

Hawkeyes lose third straight, falling 24-21 to Hoosiers

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – Three quarters of the 2012 season has concluded and the Iowa Hawkeyes – at least this particular group of players – find themselves in uncharted waters.

Iowa lost its third straight game Saturday, falling to Indiana 24-21 at Memorial Stadium. This defeat has the Hawkeyes sitting at 2-3 in Big Ten play and 4-5 overall, making this the first time since 2007 Iowa has possessed a losing record of any kind in football.

“This is a letdown,” senior cornerback Micah Hyde said. “Give the credit to them. They made some big plays and we didn’t make enough plays when we were capable of doing so.”

After severe weather delayed kickoff of this game by an hour, things finally got underway at 4:42 p.m. Eastern. Iowa struck first on its second possession of the game when senior quarterback James Vandenberg threw his lone touchdown pass of the day to sophomore wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley. The play covered 24 yards and put the Hawkeyes ahead 7-0.

Martin-Manley ended up having one of the better performances of any Iowa wide receiver this season, finishing with 131 yards receiving on seven catches.

“When we stayed in front of the chains on offense, we did a lot of things and Kevonte made a lot of plays with his hands,” Vandenberg said. “We were able to get it to him in a variety of different ways. The touchdown was just kind of one of those things where I just looked over, they wanted us in no-huddle

and we caught them in a man-to-man.”

The Hoosier offense took the field for their second series and inserted quarterback Nate Sudfeld in place of starter Cameron Coffman. Sudfeld’s first play from scrimmage was a pass picked off by Iowa junior linebacker Christian Kirksey and taken back 18 yards for a touchdown that extended the Hawkeye lead to 14-0.

Indiana would respond with a 45-yard field goal to make it 14-3 and the score would remain this until the final minutes of the first half. Sudfeld was benched permanently in favor of Coffman and the switch paid off big time for the Hoosiers. Starting at their own 13-yard line with 2:13 left until halftime, Coffman guided an 87-yard scoring drive capped by a 15-yard touchdown reception by Cody Latimer that made it 14-10 when both teams went to their locker rooms.

Early in the third quarter, Iowa had a chance to extend its lead. But facing 3rd-and-Goal from Indiana’s 12-yard line, Vandenberg threw a pass into the corner of the end zone intended for junior wideout Jordan Cotton that was intercepted by Indiana’s Antonio Marshall, keeping the score at 14-10.

“He was probably pressing a little bit,” Ferentz said. “It’s one of those deals there, if you don’t have it, you probably just throw it out of bounds where nobody can get it and hopefully get the three points.”

Three plays later, the Hoosiers faced 3rd-and-8 from their own 22-yard line when Coffman hit a wide open Kofi Hughes for a 77-yard strike originally signaled a touchdown, but was changed when replay showed Hughes was out of bounds before the ball broke the plane. Indiana would eventually capitalize in the red zone after a pair of failed attempts in the first half and take its first lead of the game at 17-14.

Iowa would re-take the lead in the fourth quarter when sophomore running back Damon Bullock ran in from four yards

out to give the Hawkeyes a 21-17 lead with 12:27 remaining. Bullock had re-entered the game after getting his knee twisted in the third quarter.

But the lead would be short-lived for the Hawkeyes. Once again, Indiana would strike back with big plays in the passing game and went ahead 24-21 when Coffman hit Latimer for his third score of the game on a play where he got past Hyde.

"That was a really good throw. I couldn't even make a play on the ball," Hyde said. "I tried slipping underneath and the ball was just even over my head and perfect for the receiver."

Late in the game, Iowa had the ball and faced 4th-and-1 from its own 28-yard line after a completed pass by Vandenberg to senior wide receiver Keenan Davis resulted in Davis coming up just short of the marker as he got hit out of bounds. The Hawkeyes looked as though they would go for it, but while the spot of the ball was being reviewed, Ferentz opted to punt with 4:43 left and put the game in his defense's hands.

"We felt like if we had tempo, we could take a shot at it right there," Ferentz said. "But the play got stopped to review the spot and that kind of changed the complexion."

Iowa now needs to win two of its last three games just to reach the six-win minimum needed to become bowl-eligible. The Hawkeyes return home Nov. 10 to face Purdue (3-6, 0-5), who is coming off a 34-9 loss to Penn State on Saturday. Kickoff is scheduled for 11 a.m. Central and will be televised nationally on the Big Ten Network.