

COMMENTARY: Hawkeyes now need to move forward

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Henry Ford once said the following: "Failure is only the opportunity to begin again, only this time more wisely."

In many ways, this quote can be used in describing the current state of the Iowa football program.

Maybe 2010 has been more of a disappointment than a failure for the Hawkeyes, but nevertheless, they were a top 10 team preseason that went 7-5. All five losses basically followed the same script (I likened this after Iowa lost to Ohio State to [watching multiple Road Runner/Wile E. Coyote cartoons](#), only to see Wile E. Coyote fall off a cliff every time he uses a different Acme product).

Many looked for a scapegoat as to why this team didn't have the same type of success it had when it won the Orange Bowl 11 months ago. Was it Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz not adjusting accordingly? Was it lack of creative play-calling on both sides? Was it lack of execution? This can be speculated many different ways.

Then came the bombshell on Dec. 7, two days after the Hawkeyes were invited to play Missouri in the 2010 Insight Bowl.

The whole situation surrounding the arrest of senior wide receiver Derrell Johnson-Koulianos on numerous drug charges has been well-documented, so I'm not going to rehash

everything here. I waited until now to write this because I spent most of my Wednesday afternoon reflecting back on Johnson-Koulianos' Hawkeye career and the fall from grace it has taken.

I have three thoughts on this matter:

1. Ferentz acted appropriately when he suspended Johnson-Koulianos from all team activities. As much as I grew to respect Johnson-Koulianos the person outside of our respective working environments ([I elaborated on this in a commentary](#) after his record-breaking day at Michigan last October), he should not be allowed to even travel with the team down to Arizona later this month, let alone actually play in the Insight Bowl. If you're looking for him to suffer consequences, this is where you start.

2. I do hope that Johnson-Koulianos manages to turn his life around for the better and can stay clean once he has gone through rehab and paid his debts to society. By no means do I condone anything he admitted doing. He put himself in this position and has no one but himself to blame. But if Johnson-Koulianos truly shows remorse for his wrongdoings and makes the honest effort to change his lifestyle off the gridiron, then he ought to be given that second chance in life, whatever that happens to be.

3. I hope when fans reflect back on his career that they are fair in their approach. It's one thing to be upset about the situation at hand, and that's reasonable. But this setback in Johnson-Koulianos' life shouldn't diminish anything he accomplished on the field as a Hawkeye. No one can take away his receiving records or the big plays he made in games from the moment he first saw the field up until his last game on Nov. 27 at Minnesota. Just something to keep in mind.

Now, the page needs to be turned.

Whether you like it or not (I know many who "want this season

over with"), the Hawkeyes are playing in the Insight Bowl on Dec. 28, and then their focus shifts to the upcoming 2011 season.

Regarding this game against Missouri, this is an opportunity for someone like senior Colin Sandeman to make one final impression before his career comes to an end. Keep in mind that Sandeman played a significant role in that Orange Bowl win last January. Same goes for senior Paul Chaney, Jr., who is a St. Louis native and would probably like nothing more than to go out with a win over the Tigers.

This is also going to be a great opportunity for a guy like Keenan Davis to show how he would fit in a potential 1-2 punch of himself and junior Marvin McNutt in 2011 (assuming McNutt returns for his senior year).

For the Hawkeyes, winning this game doesn't salvage this season. Whether the final record is 8-5 or 7-6 probably doesn't make that much of a difference because for some (probably most) fans, this season will be viewed as a failure.

This game is truly a new beginning. Yes, it's one last chance to see players like Ricky Stanzi and Adrian Clayborn don black and gold. But winning the Insight Bowl gives the Hawkeyes a building block they probably needs right now. It would give those who do return in 2011 an idea of how quickly things can be turned around at Iowa.

Assuming, of course, the players make wise decisions off the field and handle their business accordingly on it.