

10/19/2010: 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:

"First, we're happy to see Rick [Stanzi]'s efforts recognized. He has really played well for us for a long time, and he's having a great senior year, so I'm happy to see that, and we were happy to get out of Ann Arbor with a win. That was a hard-fought game. Wins don't come easy anywhere in the conference. They certainly don't on the road up in Michigan. So we were happy to get the victory, and we'll move on to the next game, another real tough challenge for us."

On how he deals with the temptation for the players to look at Iowa's upcoming home schedule:

"Well, two thoughts. First, what's at the end of the road is so far down the road. I don't think anybody can predict that. We've seen evidence of that the last couple of weeks, certainly. The last two weeks, the No. 1 team in the country has been beaten. All the experts had those teams up there for a reason, and for a good reason, and I think we've seen the last two weeks, you know, it's a good year. There are a lot of good teams in the country, so there's a good lesson to be learned there."

"And then the other part of it is, in our conference (and I imagine it is probably like this in a lot of other

conferences, I don't have experience anywhere else unless you want to include the Yankee Conference. You probably don't want to), I think the Big Ten is a lot like the NFL. Every week. There's absolutely no way to predict who is going to do what. I did take time during our bye week and paid attention a little bit to what went on a week ago Sunday, and I've always felt like whoever bets on a football game is a little bit goofy anyway, but if you bet on NFL games, you're totally out of your mind. A week ago Sunday's results are probably good evidence of that. I think that's just how football is. Everybody thinks they know what's going on, and you know, things don't always go quite the way people predict."

On the challenges Wisconsin presents this week:

"It depends on where you want to start. First of all, they're very talented and a well-coached football team. They've got a great tradition of success, and there's a reason for that. They've had talent and they've been well-coached for a long, long time. This team is no exception. The game Saturday night was not a fluke. That's no disrespect to Ohio State. It was two excellent football teams playing, and Wisconsin really had it going and played a great game.

"They're good on special teams, as evidence from the first play of the game. It was a huge play in the game. They're very good on special teams. They've got an excellent placekicker, a field goal kicker. Offensively, they traditionally score a lot of points and move the ball, and it's the same thing this year. They've got two outstanding running backs, a veteran offensive line, and a senior quarterback that has done a tremendous job of leading them, traps at receiver and tight end. Defensively, they look tough at every position. They've got an excellent football team."

On the difference in Stanzi between this year and last year with throwing fewer interceptions:

"And I'll just throw this in there – one of those [interceptions] was a very catchable ball that the receiver unfortunately didn't make the catch, and it went up in the air, and another infamous pick-six. To put that on the quarterback would really be unfair. Reality is he has thrown one down the field that maybe we wish he could have back. I think it's just he's a fifth-year senior and he has worked extremely hard for a long time. I think this is a key little fact, but we still have six more games to go, so anything can happen. But I think he's playing with confidence and it's confidence that he has earned."

On Stanzi as a leader:

"Well, that has been a strong point of his from Day One. Ricky's a physically tough guy, and more importantly, a mentally tough guy. He has got tremendous work ethic. I think everybody involved with our team realizes his investment. He has just had a good knack of being a leader from Day One since he got here and earned the starting job. As you might imagine, just as much as his experience on the field has helped, I think he has certainly grown into a very strong team leader for us."

On what he noticed from Wisconsin's offensive line that allowed it to be successful against Ohio State last weekend:

"Pretty much what you see every year. They've always been very, very well-coached. I'll go back to my time in the NFL scouting their linemen. It goes back to Bill Callahan was the line coach, I believe on Barry [Alvarez]'s initial first staff. They've done a great job through the years, and this is no exception. The other aspect is they're just so veteran up front. So not are they good, and we all know they're big, but they're also very veteran, which means they just react very well together to whatever is thrown at them. It's a real credit. They've worked hard, and they have done a great job."

On his reaction to the recent SI story about agents, and what solution he would prefer:

"I haven't read any of it. I heard it on the radio coming in. I believe this was what, late 80s/early 90s. This is not a new phenomenon, certainly. I think probably the only thing that has changed right now is it's like everything. There's just more information out there. I think there were, and this is hindsight, but in my mind, I think there's more people that are unscrupulous and more aggressive, maybe than there was 20 years ago, 25 years ago.

"I think this is a new phenomena. We won in the 80s and went through the Norby Walters and whatever that other guy's name was, that deal. Any time money is involved or there are potential earnings for people, some people are going to make bad choices. Ultimately, I think all of us have to realize it's a very distinct possibility. It always has been. People are aggressive, and I think all we can try to do is continue to educate our players as proactively as possible, and just show them what the potential downside is.

"I have read about some of the players that have had instances and know at least of one person who had to forfeit their senior year who was and probably will be a very high draft pick. But you don't get those years back. If people are accepting money, and in the big scheme of things, a player of that magnitude, it's really not worth the risk. Ultimately, it just gets back to people have to say no. I think it's kind of like performance-enhancing drugs or any other things that might be of temptation to people in competition. They just have to, ultimately, they have to say no."