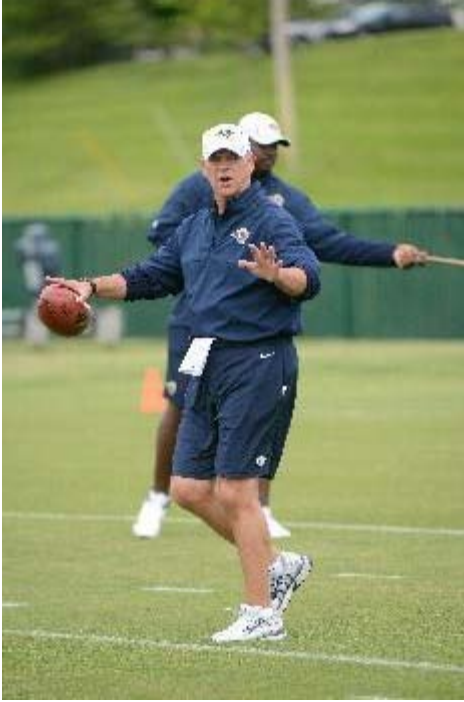


Waufle's football coaching skills took shape at Alfred

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Mike Waufle has fond memories of the 1979 Alfred University football team. He coached the defensive line that included Steve DiLaura '83, Frank Muraco '80, Andy Lasky '82, Joe DeBiase '83, Steve Ratliff '82, and Mark Shardlow '83. He considers one moment to be a turning point for the team.

"We were up on Jericho Hill and I told Mark (Shardlow), take your helmet off," recalls Waufle. "I put his helmet on, lined all the guys up and took them on one-on-one. I was trying to show them that Division I intensity. They really caught onto it. We ended up having a 7-2 season."

Waufle, a Hornell native, now coaches the National Football League's St. Louis Rams defensive line, a position he accepted this spring. He's worked for five college football programs and three NFL teams, coaching in three college football bowl games, 14 NFL playoff games, and two Super Bowls (XXXVII and XLII). Pro Bowl players he's coached include the late Darrell Russell, Richard Seymour, Michael Strahan, Justin Tuck, and Osi Umenyiora,

Waufle says his interest in football began in junior high school watching Jim Moretti '72, an accomplished quarterback and recently retired AU athletics director, play. After graduating from Hornell High School in 1972, serving three years in the United States Marine Corps, and playing on the defensive line at Utah State University from 1976-1978, the Dallas Cowboys cut Waufle at tryout. He and his wife decided to return to Hornell. AU Assistant Coach Mark Sacco's impending departure to coach high school football in Colorado created a coaching staff vacancy at the University.

"I was working on my master's and I still had hours left," says Waufle. "Sam Sanders (AU head coach 1977-1984) and Mark (Sacco) talked me into coaching."

Waufle enjoyed his time coaching at Alfred, where he worked with Moretti on the coaching staff. Waufle says he recently met recently graduated Alfred Linebacker Nick Clark at a fundraiser for the Hornell High School football team.

"He's got a chance in the NFL," says Waufle. "I've got him on the backburner in case something happens here (in St. Louis)."

Waufle worked with Steve Mariucci during the 1996 season at the University of California, Berkeley football season. Mariucci became the head coach of the San Francisco 49ers in 1997 and recommended Waufle to Oakland Raiders Head Coach Jon Gruden.

Waufle has special names for the days leading up to an NFL game.

“I call it Monster Monday, Terrible Tuesday, Wicked Wednesday, Tough Guy Thursday, Feel Good Friday, Super Saturday, Gameday, Gameday, Gameday and back to Monster Monday again,” he explains.

Waufle wakes up at 5 a.m. Monday through Friday. His game preparations include watching opponent film, team meetings, and practices. Friday afternoons provide a rare opportunity for to spend time with family. On Saturday, he says the team either has meetings in the morning and evening if they are at home, or travels to a road game site.

“It&s like that non-stop,” says Waufle. “The year we won the Super Bowl, I went to work on July 25. I had some time off for the bye weekend. Those are the only two days I really had off until two days after the game in February.”

Waufle coached the New York Giants defensive line from 2004-09. In 2008, the team won Super Bowl XLII.

“It was a team that was very talented,” says Waufle. “Coach (Tom) Coughlin did an excellent job getting the team to stay together. It was a great experience.”

Waufle hopes he can help the Rams become a winning team.

“We&re constantly working towards elite status,” says Waufle. “We pay a price with the things we do physically in practice. Hopefully it will work out.”