "He's more laid back rather than intense all the time. He's always willing to work as much as you want and on what you want."

Teaching is not a one-way street for Brand. Over the years, Brand's players have made an impact on him as well.

"Many players have taught me to be humble," said Brand. "I've learned to have an open mind and I've learned some things I would have never thought of if they weren't around."

He's not ready for the party to end.

"I have had a great time being apart of the Central College football program," said Brand. "Playing football, graduating from here and now coaching has been some of the best years of my life. The association and affiliation I have with the people here at Central has been a great highlight of my time here."



Punting/kicking coach Darrell Brand works with kicker Jason Goulden while punter Kurtis Brondyke serves as holder and kicker Kip Morsch loosens up. Brand is a member of the Iowa High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame. (Photo by Chris Gales '09)