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My Two Cents: Even at 87, the Great Lee Corso Still a Great Storyteller

Lee Corso turned 87 years old two weeks ago, and he's still going strong. He coached at Indiana for 10 years from 1973 to 1982 and has been entertaining the masses on ESPN's "College Gameday" show since 1987. Here's never done a podcast before, but he sat down with Terry Tallen and I last month and was pure gold for nearly an hour.

TOM BREW • 15 HOURS AGO



LAKE MARY, Fla. — Lee Corso is one of my favorite people in college football. He has a lot of history with my two schools, Florida State and Indiana, and he's made Saturday mornings on ESPN extra special during his three decades on the air.

Corso, who turned 87 years old two weeks ago, is still going strong. He played at Florida State — and was a two-way player alongside future actor Burt Reynolds — back in the

1950s. He also coached at Indiana for 10 years from 1973 to 1982 and has been entertaining the masses on ESPN's "College Gameday" show since 1987.

Corso and his wife Betsy – his bride since 1957 – live in Lake Mary, Fla., a suburb of Orlando. He's getting ready to start his 36th season at ESPN next week, but before he did, he sat down with Terry Tallen and I for our second episode of the "Tallen Time" podcast. Tallen played for Corso and Indiana and is a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Corso has basically done it all in the college game. But there is one thing he's never done – and that's to sit down for a one-on-one podcast – until now. When Terry Tallen, who played for Corso at Indiana, asked his coach to sit down for an interview, Corso gladly said yes. And it's no surprise that he was funny and full of wonderful stories during the hour-long sitdown for the second episode of the "Tallen Time" podcast with Terry and I.

"I've heard about podcasts, and I finally get a chance to do one," Corso said. "I have never done one before. I don't do these things but I finally got to do one with my friend Terry Tallen. You're the reason why I'm doing this. You were a great captain and a great guy."

The podcast was broken down into the three parts. In the first segment, Corso talks about his time at Indiana from 1973 to 1982, and he and Tallen share lots of laughs about their time together. In the second segment, Corso tells a bunch of stories about his time at ESPN, how it all began, how his schtick of wearing mascot headgear got started and his favorite places to visit on those Saturday mornings.

During the third and final segment, talks about his college football journey, telling stories of Bobby Bowden and Nick Saban, plus several other coaches.

Here are some of his best comments throughout the show:

on Indiana's huge 1979 Holiday Bowl win that was 'divine intervention'

- "That year (1979) we decided to have fun and we won a lot of games and had a lot of fun. In that Holiday Bowl, that was sensational. We beat an undefeated BYU team 38-37, and they were No. 8 in the country at the time. I'll tell you a true story about that game. They had a kicker that had never missed a field goal and he was out there to kick about a 20-yard field goal with about 15 seconds to go. And Father Jim Higgins, a Catholic priest, was at every game that I coached. I walked over to Father Higgins and I said, 'Father, it's you against 200 million Mormons. That guy has to miss that field goal. Can you do it?' He said, it's taken care of. And when he missed it, I said, 'Oh God, thank you.' And Father Higgins said, 'you're welcome.' "

- "We didn't have any curfews and I only gave them one rule and that was to change their shirts by breakfast. I didn't want them showing up in the clothes they had on the night before."

– on how much he loved Ohio native Terry Tallen as a player and captain

- "Terry was a heck of a captain, but by example. He was quiet, but he had strong leadership. It comes from being from Ohio, I think. They really care about their football and we had a lot of great leaders from that area."

- “His group, and Tim McVay’s group, they were the ones that saved me from getting fired. And (quarterback) Tim Clifford too. He was the most valuable player in the Big Ten as a junior, and he was an Ohio kid too.”

– on getting hired at ESPN 35 years ago

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- “A friend of mine was interviewing for the job at ESPN too and he had all sorts of demands. I told him I was going to get it, because I told ESPN I would do the job for nothing.”

– on the mutual loyalty between himself and ESPN

- “On May 16, 2010, I walked outside to get the newspaper and my wife Betsy looked at me, and she told me it looks like you had a stroke. ESPN, they could have dumped me then, because I couldn’t talk. That speaks well of ESPN. That’s why I’ve stayed so long, because they took care of me. It’s been 35 years.”

- “The first one we went to was Florida State against Notre Dame (in 1993) when it was No. 1 vs. No. 2. I remember it like it was yesterday.”

– on his favorite things at ESPN

- “The Oregon Duck is my favorite. We rode motorcycles together and we’ve had a lot of fun. They’ve always had a great sense of humor.”

- “It started there at Ohio State. Brutus the Buckeye walked by and I said to Kirk Herbstreit, if you could get me that, I could put it on. The next day I put on the Buckeye head and the crowd went crazy and the truck crazy. I told them, ‘I think I’ve got a schtick here.’”

- "The 'not so fast, my friend' thing started with Craig James, because he'd say things to get under my skin."

- "My favorite is Kirk Herbstreit. He's like a second son to me. He's probably the best all-around guy on television right now. I always joke that I'm deaf in my left ear because I've listened to Kirk talk so much."

– on former Florida State coach Bobby Bowden

- "Bobby Bowden, I say this without question, was one of the most Christian and most loving man to every coach football. He was a great man and a great Christian."

Watch the entire Lee Corso podcast here

To watch the entire podcast on YouTube, [CLICK HERE](#). You can also subscribe to the Tallen Time YouTube page there. It's all free, and you'll get a notification on every new episode.

Previous episodes of Tallen Time podcast

- **EPISODE 1, TOURING TALLEN COMPLEX:** The new Terry Tallen Indiana Football Complex is one of finest facilities in the Big Ten, and it came together thanks to a \$2 million donation from former Hoosiers captain Terry Tallen. In the first episode of his "Tallen Time" podcast, he gives a tour of the facility, and visits for former teammate Mark Deal. [CLICK HERE](#)

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