

O'Keefe, Parker address team progress going through bye week

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Rarely are assistant coaches made available for press conferences when the Hawkeyes go through the course of football season.

But with this being No. 15 Iowa's bye week (something it hasn't had since the 2008 season), offensive coordinator Ken O'Keefe and defensive backs coach Phil Parker spoke about how the Hawkeyes (4-1, 1-0) have looked through five games.



Ken O'Keefe, Oct. 7, 2010

O'Keefe spoke highly of senior quarterback Ricky Stanzi, and the progression he has made this season in contrast to his previous two seasons as the Hawkeyes' signal-caller.

He cited how Stanzi has led by example, and like the 6-4 quarterback, attributes the film study Stanzi does on a routine basis to the bulk of his success on the field.

"He just studies the looks. He studies the tape," O'Keefe said. "He's got himself a little notebook that he's got

everything jammed into, and he's pretty meticulous about those kinds of things."

Another facet of the Iowa offense O'Keefe discussed Thursday was what goes into scripting plays. As head coach Kirk Ferentz said earlier this season, the offensive coaches script approximately the first 12 plays for every game in advance.

"What you're looking for are the formations that you need. You want to see how they're going to line up against you basically," O'Keefe said. "You're going to have, whatever it is, X number of formations or motions that you want to see how they're going to line up in them, so you can go and attack it from there."



Phil Parker, Oct. 7, 2010

Meanwhile, Phil Parker filled in Thursday for defensive coordinator Norm Parker, who recently had his right foot amputated as a result of his recent diabetic setback.

The secondary coach was asked about what the Iowa defense will have to face next week in Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson. Like Ferentz, Parker drew the comparison to former Indiana quarterback Antwaan Randle El when describing Robinson.

He also made mention of Robinson's accuracy throwing the football, and said it will be crucial to play fundamentally sound defense next week when the Hawkeyes visit Ann Arbor, Mich.

“There’s going to be one of him and there’s going to be 11 of us trying to get the guy,” Parker said. “But you’ve got to have proper leverage, got to have good footwork, and be ready to take the challenge on.”

With the week away from the gridiron, plenty of eyes within the program will be glued to the 18th-ranked Wolverines’ in-state showdown on Oct. 9 against Parker’s alma mater, Michigan State.

The Spartans, who are ranked 17th nationally, run a 3-4 scheme defensively, in contrast to Iowa’s 4-3. Parker said that whatever success Michigan State ends up having with containing Robinson this weekend would have no bearing on how the Hawkeyes prepare for him next week.

“It’s going to be a great challenge for us to sit there and see what they do, but I don’t think it’s going to change what we do,” Parker said. “We know we have our game plan and what we want to do, and it’s not going to change. We’re not going to change our defense just because of what Michigan State does.”

Future Homecoming games announced

In a release sent out Thursday from Iowa’s sports information department, the UI has announced its next two Homecoming games, as a result of the schedule quirk after the Big Ten fixed its 2011 and 2012 conference schedules to accommodate Nebraska.

The Hawkeyes’ next two Homecoming contests will be on Oct. 22, 2011 against Indiana, and Sept. 29, 2012 against Minnesota. Iowa’s last Homecoming game against the Hoosiers was back in 2007, a 38-20 loss. Meanwhile, 2012 will mark the first time since Hayden Fry’s first season as the Hawkeyes’ head coach in 1979 that the Golden Gophers come to Iowa City as a Homecoming opponent.

Iowa's most recent Homecoming game was its most recent game, a 24-3 win over Penn State on Oct. 2 at Kinnick Stadium.