

11/16/2010: 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 was a really tough disappointing loss for us. A very hard-fought game. I thought both teams really played hard, and give Northwestern the credit. They got it done there in the end, and it was just a real shame that Dan Persa was injured in the game on that last play. He has been a tremendous player, a tremendous competitor, and we had a lot of respect for him going into the game and even more following. It's just really unfortunate any time any player gets hurt, and that was just a tough thing for them. We went back to work on Sunday, made some corrections, looked at the tape, and now we have to move forward and play an outstanding opponent with Ohio State coming to town this week."

On whether his defense was gassed in the fourth quarter against Northwestern last weekend:

"Yeah, I think anybody who was at the game would understand why they were. I think our guys are in great shape, in great condition. I don't know how many plays they ended up running total, but I think it was close to 50 in the second half. You go through two 2-minute drills like that, against any team it's difficult. But I think the thing that really made it different was you were playing against a quarterback that is

very elusive, that you've got to chase around. So it's a tough deal. Not so much the pace of the game I think, but the way he plays really puts a lot of pressure on everybody, and we're not the deepest group. We don't have the luxury of rolling guys in and out."

On if there's any more as to why the struggles against Northwestern have continued:

"You know, there might be some cosmic thing. I was born in August, I don't know when Pat [Fitzgerald] was born. Maybe there's something with Leos and Capricorns, or whatever sign he might be. I think the bottom line is they've outplayed us. You go back to the last two years, not this year but the last two years, it was 9-2 on turnovers. You go back to the other day, to me the biggest factor in the game probably would've been on third down if I was going to pick out one thing. Turnovers were even, so third downs were a huge factor. You know, I think you've got to give them an awful lot of credit. They've had good football teams, particularly the last three years. The quarterback play we saw from them last week was just outstanding. We haven't played many quarterbacks that have played much better than that."

On his evaluation of the play of both Adrian Clayborn and Tyler Sash this season:

"Yeah, they're both good players and they've played well. Very well."

On if it's fair to say Clayborn's numbers are low because of teams game-planning for him:

"Yeah. I think in part, that's fair to say. That's what happens to good linemen. I don't think typically stats tell the whole story with linemen. I think there's a guy in Chicago, I think I just saw this in the paper, Julius Peppers has got two sacks. Maybe he's having a bad year, I don't know, but he's a pretty good player. At the end of the day, and I

read this somewhere Sunday night. I read all the papers here, but somebody printed that he had a subpar game last week. I looked at the tape and I thought he played excellent. It's hard to evaluate linemen in particular unless you do it off feel. If you do evaluations off stats, you've probably got a different story than what the film might say. He's an excellent player, just like Ohio State's [Cameron] Heyward. They both, to me, are kind of top-shelf guys."

On what this year's group of seniors have meant to the program over the last several years:

"Well, yeah. First of all, it's good to be playing at home on a Senior Day. I think we've set a record this year. We've played three straight teams on the road, one to come yet still, that is having a Senior Day, so it has been a little bit unusual from that standpoint. But this group has just done a fantastic job. If you look at some of our guys who are our most noteworthy guys – Ricky Stanzi, Adrian Clayborn, Karl Klug, Brett Greenwood, you go right down the list. These guys have done a fantastic job, and we've also got a group of guys that are more unheralded, not as well-known, that have also done a tremendous job. Our teams have had a lot of success over the last three years in particular, and a large part of that is just the work that these guys have done, not only on the field, but with all the other things they do. A great group of guys academically, character-wise, and what have you. Senior Days are always a little tough. That's one of the things about college football. You always have to turn over a group and it will be a real emotional thing, and on top of that, we have to play an outstanding team against Ohio State."

On how much there still is for the seniors with playing Ohio State this week:

"I think there's always something to play for. We were 1-9 back in '99 and I think those seniors, in our last game against Minnesota, thought that was an extremely important

game. There's always something to play for. Our season is not over yet. We have not surrendered. The chances of us being in the title talk are basically reduced to a very, very slim percentage, and that's not our focus right now. Our focus, as it has been all season, has been to go out and play as best as we can this week, and then go out and do that the next week as well, and then hopefully play great in the bowl game. There are a lot of good things that are still out there. To play a team like Ohio State this week is a real exciting thing, and needless to say, we'll have to be at our absolute best if we're going to be competitive in this game."

On what differences there are with having Stanzi for this game unlike a season ago:

"I've got, well I was going to say 20 years of playing against Ohio State, we haven't played them every year. But in my 20 years involved in the league and six years of watching them from the NFL, I can't ever remember them ever having bad personnel, having a bad defensive team, and this group is like the ones that we're accustomed to seeing over the last 12 years. They're very, very talented, very well-coached, and very tough to prepare for. One thing to have a veteran quarterback, I think that certainly is helpful. In our case last year, James [Vandenberg] wasn't a veteran, but he really played like one in that game. To have any chance at all to score some points and be successful, you need good quarterback play. Certainly, we're going to need that this week. These guys don't give up many yards, they don't give up many points, and it's a real challenge for anybody playing offensively against them."

On whether Stanzi should have been the one taking the blame for the team losing to Northwestern last week:

"Well, I think he made one [mistake] certainly on the pick, and he hasn't made many this year like that, and that's going to happen. You're not going to go through a whole season

playing perfect. But I think it's more of a reflection of Ricky as a person than as a leader. He looks inward and expects a lot from himself. I think that's why he's so highly respected by everybody on our team, in our organization here."