

# COMMENTARY: History repeats itself (premium)

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*HawkeyeDrive.com*

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – A funny thing happened at TCF Bank Stadium on Saturday. It came in the fourth quarter of Iowa's game against Minnesota.

The Hawkeyes were ahead 21-16, but the Golden Gophers had just scored a touchdown to make it a one-possession game. Then Minnesota reached into its bag of tricks.

Recall last season when Iowa lost to Minnesota, 27-24. The Golden Gophers attempted an onside kick in the first quarter, recovered it, and scored a touchdown on its following drive.

Now fast forward to this moment with the Hawkeyes ahead by five points. Minnesota once again tried an onside kick and once again recovered the attempt. The Golden Gopher offense then took the field and scored a go-ahead touchdown that proved to be the game-winning touchdown, defeating Iowa 22-21.

There are times when it seems as though history tends to repeat itself, and it did so here on Saturday. For the second straight year, a miscue on special teams cost the Hawkeyes a chance to win the battle for Floyd of Rosedale, which will stay in Minnesota for at least 11 more months.

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said it wasn't surprising for Minnesota to attempt an onside in that situation. If that was really the case, then why wasn't the hands team on the field? Remember when Marvin McNutt recovered two onside kicks just two weeks earlier against Northwestern?

It's a rivalry game. Teams like Minnesota that have little to

nothing to play for are going to run plays like this because they have nothing to lose, especially when it's a rivalry game.

Which leads me to two more things that lead to this premise of history repeating. First, this current trend Iowa is on of losing rivalry games, four straight to be precise. The Hawkeyes still have an empty atrium at their football complex, and it's looking unlikely that Iowa wins whatever the Heroes Game trophy ends up being when it plays Nebraska next month in Lincoln.

In fact, here's a startling statistic. The last time, before this season, that Iowa lost to both Iowa State and Minnesota in the same season was in 2000. That's also the last time the Hawkeyes were not bowl-eligible.

And then there's this: The way Iowa lost this game was reminiscent of the close losses last season where it had a lead late, only to let it slip away. This rearing its head is a sign that changes haven't been made. This is a concern.

The same reason are given for every defeat – lack of execution. That's true, to a degree. But what happens when it's a matter where someone's not in the right position to make a play, like on that onside kick.

Senior cornerback Shaun Prater said after the game that the onside attempt was "perfect" and that no one on that side of the field for Iowa had a chance to recover it. If that's the case, that's not really lack of execution, right?

At the end of the day, this was an inexplicable loss, much like when Iowa lost to Minnesota a year ago. The fact that history repeated itself inside TCF Bank Stadium on Saturday has to be a concerning sign for a team who plays its final four regular season games against teams that are currently .500 or better.

How Iowa responds going further is going to be telling, not just for this season, but for the future as well.