

# 10/9/2012: 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:**

*"We had an off week last week, which I think came at an opportune time for our football team probably. It was a good week for us to try to work on some things that we're not doing well and then hopefully grow a little bit. Starting today, we turn our sights to this weekend's game and we've got a big challenge traveling up to East Lansing to play an excellent Michigan State team."*

## **On how the team has adjusted to the coordinator changes at this point in the season:**

*"I think fine. You know, it's a process and it began, really, back in February. Somewhere at the end of February, we got Greg [Davis] settled in and I think things have gone really well. There's a process to it, as I said. Certainly the first couple of weeks, there's a little bit of adjustment going on. But I think we're gaining ground and they're doing fine."*

## **On being part of the recent documentary on NFL Network about the Cleveland Browns and if anything from that experience still sticks with him now:**

*"I'm still anxious to see it. I heard it was well done. I've been carrying it in my briefcase for about a week now, I guess*

six days, but haven't had I guess an interest in looking at it. I heard it was well done and it's like everything you do in life. All things that you do in life certainly help shape your good experiences. Experiences help shape what you are.

"I think it's just a great experience, a great opportunity to be around a lot of good people. Certainly the head coach will be a Hall of Fame football coach, but a lot of young people in the building, a lot of great assistants. It was a great learning experience. It was like a lot of things with every stop along the way. I've met a lot of great people and developed a lot of great friendships going back to Worcester Academy, so I've been really fortunate. I've been around a lot of good folks and made a lot of friends through the process."

**On Mark Weisman, his background and what he has done the last few weeks as a running back:**

"He played fullback in high school near the Chicagoland area. His high school coach is actually a guy I've known since probably the early '80s. Lester Erb recruited that area and his daughter actually worked in our offices so we had a pretty good relationship there. Mark played football. It's not a real sexy position.

"He ended up going to Air Force and enjoyed it. It's a great program, but I think some of the challenges with being there, the military life, I think it really came down to making a bed as much as anything. He decided that it wasn't for him and ended up on our campus. Last year, he was ineligible.

"We really didn't know much about him. He was on the scout team. In the spring, he left a really positive impression, continued that in August and then with our running back situation, it was just really fortunate that he found his way to the running back position.

"It's a neat story mainly because he just works so hard and he's such a model team guy. So it's really one of those things

*you like to see guys that have work hard and really do things the way they're supposed to be done have success and Mark has certainly done that."*

**On what he meant by "making a bed":**

*"The story, it may be a legend – I don't know – but the story was they bounce quarters off your bed. He got tired of doing that, so he finally made it perfect and slept on the floor so he wouldn't be harassed. Sleeping on the floor can get old, too. So at least that's the legend traveling around this area."*

**On in-season coaching changes being made and whether it's bad for the profession:**

*"Uh, you know, every situation is different, certainly, and for me to judge what goes on somewhere else would probably be wrong. My Kodak moment, I guess, would've been in the early '80s. In fact, it was in our conference, I remember a defensive coordinator being changed. I think it was in the early '80s at a pretty prominent school. The defensive coordinator walked the plank for whatever reason, I don't know. But that was like my first recollection of assistants kind of being rotated a little bit. It was almost 30 years ago now."*

*"You know, I guess it's just part of what we do. Certainly, things have changed in 30 years. There's a lot more exposure, a lot more TV revenue, a lot more pressure, and things happen. But for me to make any commentary on any of the three that you're referring to, I'm not really familiar with any of the situations so you'd probably have to talk to the folks involved there."*

**On how backs like Weisman and Michigan State's Le'Veon Bell can be effective for offenses and wear down defenses:**

*"You know, that's possible. But I'm looking at this week and*

*we're playing a defense that's very veteran, very, very physical and very, very experienced. Very tough to run the football against. That's going to be a challenge. But I guess I would say that all good backs come in different shapes and sizes.*

*"The thing we've always felt like is if a guy's effective with his performance – be it a guy like Shonn Greene, who was on the big side, or a guy like Fred Russell back 10 years ago who was really, not real big, tall or big – to me, it's just about the effectiveness a back has. To me, good backs can cause problems for defenses regardless of their style.*

*"When you face a good back like Bell, certainly he'll have our full attention. He has to, and he has had success against us. We're very respectful of what he's capable of doing."*

**On the statuses of Micah Hyde, Ray Hamilton and Drew Clark:**

*"Yeah, I made a statement after the incidents that they'd be handled by the student code of conduct. Those three situations will be handled within the framework of the student code of conduct. It was a first violation for all three players, so we'll do that. We also have some in-house policies that are in place. We'll do additional things there, but I'm not going to make that public."*

**On how running back Damon Bullock has progressed and how much he'll be used vs. Michigan State:**

*"We expect him to play and the good news is a month ago, we didn't know if we had any running back that could play in this conference. We've only had one conference game, but I think both guys have demonstrated now that they're capable of playing well and we intend to play both of them on Saturday."*

**On other guys besides Bell emerging in Michigan State's offense, particularly the receiving corps:**

*"You know, I wouldn't suggest Bell's the full package. I think that's why they're a good football team. They've got talented receivers. I think everybody knows they graduated some outstanding players at the receiver position, so they're going through transition there. Basically every college team goes through transitions at certain spots and that's one of them. But both those guys are doing well and they're very talented. They're very big, they're very physical. I think it's just a matter of consistency with them and I think they certainly took a big step forward last week, particularly the freshman playing as well as he did. So they're very capable there."*

*"The quarterback is a first-year starter, but it's not like this is his first game of the year right now. He has played and he has always been in their system. He played behind arguably one of the best and one of the most productive quarterbacks in the history of their school, so it's not like he's just some guy walking off the street, either. They make you defend all 11 guys that they have and they're well-coached like they always are and they present a lot of problems and challenges for you, as your defense looks at their offense."*

**On the challenges of going against a defense coached by Mark Dantonio:**

*"I was going to say it seems like since Mark has gotten there, they've played great defense. I think part of that equation too is basically his entire staff came from Cincinnati, so when they hit the ground running, they knew who they were, what they were and what they wanted to do. They had a system, if you will, on both sides of the football and they incorporated that right away. I think the record speaks for itself. They have 22 wins the last two years, so they've just done a great job."*

*"The most important thing about systems are that your players understand the system and being able to play, using their abilities within that system and that's clearly what has taken"*

*place with the defense. They're a very aggressive group. They're very tough to throw against, very tough to run against and they can create problems for you schematically.*

*"And then they have great players on top of it that really play hard, so there are challenges everywhere you look. They pose a lot of problems for you and that's probably why they've won 22 games the past two years."*