

# Interview of Saint Francis Varsity Football Coach Chris Lindquist

by

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1. What is something a high school football coach does that most people don't see?

*Film, film, and more film and working with athletes and coaches to place kids in college.*

2. What is your reason for a 3-5-3 Defense compared to using say a 5-2 or 4-3 Defense?

*To put our players in what we believe is the best position for them to make plays and be successful. This year for example, we had more LB type kids on defense than bigger defensive lineman, so the 3-5 makes sense. The odd front also allows us to play an aggressive physical kid at nose over a high school center that has to snap and step. It also allows us to create confusion and bring pressure from nearly anywhere on the field.*

3. What personnel (kids) types are we missing in Saint Francis?

*The kids are here, they are all over. We just need to get them to play and develop within them a passion for football.*

4. Do we have a fullback in SF?

*Somewhere we do, I am sure of that....but this year we only had 2 RB's, and neither were the fullback type....*

5. Why do we run the spread offense instead of TE and/or multiple back offense package?

*We do have TE sets, and we did run multiple back sets this year.*

*It seems that there are some major misconceptions regarding the 'spread' offense here in St. Francis. We do have offensive formations that utilize both tight ends and ones that utilize multiple backs. We just don't use them at the same time, and that notion is the heart of the spread offense. The offense is designed to spread the defense out and create space for the athletes to attack. Creating space is a fundamental idea for many team sports like soccer, hockey, and basketball to name a few. This year, it did not work to our advantage to utilize a TE in our offensive game plan and we did run a two back set quite often.*

6. How do we get the big kids in our school to come out for the team?

*We need to develop relationships with all kids at all age levels, and continue to develop the youth program as a feeder program for the high school teams.*

7. What was the hardest thing to deal with from moving here from Hopkins?

*It's very difficult not knowing anyone. It's hard to leave the established relationships with coaches, players, colleagues/friends and starting over. It is also very difficult to walk into a program that has experienced such instability in its leadership over the past few years. The lack of consistent direction has allowed people to do their own thing. As a result, we have many different people pulling in their own direction instead of everyone pulling together in the same direction; and that slows the overall progress of the program.*

8. What do we need to do to have a winning record?

*We need a combination of football players who are talented and are passionate about playing football. We need our young people to prioritize playing football in November over hunting. We need our community to support our athletes and coaches publicly and in their dealings with our football players and each other.*

9. What does the football program need to better itself?

*We need stability in the coaching staff, grid club, and youth program. We need all of the people who are associated with St. Francis Football to become loyal to our program and defend it when necessary. We need people to buy in to our schemes, our systems, and our coaches. We need to work together to satisfy the program's needs instead of their own personal agendas. We need people who are willing to take direction and make personal sacrifices for the program.*

10. What can the Youth Program do to help the varsity program?

*Keep having kids go out for football, implement the offensive and defensive schemes and terminology and get the kids passionate about playing this great game. We need the youth program to view itself as a feeder program that concerns itself with developing skills/technique and establishing a football foundation for future success. We need youth coaches to be less concerned with winning and more concerned with teaching and making sure that every kid has a positive experience. That does not mean that we should throw in the towel and not try to win. But, winning should not become our primary focus at the youth level; the development of players is just too important.*

11. What would you like to see in the youth program?

*I would like to see coaches who are committed to serving our program and our kids. I want to work with coaches who will continue to learn the fundamentals of the game, as well as, the St. Francis way of doing things. I would like to see our youth coaches be teachable in the same manner that we expect of our athletes.*

*I would like to see an organizational structure put into place. One that would better allow us to support our youth coaches and I would like to develop a teaching progression for fundamental football skills (tackling, blocking, throwing, catching, etc.)*

12. Do you have a set of positional drills that could help the youth coaches prepare the kids for high school football?

*Yes, and they were handed out at our youth coaching clinic this summer. If there are coaches who did not get one, please contact me and I will make one available to you.*

13. Have you attended any youth games? If so, what are your impressions of the coaches and kids?

*I had hoped to attend quite a few games this year but my living arrangement made that very difficult. However, people were always willing to talk to me and tell me what was happening at the youth level, and I appreciated that very much.*

14. What is the best part of a football Friday night to you?

*There is something very special about the memories that are created on Friday nights. For me, the sights, sounds, smells, the playing of our national anthem; it all brings back so many great memories. It's exciting for me to have the opportunity to be a part of our players' great experiences that will hopefully produce similar fond memories of their time playing high school football.*

15. When did you first know you wanted to become a football coach?

*I started coaching when I was in college because I loved the game and wanted to be a part of it again. After injuring my shoulder, playing football after high school was not much of an option and I missed it; all of it. That first year, I was so drawn to working with the players I instantly changed my college major and began pursuing a teaching career.*

16. Who has been the biggest influence on your coaching career?

*Ken McDonald, hands down. Coach Mac was something like a 38 year head coach who I had the opportunity to work for during my time at Hopkins. He has done more for kids and people in general than anyone I know. He is a tremendous human being and a great role model; a truly great man who I have spoken with on several occasions during this past season.*

17. What is your favorite part of being a football coach?

*Working with the players and helping them to become outstanding young men.*

18. What is your favorite part about coaching at Saint Francis?

*There is such an amazing opportunity here to build a strong and competitive program.*

19. What has been your proudest moment in coaching?

*I am most proud of my players when after they have graduated, they come back and tell me about all that is going on in their lives. I recently ran into a young man who I had the privilege of working with during my first years in coaching. He had also become a coach in his spare time, and he had just finished with a MD degree from Carlton. He had also accepted an offer to go and work at the Mayo Clinic in a cutting edge cancer research field. I began to feel very insignificant as just a "coach", when the young man proceeded to tell me how thankful he was to have had me as his coach. He said, "You helped give me the motivation to be who I am today, and I want to say thank you." That is a tremendous feeling, and I have learned to take great pride in my coaching and teaching.*

20. What player(s) that you have coached do you believe got the most out of their ability?

*Without naming individual kids, the players who bleed football and work tirelessly are no doubt those who get the most out of their ability. They are the kids who are ALWAYS working to better themselves and improve. The key is HARD WORK!*

21. Players are often asked about their pre-game routines. Do you have anything special you regularly do just before a game?

*No, but I do try to relax and focus myself.*

22. What do you think you would be doing if you had never gotten into coaching?

*Originally, I was an accounting major in college, but who knows? They say the average college student changes their major seven times before they graduate. I was fortunate to find this amazing profession and only changed my major once.*

23. Do you have any special talents outside of football and/or what is your favorite thing to do away from football?

*I love spending time with my family, especially my wife and kids.*

24. Though SF had only a .333 season, talk about the improvement you have seen throughout the season.

*This is a difficult question to answer because I have no basis for comparison. This year provided me with an opportunity to establish a baseline for comparison in the future.*

25. Give me a player or two who has really opened your eyes, and why?

*One of our players recently lost his life in a very tragic manner. His father told me on several occasions that despite some physical problems, his son loved to play football and if he were unable to play, it would simply break his heart. I wish all of our kids had that kind of love for playing and I think we can all learn from his passion.*

26. How do you measure success with a sports program excluding wins?

*One of the benchmarks of a strong program is how many kids from each graduating class continue on and play football in college. It is important to note that in a recent study, the success of various programs is not determined by how many kids go on to play at a division one level, but by how many kids go on and play at any level of college football. That says to me that kids develop a passion for the game and their high school experience was a positive one. If our players are happy and feel good about their experience, we will be successful.*

27. We have had quite a few coaches over the last few years, are you here in Saint Francis for the long haul?

*I hope so! My wife and I just bought a home in the St. Francis school district where we plan to raise our three boys. We have made a commitment to this school district and football program and the only way I can see not coaching here is if something extreme happens.*

**GO SAINTS!!!**