

# Hawkeyes suffer first defeat, fall to Arizona

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

TUCSON, Ariz. – A first half that could only be described as a debacle, a fourth-quarter comeback for the ages, and a disappointing finish were all wrapped up into one for No. 9 Iowa on Saturday.

The Hawkeyes were handed their first defeat of the 2010 season, falling to the No. 24 Arizona Wildcats, 34-27. This loss drops Iowa to 2-1, and the Hawkeyes are likely to fall out of the top 10 as a result.

Special teams proved to be a killer for Iowa. After a 3-and-out on its opening series, senior Ryan Donahue saw his first punt of the evening blocked. Arizona took over from the Hawkeye 8-yard line, and struck when quarterback Nick Foles found wide receiver David Douglas for a five-yard score to put the Wildcats up 7-0.

Iowa managed to move the ball down the field on its following possession, but an errant throw from quarterback Ricky Stanzi led to his lone interception of the evening. Unfortunately for the Hawkeyes, that interception was taken back by Arizona cornerback Trevin Wade for an 85-yard touchdown return, giving the Wildcats a 14-0 lead.

Even though the football bounced off the hands of wideout Marvin McNutt prior to Wade picking it off, Stanzi placed all the blame with that play on himself.

“The ball was high, it was wobbly, it was a tough ball to catch,” Stanzi said. “It shouldn’t have been thrown there

anyway.

"That one's on me, and you got to live with it and go on to the next play."

Arizona threatened to make it a three-score game, but Iowa made a big play defensively, when senior linebacker Jeff Tarpinian forced a Nic Grigsby fumble that would be recovered by fellow senior linebacker Jeremiha Hunter. The Hawkeyes took advantage with a nine-play drive of 93 yards, capped by a 4-yard touchdown pass from Stanzi to sophomore running back Jewel Hampton.

But then porous special teams struck again. The ensuing kickoff was taken back 100 yards by Travis Cobb, and just like that, it was a 21-7 contest in favor of Arizona. Two Alex Zendejas field goals would give the Wildcats a 27-7 lead at halftime.

"Our sloppy play in the first half really made it difficult," Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said.

Iowa would get it going in the second half. Stanzi found senior wideout Derrell Johnson-Koulianos for a 37-yard touchdown in the third quarter to make it 27-14. Johnson-Koulianos finished the game with seven catches for 114 yards receiving.

Going to the air proved to be a necessity for the Hawkeyes since Hampton and sophomore running back Adam Robinson combined for 35 yards rushing after the duo combined for 240 yards rushing last week against Iowa State.

"I think we opened up the passing game a little bit, and Rick was throwing great balls," senior wide receiver Colin Sandeman said. "We were kind of spreading them deep, and that left us open for some shorter routes underneath."

Momentum then switched towards Iowa's favor in the fourth

quarter.

Junior cornerback Shaun Prater recovered a muffed punt by Arizona that was originally ruled a Wildcat recovery before overturned by instant replay. Luck would be on the Hawkeyes' side the following play, when a Stanzi pass to Marvin McNutt in the end zone originally called an incomplection was changed to an 18-yard touchdown.

Iowa junior defensive end Broderick Binns completed what appeared to be an improbable Iowa comeback when he leaped up for an interception and returned the Foles pass 20 yards for a touchdown that tied the game at 27-27.

"I guess I was lucky today," Binns said. "I've had so many pass break-ups, getting my hands up. I guess I was just bound to get one.

"I threw my hands up there, caught it, and ran for the touchdown."

Any celebration following Binns' pick-six evaporated in the desert air as the trifecta of inept special teams was completed. A Trent Mossbrucker extra point that would've given Iowa the lead was blocked, keeping the score tied at 27-27.

Arizona again responded with a touchdown drive, finished off by a four-yard touchdown pass from Foles to William Wright that gave the Wildcats the lead right back.

That touchdown marked the first time since a 31-6 loss to Purdue in 2007 that the Hawkeyes had surrendered more than 30 points in a single contest.

"We just stepped it up," senior defensive end Adrian Clayborn said about the defense's second half play. "We didn't really make too many adjustments. We didn't make any at all, really. We just played better. A little better.

"Just not enough to win."

Iowa had one last realistic chance to score, but constant breakdowns on the offensive line led to Stanzi being sacked three times, including on a crucial 4th-and-25.

Senior offensive lineman and team captain Julian Vandervelde called that last series "remarkably frustrating," saying it reminded him of the struggles Iowa had towards the end of its game last season at Ohio State that cost them a Big Ten championship and trip to the Rose Bowl.

"To have a game end like that, it's something that's going to be on at least my mind, and I'm sure the other guys on the offensive line will be thinking about it," Vandervelde said. "But I think it's something that will make us better. It will make us more aware in the future."

The Hawkeyes now shift their attention to their final non-conference game on Sept. 25 at home against Ball State. Kickoff is slated for 11 a.m. at Kinnick Stadium. Iowa will be wearing throwback uniforms to honor the 1958-59 Rose Bowl team that won a share of the national title that season.