

# 4/4/2012: Iowa spring football notebook

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz spoke briefly at the start of Wednesday's spring football press conference, confirming [reports from last week of sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri tearing his ACL](#).

In his first public comments about the injury since it happened, Ferentz said the 5-9, 180-pound back had surgery on the knee Wednesday afternoon. The actual tear took place during practice on March 28 while Canzeri was making a cut during a non-contact drill. An MRI performed the following day revealed the ligament damage.

Assuming rehabilitation goes according to plan, the earliest Canzeri would likely get medically cleared to practice again is in September. No timetable is actually in place though for when he could possibly return to the gridiron again.

"We won't go into it with a set plan," Ferentz said regarding Canzeri's rehabilitation process. "We'll just see how it goes and see how he's doing. What's most important is his welfare."

With Canzeri sidelined, the depth at running back now features sophomores Damon Bullock and De'Andre Johnson atop the 2-deep. Both were parts of Iowa's running back-by-committee implemented last December when the Hawkeyes lost to Oklahoma in the 2011 Insight Bowl. Ferentz said nothing from what has already been installed this spring by offensive coordinator Greg Davis would be altered as a result of not having Canzeri.

"We're going straight ahead," Ferentz said. "We're just a

little thinner than we were last week.”



Iowa wide receivers coach Erik Campbell discusses his group of wide receivers for spring football during a press conference with the local media held Wednesday, April 4, 2012 at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

### **Campbell assesses receiving corps**

Iowa wide receivers coach Erik Campbell took to the podium Wednesday all smiles, and perhaps for good reason.

With offensive coordinator Greg Davis now in control of the Hawkeye offense, there's a sense that Iowa might throw the ball more often than before. And that's just fine with the former Michigan wideout, as long as his receivers know their blocking assignments in the run game as well.

"We just do our job," Campbell said. "Whenever it's called for us to do it, be ready. Those guys have really embraced that part of it."

It's no secret who Iowa's No. 1 and No. 2 receivers are this spring and – barring injuries – will most likely be this fall in senior Keenan Davis and sophomore Kevonte Martin-Manley. Campbell said Martin-Manley's progress this spring has made

him take note following a redshirt freshman campaign where the 6-0 wideout caught 30 passes for 323 yards and three touchdowns.

“Now you can see that experience pay off,” Campbell said. “You can see him looking like a veteran receiver, doing things that a guy with that kind of experience has shown. He has done a good job so far this spring.”

While Davis and Martin-Manley are known entities in the Iowa offense, one thing Campbell is hoping will emerge this spring is a No. 3 receiver to complement the aforementioned duo, especially in packages where Martin-Manley would continue to be used in the slot.

Right now, Campbell said that No. 3 spot is up for grabs. He mentioned such names as senior Steven Staggs and juniors Don Shumpert and Jordan Cotton, but all three wideouts currently share a common bond.

“Not a lot of guys with game experience,” Campbell said. “That’s why I said it’s open for grabs right now.”



Iowa defensive line coach Reese Morgan discusses his group of defensive linemen for spring football during a press conference with the local media held Wednesday, April 4, 2012 at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa

City.

## **Making the switch from offense to defense**

Reese Morgan could sense something was coming when he was asked by Ferentz to switch from coaching the offensive line to the defensive line last winter. As it turns out, the transition was easier for him to make than it was on his own family.

"I did upset my wife and our daughters because I had found out and I didn't tell them. They had to find out in the media," Morgan said. "Our two daughters ripped me for not telling my wife. My wife understands. We don't talk about that stuff.

"But I am in the doghouse."

As he continues earning back his family's good graces, Morgan finds himself enjoying the time he has spent working with what he acknowledged as "a young, inexperienced group." He also said that in a similar fashion to last season, there could be as many as 6-8 players used along the front four in 2012.

One name Morgan was quick to point out as emerging along the D-line as the unit's leader is senior defensive tackle Steve Bigach, who started five of the 12 games he appeared in last fall. Bigach compiled 24 tackles last year as a junior playing at both tackle and end while players such as Thomas Nardo and Dominic Alvis dealt with in-season injuries.

"Steve has been on the field and played," Morgan said. "He's respected by the players because of his knowledge and because he's such a hard worker. He cares about the other guys. He's trying to help them out a little bit."

Two redshirt freshmen he described as "raw" upon first mentions of them are defensive end Riley McMinn and defensive tackle Darian Cooper, both of whom have been listed as starters on Iowa's 2-deep this spring.

Morgan said Cooper reminded him of “a miniature Mike Daniels” (referring to the former defensive tackle) when he visited him on the recruiting trail. As for McMinn, Morgan described him as explosive and coachable, adding that he wants McMinn to spend some more time this offseason with strength and conditioning coach Chris Doyle.

As he continues building up the defensive line, Morgan continues to stress things such as improvement, technique and fundamentals to his players.

“Our opponent right now is ourselves. Our challenge is how much we can improve,” Morgan said. “If our guys buy into that, we have a chance.”

**TRANSCRIPT: [Ferentz/Campbell/Morgan transcript \(April 4, 2012\)](#) (Courtesy: UI Sports Info.)**