

9/13/2011: 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 a disappointing loss for us traveling over to Iowa State. We did some positive things, but they clearly outplayed us and deserved the victory, so credit goes to them. The key thing for us right now is learning and moving on. We've got another big challenge on our hands this week with Pittsburgh coming to town."

On what he sees on film with Pittsburgh:

"Well, first of all, they've got good players and the staff has done a great job in a short amount of time. Certainly, Coach [Todd] Graham has had great success throughout his time and was a good hire at Pitt. But he has got a veteran staff, too. But as we look at it, they've got a lot of good football players on their football team on both sides of the ball, and special teams as well. They're clearly learning the new schemes and they're new on both sides of the football. Yet I think those guys have done a very nice job of making the transition, and they're playing well."

On whether the defense will be quick to handle the type of high-tempo offense Pitt runs:

"Well, we didn't do a great job of it last week. We have

played three straight teams, well, this will be our third straight team, and as you know, this is really becoming a way of play for a lot of people nationally right now. Quite frankly, we didn't handle it well on Saturday, this past Saturday. We'll have to do a much better job because we're going to face a lot of the same challenges this coming weekend. It's something high on our list. We've got a lot on our list of things right now."

On whether there will be a schematic adjustment or continuing to play base defense against Pitt:

"Well, we're going to have to do a better job of playing what we are playing, and then we may have to add some new things as well. It's something we're evaluating all the time. Hopefully, we'll look a little bit better this Saturday. But we'll have our work cut out. That's for sure."

On evaluating the performance of quarterback James Vandenberg through two games:

"I think he has done a good job. You know, he has missed a couple of throws, made a couple of bad decisions, which I could say about Ricky Stanzi in his last ball game for us, yet he played very well. That's a part of playing quarterback. It's a very challenging position, as you know. But I think he has done a really nice job. He was a guy we were counting on, even though he hasn't played a lot. He had only two games of starting experience coming into the year and hasn't thrown as many balls as relative to a lot of quarterbacks. But we were really confident that he'd play well, and I think he has really done a good job so far."

On his confidence in Vandenberg being able to carry the team:

"Yeah. I think there's a real perception out there that we're a run-only team, or a run first and second team, and I don't think that's necessarily accurate. When we had Shonn Greene, we did a lot of that for obvious reasons, but we try to do

what it takes to be successful and score points and win. In a perfect world, we would like to be balanced, and I think we have a real comfort level with James at quarterback that we don't have to run the ball 85 percent of the time to have success. Hopefully, we'll never get to the point where we're throwing it 85 percent. That probably means we're well behind. Yeah, but we have confidence that he could really do a good job and help us win football games."

On whether there are short cuts with breaking in a new quarterback:

"I don't think so. I think it starts like any player. It's preparation in practice, and then there's still something about game experience that's so, so valuable. I haven't thought much about it. I guess back in 2001, our plan, we played Brad Banks, who had never really started a college game. We played him a series or two series each game in 2001. We just made that commitment prior to the season and decided to do it because we felt Brad deserved to get some work. It wasn't a knock on Kyle McCann, who really played well for us that year, but we really wanted to bring Brad along a little bit. We didn't do that last year with James, but James got thrown in there a couple of years ago and did a nice job, so I think that has helped him with his deal. But at the end of the day, for a guy to get out on the field, it's just one more step along the process for a guy, those first couple of games of experience."

On the importance of technique in becoming an effective pass rusher:

"I think it's important for even the guys who have power or speed or have the rare combination of both. It's important to pretty much every position out there on the field. So if you got the guy with the innate ability, and some guys do things better. Some guys have a knack of blocking kicks or getting free in a run play or rushing the pass a little bit better."

But I've never seen a player that can't improve without improving his technique. I think with a great attitude, that really gives them a chance to go from being a good player, to a dangerous player, to being a really productive player."

On putting together the non-conference schedule:

"I think it's simple. First of all, our administration has been great since I've been here. Bob Bowlsby was our athletic director when I got hired, and Gary Barta has been here now, I think going into his sixth year, so we've had good stability. And I think our philosophy has been pretty well set. I've always looked to play a BCS conference school. We've always looked to play Iowa State. That series began, or renewed I should say, in the late '70s. Then we play two teams outside of that description, so needless to say, whenever we shift to nine games conference-wise, it's going to change things a little bit. But hopefully our plan is to continue to play Iowa State every year. I think it's a very important game in this state. What that probably means is our BCS opponent would be the ninth Big Ten game."

On what he sees being the biggest challenge once the Big Ten goes to nine-game conference schedules:

"You know, you're asking the wrong guy. I really haven't given any thought to that. I just know that we're going to have the ninth game, and chances are that will be a tough game."