

# 12/17/2010: Iowa football notebook



Iowa defensive coordinator Norm Parker spoke publicly for the first time since having his right leg amputated during a press conference at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City on Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Three months after having a prosthetic leg put in as result of diabetes complications, Iowa defensive coordinator Norm Parker made his first public comments during a press conference held Friday afternoon at the Hayden Fry Football Complex.

Parker, who came in with a walker and needed assistance getting up and down from the podium, was the focal point, as he has been around the team during its bowl preparation and will be traveling to Tempe, Ariz., for the 2010 Insight Bowl on Dec. 28 against No. 14 Missouri.

Not only is the plan for Parker to be with the Hawkeyes for the Insight Bowl, but he also restated his intentions of being around in 2011.

"I really missed it," Parker said about the time he spent away from the team while being treated at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. "The first game I got to come to was the Michigan State game. I was sitting at that game up in the press box and thinking to myself, 'This is where I really want to be. This is who I am, what I live for.'"

When asked about Parker's future as the team's defensive coordinator, Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz made clear he'll stay as long as he'd like to.

"Over the long haul, we're better with Norm, no question about it," Ferentz said.

### **"Year of the Quarterback"**

In their eight Big Ten games this season, the Hawkeyes have faced an outstanding crop of quarterbacks in the conference. Iowa has already faced players such as Denard Robinson, Scott Tolzien, Kirk Cousins, Ben Chappell, Dan Persa, and Terrelle Pryor.

When Parker was asked about some of the shortcomings the Hawkeyes had defensively this season, he summed up 2010 in the Big Ten as "the year of the quarterback."

So it shouldn't be all that alarming that the Hawkeyes will face yet another talented signal-caller in Missouri's Blaine Gabbert. This season, the Tiger junior completed 260-of-418 passes for 2,752 yards, 15 touchdowns and just seven interceptions. He also has four rushing touchdowns and 239 yards rushing on 99 carries.

"He can really throw," Parker said. "I think his speed is deceptive. He's a good athlete. He's a real good athlete, so

he can scramble around and beat you.”

Parker described the Tigers’ offense as “Northwestern at its most extreme, bizzare things.” Ferentz, meanwhile, played up to Missouri’s ability to spread defenses out and distribute the football all around the field.

“They’ve evolved into a very good throwing football team,” Ferentz said. “[Gabbert] doesn’t hang on to the ball. He knows where to go with it and does a nice job throwing it accurately, too.

“As a result, they have been proficient offensively.”



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming Insight Bowl match-up with No. 14 Missouri during a press conference at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City on Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

### **Dealing with no DJK and no A-Rob**

With Derrell Johnson-Koulianos no longer a member of the team and sophomore running back Adam Robinson not accompanying the Hawkeyes to Tempe, Iowa finds itself needing to shore up a few positions on the offensive side of the ball before taking the field against the Tigers.

Fortunately for the Hawkeyes, freshman running back Marcus Coker has started three of the last four games in Robinson's place, with two of those games being due to Robinson dealing with concussions.

In those three games started, Coker had 52 carries and rushed for 289 yards and a touchdown that came in the fourth quarter of Iowa's 20-17 loss to Ohio State on Nov. 20.

Although both senior Paki O'Meara and redshirt freshman Brad Rogers could get carries in the Insight Bowl, the bulk of the ground game will come courtesy of Coker.

"We're only playing one game," Ferentz said. "Right now, Marcus will go as hard and long as he can."

As for replacing Johnson-Koulianos, senior wideout Colin Sandeman is listed as the starter on the 2-deep released by the coaching staff earlier this week. Fellow senior receiver Don Nordmann is listed behind Sandeman.

The player who might benefit the most, however, is sophomore Keenan Davis, who is currently on schedule to start in 2011 opposite the man in front of him right now on the 2-deep, junior Marvin McNutt. This season, Davis has 10 receptions for 126 yards and one touchdown catch that came during a 45-0 win over Ball State back on Sept. 25.

"We have confidence in Keenan," Iowa offensive coordinator Ken O'Keefe said. "I think there's a lot of excitement that he gets an opportunity. He's going to do whatever he can to take advantage of it."



Iowa offensive coordinator Ken O'Keefe talks about the Hawkeyes' upcoming Insight Bowl match-up against No. 14 Missouri during a press conference at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City on Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

### **O'Keefe reacts to coaching rumors**

Shortly after Indiana had dismissed Bill Lynch as its head coach, one of the names being possibly linked to the job opening in Bloomington was O'Keefe, who has been a member of Ferentz's staff at Iowa since the very beginning.

Since then, Indiana hired a different offensive coordinator in Oklahoma's Kevin Wilson, and O'Keefe has remained content at his position with the Hawkeyes.

Before joining Ferentz at Iowa in 1999, O'Keefe had spent the previous nine seasons as a collegiate head coach – one year at Fordham and eight at Alleghany College in Pennsylvania. He won a Division III national championship in his first season at Alleghany College, and had three additional unbeaten regular season campaigns and won five conference crowns.

"It has been so long now that I barely remember what it was like at this stage," O'Keefe said. "Time flies. It has been 12 fast years."

When asked further on the matter, O'Keefe said being recognized as a head coaching candidate at another program is something he doesn't give much thought to, mainly because the opportunity to reflect doesn't just present itself.

"In college football, you don't have a whole lot of time to stop and smell the roses, or think about things until everything's past you for the most part," O'Keefe said.

[Ferentz/Parker/O'Keefe transcript \(Dec. 17, 2010\)](#)