

11/15/2011: Iowa football notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming game at Purdue with the local media during his weekly press conference on Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2011, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – When the Iowa Hawkeyes travel to West Lafayette, Ind., to face Purdue Nov. 19 at Ross-Ade Stadium, a lot could potentially be riding on the outcome.

While Iowa enters this game coming off a disheartening 37-21 loss to Michigan State last weekend at Kinnick Stadium, the Boilermakers can become bowl-eligible with a victory this weekend after pulling off a 26-23 overtime win over Ohio State to reach 5-5 overall and 3-3 in the Big Ten.

With Purdue ending its season against a lowly Indiana squad, the winner of this weekend's contest will likely have at least seven wins, which would practically guarantee it a spot in a

bowl game that has a Big Ten tie-in. Meanwhile, the loser could very well end up being 6-6 and possibly find itself filled with anxiety in the week leading up to when bowl games are officially announced, which will take place Dec. 4.

"Their record doesn't show how good they are," junior cornerback Micah Hyde said. "You've probably heard that all day today, but I'm really not lying to you. They're a fast team."

Another obstacle the Hawkeyes will have to overcome this week is their road woes, having gone 0-3 away from Kinnick Stadium this season. In fact, Iowa's last true road victory came at Indiana during the final month of last season, and even that was a game the Hawkeyes were fortunate to win.

Iowa, along with Penn State, are the only two Big Ten teams this season to play their final two regular season games on the road, as the Hawkeyes make a trip to Nebraska next week following the contest against the Boilermakers.

"I can't put a positive spin on this one, other than it gives us two opportunities to win on the road," Ferentz said.

Injury-gate

A heavy topic of conversation during Ferentz's press conference Tuesday was talk following last weekend's loss to Michigan State of Spartan defensive players faking injuries with the intent to slow down Iowa's offense as it began to make a comeback and trimmed its deficit to 13 points entering the fourth quarter.

Ferentz was asked whether he had intentions to submit tape to the Big Ten offices in Park Ridge, Ill., regarding what took place during last weekend's game at Kinnick Stadium and said he didn't see the point in doing so.

"At the end of the day, it really didn't impact the game,"

Ferentz said. "It's one of those, I don't want to call it a hot topic, but it's going to be a topic that's out there for sure."

As for player reaction, senior offensive tackle Markus Zusevics got to see up close the number of Spartan injuries that kept piling up on the defensive side of the ball during the second half.

"I can't really comment on why they were going down," Zusevics said. "I have no idea."

Senior defensive end Broderick Binns was one of at least three defensive starters interviewed Tuesday that said they wouldn't resort to faking an injury just to slow down an opposing offense.

"Myself personally, I guess I just have more respect for the game," Binns said. "Coming here, that's just something that you're not taught to do. You get up and you play the next play, no matter what happens."

McNutt's catch

It was one of the few positives the Hawkeyes were able to take away from last weekend's loss to Michigan State. In the first quarter, senior wide receiver Marvin McNutt reached the 1,000-yard receiving plateau for the season with a one-handed catch that found its way on "SportsCenter" later that evening.

McNutt said he normally doesn't watch the news, but that he had to turn on his TV that night during the "Top 10" segment.

"I did see that," McNutt said. "I had to catch that one."

In the loss to Michigan State, McNutt became Iowa's all-time leader in receiving yards for both a season and a career, with the latter breaking a mark set just last season by former wideout Derrell Johnson-Koulianos. He had already set the touchdown reception mark shared by both Tim Dwight and Danan

Hughes.

Ferentz called McNutt's accomplishments a tribute to his work ethic.

"Marvin has really put himself into a real select group of guys," Ferentz said. "He has really set a good example for all of our guys."

Facing two QBs again

It isn't that Iowa hasn't faced teams that like to throw two quarterbacks out on the field for games. It's that Purdue just seems to make what it does more obvious.

Boilermakers head coach Danny Hope said at Big Ten Media Day last July he planned on using a two-QB system this season, with the idea being Robert Marve would split time with Rob Henry. However, Henry tore his ACL during fall camp, and as a result, Caleb TerBush has started all 10 of Purdue's games this season.

What makes what the Boilermakers do even more of a story is that despite not starting last weekend against Ohio State, it was Marve who put the team on his shoulders late and scored the game-winning touchdown to beat the Buckeyes in overtime. He finished completing 10-of-13 passes in that game.

TerBush is expected to start for Purdue this weekend.

"You're going to have to put some different things in your defense to be able to play for both types of guys and for the different things they run with each quarterback," sophomore free safety Tanner Miller said. "It's more of a mental aspect when you have to prepare for two rather than just one, especially when it's two guys that can beat you with their arm and on their feet as opposed to being more sit in the pocket type guys."

Iowa/Purdue: Is it a rivalry?

When the Big Ten revealed its two divisions and each team's crossover rival from the opposite division, Iowa ended up drawing Purdue. While the Hawkeyes and Boilermakers didn't even meet each of the past two seasons, Iowa's series with Purdue is its third-longest behind natural rivalries with Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The other crossover rivalries set up by the Big Ten were Michigan/Ohio State, Michigan State/Indiana, Minnesota/Wisconsin, Nebraska/Penn State and Northwestern/Illinois.

"It was going to be somebody," Ferentz said.

Purdue's weekly release made mention of the fact Iowa was its crossover rival. As for whether there's mutual feeling from Iowa remains to be seen.

"Anybody in the Big Ten is not your best friend," McNutt said Tuesday when asked directly by a television reporter if he "hated Purdue."