

# 10/12/2010: Kirk Ferentz teleconference transcript (premium)

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Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's teleconference on Tuesday with the Big Ten media:

## **Ferentz's opening statement:**

*"It's good to have a bye week, certainly. It came I think at a good time for our team. We were a little bit beat up, and it gave guys a chance to rebound a little bit, so we've got that out of the way. We'll go back to work today and have a big challenge here, traveling on the road – it's only our second away game – and play an excellent football team. We've got a lot of work to do, and we'll get back to that this afternoon."*

## **On what stands out about Michigan besides quarterback Denard Robinson:**

*"They've got a lot of good players. It's like it has been traditionally. They've got an awful lot of good players up and down the board. They've played very well this year. They've got an excellent record. Robinson is a big, big part of what they do, but they've got a lot of guys that are very explosive and dangerous, a good, athletic offensive line, and defense is the same way. They've got a lot of outstanding players, and we're going to have to be at our best."*

## **On what he thinks he'll learn about his team during this upcoming three-game stretch:**

*"I think you learn every week, no matter who you're playing,*

certainly. Conference play has been going on for two weeks, and we've only been involved one week. But I know everybody spends the whole out-of-season and everybody spends it seems like the whole month of September trying to project and figure out who is going to be the Player of the Year in the Big Ten, who's going to win the conference, and you know, all those things that people talk about. But that's what we'll all find out here in the next seven weeks.

"Certainly the next three weeks will be a big part of it, no matter who you're playing. The month of October, the picture becomes a little bit more clear. We've got a lot of things we're concerned about, and I think probably most people do. It's a matter of what you can do to move ahead and, you know, have a good outcome each and every week. But to me, there's nothing easy about it.

"I think if you're in a competitive conference, the Big Ten or any conference, it's very evident. You look at last week's score, very few saw Alabama getting knocked off – at least a couple of weeks ago, nobody did – and it happened on Saturday. There are a lot of good teams out there. The bottom line is we play in a tough league, and we expect this game to be tough, we expect the next six after that to be tough, and how you can best answer the bell every week. That's what it really gets down to."

**On the linebacking corps and how it's doing after the bye week:**

"I think we're doing better. We'll know more as we go along, but I think we're doing better, and I don't know. Bruce Davis isn't coming back obviously, he had surgery, but everybody else has a shot. We are healthier now than we were a week ago."

**On Joe Paterno's benchmarks and his influence on Ferentz's own coaching career:**

*"He's influenced mine, primarily because I grew up in Western Pennsylvania, and I grew up wanting to be and play in that program. I'll expand on that with due respect to everybody else. Back when I was in high school, they were the premiere program in the East. It's no disrespect to Pitt. They came alive a couple of years after I got out of high school, but at that time, they were really down. I was a long time fan of how they did things. His record amount of wins speaks for itself. I think what's more impressive is how they've done things through the years, going back again to the late '60s, when I started paying attention. They have a tremendous program, and to me, Coach Paterno is not only an excellent football coach, which he has proven, but I think he's probably what always stands for what's good in college football and college athletics."*

**On what he remembers from last year's game against Arkansas State, who plays Indiana this week:**

*"I just remember our game, it was a very tough ball game. There was nothing easy about it. I haven't really followed them closely since that game, but it was a 3-point game that could have gone either way, and we were in quite a battle the whole day. That's what I remember."*

**On the improvement of quarterback Ricky Stanzi:**

*"You know, I've said it a couple of times. I really think when he came back in our bowl game, he fought back from a tough injury and had surgery and showed an awful lot for getting back in that game, but I think he was really sharp in that game and I think it has carried over to this year. What I would credit it to are a couple of things: Number one, he works extremely hard away from the field and away from our practices, and then the other thing I think he is really benefiting from being a fifth-year senior quarterback who has played a lot. That's one good thing about experience. If you do it properly, you have a chance to play faster and make*

*better decisions, at all positions. Certainly at quarterback, it's very, very important."*

**On if there are any aspects to Iowa's highly-rated defense that might be under-publicized:**

*"I don't know. To your point, and with all due respect, statistics don't really mean a lot at this given point. We've only played five games, and it's like everything else. I think at the end of this month, those things might be a little bit more valid. But with all that being said, we think we have a chance to have a decent defense, and we thought that coming in. We brought back eight guys, and that's where most of our experience is. But you know, we're not out of the woods yet. We graduated three starters that are all playing in the NFL right now. But they're all quality players, and they don't just fall out of trees and end up on our campus. We're still a work in progress, and I think we can get better, hopefully. We're going to have to be better this week because we have such a challenge with the way [Michigan] will make you defend the entire field. It's going to be a great challenge for us."*

**On whether he was recruited by Paterno and the challenges of recruiting against him since Penn State joined the Big Ten:**

*"What's the win count right now? 400? It's close to it, if not, right? My point is coaches that win that many games don't recruit linebackers that are small and slow, and I had both of those attributes going. He's a lot smarter than that. But again, back in those days, in the early '70s, I think just about every kid in Western Pennsylvania, and probably the whole state, was thinking in those directions. When Coach Majors came to Pittsburgh, and then Coach Sherrill after that, the program gained momentum. But when I came out, Pitt was struggling, but it seemed like that's where everybody looked. And then recruiting against him, it's hard. They've got a tremendous institution, they've got such a stellar football program with a strong tradition, and a legendary icon head*

*coach. It's not much fun trying to recruit against him, and we certainly haven't beaten him on any players, and I doubt that we ever will."*