

11/6/2012: 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:

"Certainly, we're disappointed to have come off a loss. Give Indiana credit. They played a good football game Saturday and we came up short. So we move our attention now to Purdue and it's good to be back at Kinnick. We've been on the road two weeks, so good to be back at home and we certainly have our work cut out getting ready for this week's game."

On the development of wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley:

"Kevonte is a great young guy. A tremendous work ethic. We redshirted him two years ago and he did a nice job moving along last year as our third receiver and just continues to improve. He has got a great attitude, first and foremost. Just a tremendous young guy. Has great work habits, not only during the season but out of the season as well."

"He's just totally committed to being a good football player and it has been fun to watch him grow and develop. Certainly excited about the way he played this past Saturday and by the way he has played all season long."

On his thoughts about Purdue and what it does on both sides of the ball:

"You know, a lot of good players. You start on the offensive side, they've got some very, very explosive football players at receiver and at the running back, so they've got a lot of big-play capability and that has certainly shown up. You know, they've got three veteran guys up front along the offensive line. They're already very, very multiple, not only with their personnel, but also formations. You really have to be sharp mentally."

"Then on the defensive side, they're a very big, physical team, especially up front. I don't think we've played anybody as big as these guys, including their fifth defender on the line now, at outside linebacker. He's a really big guy, too. So they've got some size there. Their corners are veteran, very, very athletic, very talented players. They've done a good job there."

"Then on special teams, it's kind of the same thing. When they have both their kick return guys, I don't know if there has been a better duo. One of them has been out for a couple of weeks, but two guys that can take it the distance there, too. So just kind of in a nutshell, they're a team that can hurt you fast within a multitude of ways offensively, defensively and with special teams."

On what the key is for Iowa to snap its current three-game losing streak:

"We have to play better. It's pretty simple. We need to improve and play better and that's really where our focus is right now."

On what he thought about Indiana and its coach Kevin Wilson after playing the Hoosiers last weekend:

"Well, it's only his second year there and I said a week ago, we were very impressed with the improvement we saw from Year One to Year Two. A totally different team from what they were a year ago. Going into the game, that was our impression and

nothing has changed.

"Perhaps even more impressive is they're doing it, they lost their quarterback early in the season, so they just transitioned to a different mode of operation, if you will. Now, they're just doing a good job. They play hard. They embrace the scheme and can hurt you in a lot of different ways."

On whether his offensive players are still trying to pick up the new system or just need to execute better:

"I think it's execution more than anything else. I think we've certainly been at it long enough now and we've had periods this year where we've executed really well. But the last couple of weeks, we haven't. That certainly has impacted the outcome of the ball game. So we just have to continue to work hard there. There are no magic solutions right now."

On how linebacker Christian Kirksey has put himself in position to make plays like he did against Indiana:

"You know, it's a little bit like Kevonte, although Christian played more last year. Christian's first year was last year, actually starting every game. But like Kevonte, they're like the same person. They've got great attitudes, great work ethics and care about the team. They care about playing well. They take a lot of pride in what they do."

"So I think we've seen him improve with each week as well and he certainly has made some big plays. He had a pick early in the season for a touchdown and on Saturday, he had the pick and also the fumble recovery. So he's working hard. Again, just a guy that brings a great attitude to our team. A very, very positive guy."

On the status of running back Mark Weisman for Saturday's game against Purdue:

"Yeah, we'll see how the week goes. But I'm not overly optimistic. He couldn't do anything on Sunday at all and don't really anticipate him doing a lot right now. He's still kind of rehabbing this thing. The trainers are working hard. I think he's definitely breaking the 20-hour rule. There's no 20-hour rule for medicine, I don't think. If he is, we're busted because he's wearing the trainers out."

"He's doing everything he can to get back. But nature has to take its course, too. So we'll just have to wait and see how the week goes. But planning-wise, we can't plan as if he's going to be with us."

On how he felt Damon Bullock did in his first start at running back since before his concussion:

"Well, you know, with Damon, I think the game two weeks ago, he was doing practically the same thing. He has really played well. He was playing well before he was injured and then just a week ago, after he came off a 5-6 week hiatus, he looked really sharp. He was very sore the next day, so I think he has moved beyond that a little bit. But he's doing a great job."

"It's a positive for sure. It'll be real positive to get both guys back together. But in the meantime, that's where we're at and I'm really proud of Damon's development."

On what the attitude amongst the players is at this point given the current losing streak:

"Well, last time I saw them, it was good. Nobody likes losing, certainly. Nobody does. I don't know who would and the players are probably at the top of that list. You know, we have three games left and we'll start practice again this afternoon."

"But I think we've got a good group of guys. They're high-character guys that are totally invested. I expect to have a good week of practice this week and hopefully, a good game Saturday. We're going to need that because we're playing a

team that I'm sure is going to be thinking the same things."