Stockstill hires Ricker as tackles/tight ends coach

Spent previous two years at WMU

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MURFREESBORO - Middle Tennessee Head Coach Rick Stockstill announced today the hiring of A.J. Ricker as the Blue Raiders' tackles/tight ends coach. Ricker joins the Middle Tennessee staff after spending the previous two seasons at Western Michigan.

"We are excited to have A.J. as part of our staff," said Stockstill. "He is very well respected in our profession as an offensive line coach and recruiter. A.J. will fit in nicely with our staff and we look forward to having him and his wife, Lauren, as part of the Blue Raider family."

In 2012, Ricker led a WMU offensive line that boasted a First Team All-MAC selection and the program's second two-time Rimington Trophy candidate.

The Bronco offensive line boasted All-MAC selection Dann O'Neill in 2011 and saw first year guard Kasimili Uitalia start all 13 games. Returning center Kevin Galeher was a 2011 Rimington Trophy candidate under Ricker's tutelage.

Prior to rejoining Western Michigan's football program, Ricker served one season as the head coach at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind. Ricker served as the Pumas' offensive line coach in 2009 under Lou Esposito. In one season, the offensive line paved the way for 179.5 rushing yards a game and only allowed two sacks per contest. Ricker earned the mantel of Great Lakes Football Conference Assistant Coach of the Year in 2009 for his SJC offensive scheme efforts.

During his previous tenure at WMU from 2006 to 2008 Ricker was hands on with the offensive line, providing support to offensive line coaches Bob Stanley and Mike Sullivan. The Bronco offensive line produced a 1,000-yard running back and ranked 14th in the nation in sacks allowed in 2006 and blocked for another 1,000-yard back again in 2008. It also produced a two-time Rimington Trophy candidate in Robbie Krutilla, who was an Outland Trophy candidate in 2007, and a pair of All-Mid-American Conference selections in Krutilla and James Blair. Blair was selected to participate in the

2008 Hula Bowl All-Star Classic and the Texas vs. the Nation Challenge.

Ricker completed a stellar collegiate career at the University of Missouri as a center, where he earned a degree in agriculture in 2004. He holds the school record for consecutive starts with 47, starting 11 games in 2000 and 2001, 12 games in 2002 and a career-high 13 contests in 2003.

The Klein, Texas, native was named First-Team All-Big 12 by the coaches and the Dallas Morning News in 2003, while also receiving Second-Team All-Big 12 honors from the Associated Press.

Ricker was named Second-Team All-Big 12 by the coaches and received honorable mention for All-Big 12 from the AP in 2002. He was also named First-Team Academic All-Big 12 during his junior campaign. His sophomore season was highlighted by being named Third-Team All-Big 12 by the coaches, receiving honorable mention for All-Big 12 from the AP and garnering Second-Team Academic All-Big 12 honors in 2001.

He signed a free-agent contract with the Chicago Bears in 2004 and was allocated to the Rhein Fire in 2005 of NFL Europe where he was named the offensive team captain prior to the season opener.

Ricker spent the 2006 season and part of the 2007 campaign, as a member of the Tampa Bay Storm of the Arena Football League. He saw action in 16 games, starting 10 in 2006. He made seven tackles, playing both offense and defense, and recovered four fumbles.

Ricker, 32, is married to the former Lauren Mattaliano.

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