

11/20/2012: Kirk Ferentz teleconference transcript (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's teleconference on Tuesday with the Big Ten media:

Ferentz's opening statement:

"We've got a busy week here this week with a short week playing Friday, so that's one challenge. Then the bigger challenge is we're playing a team that's just having a tremendous season. Nebraska's playing well, basically in all three phases. They've got an awful lot of good football players that are well-coached and they're playing at a really high level right now."

On how the additions of Maryland and Rutgers helps Big Ten football:

"You know, I haven't thought too much about it. I didn't catch wind of it really until late in the weekend. You know, first of all, I think it's a sign of the times. Clearly, the landscape in college football has changed very dramatically in the last 20 years. I think this was a continuation of that."

"Basically, the thing I can tell you is I think the people who would make those decisions in our conference do a fantastic job. We've got great leadership, starting with Commissioner [Jim] Delany. Overall, I think it's going to be the best thing for our conference, just like adding Penn State years ago and adding Nebraska most recently. It has proven to be good for the conference."

On whether he'd like to see the game against Nebraska remain on Black Friday:

"You know, it's a little bit like the last question. I haven't thought too much about that. The game is scheduled Friday and we haven't had much time to think about anything other than just trying to get ready for it. We'll have a lot of things to think about after the season's over and that will be one thing on the list. But for now, we're playing Friday at 11 o'clock and we're excited about that. We have a lot of work to do."

On the attitude of his players knowing that Friday is their final game for the season:

"I don't know how you measure one year towards the other, but I think we're all excited to have an opportunity to play against a very, very good football team and we haven't had too much time to think about anything. Sunday was like normal Sundays. We came in and reviewed the film from Saturday."

"The biggest difference is we didn't have Monday. With the players being away, we got going and got back on the field yesterday, had a really good practice. So I think the players, like you'd hope they are, are very excited about playing this week."

On how he'd characterize Iowa's rivalry with Nebraska:

"Well, you know, I don't know. It's called that for obvious reasons. We're border rivals, and what have you. I think we played a four-game series – I think I'm correct in saying – back in the late '70s/early '80s. A two-year series in '99 and 2000. And then this will be the second game in what will be a long-standing series."

"So it's not quite like the Nebraska-Oklahoma rivalry through the '70s, '80s, etc. But it makes perfect sense. I thought that was part of the attractiveness with expansion. It was great for our conference, but certainly it affected us and

made perfect sense that way. So that's kind of where it's at right now and I think it should run into a great series."

On what the approach to this game is with postseason play out of reach:

"The same as it would be if we were undefeated or haven't won. We're going to do our best to get ready for this ball game knowing that they're an outstanding football team. Nebraska's really good. We've seen them on film during the course of the year against other opponents and, you know, they're just playing at a very, very high level. They've got good players, they're well-coached and most importantly, they play well on Saturdays. So we're very, very impressed with them."

On how he goes around filling out ballots for Big Ten awards:

"Basically, what we've done traditionally is we'll have the defensive staff go through the offensive players and then vice versa. Then it makes for interjecting thoughts. But typically, both staffs will come up with who they think and then I'll kind of go from there."

"But for the most part, I lean on what they say. You know, you make mental notes. I think everybody does during the course of the season. Some of the players you play against just really jump out at you and that's pretty obvious. But it's kind of a collaborative effort."

On which guys have stood out to him this season:

"There are a lot of guys who are good players. The first guy I'm thinking about would be Jordan Hill from Penn State. No. 47. Every film I've seen, he's just a tremendous football player. But there are a lot of them out there. There are a lot of good players that are going to be on the field this weekend."

On if he's concerned about Iowa fans not necessarily traveling

to games at Maryland or at Rutgers:

"Oh boy. You know, I haven't even thought about that at all. In fact, that would probably be the last thing I think about. But, you know, one thing about Iowa, there are Iowans everywhere. People that have some association who lived in the state or went to school here. There are Iowans everywhere."

"So it's a little bit like when I was in Cleveland. My first year in Cleveland, we played in Seattle and there were "Browns Backers" everywhere that turned out at the Seattle Kingdome. It reminded me a lot of coaching at Iowa because everywhere you go, there are Iowa people turning out and supporting other teams. That's one of the neat things about this institution."

On if there's something lost in growing beyond what the Big Ten has traditionally been:

"Um, I mean, yes and no. You could argue that the NFL's different since free agency. Other teams that have played well through decades. But those days are gone in the National Football League. Not the same as, but I guess the parallel there is that it's not the Big Ten anymore or Big 8 or whatever."

"I mean, it's just a sign of the times. There are a lot of reasons for it, but they don't need to be discussed right now. But it's just the way college football is transitioning. I'm not a great barometer, but it seems like everybody just goes with the flow and it's happening in a lot conferences where there has been change. So you just go with the flow and go with it."

On how special it is having his son James being recognized during Iowa's Senior Day:

"Well, yeah it is. You know, the first thing I would say, well, two things. First of all, we did have two daughters, which nobody really seems to take note of or what have you."

But we do have two daughters and my wife and I are very proud of all five of our kids. This one just happens to play football and he has had a really nice career here.

"He has done a great job. I'm really proud of him. He has grown a lot. Not only as a player, but as a person. I could say that about all 19 of our seniors. I think they've all really grown and done nice jobs here and I'm really proud of each and every one of them.

"So it's a special day on that side. I'm like any parent in that way. I'm one of 19 people who are parents this weekend, so it's a little bit of a special moment."