

Iowa vs. Minnesota (What to expect)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

To get you all ready for Saturday's game between Iowa and Minnesota, 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 (2-2) vs. Minnesota Golden Gophers (4-0)

Kinnick Stadium; Iowa City, Iowa

Sept. 29, 2012

11 a.m. Central

TV: ESPN2 (Beth Mowins, Joey Galloway, Lewis Johnson)

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

Weather: [69 degrees; partly cloudy early/sun throughout; wind from WNW](#)

Brendan's Three Keys to the Game:

1. Better special teams play

Given the onside kicks Minnesota has executed in each of the past two meetings, as well as the onside kick Iowa gave up to Central Michigan last week, and this is fairly obvious. But looking beyond the obvious here, special teams will likely be the difference again Saturday. Keep in mind that one of the

Golden Gophers' biggest areas of concern right now is their field-goal kicking, while conversely, Mike Meyer has been a strength for the Hawkeyes this season and proved his worth with the 46-yarder he made against the wind in the fourth quarter of last week's game. If it comes down to a game-winning kick, Iowa could be holding a distinct advantage.

2. Continued red zone success

Both teams are going to be running the football. A lot. To me, this means points are going to be coming at a premium on Saturday. Think back to last year's game in Minneapolis, and one of the biggest reasons Iowa lost that day was because the Hawkeyes came up empty on three different occasions in the red zone (and this was before the Minnesota comeback began to take place). Iowa has done well in recent weeks of turning red zone trips into touchdowns and I think the Hawkeyes will have numerous trips in the red zone again in this game, meaning they have to be able to make the most of those opportunities if Floyd of Rosedale is going to be stay in Iowa City beyond Saturday afternoon.

3. Force Shortell out of the pocket

Make no mistake – Max Shortell is a different style quarterback from MarQueis Gray, who won't be playing for Minnesota on Saturday due to an ankle injury. Shortell's at his best when he's able to stay in the pocket and look downfield, which is something opposing quarterbacks have been able to do against Iowa's defense each of the last three weeks. If the Hawkeyes are going to rise to the occasion defensively Saturday afternoon, they have to be able to make Shortell move around and not let him be able to set his feet, otherwise he's going to carve them apart. Force him to scramble and think on the fly, and Iowa might be able to force a couple of Gopher turnovers and win the bulk of the field position battles.