

# Hawkeyes conclude spring football with Kinnick scrimmage

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – The theme of difference resonated throughout Kinnick Stadium on Saturday, and really, throughout the entirety of Iowa's spring football period.

Instead of conducting an open practice similar to what took place in West Des Moines two weeks earlier, the Hawkeyes added some spice to their regimen and treated those who trekked over to Kinnick Stadium with a controlled scrimmage that looked closer to an actual spring game than a typical practice like they've done many times before.

"This was definitely fun," senior defensive end Dominic Alvis said. "When you can line up for a scrimmage, man, I mean that's perfect. You know what I mean? There's tackling involved. There's game situations. That was great."

At the quarterback position, the 3-way battle rages on between sophomore Jake Rudock, junior Cody Sokol and redshirt freshman C.J. Beathard. All three signal-callers worked with the first-string and second-string offenses during Saturday's scrimmage and as mentioned earlier in the week by offensive coordinator Greg Davis, the QBs rotated series rather than every two snaps like they did at the West Des Moines open practice.

"I think it's good," Sokol said. "You know, when you've got that practice kind of format where you're working on situations, I think going 2-and-2 is a great thing."

"But I think it's great getting to own your own drive because

you get a chance to see what each guy is made out of and what are they going to do? Are they going to take it all the way down the field and put it in or 3-and-out? I think it's great."

The battle itself remains ongoing. While one might argue based on Saturday's showings that Rudock has the slight edge on the other two QBs, head coach Kirk Ferentz said the competition will carry over into fall camp before a decision gets made on who starts the Hawkeyes' opener Aug. 31 against Northern Illinois.

"I think they're all doing some things well. They all have some things to work on," Ferentz said. "But the good thing is we're not playing until the end of August, so we have a lot of time to let things kind of sort themselves out, if you will.

"At some point, we're going to have to start differentiating a little bit and steer it one way or the other. But right now, we still want to let them continue to compete."

As for the scrimmage itself, it consisted of offense against defense for four quarters – the first two of which lasted the typical 15 minutes and the last two periods shortened to 12 minutes. The offense ultimately outscored the defense (who could score points in a variety of ways), 61-37. While the result is moot, the progress displayed on both sides of the ball wasn't.

The offensive squad was rewarded a point for every "explosive play," which Iowa defines as any running play for 12-plus yards or any pass play of 16-plus yards. Opportunities for "explosive plays" presented themselves Saturday in large part to the offense running no-huddle most of the afternoon, another thing that shows difference from years past.

"We don't do it every time, but it's definitely a little wrinkle," senior offensive tackle Brett Van Sloten said.

Making the two most explosive plays of the entire afternoon for either squad was sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri. In the first quarter, he shook off defenders and reversed field on a big run play that set up a touchdown near the goal-line from redshirt freshman running back Michael Malloy. Then in the third quarter, Beathard called an audible when the defense sent an all-out blitz and he proceeded to dump the ball off to Canzeri, who had nothing but green in front of him en route to a 46-yard score.

"When you know that audible gets called for you, you just know, 'You got to make it,'" Canzeri said. "You got to just make it a successful play. I was happy that it worked out."

Defensively, the player who stood out the most Saturday was junior defensive tackle Carl Davis. Whether it was disrupting the ground game, batting down passes, or getting to the quarterback, Davis showed a little of everything Saturday.

He also continued to look like someone having fun.

"I love coming to practice and I can't say I was always like that my freshman and sophomore year," Davis said. "I love coming to practice now. This spring, it was great. I just feel like since I'm an older guy and I got all the guys around me, it's just fun. We make it fun every day."

Overall, it ended up being the kind of day one would expect. The monotony break-up was apparent to the players and the response seemed to be there in front of 16,500 spectators estimated to be on hand.