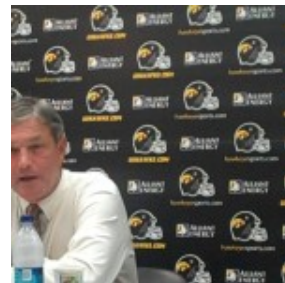


9/14/2010: Iowa football notebook



Kirk Ferentz,
Sept. 14, 2010

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The story of defensive coordinator Norm Parker's ongoing battle with diabetes has been well-documented.

On Tuesday, Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz added a few more sentences to that story, saying Parker won't make the trip with the team this week to Tucson, Ariz.

Parker had checked into the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics on Sept. 10, the day before No. 9 Iowa clobbered Iowa State, 35-7, inside Kinnick Stadium last weekend.

Ferentz said he visited Parker on Monday, but made clear the defense will have to deal with not having his presence around.

"To me, football is really secondary right now in this equation," Ferentz said. "I don't know if we're talking about days or weeks. I don't know that. I don't know if anybody knows that right now, but whenever he's ready to come back, we'll get him back and going."

"In the meantime, we will proceed without him."

While it is uncertain which coach will signal plays into the Hawkeye defense on Sept. 18 against No. 24 Arizona (Linebackers coach Darrell Wilson did so against Iowa State), the defense knows regardless that it will need to have a strong performance in order to leave Arizona Stadium with a victory.

"[Parker] has been a behind-the-scenes type guy the last couple of years anyway," junior linebacker Tyler Nielsen said. "Our other coaches, we have confidence in them that they'll put together a great game plan. I know they will. We'll just have to go out there and execute what they put together for us."

This will be easier said than done, however. Arizona has put up 93 points thus far in two games. While the Hawkeyes did defeat the Wildcats last season at Kinnick Stadium, the defense surrendered a touchdown in the final minutes when Nick Foles came into the game at quarterback for a shaky Matt Scott.

From that moment on, Foles has been Arizona's starting signal-caller, and he presents more complex problems.

In two games this season, Foles is a combined 49-of-59 passing for 574 yards, with three touchdowns and two interceptions.

"He's a very good thrower," Ferentz said, adding that Foles' arm is the strongest part of his game. "He's not hanging with the ball back there, either. He's getting rid of it. He gets it out and spreads it around nicely."

Go West...

Location has been discussed ad nauseum, as this marks the first time Iowa is traveling west in six years. Its last trip west of Ames came back in 2004, when it visited the Grand

Canyon State for a showdown with Arizona State Ferentz tries to forget.

That evening, ironically a Sept. 18, the Sun Devils pasted the Hawkeyes, 44-7. The lone Iowa touchdown came in the game's final minutes on a punt return by Walner Belleus.

Ferentz has taken the approach of using that particular game as a reminder to his current team of what can happen if it isn't ready.

Which is why even though it's a road game against the Pac-10's other Arizona team, the players are downplaying any significance that may exist and treating it like any other road game.

"I don't make a big deal about going West," junior safety Tyler Sash said. "Everybody is making this big deal about going West. I just feel like, it's just the opposite direction of going East. We've gone to Penn State, we've gone to Ohio State.

"It's just going another direction, in my opinion."

The direction may not matter, but the climate might. The overnight low temperature for Sept. 18 in Tucson is currently [76 degrees Fahrenheit](#).

The sun might be down, but the desert heat will still have an effect.

"We're just going to be real good with our recovery, our rehydration, and doing everything necessary to make playing in their environment a non-factor," junior right tackle Markus Zusevics said.

The preview before the main event

When the Hawkeyes travel for a road game, it's all business.

Well, almost.

One thing Ferentz revealed during his press conference Tuesday is that every Friday before a road game, the entire team will get together and see a movie at a local theater. Doing this during the team's down time allows the players to stay fresh, as well as bond with teammates.

The decision on which movie the team sees is made by the seniors. Quarterback Ricky Stanzi suggested this week's film might be "The Town," and sounded excited about the chance to actually have a say in what everyone sees.

"I kind of got a say this year. I'm pretty excited about it. I haven't had a say," Stanzi said. "Last year's group, they took us to "G.I. Joe" one time, and that was just the worst movie ever.

"We're trying to have good experiences from here on out with what movies we choose."

Game-day preparations for night games

As a result of this week's game being a 7:30 p.m. local kickoff in Tucson, Ferentz said the team will hold its typical Friday night meetings on Saturday and attempt to keep all of its pregame preparations as routine as possible.

This also goes for the players, who find themselves having lots of time to mentally prepare.

"I just try to get up and walk around, stretch, keep my legs stretched, and just try to walk around and move my body as much as possible, and not get too settled in," sophomore running back Adam Robinson said. "I try not to take too many naps or anything like that. I want to keep my body awake and prepared for the game."

Sash made clear he is not someone that can just sit in his hotel room all day waiting for the game. As a result, he finds

himself in the routine of watching additional extra game film.

He said he'll always do this on Saturday mornings before a later game, or if it's an early game like the Hawkeyes had against Eastern Illinois in the season-opener, he'll watch it that Friday night.

Either way, he makes certain to get it in before he takes the field.

"I like to watch, maybe some of the main concerns that I would have going into the game, just going over those things again in my mind," Sash said.

This demeanor has rubbed off on at least a few players. Junior cornerback Shaun Prater said he finds himself also watching game film right before leaving for the stadium. Stanzi also said he might occasionally watch extra film.

"It's very possible," the 6-4 quarterback said. "We could do that as quarterbacks, go in there and watch some things that maybe we're not quite sure of yet. That just gives you a little extra time to prepare, so that can help out."