

# Ferentz, Pinkel give final thoughts before taking field



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz (right) and Missouri head coach Gary Pinkel stand side-to-side behind the trophy for the 2010 Insight Bowl in between final pregame press conferences on Monday, Dec. 27, 2010 in Scottsdale, Ariz.

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – For both the Iowa Hawkeyes and No. 14 Missouri Tigers, plenty is at stake in Tuesday's Insight Bowl at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Ariz.

If the Tigers (10-2) emerge victorious, it would mean a second season in the last four with at least 11 wins. Given that Missouri only has a total of five seniors that start on either side of the ball, beating Iowa could potentially be a catalyst for a monumental 2011 campaign.

"Our players recognize that they want to end this in the right way, and want to give their greatest effort," Missouri head

coach Gary Pinkel said.

As for the Hawkeyes (7-5), winning this game would put a halt to some of the negativity that has surrounded the Iowa football program both on and off the gridiron. Beating Missouri would also give the Hawkeyes three straight bowl victories for the first time ever, and it would send prominent seniors such as quarterback Ricky Stanzi and defensive end Adrian Clayborn out in a fashion they and the rest of their class became accustomed to.

“Outside of just winning, if there’s one good reason to win, to me, that would be the first one on my list,” Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said. “They have done a great job in a lot of areas. They’ve really been a big part of the success, and it would be a really nice way to send them off.”

Missouri has tasted recent success in bowls, having won three of them during Pinkel’s tenure in Columbia, Mo. The Tigers have also experienced disappointment in recent years, getting pounded by Navy in last year’s Texas Bowl, and before that, suffering a heartbreaking defeat in the 2006 Sun Bowl at the hands of Oregon State.

Overall, Pinkel has been pleased with how his team has managed its bowl week, and credits some of those prior experiences as something that helped establish how he wants the players to balance the game and events surrounding it.

“I think our practices have been excellent. The meetings prior, too, have been really high-focused,” Pinkel said. “I think our players have had a great time. This is as good as any bowl I’ve been around.

“They’re excited. This is as hugely important to us as it is to Iowa, and I think we’re in a position now to play our best football game.”

With Iowa, things are slightly different. It hasn’t even been

a calendar year since the Hawkeyes defeated Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl, yet they come into this game starting a running back in Marcus Coker that was in high school last winter.

Although Coker has only started three games in his young Hawkeye career, the 6-0 running back is someone that has impressed Ferentz and the coaching staff from the start.

"We were really excited about [Coker] when we recruited him," Ferentz said. "I think he's probably a good example of the kind of player that we hope to get in our program. We thought he had the chance to be a really good back, and I had a very bad vibe when he got injured that third day of camp.

"We think he can be a real quality back for us, and we're excited about his future."

Another area of the offense Ferentz has been pleased with in recent weeks is the receiving corps, even without the services of Derrell Johnson-Koulianos after he was arrested on drug charges earlier this month.

Senior wideout Colin Sandeman will get the start opposite junior Marvin McNutt, and between those two, as well as seniors Paul Chaney, Jr., and Don Nordmann, and sophomore Keenan Davis, a lot will be expected of this group Tuesday night.

"Our guys have to be versatile. It's something that we like them to do," Ferentz said. "I think we'll be fine there. They've practiced well."

### **A third Hawkeye junior might test the NFL waters**

Like McNutt and safety Tyler Sash, cornerback Shaun Prater has filed the proper paper work with the NFL to get a better read on whether jumping to the pros would better serve his interests than staying at Iowa for his senior year. Ferentz

confirmed this during his press conference Monday.

Last year, the Hawkeyes had both Bryan Bulaga and Amari Spievey elect to forgo their senior years and leap to the NFL. Prior to that, Shonn Greene announced he was leaving as he walked off the field following Iowa's 31-10 win over South Carolina in the 2009 Outback Bowl.

The matter is one Ferentz deals with on a regular basis, and while he wouldn't comment directly on either Prater, Sash or McNutt's situations, he does think the way the NFL operates such procedures serves a purpose.

"It's better for them to get information from people that do this for a living as opposed to people that might be advising or offering advice that really have no idea," Ferentz said. "It's a nice resource for players, and we encourage it. We have no problem with it.

"At the appropriate time, we'll deal with it."

[Kirk Ferentz transcript \(12/27/2010\)](#)