

10/18/2011: Kirk Ferentz teleconference transcript (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

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

Ferentz's opening statement:

"It was certainly a great environment in Kinnick the other night. It was good to play a night game, and the Big Ten Network did a great job. The crowd was really into it, and we had a chance to recognize the ANF effort (America Needs Farmers), which Coach [Hayden] Fry came up with back in the '80s. All in all, it was great. A lot of former players back, that was exciting. It was a really hard-fought game. Both teams really competed hard, and we were just thrilled to get the victory. Now we move on to our next challenge. We start up again this week, and we have a lot of work to do."

On what challenges he sees Indiana presenting this week:

"Well, you know, a couple of things I would point out. We have had a tough time with them the last two years, just in recent history-wise. Certainly if you just go back a couple of weeks ago, I would have much rather been where they were in the last couple minutes of their game against Penn State than where we were a week later. We're trying to match up with them. They present some problems preparation-wise, certainly, and then we've got a lot on our plate here just with trying to get our team to improve a little bit as well."

On how impressed he was by Penn State defensive tackle Devon

Still when Iowa played Penn State two weeks ago:

"He has been having a great season. He has had a good career there. He's a big, imposing guy. He showed up against us on film in the game and then certainly on the film afterwards. Every team we've seen Penn State on a cut-up, he has typically shown up. He's a veteran guy who has played a lot. He has great size and is very active. He's just a tough guy to handle one-on-one."

On the improvements made by running back Marcus Coker through the course of the season:

"I think very simply, we all thought he ran more decisively. It's almost like he has been thinking a little bit too much when he has been back there. I thought Saturday was clearly the most decisive he has been, just going with a cut, making the decision and going with it. He just looked a little bit more aggressive out there as the result of that, so hopefully, I think we're on the right track. He missed some time back in camp and I think that was showing up a little bit. Hopefully, we're moving in the right direction now."

On defense being a basis still in the Big Ten even with changes in offensive philosophy:

"You know, I don't know if I think it's globally, but it's really tough to be successful, probably in any sport, if you can't play good defense. I know that has been our experience. If we're playing good defense, at least we have a chance to be competitive. To try and outscore people all the time, that's a real challenge, although there are people that do it and do it well. But I think at the end of the day, it's certainly a challenge."

"You know, I don't know if I can speak as to the recruiting part of it. I think one thing I would say, I guess maybe I think it would pertain to, or maybe it's not every conference because when you play in bowl games, you get a little bit more"

exposure, but one thing about our conference as it pertains to what you're asking is there's a lot of variance within the conference in terms of your preparation. There are a lot of different styles of offenses in our league. So your personnel and your scheme have to be pretty flexible because you might be playing a team that's going to throw it 60 times, you might have a team that's going to run it 50 times, and both of them can do it very well and in very different ways.

"As a result of that, I think for the defensive staffs, it's a real tough gauntlet that you run through because in our league at least, there is a lot of variance in terms of the offensive philosophy, so that makes it a bigger challenge."

On where Marvin McNutt ranks among Iowa receivers after tying TD reception record last Saturday:

"He joined pretty elite company on Saturday – Tim Dwight most recently, and then prior to that, Danan Hughes had been tied for that record. So for Marvin to join those two guys, both of were just phenomenal players at Iowa. Tim's back in the community now. He's retired from the National Football League. Danan's an East coast guy who is retired in Kansas City. He had a tremendous NFL career. He was a very talented baseball player, too, and Tim was a great track athlete. Marvin has only gone one sport since he has been here, but he was a pretty good baseball player in high school as well, so it's pretty elite company.

"It's a real credit to Marvin because unlike those two guys, Marvin transferred to that position if you will in 2008, so he has been learning on the fly. He has had an outstanding career here."

On how linebacker Tyler Nielsen handled moving from outside to inside against Northwestern:

"Well, he handled it really well, and we don't have many choices. It's a little bit like last year, and probably a fair

analogy, Jeff Tarpinian did both for us. Jeff played all three positions for us during his career. Jeff might be the best linebacker that never played here that we've had, and I say that kind of tongue-in-cheek, but he really didn't get many starts during his career, yet he's on the New England Patriots' active roster right now. He was an outstanding football player. He just had a lot of bad luck, unfortunately. But he was our middle linebacker starting last year and got injured, and then finished up in the bowl game at the outside linebacker position where Tyler played.

"Tyler was injured, so it was kind of a reversal of roles, if you will. Tyler's a guy that already graduated with a business degree, an outstanding student, a tremendous football player. We're just really fortunate to have him on our football team. He has been a captain in every game this year, so far. No big surprise. I just talked about Marvin McNutt, and here's another great senior leader for us."