

9/6/2011: Iowa football notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming game at Iowa State with the local media during his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2011 at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – With Iowa's 34-7 win on Sept. 3 over Tennessee Tech behind them, the Hawkeyes have now shifted their attention to their in-state rivals from Ames.

Iowa goes into the Sept. 10 contest against Iowa State at Jack Trice Stadium with a three-game winning streak in the series over the Cyclones. While the Hawkeyes come into this game off a pretty comfortable win, Iowa State needed to rally from behind and scored a touchdown with 40 seconds remaining to beat Northern Iowa last weekend, 20-19.

The Cyclones are led offensively by junior quarterback Steele Jantz, who only completed 18-of-40 passes against the

Panthers. Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz mentioned during his weekly press conference how he felt Jantz managed to overcome a pretty average performance by performing well when his team needed him most.

"They got the job done kind of like us two years ago against UNI," Ferentz said. "UNI is an excellent football team. They knew that. We knew that.

"But the bottom line is he made some really good plays in that fourth quarter and gave them a chance."

For players such as sophomore linebacker James Morris, this is going to be his first game as a player inside Jack Trice Stadium. He attended the last meeting there two seasons ago while he was a senior at Solon High School, a game the Hawkeyes won in convincing fashion, 35-3.

"I was in the crowd," Morris said. "It was loud, it was rocking. It's the only game I've ever been there, and probably as hostile an environment as we'll have to go to. It's something we have to get ready for."

Ferentz would OK policy for future weather delays

Iowa's game against Tennessee Tech was one of four over the weekend to feature some sort of delay in the action due to lightning in the vicinity. One of the other games involved featured Big Ten counterpart Michigan. The Wolverines' contest last weekend against Western Michigan featured two suspensions before eventually the game was abruptly ended with time remaining in the third quarter.

After last weekend's game against the Golden Eagles, Ferentz mentioned "uncertainty" being his biggest concern in terms of keeping his players ready for whenever the green light would be given to return to the field. When asked about it on Tuesday, Ferentz said he would approve if the Big Ten were to ever set a cut-and-dry policy centered around what should be

done in the event Iowa, Michigan, or anyone else deals with an occurrence such as this again in the future.

"We need more clarity to the situation," Ferentz said. "If that were a conference game, you probably wouldn't stop playing."

Players immune to Cy-Hawk fiasco

Last month, a new Cy-Hawk Trophy was unveiled at the Iowa State Fair, only to be scrapped after both Hawkeye and Cyclone fans spoke out vehemently in disgust.

But the whole fiasco surrounding the rivalry trophy is something that players said they could care less about.

"It really doesn't matter what it looks like," senior wide receiver Marvin McNutt said. "We still want to keep it."

Junior quarterback James Vandenberg, a Keokuk native, was completely immune to the whole situation regarding the Cy-Hawk trophy that depicted a family of four surrounding a bushel of corn.

At a press conference held in Johnston, Iowa on Aug. 23, there was a plan in place to have an interim trophy in place for this weekend's game, but nothing has been formally announced yet.

"I didn't even realize the controversy over it in all honesty," Vandenberg said. "Whatever it is, I know each team is going to look forward to grabbing it."

Remaining disciplined

One of the most glaring statistics in the Cyclones' win over UNI last weekend was that the Cyclones were aided by 16 Panther penalties.

In contrast, Iowa was only called for three penalties during

its game last weekend against Tennessee Tech. Senior cornerback Shaun Prater made mention of how discipline is “preached” by the coaching staff to the players.

So with that in mind, it seems as though keeping grounded will be key for the Hawkeyes this weekend in Ames.

“I think football is all about discipline,” junior free safety Micah Hyde said. “You can’t jump offsides. You can’t have a pass interference. It makes it hard on your defense, and it makes it hard on your offense. You keep backing up, or as a defense, you keep giving up yards.

“It’s all about discipline, and I think Coach Ferentz does a great job of installing that into us.”

Echoing Hyde’s comments was senior offensive lineman Adam Gettis, who mentioned the importance of sticking with fundamentals offensively.

“Getting out and playing football, discipline is a big thing,” Gettis said. “That’s something I think we’ve got to work on a little bit this week. We got a couple of things that didn’t go right in the first game. As long as we get that down, we’ll be fine.”

RB situation

With true freshman running back Mika’il McCall sidelined for the season with a broken ankle he suffered against Tennessee Tech, it appears as though Iowa now only has two set running backs, with junior Jason White behind sophomore Marcus Coker on the 2-deep.

White, who was listed on the Tennessee Tech 2-deep ahead of McCall, said Tuesday the coaches’ decision to go with the true freshman instead of him when Coker left due to his fumbles didn’t upset him.

“I knew Coach was going to put in whoever he thought was ready

for the job that day,” White said. “If it was me, or Mika’il or De’Andre Johnson, whoever it was going to be had to be ready, and if they had to come out, the next man in would have to be ready after that.”

As for Coker, he admitted Tuesday that his fumbles may have been more a result of him over-thinking what he had to do as opposed to just playing football. He also said the onus is on him to bounce back this week.

“I feel like I have a lot to prove to myself,” Coker said.

No uniform changes expected anytime soon

Last weekend saw teams such as Boise State, Georgia and Maryland all sporting new-look uniforms during their games.

With Iowa being a Nike school, the suggestion of the Hawkeyes ever wearing Pro Combat uniforms was immediately shot down by Ferentz at the end of his press conference. He not only described Iowa’s current uniforms as “sharp,” but made reference to his childhood roots growing up in western Pennsylvania.

“I really like our uniforms. I think they’re outstanding,” Ferentz said. “I grew up in Pittsburgh, so what do you expect?”