

10/25/2011: 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:

"Certainly, we were pleased to get the win Saturday, and I'm happy for Marvin. Not only for his recognition being one of the players of the week this past week, but to set a career mark like that. That's really significant. He just moved by two outstanding players, Tim Dwight and Danan Hughes. Both had great careers here and certainly great careers beyond, so that's a real tribute to Marvin. He moved from the quarterback position in '08 and has worked extremely hard. I'm just happy for him on a personal level. So that's a real plus certainly. It was good to get the win Saturday. Now we've got plenty of things that we're trying to work on and address locally, and then certainly have a challenge there going on the road this Saturday, going up to Minnesota."

On what impresses him about Minnesota's team:

"I think first and foremost, just the intensity level that they're playing at. They're playing extremely hard and really have been all season long, so I think that's certainly a reflection of the job that Coach [Jerry] Kill and his staff have already done and have been doing. We just expect a very tough ball game Saturday."

On the offense having scored 30-plus points in six of seven

games thus far in 2011:

"Well, that's the good news. The bad news is in that other game, we scored three. I think a couple of things. We've got an O-line that has got some experience. We're still working through some things that we've got to get better at. Our receivers overall have done a pretty good job. I mentioned Marvin McNutt a minute ago. He has been the leader of that group.

"Then I think the last two components, Marcus Coker has been improving with each week and the last couple of weeks has started to look more like what we thought he could become. Then obviously James Vandenberg has done a good job, and it didn't come as a complete surprise. We said this in the preseason. He's a guy that hasn't played a lot but has worked a lot and really has done it in a quality fashion. He's learning every week, and overall, I think he has done a nice job playing quarterback and also leading our football team, which is really important."

On how he evaluated A.J. Derby's performance after he switched to linebacker last week:

"I thought he did really well. He just ran down on a couple of kickoffs. The first one was almost picture perfect. He used good technique, which he has never worked on, to avoid a blocker, and then made a really nice tackle. For not having really been coached that much in that drill, it shows that he has got some natural ability, I think, to play defense. Now he has got a real task ahead of him to learn the technique and learn more of what we're doing defensively. But we're excited to have him make that move.

"It's an unselfish move on his part. We've had tremendous success through the years with players making position changes. If his works out half as well as most of them have, then that would be a real positive for him and our team."

On why he thinks Iowa has had success with players changing positions like Derby did:

"Well, I think it's in the nature of our recruiting. We can't always get the guys that are obvious choices at their positions, so we have to do a little projection sometimes in recruiting and have to see some things that maybe you hope you're right on, you're right on. In his case, it was pretty easy only because he was a pretty good quarterback, too, but we thought he had position flexibility. McNutt had the same thing when we recruited him.

"If guys aren't locked in physically to a position, then it affords you a little bit with some options, if other players develop at a position, that type of thing. So it's a good thing. We've had guys go to all different positions from various moves. Not all of them have worked out. Those are the ones people forget about, I guess."

On Keenan Davis' status for this weekend's game after injuring ankle against Indiana:

"Well, we'll know more at the end of the week. We've got, and we've been this way for a couple of weeks now, but we have, looking at the injury report here, right now we've probably got 8-10 guys that we're going to have to be careful with this week. Some guys, it's a matter of being careful with. A guy like James Morris, who played last week, but obviously is not 100 percent. Then we've got guys that are less than where James would be, and we'll have to see how the week goes. We've got 3-4 guys in that category. Keenan would be in that category."

On whether Derby's move was due to quarterback Jake Rudock's progress or due to need at linebacker:

"Yeah, it's probably both. We think Jake's a good prospect. But that being said, he certainly hasn't played a snap yet and has not been here that long. But we like what we've seen from

him, certainly, at this stage. More pressing, it's just our linebacker situation. I mentioned last week ever since [A.J.] Edds and [Pat] Angerer graduated, it just seems like we've been playing a guy short. Last year, we had injury problems at the middle linebacker position. [Jeff] Tarpinian went out right away. I say right away, first Big Ten game. Then a week or two later, I think we had a bye week, Tyler Nielsen went down. We've had some good players ready to go, but then it just seems like we can't keep them on the field. We're right back in that situation again this year."