

Iowa-Eastern Illinois: Grades

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The No. 9 Iowa Hawkeyes defeated the Eastern Illinois Panthers on Saturday, 37-7. The win puts Iowa at 1-0.

Below are the grades I would give each group of players:

Quarterbacks – A-

Both Ricky Stanzi and James Vandenberg saw action on Saturday. Stanzi played a near flawless game, completing 18-of-23 passes. When he had to briefly exit due to injury in the second quarter, Vandenberg came in and the Hawkeyes finished that drive with its third offensive score of the afternoon.

Running Backs – A

Without the services of Jewel Hampton, Iowa got “a statement game” from Adam Robinson, who finished with 24 carries for 109 yards rushing and three touchdowns of four, two, and six yards. The fourth offensive score came on a touchdown pass to fullback Brett Morse.

Wide Receivers – B-

Colin Sandeman was the leader of the receiving corps with four catches for 59 yards. Neither Marvin McNutt nor Derrell Johnson-Koulianos had exceptional games receiving, but both were heavily involved, as was Keenan Davis.

Tight Ends – B+

Eight of the Hawkeyes’ 21 receptions came from the tight ends group. Allen Reisner had four catches for 39 yards, while Brad Herman had three catches, including one of 35 yards on Iowa’s opening drive.

Offensive Line – A-

Despite the inexperience, the O-Line was very productive against Eastern Illinois. Stanzi found time to throw, Robinson found room to run, and the offense clicked, primarily because of the efforts of the guys up front.

Defensive Line – B+

Guys such as Adrian Clayborn and Christian Ballard didn't necessarily have big games for the Hawkeyes, but Mike Daniels recorded five tackles and a sack in what was his first career start, Karl Klug led the team in tackles with six, and the front four was consistently putting pressure on Eastern Illinois quarterback Brandon Large.

Linebackers – B+

No one in the linebacking corps particularly stood out, but Tyler Nielsen had six tackles, while Jeremiha Hunter had five. Bruce Davis played in place of Jeff Tarpinian at middle linebacker, and had three tackles. Nothing extraordinary, but overall, not bad either.

Secondary – B+

Seeing how Eastern Illinois failed to crack the 100-yard mark in the passing game, the secondary certainly did its part. Micah Hyde, in particular, stood out after finishing with five tackles (four of which were solo) and one pass break-up.

Special Teams – B+

The fake punt Eastern Illinois successfully executed is the only reason this isn't in the A range. Otherwise, Paki O'Meara reminded everyone why he has been a big contributor on special teams after returning a blocked punt 42 yards for a touchdown. Trent Mossbrucker also connected on all five of his PAT attempts, and Iowa may have found a kickoff specialist in Michael Meyer, who had a touchback on his first kickoff.

following the Hawkeyes going up 7-0.

Overall – A-

This was an exceptional performance by the Hawkeyes considering it was the season-opener. Aside from a couple of plays by Eastern Illinois in the second quarter, Iowa played about as well as any Hawkeye fan could have wanted. Iowa's players and coaches should feel good after this one, as the Hawkeyes now turn their attention to intrastate rival Iowa State next week.

“BIG UPS”

My player of the game will get “Big Ups” from me (For those new to *HawkeyeDrive.com*, I'll give these out on Twitter every now and then). After No. 9 Iowa's 37-7 win over Eastern Illinois, I'm giving them to sophomore running back Adam Robinson.

The Hawkeyes were missing fellow running back Jewel Hampton, and Robinson made the most of his opportunity against the Panthers. The Des Moines native finished with 109 yards rushing for the Hawkeyes on 24 carries. More importantly, he had three touchdown runs and is a major reason why Iowa sits at 1-0 to start the 2010 season.

2010 BIG UPS TALLY:

9/4/2010: Iowa 37, Eastern Illinois 7 – Adam Robinson