

# Spartans spoil Hawkeyes' Senior Day

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – On what was supposed to be a day to remember for 18 Iowa seniors, it wound up being a day to forget.

The Iowa Hawkeyes were beaten, battered and bruised by a 13th-ranked Michigan State squad out to prove it was legit, and the Spartans ended up defeating the Hawkeyes in a game that wasn't as close as the final score indicated. It was Michigan State's first victory at Kinnick Stadium since 1989, but more importantly for the Spartans, they managed to remain alone atop the Legends Division holding a 5-1 conference record with two games left.

Meanwhile, Iowa fell to 6-4 overall and 3-3 in the Big Ten, and while the Hawkeyes aren't mathematically eliminated from contention in the Legends Division, their chances of playing in Indianapolis next month are now on life support.

"I guess you'd have to say we weren't ready," Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said. "We didn't look ready. We left the door open way too many times in all three phases.

"If you play a good team like Michigan State, it's going to be tough to win if you're not playing well."

It began with Michigan State jumping ahead 14-0 out of the gate. The Spartans struck on their opening drive when quarterback Kirk Cousins connected with wideout B.J. Cunningham for the first of two scores, then capitalized off an interception thrown by junior quarterback James Vandenberg when Cousins hit running back Edwin Baker for a touchdown.

Vandenberg would respond back with a touchdown pass of his own to sophomore tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz, but Michigan State then scored 17 unanswered points to take a 31-7 lead into halftime. The 24-point deficit was the largest Iowa had faced in four seasons and stirred up some emotions in the locker room.

"The seniors did not want to go out like this," senior defensive end Broderick Binns said. "We were trying to get everybody going, telling them to keep your head up."

Michigan State tacked on a field goal in the third quarter to go ahead 34-7, but not before running both a reverse pass and a fake field goal attempt.

"It just comes down to we got to stop them when we're on the field as a defense," senior safety Jordan Bernstine said. "That's what's going through my mind when we're out there, even when they have a big lead."

Then Iowa scored two consecutive touchdowns to trim the Spartan lead to 13 points entering the fourth quarter. The first of those two third-quarter scores came courtesy of senior wide receiver Marvin McNutt, who set two school records Saturday.

The St. Louis native reached the 1,000-yard receiving plateau for the season after hauling in a one-handed catch, and eventually recorded the milestone for most receiving yards in a season. He also surpassed the mark set by former wideout Derrell Johnson-Koulianos last season for career yards and is the new record holder with 2,635 yards receiving.

Another field goal would be made by Michigan State in the fourth quarter to finish off the scoring. Afterwards, Hawkeye players showed their disappointment, but also felt encouraged by the rally that was made in the second half holding the Spartans to just six points during the final 30 minutes of play.

Iowa now heads to the road for two straight games to conclude the regular season, with the first contest taking place Nov. 19 against cross-protected rival Purdue. The Boilermakers will become bowl-eligilble with a victory after defeating Ohio State in overtime Saturday, 26-23. Kickoff is scheduled for 11 a.m. Central and will be aired nationally on the Big Ten Network.