

11/1/2011: 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:

"It was a tough weekend for us. Minnesota really played a good game, and we came up short in that fourth quarter. So it was a disappointing loss, certainly. We went back to work on Sunday. Moving forward now, we've got quite a challenge on our hands. We're playing an excellent University of Michigan team that's really playing well right now. We'll have our hands full in all phases, so we're back to work today."

On what makes No. 13 Michigan such a good team:

"Well, one thing, I've been in the league a few years, and one common recurring theme is they seem to have good players. They've had that every year I've seen them in person and seen them on tape. They're very, very well-coached. They're playing together very well in all phases. They've got a lot of very good players, and they've got a few players that are difference-makers, too. You put that all together with a good environment, and I think you have a very good football team."

On being able to control destiny in the Legends Division despite last weekend's loss to Minnesota:

"Every Sunday, we just talk about it. Basically, we're 5-3 and 2-2 in league play. You know, everybody talks about conference

racers and things like that, and I understand all that, but really, the fact is what you do each week counts. We came up short Saturday, and there's still four games left. I haven't even looked at the math or done the math, and I haven't really looked too closely at anything. I just know there's a lot of benefit in winning on Saturday. We came up short last week, and we're going to try and reverse that this week. It will be a real challenge."

On the competitiveness of the conference and Penn State being the lone unbeaten in Big Ten play:

"I really can't, other than the teams that we've seen. I can comment to Penn State. They've been playing great defense for about 45 years and that hasn't changed. They ran the ball really well against us and did a very nice job. They have an excellent back, and they blocked us well. They were clearly the better team the day we played them. Again, there's a lot of football to be left.

"I think the highlight of my weekend, late Sunday night, I heard somewhere during the day, I walked into our video room and saw someone's pre-BCS ratings, predictions. They were predicting what the BCS was going to say at whatever time that comes on, and I thought, 'Boy, that's interesting.' Now we have the need to know what the BCS is going to do. We couldn't wait two hours to find out. I get all that, and that's what causes people to be interested, and that's great. But I think right now, without looking at things too closely, anybody can do anything here in the next month."

On what differences he sees in Michigan's defense between now and the past two years Iowa has played the Wolverines:

"Well, they've gone from two very different schools of thought, if you will. They're playing a system that's very, very different than what they did the past couple of years. I'm not saying one makes one wrong and one right because there

are a lot of different ways to get things done in football, certainly.

"But the bottom line is this: It's pretty clear on the tape that they've got good players that understand what their roles are, and they're able to fit those players into those roles, and they're doing a good job of coming up with good results. That's really what good football is, regardless of what your philosophy is. You know how the 11 guys on the field can translate what they've learned and what they're being taught in their production on the field. That's what you see when you look at their tape, and that's what causes good results. That's what they're getting right now."

On the difficulty of shaking off another loss to Minnesota and whether it's good to have a big game follow such a loss:

"Well, I can't remember any loss that didn't feel bad. Maybe in '99, 2000, things were a little different. The expectations, or the reality of things, was a little bit different maybe. But it still hurt to lose, and Saturday was no different. Whether it be two straight, or 10 straight, there's really no fun in losing. I guess if you can accept it, then it's probably time for you to do something else, you know, go collect stamps."

"Really, the biggest thing right now, and it's true after every game whether you win or lose, it's how you respond to what you did the week before and how you move forward. That has kind of been our philosophy for 13 years, and we'll try to stick by that. We're playing an excellent football team, and I just know this: If we're not at our best, you know, it won't be good. The challenge for us this week to get back to playing our best kind of football possible."

On whether there are shortcuts a defense can take when defending a player like Michigan quarterback Denard Robinson:

"None that I'm aware of. If you have any knowledge on that,

please send it in to us. We'd be welcome. You know, if you're playing any good teams, regardless of the skill set of the quarterback, if we're playing Stanford this, it's a whole different set of challenges. When you play teams that have real dynamic performers and they're surrounded by a lot of good players, I just pulled Stanford out of my pocket there.

"Obviously, their quarterback's a great player, but they've got a lot of good players around him that complement his skill set, and I think that's what you see with Michigan as well. It's a real challenge because they can hurt you in a lot of different ways, and that's what good offensive teams do."

On whether there are any specific areas where he feels improvement needs to be made in November:

"There are a lot of them, and it changes from week to week. Typically, we're playing good red zone offense and defense, and came up well short in both of those areas on Saturday. If you want the one thing that pops in my head from last week, that'd be it. But it's not like we've been void in that area during the season. The other thing is, and this is good news/bad news, or it's all bad news I guess, we have to do a better job against the run.

"You can't play good defense if you can't stop the run, and this team coming in runs it extremely well. That's going to be a great, great challenge for our football team."