

Last-second kick lifts Boilers past Hawkeyes

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – When the Iowa Hawkeyes eventually reflect on this 2012 season, losses such as the one they suffered Saturday at Kinnick Stadium will be the ones that sting the most.

As sloppy as Iowa looked at times, it managed to come back from a 10-point deficit in the second half to tie the game, only to lose 27-24 to Purdue following a 46-yard Boilermaker field goal as time expired. The Hawkeyes have now lost four straight games and have lost four games at Kinnick Stadium.

At 4-6 overall, any small hope that existed of Iowa playing in a bowl game is practically gone. The Hawkeyes now must win both of their remaining games against Michigan and No. 18 Nebraska just to become bowl-eligible.

“We’re feeling it,” sophomore wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley said.

Purdue struck first when running back Akeem Shavers rushed for a 3-yard touchdown to put the Boilermakers up 7-0. Iowa would tie the game in the second quarter when sophomore running back Damon Bullock scored from one yard out following a fumble recovery by redshirt freshman defensive tackle Darian Cooper.

But the game wouldn’t be tied for long. Purdue quarterback Robert Marve threw the first of two touchdown passes on the day to Gabe Holmes from 9 yards out to put the Boilermakers back up 14-7. Purdue had a chance at the end of the half to extend its lead to 10 points, but hooked a 22-yard field goal

that occurred on an untimed down following a holding penalty called on Iowa.

After Purdue would eventually make it a 17-7 game, the Hawkeyes responded offensively when senior quarterback James Vandenberg threw his fifth touchdown pass of the season, a 5-yard pass to junior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz. The touchdown reception was Fiedorowicz's first in 2012.

The Boilermakers would go up by 10 points again when a 56-yard run by Ralph Bolden was immediately followed by a Marve touchdown pass to Gary Bush.

In total, the Boilermakers compiled 490 yards of total offense, a lot of which was in part to poor tackling by the entire Iowa defense.

"That's a pretty objective observation," junior linebacker James Morris said in reference to the poor tackling. "Anybody would say that."

Iowa would get a spark defensively from the play of senior cornerback Micah Hyde. First, he recovered a Purdue fumble and returned it nine yards for a Hawkeye touchdown in the final seconds of the third quarter to cut Iowa's deficit back to three points. There was then another play in the fourth quarter where Purdue back-up quarterback Rob Henry would eventually be ruled down after a review, but initially, the call was a fumble that Hyde picked up and nearly returned for a second defensive touchdown.

"After a loss like this, it doesn't really matter because you don't think about the positive plays," Hyde said. "More about the negative plays and how you could've helped your team out better."

Iowa would get something going again on offense as it used a double-pass to Martin-Manley to set up what turned out to be the game-tying field goal by junior kicker Mike Meyer, making

it 24-24 with 3:32 remaining.

Following a Purdue punt, the Hawkeyes would have a chance to win the game in regulation. A 20-yard scramble by Vandenberg jump-started the final drive, which got Iowa into Boilermaker territory and ultimately down to their 35-yard line.

Facing a 4th-and-3 from the Purdue 35-yard line, Iowa called timeout and ran a play where the receivers ran hitch routes and senior tight end Zach Derby would be out in the flats. Vandenberg threw a completion to Derby, but it wound up being short of the first-down marker.

"We knew what we were going to get. They were going to blitz us and play man coverage," Vandenberg said. "We're kind of running what you kind of consider a rub. We're kind of causing a traffic jam and we were trying to leverage a guy who we had leverage on. The guy got through clean, made a good play.

"It's quite possible there might have been somebody else open, but that's kind of how I interpreted the call and how we worked it. The guy made a better play than I made."

Purdue then got the ball and in two plays, Marve threw a pair of completions that got the Boilermakers to the Iowa 29-yard line and Purdue called timeout with five seconds remaining to set up the game-winning kick by Paul Griggs.

The kick sailed through the upright and the rest was history.

"We just had to keep our composure," junior defensive end Dominic Alvis said. "That's what we were saying. Unfortunately, they were able to drive it on us and that's life."

Iowa's second-to-last game comes Nov. 17 at Michigan, with kickoff scheduled for 11 a.m. Central from "The Big House" in Ann Arbor, Mich. The game will be on either ESPN or ESPN2. The Wolverines are coming off a 38-31 overtime win Saturday over

Northwestern.