

10/30/2012: 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 loss for us on the road this past Saturday. Now we travel down to Indiana and play a team that's coming off a real good win. They got a road win Saturday and as impressive as that is the improvement they've made. The losses they've had, basically they've had four games they lost by 10 points. So they're playing really well, playing with a lot of confidence and I think certainly last Saturday was a big step for them, giving them confidence, winning on the road like that."

On his team's ability to force turnovers as frequently as it has:

"I think that's one of the things we've done well. We've protected the ball pretty well offensively and our defense has been opportunistic. They've done a good job both with interceptions and fumble recoveries. The guys are working hard and that's certainly a positive statistic for us."

On how Indiana's defense looks to him on film and how he thinks it has improved:

"Yeah, I think that's probably the thing I would reference. They have some new players out there. Obviously, everybody

graduates players each year. But I think that's one of the areas where statistics may not bear it out at this given point. They're doing a lot of things really well defensively and I think they're playing a lot better than they were last year.

"It starts up front. They've got two really veteran guys inside that play well. They played well a year ago and they're playing even better now. They've got a lot of experience, those two guys. They play at, I think, a very, very high level. I think they've improved at linebacker. They've got a couple of new guys there that have really given them some octane and their secondary is very talented, very athletic and very active.

"So they're doing a lot of really good things. If you look at their tackles-for-loss statistics, their sacks, those types of things, they're a very disruptive group."

On the running back situation between Mark Weisman's injury and what Damon Bullock brings:

"We don't expect Mark to play. He was run out of the game the other day, so I don't think it's likely that he'll play this week. That's bad news, certainly. The good news is we finally got Damon back after six weeks and got him back out there. He started out a little slow, a little bit rusty for obvious reasons, but I thought he played well and competed hard.

"Hopefully one of these days, we'll have a chance to get these guys together. But Damon really did a nice job out there and we're going to need him again Saturday."

On the development Micah Hyde has made over his career:

"You know, he's just a great young guy and really came in that way. He just came in with a great attitude, works extremely hard. He was a little bit of a tweener in recruiting, if you will. He was getting a lot of attention from Mid-American

schools. A good player and just all around, a good athlete. So he came in and I really feel like he could've played receiver for us as well as defensive back, but that's kind of where he fit in.

"We had a tough game the other day, but he really had two stellar plays. He killed a punt, kept it from going into the end zone and we were able to kill the ball at the 1-yard line. John Wienke punted it down there and that's not a play everybody can make, but it was an outstanding play. And then they turned around unfortunately and hit a big play, a 70-plus yard run with a very fast running back, and Micah tracked him down. He not only made the tackle, but it was a smart tackle. From the sideline, it looked like he was going to horse-collar the back and then he grabbed him, then just re-adjusted his hands and was able to bring him down.

"You know, that to me speaks volumes about the kind of player Micah is, those back-to-back plays basically. So it was a great hustle play. He showed more speed than we thought he had on that one, but it's kind of the way he is. He just does everything full speed."

On Hyde showing his speed on that particular tackle:

"Well, yeah. The week before, we saw [Northwestern's Venric Mark] go 80 yards untouched and he could've gone 100 if he could have against a bunch of fast guys. That running back is fast. There's no question about that. I think Micah showed a different gear there. Maybe we need to put Micah at running back."

On if he thought about playing Hyde on offense:

"Not recently. But we had thought about him at receiver. He has just been too valuable for us on defense."

On what he's looking to see from his defense against Indiana's high-powered offense:

"Well, we just have to play as well as we possibly can. This is the third week in a row now we're playing a really high-paced, fast-paced offensive team. Ironically, just the way our schedule shakes out, we played the three fastest operating teams in the league back to back here. It's going to be a challenge, but if there's good news there, we've had practice at it, so we should be used to that part of it."

"But it still gets down to the key stopping any team, whether they're high-paced or a deliberate team, is get off the field. That's the name of the game on defense is get off the field. We just have to do a better job of that. That's what we'll focus on this week and it's going to be a real challenge. They've done a great job of moving the football and more importantly, they've scored points and that's what you're shooting for on offense."

On what he has seen from Indiana quarterback Nate Sudfeld:

"Yeah, I think they're similar in style – both quarterbacks are. But I think the thing that stands out to me the most is you're looking at a player who was playing high-school football a year ago at this time and he stepped in and didn't seem real phased by the environment or the situation. That's certainly a good sign for any player, but certainly with a quarterback having a little bit more on his plate, that's really impressive."

On what else Indiana brings offensively from a personnel standpoint beyond the QB position:

"Well, I mentioned a lot. I think their defense is really improved and they're young on the offensive line, but I think that group has improved. The guys that are back – the center has played forever – and the guys with experienced have improved their play and they've got some young players playing that are doing a nice job also. That's the first thing that jumps out at you."

"The running back was good a year ago. He's still very good. We played when the running quarterback was in. He's out right now. So it's a different style attack from what we saw a year ago. Last but not least, their outside guys are really talented. They're very, very skilled players and they're very productive players. Two of the three have very good size. The other guy is just a really explosive player.

"So they give you a lot to worry about, a lot to defend. But their scheme is well-conceived and most importantly, the players execute it well."