SIBLINGS 04/13/2016 K. VRUWINK

After first stepping on to the UW-River Falls campus as a prospective student six years ago, Rocky Larson knew where he belonged. Kate Vruwink has the story.

MP3 R/T: 2:23 O/C: “…I’M KATE VRUWINK.”

KATE VRUWINK: WITH A FAMILY THAT IS AS CLOSE AS HIS, ROCKY LARSON, THE NEWLY HIRED D-COORDINATOR, SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM TO STAY NEAR HIS HOME IN SOMERSET, WISCONSIN.

ROCKY LARSON: I WANTED TO BE CLOSE TO HOME, AND I WANTED TO BE WITH A FAMILY ATMOSPHERE. IT FELT RIGHT STEPPING ON CAMPUS HERE AND I KNEW A LOT OF PEOPLE FROM MY DAD. IT WAS JUST A RIGHT FIT.

KATE VRUWINK: A FIT THAT FELT SO AT HOME BECAUSE BOTH HIS PARENTS ATTENDED U-W-R-F, AND CLOSE ENOUGH BECAUSE THEN HE COULD WATCH HIS YOUNGER SIBLINGS COMPETE IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS. HIS TWIN SIBLINGS, REGGIE AND MCKELL, WERE BOTH INVOLVED IN FOOTBALL, AND REGGIE PLAYED BASKETBALL. ALSO, AT THAT POINT THEIR FAMILY HAD JUST ADOPTED GAELIN (GAY-lin) ELMORE, WHO PLAYED FOOTBALL, AND NOW PLAYS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA. BECAUSE FOOTBALL WAS SUCH A BIG PART OF HIS LIFE, ROCKY WANTED TO BE INVOLVED WITH IT AT U-W-R-F, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF AN INJURY HE WAS BROUGHT ON AS A COACH INSTEAD OF A PLAYER. HE SPENT THE 2010 THROUGH 2013 SEASONS COACHING VARIOUS POSITIONS ON THE DEFENSIVE SIDE OF THE BALL FOR THE FALCONS. IN 2013, BOTH REGGIE AND MCKELL GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL, AND WERE PLANNING ON ATTENDING DIFFERENT PLACES FOR COLLEGE. DUE TO DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES THEY BOTH FOUND THEMSELVES COMING TO U-W-R-F IN THE 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR. REGGIE WAS BROUGHT ON THE FOOTBALL TEAM AS A CENTER, AND MCKELL HELPED WITH FILM, WRITING DOWN PLAY CALLS, AND MANY OTHER ASPECTS. ACCORDING TO MCKELL, FOOTBALL HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HER FAMILY'S DYNAMIC.

MCKELL LARSON: WE'RE REALLY TIGHT KNIT, AND FOOTBALL HAS A LOT TO DO WITH THAT.

KATE VRUWINK: HOWEVER, THE SIBLINGS WERE PUT ON OPPOSING TEAMS DURING THE 2015 SEASON WHEN ROCKY GOT OFFERED A FULL-TIME COACHING POSITION AT UW-LA CROSSE. THAT SEASON THE FALCONS BEAT THE EAGLES 21-20. AFTER THAT, ROCKY KNEW HE WANTED TO COME BACK TO THE FALCONS, AND HE ENDED UP APPLYING FOR THE D-COORDINATOR POSITION. FOR HIM, IT IS GREAT TO BE ABLE TO COME BACK TO HIS FAMILY, GIRLFRIEND, AND THE PLACE HE CALLS HOME.

ROCKY LARSON: MY FAMLY WAS REALLY EXCITED, WE ALL WENT OUT TO EAT AND HUNG OUT. IT WAS LIKE A BIG HOMECOMING.

KATE VRUWINK: WHEN MCKELL FOUND OUT, SHE LAUGHED WHEN SHE HEARD SHE WAS THE LAST TO KNOW HER BROTHER WOULD BE COMING BACK AS A FALCON.

MCKELL LARSON: MY FAMILY LEFT ME OUT OF THE LOOP BECAUSE I CAN'T KEEP SECRETS. AND SO I HAD NO IDEA. I'M JUST HAPPY TO HAVE HIM BACK.

KATE VRUWINK: REGGIE ECHOS MCKELL'S HAPPINESS, AND ADDS HE'S HAPPY TO HAVE HIS BROTHER BACK TO WATCH HIS SENIOR YEAR OF FOOTBALL.

REGGIE LARSON: I WAS REALLY EXCITED FOR HIM TO BE BACK. HE WANTED TO WATCH ME FOR ONE MORE YEAR, AND NOW HE GETS TO COACH ME FOR ONE MORE YEAR.

KATE VRUWINK: WITH HIS NEWLY ACQUIRED POSITION AND HIS FAMILY BY HIS SIDE, ROCKY WAS NERVOUS THE FIRST DAY AS THE D-COORDINATOR.

ROCKY LARSON: WALKING INTO THE OFFICE THE FIRST DAY I WAS PRETTY NERVOUS BECAUSE THERE WAS A LOT OF COACHES I DIDN'T KNOW, THERE WAS A LOT OF PLAYERS I DIDN'T KNOW. BUT AFTER AN HOUR BEING IN THE OFFICE, I FELT HOME.

KATE VRUWINK: A HOME, HE ONCE AGAIN GETS TO SHARE WITH HIS SIBLINGS. FOR FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I'M KATE VRUWINK

 Rocky Larson will kick off his coaching career as the defense coordinator against Coe College on Sept. 3 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

###