

Iowa vs. Northern Iowa (What to expect)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

To get you all ready for Saturday's game between Iowa and Northern Iowa, I put together a list of things you ought to know before heading to Kinnick Stadium.

At the end, I'll provide what I think are three keys to an Iowa victory.

Iowa Hawkeyes (1-1) vs. Northern Iowa Panthers (1-1)

Kinnick Stadium; Iowa City, Iowa

Sept. 15, 2012

2:30 p.m. Central

TV: BTN (Tom Werme, Danan Hughes, Damon Benning)

Radio: Hawkeye Radio Network (Gary Dolphin, Ed Podolak, Rob Brooks)

Weather: [79 degrees; sun; wind from SSW](#)

Brendan's Three Keys to the Game:

1. Touchdown on opening drive

In each of Iowa's first two games, the Hawkeyes have marched down to the red zone and come away with points on the opening drives. However, those points on both occasions were courtesy of Mike Meyer field goals. Obviously, Iowa has to show it's capable of scoring touchdowns when they get down inside the opposing 20-yard line, but it's probably even more important

to come away with a touchdown on the opening drive this week. If you recall, Iowa had to settle for a field goal on its opening drive the last time it played UNI back in 2009, and look at what ended up happening then. A 7-0 lead out of the gate gives the offense confidence it's currently lacking, it gives the defense something to build off of from the start and it allows the crowd to get into the game early.

2. Establish the ground game

Coming off a 150-yard rushing performance in his debut as Iowa's top running back, sophomore Damon Bullock only managed to pick up 53 yards on the ground last week against Iowa State. The strength of UNI's defense is its secondary and the Panthers have an inexperienced front seven, so I think this would be a good week for Iowa to get a ground game going. If Bullock gets somewhere in the 20-25 carry range and true freshman Greg Garmon's able to get at least 10 carries while spelling Bullock, Iowa should be able to have some offensive success. And who knows? It might even open up the passing game a little for the Hawkeyes.

3. Strong first half from defense

Iowa's defense has done a good job this so far this season in being able to make halftime adjustments and be able to play strong enough second halves to keep the team in games. This is a week where Iowa can't be sluggish early on defensively, especially facing a redshirt freshman quarterback who isn't going to be intimidated by Kinnick Stadium since UNI has already played a game this season at Wisconsin. It all goes back to confidence. Iowa, as a whole, has to be able to play with more of it than it has the first two weeks. The defense has shown it can be capable of being that spark plug, but at some point, that has to show early on, too.