

10/23/2012: 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:

"It was a tough weekend for us. Penn State played a tremendous football game and we had a great environment in our stadium, but we just couldn't match their tempo. They played a tremendous game and it was a disappointing night for us. We looked at the tape Sunday and we've moved on now and trying to get ready for a very good Northwestern team."

On what he feels the team needs to work on this week after reviewing the film:

"I mean, where would you want to start? There wasn't much we did well and Penn State had a lot to do with it. They played excellent football. They've been playing better with each week and they played an excellent football game and we didn't match them. So we lost a game and we'll just go back to work. It's not one specific area, I don't think."

On if he considered putting his backup QB in late with the game well in doubt:

"Yeah, you think about a lot of things during the course of the game. Obviously, we left our starters in there. We just felt like it was the best thing to do at that time."

On how running back Mark Weisman has looked and if he'll be more of a factor against Northwestern:

"We're hoping so. He has got – if we go through this week without any reoccurrences – then hopefully he'll be a week stronger. He really made a good comeback last week. Played a little while, but there wasn't much in terms of holes being open, that type of thing. So the game got out of hand and we just felt like it was best to get him out of there. I think he'll be fine."

On if Weisman is still humble even given the success that he has had:

"Yeah. Outside of last Saturday, he has really run the ball well and has just done a wonderful job. It's a neat story, but the best part about the story is exactly what you're referring to. He's a tremendous young guy. Very, very quiet. I'm sure he's a little more outspoken away from the building, but with us, he has just been a guy that shows up with a great attitude and works extremely hard and obviously, he's a tough young man, too. It's a real neat story and we feel very fortunate that he's here."

On how he feels Penn State quarterback Matt McGloin's skills fit in Bill O'Brien's offense:

"Well, I think it's a real credit to Coach O'Brien and mostly to Matt. You know, I'm not saying he wasn't a good quarterback last year, but he's leading the Big Ten in passing and to me, he's kind of representative of their football team. We've seen him, at least from my vantage point, I think he has improved every week and he played a stellar game the other night."

"But beyond playing, from the sidelines at least and watching tape, it occurs that he's a real strong leader and I think they've got a lot of great leadership on that football team from my vantage point. But certainly he has done a real fantastic job for them."

On if there are signs of the offense starting to break through or if major things need to happen:

"You know, we're not surrendering or not planning to show up for the rest of the season. You know, what happened Saturday, I'd like to think it was an aberration. I'm not diminishing Penn State's role. They played a tremendous football game. We didn't and unfortunately, I've been involved in games like that. I don't think that's representative of our football team. It may be of theirs. They're playing very, very well. But I'd like to think we're a little bit better than that. We're not planning on any major overhauls. We just have to do what we do better."

On if he feels Northwestern still is difficult to prepare for despite offensive numbers sputtering:

"Yeah, we do. They're always a challenge. This year's a little bit different. They've been playing two different quarterbacks. But the common denominator is they have a real good attack. It's well thought out. Their guys, they throw and catch really well and they've done that for a real long time."

"They've got a running back who is extremely dynamic. 'Explosive' is a big word nowadays and he certainly fits that. You know, he can take it the distance from anywhere, basically, and when the running quarterback is in there, he can basically do the same thing. So they've got a lot of things to prepare for and they're always a tough, tough match-up."

On if it's easier to get his guys to prepare for Northwestern given the Wildcats' recent success vs. Iowa:

"I think it's probably an important game for everybody this weekend, not just in our game, but everywhere in the conference. It's just what football is all about, so, you know, credit to them. They've done well. But what has happened over the last year, two years or seven years really doesn't

matter this week. It's the team that plays the best on Saturday."

On the work linebacker Anthony Hitchens put in the offseason to get to where he is today:

"Anthony's a guy that has done a good job since he has gotten here. We played him as a true freshman on special teams and played him at a couple of different positions. He had a short stint at running back – I guess everybody on our roster has – but he was there for a little bit. He played some safety and then we finally settled him at the end of the year in 2010 at linebacker and he actually played a little bit in the bowl game.

"You know, he has worked hard and he's continuing to progress. Statistics are good, but the good news for us is he can continue to be a much better football player. He's making tackles and that's where it all starts on defense, but as far as reading his keys and getting where he has to get quicker, that's a challenge for every player. I think it's something he can continue to improve on."

On how players have picked up on Greg Davis' system and what things they need to keep working on:

"Well, I mean, it's everything. You work on everything and I think we're making progress. But it didn't show up Saturday, that's for sure. But it's a long road. We'll just keep working. We'll go back to work today and just see if we can't get better."

On whether he sees opportunities for the passing game to get going against Northwestern's defense:

"You know, there are opportunities every week. It's just how you play. You know, I think they've done a good job defensively. To me, just looking at them, I think that's one of the things that I think they've settled in with what they

want to be and how they want to play defensively. They make several changes and adjustments that pose challenge for offense.

"So they've done a good job and they've played some good teams. They're a 6-2 football team that has been playing well and the two games they lost, they lost in the fourth quarter. So they're an excellent football team and we've certainly got to be reprehensible this week in getting ready for them."

On the difficulty of preparing for Northwestern's two-quarterback system:

"It's a challenge because I think they are two very different guys and the offense has the potential to change with each guy playing quarterback. Obviously, when [Kain] Colter's not playing quarterback, he's in position where he can hurt you in a lot of different ways. He's an extraordinary athlete and it's a credit for them, first of all, for recruiting him. He has been an excellent player. I believe he is from Colorado. And then secondly, they utilize him in a lot of smart ways. So it just puts a lot of pressure on you defensively, but they've always done a great job with that."

On the status of right guard Andrew Donnal, who along with left tackle Brandon Scherff, was injured in Iowa's loss to Penn State:

"Yeah, it looks like both of them are out for the season. Both suffered severe injuries and they were significant injuries on Saturday. It's unfortunate, but that's part of college football. That's part of football in general. It's just really disappointing because mainly players work extremely hard close to 12 months a year just to play 12 games. I hate to see anybody on any team have that taken away, but it's unfortunately part of what football entails."