

# 9/11/2012: 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:**

*"Certainly, it was a tough loss for our team Saturday. It was a hard-fought game and both teams competed well out there and we came up short. Tough, tough pill to swallow. Credit goes to Iowa State and we moved on on Sunday. So we've turned our focus to Northern Iowa. They come in here this weekend and focus on getting ready for them and also focus on getting our team to move forward."*

## **On what needs to improve offensively going forward after only score one touchdown through two games:**

*"I'd say pretty much everything. You know, when you have one touchdown in two ball games, that says it all. So we've got work to do and we'll just continue at that work."*

## **On why the passing game has struggled going downfield:**

*"If it is true, it's collective. The passing game isn't where we want it to be in any phase – downfield or in any regard. So we'll just continue to work on it. Obviously part of it is we have to do a better job when we get the ball down in the red zone area. We haven't converted touchdowns or done well in that regard either game."*

**On the play of linebacker Anthony Hitchens after he recorded 19 tackles against Iowa State:**

*"Yeah, I thought all of our linebackers did a good job. Anthony was really active when the ball came his way, so that factors in certainly. Chris Kirksey is playing well too on the other outside position. Typically, that guy doesn't get involved in as many plays as the other two inside guys. Anthony did a good job and James Morris played a phenomenal game and really gave us a chance to win with his big interception."*

*"First of all, it saved a touchdown down at our end of the field and then he brought the ball down to midfield. Unfortunately, we couldn't convert that into any points. But he's really playing a high level, too. Anthony's the least experienced of the three, but he's making progress with each time out there and we think he has got a chance to be a good player for us."*

**On how he'd evaluate the play of quarterback James Vandenberg after two games:**

*"Well, you know, we haven't scored enough points. We haven't won both games so we haven't scored enough points. With everybody on our team right now, we're not where we want to be. James is doing a great job. He's practicing well. He's doing a good job of leading. The next step for us is we have to get in the end zone."*

**On what UNI does well:**

*"Well, I'd say they look like a typical UNI team, but that's probably not a good way to say it because they've changed a little bit philosophically offensively. The one thing they look like is another excellent UNI team. That does look the same. They do it in a couple of different ways. More recently, they ran the quarterback a little bit more."*

*"Now they've got a guy who is more of a thrower and showed tremendous poise in two games. He really didn't get tested last week, but in the opener, he just played phenomenal and brought his team back and gave them a chance to win in a hostile environment his first time out. He hasn't thrown an interception yet. They shifted the way they're doing things, but they've got weapons. Their guys do an excellent job. They've very, very well-coached."*

*"Defensively, that way they are typical. They've looked the same for as long as we've been watching them. The common denominator is they're playing good defense. They do that time and time again. But I think overall, I don't know if anybody we played in 2009 played any harder than UNI on our schedule that year and that's what we're seeing on film, too. They just play extremely hard. They're tough guys and good football players. They're very well-coached and play well in all three areas."*

**On Vandenberg's confidence level at this point in time:**

*"He's fine. That's easier to say than maybe verify. We don't have anybody more invested on our football team – and I say this with all respect to a lot of guys; we have a lot of guys working hard – but James is totally in. I'm sure he's disappointed. I haven't asked him, but I'm sure he's disappointed right now. But the bottom line is we're two games into this thing and we just have to keep working."*

*"It's going to get better. He's going to be a big part of our improvement. There's no question in mind because he's a proven player, an outstanding football player. I'm just worried about him trying to do too much. All he has to do is just play his position."*

**On if he's seeing encouraging things in practice that just haven't translated into games:**

*"Absolutely. I thought we were much improved in August from*

the spring. The next step is for it to show up on the game field and there's no automatics in football, certainly. We're going to have to make that happen. I don't think we're that far away. It's just like last Saturday. When we made plays, when we executed, and we caught the ball and ran with it after the catch, those types of things, the ball moved fine up and down the field. But there were other times where we didn't do that.

"So you know, the trick is having team execution all around – all 11 guys doing their jobs. Again, that's a lot easier to say than do, but that's the challenge that we're facing right now. I don't think we're that far away, but we just have to keep working hard."

On how UNI potentially moving up to FBS would affect the talent pool in the state of Iowa:

"That's the first I've heard of it, so I have no idea how to answer your question. I have no idea and that's the last thing in my thoughts at this point. I don't think it's going to affect the talent pool at all. We have great programs in our state. We've got three million people in our state. I don't think how they approach football is going to change things dramatically. That's news to me. You got me on that one."