

8/5/2011: Iowa Media Day notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz speaks to assembled media during his Media Day press conference at Kinnick Stadium on Friday, Aug. 5, 2011.

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HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The word “transition” might not apply more to the Iowa football program than it does right now.

For starters, the Big Ten has entered a transition. The stories are well-documented by now of divisions like Legends and Leaders, the addition of Nebraska, having a league championship game. Then there’s the Hawkeyes’ transition from a heavy senior-laden squad in 2010 to one where both old and new faces could emerge.

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz likened it to 2008, a season where nothing was truly set in stone until the end of September. It isn’t so much deficiencies the Hawkeyes are dealing with four weeks before their season-opener against Tennessee Tech, but more so a lot of unknown.

In other words, some of the questions many have about this team just might not truly be answered until the season actually arrives.

“We’ve got a new team and new opportunities in front of us,” Ferentz said at his press conference Friday afternoon. “I’m sure we’ll have new challenges as well.”

Some of the answers appear to be set, particularly on the offensive side of the football. But while who starts seems more obvious on offense, very few of the offensive positions have the whole “next man in” figured out. For instance, James Vandenberg is set as the starting quarterback. Who plays behind him hasn’t been determined yet. The same thing can be said about others such as sophomore running back Marcus Coker, junior offensive tackle Riley Reiff, and senior wide receiver Marvin McNutt, just to name a few.

Then there’s the defense. Names have surfaced, but how some of those players wind up being used hasn’t quite been determined yet. A clear example of this is the situation surrounding junior defensive back Micah Hyde. The Fostoria, Ohio native started all 13 games last season at right cornerback, where he had replaced Amari Spivey. This spring, he was moved to free safety with sophomore Tanner Miller being out due to offseason surgery.

Where he ends up playing impacts whether or not Miller or other cornerbacks such as junior Greg Castillo and sophomore B.J. Lowery see the field right away.

Even special teams have transition, with senior punter Eric Guthrie now stepping in to fill a void left by a four-year starter in Ryan Donahue.

“We have a lot of moving parts, and we’ll have a lot of moving parts through the month of August,” Ferentz said.

Reiff not thinking about the NFL right now

As anticipated, the question was asked to offensive tackle Riley Reiff about his future. Reiff is being highly-touted by some as a high first-round pick should he forego his senior season.

This isn't the first time this has been an issue for Iowa under Ferentz. Two former left tackles, Robert Gallery and Bryan Bulaga, had similar situations when they were juniors. Gallery opted to stay for his senior year and was the second overall pick in the 2004 NFL draft. Bulaga, on the other hand, left after his junior year and went 23rd overall in 2010 to the Green Bay Packers, with whom he went on to win a Super Bowl with his rookie season.

As far as Reiff is concerned, it's the furthest thought from his mind right now.

"I'm just trying to get better. That's what we preach every day – trying to get better," Reiff said. "I take it day by day. Whatever happens, happens."

Parker feeling well

Iowa defensive coordinator Norm Parker sat back in his golf cart taking questions Friday afternoon from reporters about a variety of topics. When asked about his health, Parker said he was feeling fine.

Since having his right foot amputated last fall as a result of diabetes complications, Parker had a prosthetic leg put in. He ended up missing the bulk of the 2010 season as a result of the operation.

"I might not feel good three weeks from today," Parker said. "But today, I don't see any difference now than 20 years ago."

Ferentz has made an emphasis of making sure to reach out and be supportive of Parker whenever he can.

"We've just got to adjust a little bit," Ferentz said.

“Hopefully, he’ll do that, take care of his diet, and do all the things probably all of us should be doing.”

Injury/Early camp updates

Ferentz gave a few updates regarding players Friday afternoon. The only player not to have arrived in camp yet was freshman defensive tackle Darian Cooper. Ferentz called it “a complication” and expects him to be in fall camp sometime next week.

On the injury front, senior defensive end Lebron Daniel and sophomore linebacker Dakota Getz both have had limited contact in practice. Sophomore fullback Brad Rogers is still being held out right now as he continues to go through testing after a heart condition discovered last December prevented him from playing in the 2010 Insight Bowl, as well as spring practice.

Ferentz also revealed that sophomore offensive lineman Nolan MacMillan is dealing with a sports hernia injury and the timetable for his return is unknown. MacMillan was listed first string at left guard on the preseason 2-deep Iowa released last week.

Hawkeyes to hold “ANF Day at Kinnick”



Former Iowa head coach Hayden Fry (right) speaks about the UI's partnership with the Iowa Farm Bureau to raise awareness to "ANF"

during a press conference at Kinnick Stadium on Friday, Aug. 5, 2011.

Prior to Iowa's Media Day, an earlier press conference took place featuring legendary Hawkeye icon Hayden Fry. The former coach was in town to help promote a partnership put on between the school and the Iowa Farm Bureau that raises awareness to farming issues in the U.S.

The term "ANF" (America Needs Farmers) ought to sound familiar to Hawkeye fans. The "ANF" decal first came to light during Iowa's 1985 Rose Bowl season as the country was dealing with its farming crisis of the 1980s. The cause was headed by Fry and the decal remained a staple on the Iowa helmets until a rule was passed by the NCAA for schools to rid of such decals.

However, the decal was brought back to life in 2009 and has been on the back of the Iowa helmets ever since. Iowa announced its inaugural "ANF Day at Kinnick" is set for Oct. 15 when the Hawkeyes play host to Northwestern, who has won five of its last six meetings with Iowa. The area between the North and West grandstands of Kinnick Stadium will also be re-named ANF Plaza, and it will feature a Wall of Fame honoring former players that "exemplify the tenacity, work ethic and character of the American farmer."

"This is going to bring national recognition to farmers across America," Fry said.

[Kirk Ferentz, Iowa Media Day press conference transcript \(Aug. 5, 2011\)](#)