

# 2013 Iowa position breakdowns: Quarterbacks

*\*This week, HawkeyeDrive.com presents an eight-part series of position breakdowns as the Iowa Hawkeyes continue preparing for the 2013 season. Our first part examines the team's quarterbacks.\**

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

Throughout a 9-month long offseason that has presented a heated 3-way battle for the starting quarterback spot, a lot has been made about how similar Jake Rudock, Cody Sokol and C.J. Beathard all are. Whether it's leadership in being able to command the huddle or being able to grasp the playbook of offensive coordinator Greg Davis, the manners in which this trio of signal-callers is similar has been heavily highlighted by Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz and other Hawkeye players on the offensive side of the ball.

But when three people are fighting for one job – regardless of whether it's playing quarterback for a Division-I football program at Iowa or in any other walk of life – the differences between the three candidates will likely play a greater part in the final outcome.

Davis reiterated during Iowa's Media Day how he wants separation to take place – preferably sooner than later – between the three QBs, none of whom have any experience taking a single snap in a game for the Hawkeyes. Through the first week of fall camp, all three guys have continued splitting reps with the first-team offense.

"The truth is, I would like them to make that decision," Davis said.

So what makes all three different? For starters, all three are different ages and barring any transfers next offseason would all return to Iowa in 2014 as well. Rudock is a sophomore, but has the most experience in the program of the three as he redshirted in 2011, which was Iowa's last season under then-offensive coordinator Ken O'Keefe before he left the program to take an assistant coaching role with the Miami Dolphins.

Rudock was the clear No. 2 last season behind James Vandenberg while the other two signal-callers were redshirting to make way for this 3-way competition currently taking place. The Florida native hates being asked about his strengths, but the one aspect of the position where he appears to have a strong edge is intelligence.

"I like the cerebral part of the game, seeing the little details," Rudock said. "Throwing the ball a split-second earlier when the guy hasn't even turned his head, that makes a huge difference. So I'd say the little details are very important."

Sokol might not have as many years in the program as Rudock, but he's actually the oldest of the three. After playing two seasons at Scottsdale Community College in Arizona, he transferred to Iowa and redshirted in 2012, giving him two years of eligibility remaining.

The junior realizes that the label of "gunslinger" has been associated with his style of play, being able to make plays off-schedule (something Davis said last spring he covets) and out of the pocket. Rather than fight it off or take it in a derogatory manner since that label could also be associated with making ill-advised plays resulting in turnovers, Sokol has embraced that "gunslinger" mentality.

"Iowa is all about eliminating turnovers, but creating explosives," Sokol said. "I do a good job of creating the explosive plays, but eliminating turnovers will probably be

the biggest factor for me. Going into camp, that was my biggest focus – take what the defense gives you, but don't force anything."

Then there's Beathard, who will be a redshirt freshman this season. At one point in time, he was clearly behind the other two not just because of his age, but because he didn't have that complete grasp yet of the playbook. Beathard said it's the one area of his game he believes has improved the most this offseason.

As for what sets him apart, Beathard believes he has the most laid-back personality of the three both on and off the gridiron.

"I don't like to get uptight about things," Beathard said. "When I make a mistake, if Coach is yelling at me, I'll take the words he's giving me and I won't let it get to my head. I'll take those explanations and use them to my advantage."

For now, the battle continues on. But if and when separation does occur, it will likely be a result of which traits of difference among the three players matters the most to Ferentz and Davis.