

9/6/2010: Paul Rhoads Big 12 teleconference transcript (premium)

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Below is the complete transcript from Iowa State head coach Paul Rhoads' Big 12 teleconference on Monday, as the Cyclones prepare to visit Kinnick Stadium to meet No. 9 Iowa on Sept. 11:

Rhoads on whether he feels his defense is "opportunistic" with creating turnovers:

"Well, it can be contagious, but I don't know if it strings along from game-to-game, or from season-to-season. But I think it can be contagious within a single game. I think Wally Burn, our defensive coordinator, his trademark has always been the ability to have his defenses turn the ball over, and we were fortunate enough to be able to do it again on Thursday."

On what running games in the Big 12 used to be like in the 1990s when he was an ISU assistant:

"Yeah, I got to tail back. Nebraska was still at a point in time where they were going to grind it out. I can remember going to Lincoln and the score was 21-0 with about 11 minutes left in the first quarter. Their nose guard was pulling and reached our 5-technique, and I knew it was going to be a long, long night. '95 was the last year of the Big 8, moving into the Big 12, and teams could run the ball with proficiency. I don't know if that thought crossed my mind this past weekend or not, but you're right, that was indeed the truth."

On whether he watched any Big 12 games last Saturday and his

thoughts on some of the conference's top backs:

"I did get to see a game. I was out at a junior college recruiting, so I was live and in person. I didn't see any doggone TV games, including our opponent this week, but I saw the stats on [Oklahoma State running back] Kendall Hunter and the game he had. I got to see Daniel Thomas [Kansas State], and I was discouraged by that because we got to face them in two weeks. Kendall Hunter, we don't play Oklahoma State this year, so someone else is going to have to try and defend him."

When asked about his thoughts on QB Austen Arnaud and whether he'll try to make up for a poor performance vs. Iowa last year:

"I am worried. It is the biggest concern going into this game, because of his personality, because of his competitiveness. I don't have any doubts that he is going to prepare thoroughly and efficiently to go out and execute our game plan against one of the top teams in the country. But to get him not to press, to get him to go through his reads and throw balls away when he should as opposed to force them, that is a concern as we go into the week. We're going to try and address it in the right manner and get No. 4 ready to go."

On what the Iowa-Iowa State rivalry means to him, considering his ISU roots as both an assistant and now a head coach:

"Well, the game's important because it's the in-state rivalry game. It's important to me because I grew up with it. I grew up as a high school football player in this state, and my dad was a high school football coach in this state. I was part of a staff that ended a long-time losing streak versus the University of Iowa in this game. It's a very important game to me. And rivalry games are important. I'm blessed. I've been a part of a great number of rivalry games including Ohio State-Michigan, "The Backyard Brawl" with Pitt and West Virginia, "The Iron Bowl" with Auburn and Alabama, and this great

rivalry. It's exciting to be a part of it, and we're looking forward to the game this Saturday afternoon."

On what he took from last year's loss that he feels will have him and his team better prepared this week:

"I think you got to work hard to keep your team grounded. That would be the No. 1 thing I took away from last year's game. Austen [Arnaud], he threw a few interceptions and we turned the ball over, which dramatically hurt us in the game. I think you got to go on to this, especially on the road, and keep your team grounded. Focus on execution, and one play at a time. Hype and spirit and enthusiasm aren't going to win a game like this. It's execution and precision."

On the linebackers' performance against Northern Illinois:

"Well, they played well. I was thrilled with their performance, first off, because they got it under their belt now. They went out there with big eyes and nervous, as they should. But they've got a game experience, they played every snap, A.J. Klein and Jake Knott, Matt Tau'fo'ou was on and off the field with our base and nickel packages. But they also realize they've got plenty of room for improvement. They missed some tackles, they had some misalignments, and some missed assignments. That helps keep them grounded. I don't think either of them or all three of them think they're in line for all-Big 12 honors at this point, but they'll remain hungry and they'll remain intent, and that's what we ask of them."