

8/6/2010: Iowa Media Day notebook

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The Iowa Hawkeyes officially began their 2010 season on Friday with its first practice of the fall, attempting to keep last season's magical run to an Orange Bowl win in the past, while shifting attention to now.

On Friday, the first USA Today/Coaches Poll was released, having the Hawkeyes pegged 10th nationally. While the message going into this season is similar to last year, Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said it's up to the players to follow through on what's expected of them.

"It's a new team, and this is a new season. We are going to have a lot of new challenges," Ferentz said. "None of us can predict what's going to happen. You never know what the course of action is going to be, and all we can do is try to do the best with the things that we control."

Ferentz said the senior class will be heavily depended on to pave the way this season, starting with quarterback Ricky Stanzi and defensive linemen Adrian Clayborn and Karl Klug, all of whom were with Ferentz in Chicago earlier this week for the 2010 Big Ten Football Media Days.

But those aren't the only seniors looking to play their best football this season. In addition to Stanzi is a receiving corps full of seniors looking to add an impact, as well as tight end Allen Reisner and fullback Brett Morse.

On the defensive side of the ball, other prominent seniors include defensive tackle Christian Ballard, linebackers

Jeremiha Hunter and Jeff Tarpinian, and safety Brett Greenwood.

"To have a good football team, your older guys that have played, they have got to accept [leadership] and they have got to embrace it, and that's part of the expectation level," Ferentz said. "Starts with doing their job first, and then taking another step, if they can."

Like father, like son?

Both Ferentz and senior wide receiver Derrell Johnson-Koulianos described their relationship as though they are a family on Friday. Johnson-Koulianos was made available to the media on Friday, but Ferentz also reminded everyone who was boss.

"I might say, right now at least, he's in my house, so my say goes," Ferentz said, describing his "dad" role. "As soon as he moves out of the house, next January, he can Twitter away, you know, and I bet he will."

Johnson-Koulianos made light of the situation throughout the afternoon, but also made clear the impact Ferentz has had on him in terms of maturity into a player everyone on the team can count on.

"I now understand why he was doing what he was doing," the Campbell, Ohio native said reflecting back. "It's not just about going out and playing football. It's about turning boys into men."

Derby still a QB

Normally, freshmen players aren't allowed to speak to the media. But an exception was made at Media Day on Friday for the true freshmen.

One of those true freshmen being talked about regularly is Iowa City High product A.J. Derby, after rumors had surfaced

earlier in the week about him changing positions to linebacker.

On Friday, Derby put the rumors to rest, saying he's staying at quarterback and intends to keep it that way.

"They're making stuff up," Derby said. "There isn't anything to talk about."

Binns remorseful, grateful to teammates

Junior defensive end Broderick Binns was arrested last July for an OWI, and earlier in the week, Ferentz said he would be suspended for Iowa's season opener against Eastern Illinois.

On Friday, Binns discussed the incident publicly for the first time. The St. Paul native was apologetic for his actions, saying he was grateful that teammates hadn't quit on him as a result of his mistake.

"All the guys on the team have been real positive towards me," Binns said. "They haven't shunned me away. I just got to thank the team for keeping me a part of the team."

Norm Parker update

Iowa defensive coordinator Norm Parker confirmed on Friday he will be coaching from the press box this season. However, he disputed prior reports of him stepping down at season's end.

Parker acted like his typical self at Media Day, coming in on a golf cart and sitting it in as he answered questions from the press and had his photo taken constantly. He was wearing a cast on his right leg as a result of sores on his foot, something he said was similar to what he dealt with last summer.

"I don't have any intentions of retiring or all. There's no truth to that," Parker said. "The only two ways I'll leave is they'll carry me out, or Kirk [Ferentz] will fire me. One of

the two.”