

2011 Spring Football position breakdowns: Wide Receivers (premium)

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If there are any questions with the Iowa receiving corps entering 2011, most of them could be answered here at the conclusion of spring practices.

The big story this offseason was the decision of wideout Marvin McNutt to return for his senior year. This move has potential to pay off big time for McNutt in 2011.

As a junior last season, McNutt ended up leading the Hawkeyes in receiving with 53 receptions for 861 yards. His eight touchdown catches was second to Derrell Johnson-Koulianos, who had 10 touchdowns. Not only that, but back in 2009 when quarterback James Vandenberg filled in for an injured Ricky Stanzi at Ohio State, both of Vandenberg's touchdown passes went McNutt's way.

If all of that is any indicator, McNutt has potential to have a monster senior year with Vandenberg throwing the ball.

However, the receiving corps is an area that was hit hard by players leaving in the offseason, and with McNutt out this spring due to a shoulder injury, younger receivers are being asked to step up right away. In addition to the losses of Johnson-Koulianos and Colin Sandeman, the Hawkeyes had to fill voids left by some of the more unheralded wideouts from last year such as Paul Chaney, Jr., Don Nordmann, Nick Kuchel, and Ben Evans.

The biggest name of this returning group would be junior

Keenan Davis, who saw some action as a sophomore last season. In a game against Ball State, Davis filled in for an injured McNutt and capped his first series on the field with the first touchdown catch of his Hawkeye career. The Cedar Rapids native finished with 11 catches for 151 yards and appeared in all 13 of Iowa's games in 2010.

Behind Davis and McNutt on the spring 2-deep were sophomore Don Shumpert and redshirt freshman Kevonte Martin-Manley, both of whom will be earning plenty of first-string reps this spring with McNutt sidelined.

Shumpert played in four games last season, primarily with duties on special teams, and finished with six tackles. The St. Louis native came into the spring listed at 6-3, 185 pounds. Meanwhile, Martin-Manley is a Michigan product listed at 6-0, 200 pounds.

This was a position of strength for the Hawkeyes in 2010. It has potential to be a strength again in 2011, but a lot of it will depend on the development of young receivers such as Shumpert and Martin-Manley. McNutt and Davis will be at the forefront, but it's an area where depth is such a necessity.