

Iowa vs. Penn State: Grades

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – The No. 17 Iowa Hawkeyes defeated the No. 22 Penn State Nittany Lions on Saturday, 24-3. The win puts Iowa at 4-1 overall and 1-0 in Big Ten play.

Below are the grades I would give each group of players after Saturday's game:

Quarterbacks – A-

Ricky Stanzi completed 16-of-22 passes, had a 9-yard touchdown pass to Derrell Johnson-Koulianos, and scored from one yard out on a quarterback sneak just before halftime. However, Stanzi also threw a first-quarter interception to Penn State's Nick Sukay.

Running Backs – B+

The Hawkeyes found a way to get Adam Robinson involved, as he rushed for 95 yards on 28 carries. He also made a six-yard reception. Brett Morse also got in on the action with two catches for 27 yards.

Wide Receivers – A-

Marvin McNutt led the team with five catches for 93 yards. Johnson-Koulianos had 64 yards receiving on four catches, including nine that came on his touchdown reception in the first quarter.

Tight Ends – B

Allen Reisner had three receptions for 29 yards. Nothing out-of-this-world from him or any other tight ends, but nothing awful either. Just solid play all around.

Offensive Line – A-

When the offense shows balance, that's a good sign for the offensive line. Whether it was finding holes for Robinson, or giving Stanzi time to throw, the O-Line looked solid against a stout front four for the Nittany Lions.

Defensive Line – A

Every single one of the D-linemen came to play on Saturday against Penn State. Adrian Clayborn led the team with 10 tackles on the evening, and Christian Ballard had six tackles, including the biggest play of the game stopping Robert Bolden on a 4th-and-Goal at the Hawkeye 1-yard line.

Linebackers – B

Nothing amazing came from the linebacking corps, but they did enough to get the job done. Troy Johnson, and later James Morris, filled in nicely for Jeff Tarpinian at middle linebacker. Jeremiha Hunter and Tyler Nielsen both had strong games.

Secondary – A-

There were occasions where Bolden was able to hit his playmakers downfield, but the secondary did its part on keeping in check whatever Penn State was trying to accomplish with its passing game. Shaun Prater returned a Bolden interception 33 yards for an Iowa touchdown in the fourth quarter to seal the victory.

Special Teams – B+

Michael Meyer made his only field goal attempt of the evening, which came on the Hawkeyes' opening drive. Kickoff coverage was OK, as was punt coverage. Penn State didn't break any big plays with special teams, which is a sign that Iowa has gotten better in this area.

Overall – A-

Simply put, the defense put on a clinic Saturday evening. The score might not really tell how close the game actually was, but at the same time, it wasn't as though Penn State was ever actually in the game to begin with. This is a good victory for the Hawkeyes, not only because it was the first in Big Ten play, but because Iowa now has a bye week to look forward to before shifting its focus on towards how to shut down Denard Robinson and the Michigan Wolverines in the Big House on Oct. 16.

“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. 17 Iowa's 24-3 victory over No. 22 Penn State, I decided to give these to senior defensive lineman Christian Ballard.

Clayborn did have 10 tackles to lead the Hawkeyes, but Ballard was just all over the gridiron early on. He also made the biggest play of the evening for either side, nailing Robert Bolden just before he could cross the goal line on a 4th-and-Goal from the Iowa 1-yard line. Ballard came to play, thus he is worthy of this week's “Big Ups.”

2010 BIG UPS TALLY:

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

9/11/2010: Iowa 35, Iowa State 7 – Ricky Stanzi

9/18/2010: Arizona 34, Iowa 27 – Jeff Tarpinian

9/25/2010: Iowa 45, Ball State 0 – Mike Daniels

10/2/2010: Iowa 24, Penn State 3 – Christian Ballard