

# 10/16/2012: Iowa football notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming game against Penn State with the local media during his weekly press conference held Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2012, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – When the Iowa Hawkeyes face the Penn State Nittany Lions at Kinnick Stadium on Oct. 20, there's a good chance they'll be minus someone who has been a key ingredient to the Hawkeye offense over the past month.

Sophomore running back Mark Weisman continued his remarkable story last weekend in Iowa's 19-16 double overtime win over Michigan State by rushing for 116 yards and scoring the game-tying touchdown with 55 seconds left in regulation. But it came at a price. Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz confirmed Tuesday that Weisman has a sprained ankle, which kept him from finishing out the game.

After the game, Weisman was wearing a boot and said [he couldn't go back in because he couldn't cut on his leg like he wanted to](#). Ferentz said an MRI was done on the ankle Monday confirming the sprain. He didn't completely rule out Weisman from playing against Penn State, saying he'd be able to practice lightly this week. But right now, the odds look stacked against him being out there.

"I think realistically, you're talking about a guy trying to be a running back," Ferentz said. "I think he would have a lot of progress to make to be able to play, so we'll just have to take the mental approach, 'He's not going to be here. If he does join us, it will be great.'"

Should Weisman be unable to go against Penn State, the next man in would be true freshman running back Greg Garmon, who is a native of Erie, Pa. Garmon has played in five of Iowa's six games this season (he missed the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan due to an arm injury) and has 35 yards rushing on 14 carries thus far.

Perhaps just as intriguing though as Garmon getting his first career start is sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri listed behind him on Iowa's 2-deep this week. Canzeri was the Hawkeyes' No. 1 back in spring practice before tearing his ACL in late March.

"He's doing well," senior quarterback James Vandenberg said. "I think he's getting more confidence week in and week out. We're definitely going to need him down the road."

### **D-line progression**

When the 2012 season began, the biggest question mark surrounding this defense was up front. Now with the Hawkeyes at their season's midway point, the D-line has slowly evolved into a group that's not only formidable, but one that could change the impact of an entire game at any given point.

Take for instance Iowa's win over Michigan State last weekend. Sophomore defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat only registered one tackle the entire game. But by the fourth quarter, he just might have been the most dominant player on the entire field. Whether it was overpowering the guy in front of him, forcing the Spartans to double-team him, or get his finger on a throw that ultimately landed in the hands of defensive back Greg Castillo to preserve the win, Trinca-Pasat came up huge.

And he knew it.

"Around the end of the third/beginning of the fourth, I started to get a feel for how they were blocking," Trinca-Pasat said. "I felt like I could make some plays just speed rushing the guard and I was able to get around him."

He's not the only story to emerge up front however. Take a player like senior defensive end Joe Gaglione, who dealt with multiple injuries throughout his career only to finally get his chance to start this season. Statistically speaking, Gaglione had his best game against Michigan State, compiling 11 tackles in the win. On the season, Gaglione has 35 tackles, four sacks and two forced fumbles.

Throw in the two guys who were the most experienced D-linemen coming into 2012 – senior Steve Bigach and junior Dominic Alvis – and Iowa a front four that has exceeded many outside expectations through six games. But despite evolving from a question mark to one of the most vital parts of this year's squad, this group feels like it still has a lot more left to prove.

"We're a bunch of junkyard dogs," Alvis said. "Nobody really wanted us. We came to Iowa a bunch of no-names. We are the underdogs because we've really been through a lot together."

"We're just a bunch of guys that go to work every day and do our job. Nobody special. Just a bunch of guys that work hard."

## **Not your typical Penn State offense**

Make no mistake about it. The offense being showcased by Penn State this weekend is unlike anything Ferentz or anyone else has seen.

The Nittany Lions historically have been known for their ground attack. But with first-year head coach Bill O'Brien in charge now, the passing prowess he displayed as the New England Patriots' offensive coordinator has carried over to State College, Pa., in a big way.

Penn State senior quarterback Matt McGloin had been part of a quarterback rotation the past two seasons and had developed a reputation for being ill-advised throwing the football. That has completely changed in 2012. McGloin currently averages 250 yards passing per game, which leads the Big Ten.

"He has improved a lot," junior linebacker Anthony Hitchens said. "You can just tell he's leading out there now. He's more confident in his calls. He knows where he wants to go now with reading defenses, so we've got to make it hard for him."

There's another key element to Penn State's offense – one of surprise. Due in part to having an atrocious kicking game, the Nittany Lions in six games have gone for it on fourth down 20 times already this season, converting on 13 of those 20 attempts.

"It just makes us have to be that much more focused and detailed," Gaglione said. "They're very unpredictable and they run a different offensive scheme than they did in the past. I think we're really going to have to be prepared this week."

## **Fired up sideline**

Senior wide receiver Keenan Davis said he had never witnessed anything like it. The Hawkeyes won the overtime coin toss and just as the Iowa defense began to take the field, rap music

began to blare through the P.A. system at Spartan Stadium.

Three words, "ball so hard," were being recited over and over again. A large group of Iowa players – mostly underclassmen – began jumping around on the sideline, jamming to that well-known song performed by Jay-Z and Kanye West.

"We've all been excited in our own way, but to see the sideline get up like that and be ready to play, even the guys who aren't playing being into the game, it was great to see," Davis said.

Previously, the team as a whole was being criticized for not showing enough emotion on the sideline during games. This moment not only put some of that prior criticism to rest, but the players truly believe the team cohesiveness on display at that moment played a part in its overtime performance.

"It was a big situation and we were just having fun," senior cornerback Micah Hyde said. "It was a great feeling going out there in overtime knowing that everyone was having fun.

"As a senior and as a leader, you like to see the young guys having fun, jumping around, because when everyone's uptight and it's a pressure situation, it's not a good situation to be in. I play a lot better having fun than when I'm uptight."

### **Castillo's father fired by Eagles**

Three days after senior cornerback Greg Castillo sealed Iowa's win over Michigan State by intercepting an Andrew Maxwell pass during the second overtime, his father found himself unemployed.

Greg's father is Juan Castillo, who until Tuesday morning was the defensive coordinator of the Philadelphia Eagles. Juan was fired less than two seasons after being promoted to defensive coordinator from coaching the Eagles' offensive line.

Ferentz has always had a friendship with Juan, even before

Greg became a Hawkeye. The link between the two was Ferentz's high school coach, Joe Moore. Ferentz also crossed paths with him during the 1990s when he was an NFL assistant and Juan Castillo was working at Texas A&M-Kingsville.

"Juan is one of the best people and one of the best coaches I've been around at any level," Ferentz said. "The good news is he'll have a long line of suitors when the time comes. That's one of those temporary bumps in the road."

Greg wasn't made available for comment Tuesday, but a teammate of his who could relate was. Senior strong safety Tom Donatell also has an NFL coach as a father in Ed Donatell, who is currently the defensive backs coach for the San Francisco 49ers.

Like Juan Castillo, Ed Donatell was once a defensive coordinator in the league for both the Green Bay Packers and Atlanta Falcons. Ed was fired by the Packers in 2004 shortly after they lost a playoff game in overtime to the Eagles. Philadelphia tied the game with a field goal right near the end of regulation thanks in large part to Green Bay giving up a first down on 4th-and-26.

"It's tough at times," Tom Donatell said. "But you just want to be a good friend, a good teammate to [Greg Castillo] and support him. I told him, 'You and I both know your dad's a great coach, a great human being, works hard.'"

"Sometimes that's just part of the business. You've got to take the good with the bad and just kind of take it for what it's worth."