

# 10/26/2010: Iowa football notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the 18th-ranked Hawkeyes' upcoming game against No. 5 Michigan State during his weekly press conference on Oct. 26, 2010 at the Hayden Fry Football Complex.

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa — Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz began his weekly press conference on Tuesday talking about the challenges his No. 18 Iowa Hawkeyes will have on Oct. 30 when No. 5 Michigan State visits Kinnick Stadium.

But what originally started out as a discussion about the

Hawkeyes' upcoming opponent quickly became a re-hashing of what went array last weekend in Iowa's 31-30 loss to Wisconsin.

Ferentz acknowledged regrets about some of his coaching decisions in that defeat, most notably how the game ended with the Hawkeyes burning their final timeout with 12 seconds left as opposed to quarterback Ricky Stanzi spiking the football to stop the clock.

"In retrospect, I wish we had clocked it, quite frankly," Ferentz said. "We thought the clock was going to be down under 10 [seconds] after the sneak. That was our thinking.

"I wish I had done it over, could do over. I can't."

But while he put the onus on himself, Ferentz also was defensive when asked about performances of some of his players – both good and bad.

"I'm not big on grading players in the public," he said. "We need everybody to play better. I probably need to coach better, too."

Although Ferentz stood up for his players, it didn't go without the players themselves being critical of some teammates. Like senior defensive end Adrian Clayborn in his postgame interview following the loss to the Badgers, senior defensive lineman Christian Ballard didn't call anyone out by name, but spoke of issues he felt the players needed to be addressing during the week of practice.

"A lot of guys are going through the motions, and we got to get it going," Ballard said. "We've only got five games left, two home games left. We definitely got to pick it up, try to get the energy flowing, and I think that's what we're going to try and do this week."

Junior defensive lineman Mike Daniels said he hadn't noticed

any players slacking off during practice and he assured that if he thought anyone was, they would be called out in private.

"I don't really remember anybody just lagging ever. God forbid. But if that definitely ever were the case, you better believe people will be on top of that," Daniels said.

### **Not quick to relive the past**

Coming into this game at 8-0 overall and being the lone unbeaten in the Big Ten, many have drawn parallels to what happened at Iowa last season.

The Hawkeyes traveled to East Lansing, Mich., last October with a 7-0 record, and escaped Spartan Stadium with a 15-13 win when quarterback Ricky Stanzi found wide receiver Marvin McNutt for a touchdown as time expired. It marked the first time in school history Iowa had ever started a football season 8-0.

Now more than a year later, McNutt said he hadn't thought about that catch until Tuesday when it was brought up.

"It's a new team and a new week," he said. "We can't look back to last year."

What members of the Hawkeyes do remember from last season's affair, however, was the physical nature. Former Iowa offensive lineman Dace Richardson broke his ankle, and current players Brett Greenwood, Colin Sandeman, and Adam Robinson all sustained injuries that would sideline each of them.

Julian Vandervelde is among those who expects this weekend's contest to be no different in terms of physicality.

"It was probably our most physical Big Ten game last year," the senior offensive lineman said. "They came out swinging hard, and we came out trying to swing right back. I expect it to be a very similar game. We're both built in very similar ways.

"We all remember that game, and we all remember the way it was played."

## **Family reunion**

When the Hawkeyes and Spartans square off at Kinnick Stadium, there will be a family divided.

Iowa sophomore cornerback Micah Hyde is the younger brother of Michigan State safety Marcus Hyde. While Micah didn't start in the Iowa win in East Lansing last season, he is ahead 1-0 head-to-head against his brother, who was on the field during that final play when Stanzi threw the touchdown to McNutt.

"After we rushed the field, he was walking off all slow and stuff because they were all disappointed. It was a tough loss for them," Micah said. "I just walked past him on the way off the field. It was just one of those things where I said, 'Hey, hurry up! Mom's waiting on us. That's the game. I'm not going to be here for that long, so hurry up and get out of the locker room,' because he takes a long time.

"My mom told me to say that."

Now both are starters, and when the family comes to Iowa City, no one will be choosing sides. In fact, Micah made clear that when he went through the recruiting process in high school, the thought of being teammates with Marcus wasn't something he wanted to do.

"Honestly, I never once thought about that. I never once said, 'Hey, I want to go and play with my brother,'" Micah said. "I did that a year in high school, and I think that was all I pretty much needed. When I was a junior and senior in high school, I never really said I'm going to play with my brother.

"People would ask me, 'Oh, you're going to go play with your brother,' and I'd be like, 'No.' That's just something I never wanted to do."

## **Being aware of special teams woes**

Ryan Donahue has heard what has been said by fans about how the special teams has let down Iowa in both of its two losses to Arizona and Wisconsin this season. In fact, he won't even argue what has been said.

The senior punter also addressed the field goal that wasn't in the second quarter against Wisconsin.

"The snap wasn't that excruciatingly high. It was just to my head," Donahue said. "I should have handled it. It's a snap that I've handled before. It caught me wrong. I couldn't get my hands on it for whatever reason, and my hand was on the front side of the ball.

"If I would have kept it there, I would've blocked the kick instead of them blocking the kick. So I decided to just sweep it and get as much yardage as I can."

Special teams has been discussed heavily the last few days not only because of Iowa's failures in football's third phase, but because of how it has absolutely changed the complexion of Michigan State's season.

A fake punt executed by the Spartans last week enabled them to leave Northwestern with a 35-27 victory. Donahue took notice. He also responded to criticism of the coaching staff that suggests a lack of creativity in special teams situations, such as running a fake punt.

"We mess with it here and there. It's definitely not an every week thing," Donahue said about how often the team works on fake punts during practice. "Maybe we'll throw something in just in case. But we don't really work for gadgets and stuff like that. We really just try to play regular football."