

Tiedtke returning to Kingston as friendly foe

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 20:07 -

Blake Tiedtke has some terrific memories of running onto the football field at Kingston Stadium as a member of the Jefferson J-Hawks during his playing days at the turn of the century, but he'll be returning Thursday night with a team that wants to beat his alma mater.

Tiedtke, 31, was an elite all-state running back for Jefferson in 2000 when he rushed for 1,300 yards, scored 18 touchdowns, set five school records and helped the J-Hawks tie for the Mississippi Valley Conference title.

Tiedtke joined the Prairie Hawks as an assistant coach this year, so he'll be on the opposing sideline Thursday when Prairie and Jefferson tangle in the season opener at Kingston.

"In every other game but this one, I'll be rooting for the J-Hawks," he said Tuesday. "I'd like to see the southwest side of Cedar Rapids have overall success in football.

"I'll be rooting for the Prairie Hawks because I'm employed there, but I want it to be a good competitive game. I hope both teams have a great season."

Jefferson suffered through some lean times in the 1990's before the J-Hawks posted a winning season when Tiedtke was a junior in 1999. They had a breakthrough campaign in 2000 under Coach Dave Jacobson, but Jacobson left after the 2000 campaign and Jefferson went into a tailspin.

The J-Hawks have not had a winning season in 13 years and had to deal with a 24-game losing streak before snapping it last year in Week 3 under new coach Brian Webb, who is rebuilding the program.

Tiedtke returning to Kingston as friendly foe

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 27 August 2013 20:07 -

Tiedtke, a proud alum, suffered through the drought as well.

"It's hard to pinpoint it on any one thing," he said. "There are a lot of circumstances that no one person can control. The alumni can't do anything except support the coaches that are there and continue to show your support during their success and during the difficult times.

"There's a lot of pride in J-Hawk football," he said. "I'll tell you what, I'll be right there rooting for them. I am a J-Hawk and I want to see them have success as well."

Tiedtke joined the University of Nebraska football team as a recruited walk-on in 2001 and steadily climbed the depth chart until he started at free safety as a senior in 2005. He finished fourth on the team in tackles that season and distinguished himself in the classroom during his entire career, making the Big 12 Conference Academic Honor Roll for 10 straight semesters.

An exercise science major, he received his degree from Nebraska in 2006 and went to physical therapy school that. He's currently a physical therapist with Performance Therapies in Coralville and has worked with Prairie High school athletes since 2008.

Prairie football coach Mike Morrissey invited Tiedtke to join the coaching staff this year. He said Tiedtke has been a great addition to the program with his knowledge and enthusiasm. Tiedtke is working with the defensive backs, who had a terrific season last year with 20 interceptions and six touchdowns.

"It's different," said Tiedtke. "Obviously I'm a big football fan, but I haven't really been around football and been involved with the day-to-day things since I finished playing in 2005. It's fun to be around the guys and be in the competitive atmosphere again. It's rewarding.

"They're one reason I like coaching. They're great kids," he said. "They have the basics down. My goal is to give them one or two things to help them go out and perform."