

# Hawkeyes lose second straight Cy-Hawk battle

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The Iowa Hawkeyes won a game over Northern Illinois last week in Chicago despite serious issues with the play of its offense. These were issues that head coach Kirk Ferentz deemed “correctables.”

But those “correctables” were issues that arose again Saturday at Kinnick Stadium and this time around, they cost the Hawkeyes. Instead, they watched as the Iowa State Cyclones were able to leave with a 9-6 victory and keep the Cy-Hawk Trophy residing in Ames for another year.

Defensively, the Hawkeyes were carved up in the first half, particularly on the Cyclones’ opening drive. Iowa State marched 75 yards down field and capped its first series of the game with a 5-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Steele Jantz to wideout Aaron Horne. A missed extra point attempt resulted in the Cyclones only leading 6-0.

“They came out and they kind of jumped on our throat,” senior cornerback Micah Hyde said.

Offensively, Iowa couldn’t get anything going. Whether it was poor decision-making from senior quarterback James Vandenberg or numerous dropped passes from the Hawkeyes’ skill players, the struggles continued.

Even when the offense was moving the ball, that wasn’t enough. Twice the Hawkeyes got into the red zone and twice they had to settle for field goals made by junior kicker Mike Meyer.

“We were moving the ball,” junior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz

said. "It's just in that red zone, we can't seem to get it in the end zone. That's huge for close games like this. That's something we've got to correct."

Both teams had their red zone issues Saturday. The Cyclones had three occasions where they turned the ball over after getting inside the Iowa 20-yard line. Two of those turnovers were made by junior linebacker James Morris, who recovered a fumble in the third quarter and then returned a Jantz interception 49 yards in the fourth quarter just as Iowa State was going for the knockout blow.

In addition to his roles in the two second-half takeaways by the Hawkeyes, Morris recorded 12 tackles. Also laying the wood throughout the afternoon was fellow junior linebacker Anthony Hitchens, who compiled a game-high 19 tackles in defeat.

"They're showing great leadership," said junior linebacker Christian Kirksey, who had nine tackles himself. "Playing with James and Anthony, they bring out the best in me and bring out the best in the team."

Iowa would get one more crack to either tie or win the game in the closing minutes and reached the Iowa State 32-yard line after a fourth-down completion by Vandenberg to senior wideout Keenan Davis of 29 yards followed by a pair of completions to sophomore running back Damon Bullock.

But the Cyclones would seal the victory for good when Vandenberg threw his second interception of the afternoon to linebacker Jake Knott, who made the pick after tipping the ball in the air to himself on a play designed for Fiedorowicz. Vandenberg finished completing 20-of-42 passes for 236 yards.

"It was a bad mental play by me," Vandenberg said. "A good play by the linebacker, but a ball that never should have been thrown there. When you're getting that close to field goal range and you've still got over a minute, that ball has got to go out of bounds or down to a back."

"I know that and it all rides on my shoulders."

Iowa now finds itself in a situation where it needs to regroup and continue working on the "correctables" before another in-state foe visits Kinnick Stadium next week. Northern Iowa comes in with a 1-1 record, with the one loss being a 26-21 defeat at the hands of No. 13 Wisconsin on Sept. 1 in Madison. The Sept. 15 game between the Hawkeyes and Panthers is slated to start at 2:30 p.m. Central and will be televised by the Big Ten Network.