PETERSON 10/19/2016 T. SCHNEIDER

The U-W-R-F football team has a new member this year and he loves to get the players and fans excited. His name is Jesse Peterson and he is a 21-year-old with Down syndrome. He was a manager for the River Falls High School football team for six years, but now he’s been promoted. Tori Schneider has the story.

MP3 RUNS 1:11 O/C: STD.

TORI SCHNEIDER: WHEN YOU GO TO A FALCONS HOME FOOTBAL GAME THIS YEAR YOU MAY NOTICE A NEW FACE ON THE SIDELINES OR RUNNING UP AND DOWN THE STRETCH OF BLEACHERS TRYING TO GET THE FANS EXCITED. HE WON’T BE SUITED UP, BUT THAT DOESN’T TAME HIS PASSION FOR THE GAME. JESSE PETERSON HAS BROUGHT NEW LIFE TO THE FOOTBALL TEAM SINCE LAST SPRING WHEN HE JOINED THEM DURING PRACTICE.

JESSE PETERSON: “I LIKE DEFENSE, AND OFFENSE TOO. I LIKE FIRST DOWN. AND GO FOR IT AND FIELD GOAL.”

TORI SCHNEIDER: HEAD COACH MATT WALKER WORKED WITH PETERSON’S MOTHER AND WITH DANA ZIMMERMAN, A PROFESSOR IN THE HEALTH AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE DEPARTMENT, TO GET JESSE PROMOTED TO THE COLLEGE-LEVEL TEAM.

MATT WALKER: “IT’S SO GREAT TO SEE NOT ONLY HOW IT'S BENEFITED HIM AND THE FUN HE’S HAD WITH IT, BUT I THINK OUR GUYS, THEY’VE HAD A BLAST WITH HIM, AND HE’S KIND OF BECOME AN INSPIRATIONAL LEADER FOR US. I MEAN EVEN MORE THAN HE REALIZED. I THINK OUR GUYS, THEY REALLY ENJOY HAVING HIM AROUND AND IT’S BEEN AWESOME. I’M SUPER EXCITED THAT HE’S WITH US AND CAN’T WAIT TO KEEP HIM WITH US. IT’S BEEN COOL.”

TORI SCHNEIDER: THE FALCONS NEXT HOME GAME IS OCTOBER TWENTY-NINETH AT RAMER FIELD AGAINST THE UW-OSHKOSH TITANS. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M TORI SCHNEIDER.

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