

9/6/2011: 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:

"Certainly it was good to get started, get the team on the field and play, just like a lot of people. It was an unusual circumstance, certainly, with the weather delay. It's something we haven't gone through before, and it was certainly a learning experience, to say the least. We're all pleased with the effort and certainly pleased with the outcome. Now we turn our sights to this week, which, like most teams, we've got a lot of improvement that we need to make during the course of the week if we're going to have a chance to play well Saturday."

On defensive coordinator Norm Parker and how he's doing health-wise:

"Yeah, I sure can. Norm is continuing to improve. He went through a lot last year and joined the team back in December. He has really made progress with each step along the way. He's doing well, and it's good to have him back."

On the importance of a mentor on coaches:

"You know, I think any coach would tell you, I would imagine at least, that we've all have people that have influenced us a great deal. We were very fortunate we started out here 13

years ago. Two people I would point to – Norm Parker joined the staff, and Carl Jackson rejoined the staff, who coached here before he retired a total of 22 years. Both of those guys were veteran coaches that have been through a lot of different experiences, not only in football, but life experience as well. I thought that really gave us two guys that would really be pillars of strength on our staff to help everybody assimilate to the situation here.”

On Iowa State and what the rivalry with it is like:

“Well, I don’t know what to compare it to in our conference because, we have interstate rivalries certainly in our conference, but this one involves two different BCS conferences, so it’s unique from that standpoint. The state of Iowa is a great football state. We have two, I think, outstanding Division-I programs. We certainly have UNI, who has done a great job in FCS competition year in and year out. They’ve been awfully good. Then we’ve got a great Division-III conference here as well, and other schools. It’s a good football state. The high-school football here is tremendous. One thing about this game, I think it’s safe to say, it’s going to be talked about from border to border, at least through the course of this week. The other thing that’s obvious about it is it’s more fun to be on the winning end than the losing end. Unfortunately, we’ve been on both ends, so it doesn’t take long to figure that out.”

On what he has seen from Iowa State thus far:

“Well, there a little bit like us. They’ve got some real good players coming back, and they’ve got some young players, too. Really what you’re going to see this weekend is you’ve got two relatively inexperienced quarterbacks. Their guy got off to a tough start in their ball game, but played very well in the fourth quarter and was a big part of why they won against a very good Northern Iowa team. You could see the team grow and the confidence grow, particularly in the fourth quarter, so he

probably got through his first-game jitters. Then our quarterback is much in the same position. I think James has started three games now, so it's not like he's a veteran player. The difference is we're going on the road and it's a tough environment to play in, so we're going to need to be ready."

On Marvin McNutt's performance vs. Tennessee Tech:

"Yeah, I just mentioned that we have some real good returning players back from a year ago. We've lost a lot of good ones over the past two years, but certainly Marvin's one of the guys that we're counting on to be a top player. He got off to a great start. As you mentioned, the weather conditions got a little challenging, but he did a good job of catching and holding the ball and really did a nice job of finishing both those plays. So that was great to see him get off to a start like that. We're counting on him to perform like that all season long."

On the performance of the D-line last weekend:

"Yeah, it was a good start. To kind of tie it together, Broderick Binns and Mike Daniels are two guys we're counting on, two good returning players. They played well. Then a bunch of guys got in there and got their first playing action – first significant playing action. The two you mentioned – Lebron [Daniel] and Tom Nardo – and I'd throw Dominic Alvis in that group as well. All three of those guys did pretty well for their first time out. Then we've got some other guys – Steve Bigach, Joe Gaglione and Joe Forgy – that are also inexperienced. The big thing, as I've been saying, is that we'll end up playing all those guys during the course of a game. I don't think we have the personnel or capability right now of just lining up 4-5 guys to play the whole game, so right now, we'll keep rotating them in, trying to keep them fresh. I think if we can do that, then hopefully they will play effectively."

On James Morris stepping in at linebacker:

"You know, we had three guys that really played a prominent role last year – James being one of those guys. I think he's certainly more comfortable. We were worried a little about him during camp. I think sometimes, players think they have to do everything or do too much. He was suffering from that a little bit. He's a really conscientious guy, so I think it was good to see him. He has settled down and played the way he is capable of. There's still things he can improve upon, and I think he'll do that. But it was a good start for him. I didn't realize that was his first interception, so that was great to see. He did a nice job returning the ball as well, as did Shaun Prater after his interception."

On his message to Marcus Coker and how he expects him to respond:

"All you've got to do is bounce back. Marcus is a good football player, first of all, but more importantly is a quality person. Hey, we've all had bad outings as players and as coaches. Any profession you're in, that's part of life. He was disappointed. I'm proud that he didn't use the weather conditions as an excuse or a crutch, and you know, we're all moving on. It's what he's going to do. When you're around a guy that's a good player and a good person, I know we're banking on him. I'm sure he'll have a good week of practice and come back and improve this week."

On who steps in behind Coker at running back:

"Basically, anybody's that with us. I'll start certainly with Jason White, and we'll see what De'Andre Johnson does this week in practice. Then we've got two freshmen in Damon Bullock, who we've been fooling around with in the slot, we'll probably move him back more predominantly in the backfield, and Jordan Canzeri as well. We'll just keep working all the guys and whoever does the best during the week, those will be

the guys that get some action on Saturday."