

# 8/30/2011: Kirk Ferentz teleconference transcript (premium)

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Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's teleconference on Tuesday with the Big Ten media:

## **Ferentz's opening statement:**

*"I'm sure like everybody, we're eager to get back on the field. It has been a long camp, but a good camp. I think the team has had a good attitude. After several weeks of practice, I think certainly you get to that point where you just need to get out there and see how things are going to work and progress. We're eager to see how the team performs. We've got several returning veterans that have played well and we expect to play well moving forward, and then a lot of young guys who we're just eager to see, how they respond. We'll certainly have to be ready to go and at our best for our opponent. Tennessee Tech's a team that's very, very veteran. I don't know if we've ever played them. But it seems like they've got 20 returners back, not including their specialists, so it's a very veteran team, a team that finished up on a positive note last year. We'll have our work cut out for us on Saturday."*

## **On James Vandenberg being in place to replace former quarterback Ricky Stanzi:**

*"I think he has continued to do a good job. He had a good spring last year, and certainly I thought had a very good fall. He just didn't have an opportunity to play very much. But he was positioned behind a real good player in Ricky*

*Stanzi. He continues to demonstrate good leadership out there. He's throwing the ball pretty well. As I alluded to a minute ago just with some of the younger players, I think he's very eager to have an opportunity to get out there and actually play. That's what every player goes to college for, and I think he's eager to have his opportunity."*

**On who he considers to be the leaders on the defensive side of the ball:**

*"I think we have the last couple of years. Each year, we've graduated players and this year is no different. But if you start up front, Mike Daniels is a very vocal guy and has played very well. Broderick Binns is a very experienced guy. A different demeanor than Mike, certainly, but I think really looked upon by all of our players and a guy that's respected. Behind him, you've got Tyler Nielsen, who is just a tremendous young man and a senior who played very well last year. Then you've got Shaun Prater in the back end, who is very savvy, a senior who also has a great personality. Micah Hyde has done a good job, and certainly James Morris got thrown in there last year and did a good job as well. I think we've got some guys who are eager to show the way. But all that being said, we've got work to do."*

**On whether he expects to rotate a lot of guys along the defensive line:**

*"Yeah, I think up front especially, and it's not only Saturday, but I would envision that being all year. That's probably the biggest difference for us right now. The last two years, we've pretty much gone with a five-man rotation, whereas this year, all season long I think it's realistic to think that we'll have six, seven, eight, maybe even nine guys playing up there. Probably more in the neighborhood of six to eight."*

**On how Marcus Coker has looked since his performance in the**

## **Insight Bowl:**

*"He has done well. I've said before I think the most impressive thing he did last year was come back from injury, he had an injury very early in camp, had a fractured collarbone and missed all of camp, missed the first month or so of practice in the fall, and when he did come back it was very apparent that he had been paying attention. I think he improved over the course of the year. Did a nice job last year, and then certainly in the bowl game played better."*

*"I thought he played better as the game went on, which is good also. So that's certainly something to build off of, and you look at a guy like him or a guy like James Morris, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, both of those guys played significant plays during the second part of the season, and examples of two young guys that we're certainly counting on, especially in light of the veterans that we graduated."*

## **On if any progress has been made in determining a No. 2 quarterback:**

*"Yeah. Right now, if we we're playing tomorrow, which were not, but right now, A.J. Derby would be the next guy in the game. I think A.J. has improved. John Wienke has continued to improve as well. Jake Rudock, we're really pleased with him, a true freshman. Those are the four guys in the mix. There were only four in camp. Right now, I think A.J. would be the first guy that we'd go to, and again, he has continued to improve his game."*

## **On whether he sees much difference in the Big Ten besides the obvious changes between now and when he first started coaching at Iowa:**

*"Yeah. I missed the Penn State addition. I was here back in the 80s and I missed that, so I'm sure that was significant. And then this is equally as significant, I would imagine. And then the other ramification of the whole thing, as you alluded*

to, is the divisional play. I think it's probably good for fan interest and maybe provides more opportunity for everybody to reach the final step. But at the end of the day, as it breaks down from my vantage point, we still have eight conference games to contend with. In this case for us, we've got five new opponents and actually five new preparations in our league games, which is unusual. We're looking at it that way.

"We still play eight, and the whole idea now is to advance into the ninth game, which will be very, very competitive for everybody. I think it makes things a little more interesting probably for everyone, and if we're fortunate enough to get to Indianapolis, that's a great thing to be able to deal with. It would be the first time I would have experienced anything like that."

**On whether the reputation of the Big Ten is different now from when he joined the league:**

"You know, you folks in the media would probably have a better grip on that than I would. But I think anything's possible. Ohio State showed that in '02 when they ran the table and won the Fiesta Bowl and won the national championship. One thing for sure, if you win enough, then you keep advancing. But this change probably makes us more like a lot of other folks, and clearly the trend right now with college football is to play post-Thanksgiving and play into December beyond Thanksgiving in that weekend after Thanksgiving. We've got to join in that group now.

"We've got a game that will be in prime time in December, and I think from an exposure standpoint, it's all good. The one thing for sure, whoever makes it to Indianapolis, those two teams are going to play in great bowl games, and one potentially has a fast track to the championship game."

**On who is developing behind Coker at running back:**

"I think we're making strides. You know, we've had years where

we've needed multiple and we've had years like Shonn Greene, where he pretty much carried the load. Fred Russell did the same thing. But Marcus has done a nice job. Certainly, Jason White is an experienced guy that I think continues to improve. We'll have to find a role for him. Then after that, we've got De'Andre Johnson. We've got a couple of true freshmen that are involved, so I think we'll continue to let those guys practice and work this week. I think we'll probably see a couple in a game somewhere down the road, if not this week, then certainly in the next couple of weeks.

"It's working itself out, and with that group, I think we're pretty pleased with what we see. All that being said, we're really young. We're really young from an experience standpoint, and it's looking like the quarterback situation. We're comfortable with James Vandenberg, but he hasn't really thrown that many balls, certainly in Big Ten competition. I think you can really say the same thing about Marcus Coker. He finished up well, but he hasn't really played a whole lot of Big Ten football, so we're young at those spots."