



# GOAL TENDER

RAINEY COACHES U OF IOWA'S WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM FOR SUCCESS BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD

By Christopher Barrows



Rainey took the reins of the Iowa Hawkeyes women's soccer team in 2006. PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

**R**ON RAINEY '91 COMES FROM A LONG LINE of athletes. The son and namesake of a former Wilkes basketball coach, he grew up the youngest of four boys. This taught him a competitive edge from a young age.

This drive and will to win propelled him to success in the world of collegiate women's soccer, where he serves as head coach of the Iowa Hawkeyes.

A transfer from Virginia Tech, Rainey spent 1989 to 1991 playing soccer for Wilkes University. Some of the strongest teams in Wilkes men's soccer history, those teams still hold records, including most goals in a season (52), most total team points (145), and most wins in program history (16).

Phil Wingert, head coach at Wilkes for 26 years, credits Rainey as a big part of the team's success.

"He had an infectious personality. He made his teammates want to work and play harder. It was like having another coach out there." Wingert also considered himself lucky to have two of the greatest players he's coached play together: Rainey and Paul Jellen '93.

Jellen, the leading scorer in Wilkes' history, credits some of his personal success on the field to Rainey. "Those records are in large part due to Ron Rainey. He was a quintessential teammate, the hardest worker on and off the field," Jellen says. "He made you want to work harder yourself." Jellen says Rainey always gave his all and never gave up.

Rainey excelled off the soccer field too. He made the dean's list all six semesters and earned a 3.89 grade point average. He also held the position of sports director for the Wilkes radio station, wrote for *The Beacon* and was active in the Wilkes Education Club.

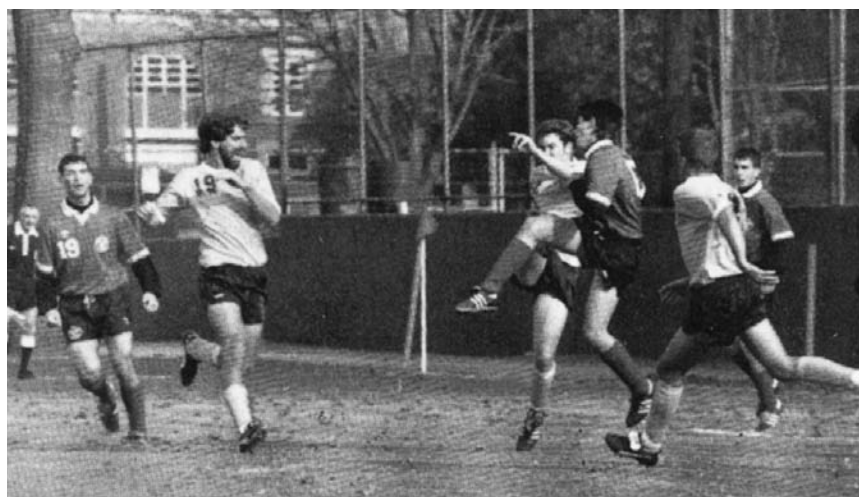
After earning a bachelor's degree in English and mathematics, Rainey went on to attain a master's in sports administration at Trenton State. There he took an apprenticeship with the women's soccer program.

"I would assume if I didn't get that opportunity at the college level while at Trenton State, I'd probably be teaching and coaching at the high school level," he reasons.

After Trenton State, he became head coach at University of Wisconsin-Parkside, then moved on to University of Cincinnati and Towson. He

served as an assistant during the first two seasons of women's soccer at Iowa before moving on to Ball State. He returned to Iowa to take the reins of the Hawkeyes in 2006.

Rainey guided the team to a berth in the Big Ten Tournament each of the last two seasons. The Hawkeyes have shown consistent improvement under his leadership, finishing 8-8-4 in 2007 – their best



Rainey, number 19 in white, teams with fellow players to outmaneuver opponents. PHOTO FROM WILKES ARCHIVES

record since 2001. In 2008, they posted nine wins with 11 of their starters either freshmen or sophomores. Number of goals scored rose each year, culminating with 28 last season. Iowa also posted an eight-match unbeaten streak last fall, a school record.

Rainey utilizes a coaching style very much based on mentoring. He developed some of his technique from his experiences with Wingert.

"He always did a great job of allowing us to prepare ourselves as players," Rainey says. "He wasn't afraid to let us fail but gave us the ability to think for ourselves on the field. These are the kind of mentoring methods I still incorporate today."

Growing up watching his father coach gave him an appreciation for the long hours and heart the job requires. Rainey and his wife, Margaret, a former collegiate soccer player, are the proud parents of three children. He intends to instill in his children the same values of leadership and personal responsibility that he has learned.

He believes these same values should be applied to his players. While success on the field is important, he understands the importance of a good education and wants to see his players succeed in life, not just in athletics.

"I hope to see my players see more than just success on the field. I want them to take the lessons on the field and apply themselves in the academic world," Rainey explains. "I'm excited where I am right now. It's a great place and a great school."

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HARDEST WORKER  
on and off the field...

– Paul Jellen

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