

2013 Iowa position breakdowns: Wide Receivers/Tight Ends

This week, HawkeyeDrive.com presents an eight-part series of position breakdowns as the Iowa Hawkeyes continue preparing for the 2013 season. After previously focusing on [quarterbacks](#) and [running backs](#), our third part examines the team's group of wide receivers and tight ends.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The quarterback situation is easily the biggest question mark surrounding the Iowa offense entering 2013. But when looking beyond that, the next major question with this group is how involved both the wide receivers and tight ends become for the Hawkeyes this fall.

If there's a good and bad with Iowa's group of playmakers, the good would be the amount of experience returning at the tight end spot as four of the returnees all were used heavily throughout the course of 2012. But the amount in which C.J. Fiedorowicz, Ray Hamilton, Jake Duzey and Henry Krieger-Coble were all used last season didn't necessarily translate in major production, as evidence by Iowa's offense being anemic last year and the Hawkeyes ending up with a 4-8 record.

Fiedorowicz is the most recognized of the bunch following a junior campaign where he hauled in 45 receptions for 433 yards and one touchdown. But 18 of those 45 catches, including the one score, came during Iowa's last three games. Meanwhile, Hamilton only caught two passes last year, Duzey had three catches, and all four of Krieger-Coble's receptions – including his lone touchdown of the season – came in the last

two games of last season. Considering how the tight ends accounted for less than a quarter of Iowa's receptions last season, it's fair to suggest the group was somewhat underutilized.

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz has mentioned looking to get all four tight ends, plus redshirt freshman George Kittle, involved more in 2013. If the tight end production does increase, one reason why might be having graduate assistant D.J. Hernandez coaching the tight end group this season.

"When we have our individual drills, he works a lot on that move off the line, getting off the line fast," Fiedorowicz said. "He has concentrated a lot on that because that was a big struggle for us the last few years. Catching the ball, that starts with getting off the ball.

"We're working on a lot of things in practice and hopefully it will pay off."

Then there's the current receiving corps, which is a question mark for good reason. The plus for Iowa is the return of junior wideout Kevonte Martin-Manley, who led the Hawkeyes in receiving with 52 catches for 571 yards. But a lot of that was done with Martin-Manley playing the slot, and the only other returnee with noteworthy stats is senior Jordan Cotton, who had 172 yards receiving on 12 catches. Both Martin-Manley and Cotton had just one touchdown each in 2012 and both scoring plays came during the month of September.

If Iowa's passing game is going to improve in 2013, this is an area where one of those "stories" Ferentz talks about needing to happen, well, needs to happen for the Hawkeyes. Given the task to help improve the production from the Hawkeyes' receivers is Bobby Kennedy, who replaced Erik Campbell as the position coach this offseason. Kennedy previously served as an assistant at Colorado for two years, but before that was the receivers coach at Texas for seven years while the Longhorns'

offensive coordinator was Greg Davis, who enters his second season overseeing Iowa's offense.

"We've got a young group, but what I've been impressed about with these guys is they want to learn," Kennedy said. "They come ready every day in terms of meetings and the practice and they want to be good."

"It's a process of, 'Are we green and growing or ripe and running?' I think we're green and growing. We're not a finished product. It's going to take awhile."

One player that might be worth keeping an eye on early is sophomore wideout Tevaun Smith. Appearing in nine games as a true freshman last season, Smith caught three passes for 31 yards and the number of reps he was given with the first-string offense increased over the course of the year. Right now, he is listed alongside Martin-Manley as Iowa's No. 1 wideouts during fall camp.

"I think I've gained a lot more knowledge of the game from last year," Smith said. "I was able to understand the offense more and I was able to read defenses. That has definitely helped throughout the past year."

There are three other receivers who might be needed to elevate their games for the Hawkeyes in 2013 – senior Don Shumpert, sophomore Jacob Hillyer and junior college transfer Damond Powell. The addition of Powell could prove to potentially pay huge dividends. Playing at Snow Community College in Utah last season, Powell had 41 receptions for 1,231 yards and 14 touchdowns.

"We wouldn't typically recruit a junior college player unless we felt they had that opportunity, so that motivated us there," Ferentz said in regard to how early Powell could see the field in 2013.

Whether it's the tight ends carrying the bulk of the passing

game or the receivers, one thing is certain. Unless players from either group emerge from the get-go and can stay consistent with production, the passing offense will continue to be perceived as a weakness holding the Hawkeyes back.