

8/27/2013: 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:

"You know, I think we had a real productive camp and I think like everybody, we're probably eager to get on the field and see how things look in game competition, so we're excited about that. Excited about being in Kinnick. It's always great to open up the season at home, on your home field. Beyond that, we know we have a real challenge. Northern Illinois comes in here and they've had tremendous success, especially over the last three years, and return an excellent football team that played in the Orange Bowl, finished up in the Orange Bowl last year. They're led by an outstanding quarterback, but they've got a lot of really good players. It goes well beyond him, but he's certainly an outstanding player. We're going to have to be at our absolute best and that's what we're working toward this week."

On what put Jake Rudock over the top in Iowa's quarterback competition:

"Well, the first thing I'd say is all three of the returning quarterbacks I thought improved and did a good job in camp. At this point, I think Jake was probably the most consistent for the big picture and we just feel like he's the best suited right now. But it was a very close competition and the guys

have continued to practice real well, so we're pleased with all three of them."

On what he sees being the biggest keys for Rudock starting his first game:

"Again, he's a first-time player like a lot of other guys will be out there. The biggest thing, I think, is just worrying about taking care of his position and doing what he's supposed to do, not trying to do too much. You know, he has practiced hard. He has been here a couple of years now and he's a very intelligent player. He has worked hard on the field and had success on the field. The big thing now is to just carry it over to the game field and just try to relax and do what you do well."

On how players are being coached now in light of the new targeting rule in college football:

"You know, I think it's probably a big concern for everybody. I think the rule, first of all, is good and I think the intent is certainly good. Nobody would dispute that. They sent an excellent training video around, which I think was a national distribution and it really does a nice job I think of showing the plays that would be considered fouls and then also plays that would be considered legal, so you know, they really did a nice job there.

"I think my biggest concern personally would just be that, you know, in the comfort of our meeting rooms and what have you, it's pretty apparent what it is and what isn't a foul, but the bang-bang nature of it during the course of a game. I think it's going to be a tough thing to challenge and I've been saying I think it's a little bit like an onside kick, whether you know if it's coming or not coming. If you don't know it's coming, forget it. But that's a really tough play to officiate, too, to make sure mechanics are correct.

"You know, it's not a black or white issue here and I think,

again, the intent is great. I think everybody is in favor of protecting defenseless players. But at the same time, it's going to be a real challenge and I think one more thing for the officials to have to deal with. I just worry about the mental approach I think we take, that would be my biggest concern going in, and then hopefully the calls are more right than wrong, which traditionally they have been."

On what he and his staff saw in Rudock while recruiting him out of Florida:

"Yeah, Ken O'Keefe was our coordinator at that time and I think Jake was one of the guys that we had identified as a guy that we had a real interest in. I think Ken went down there and watched him play baseball in the spring and then watched him in a quarterback battle while he was in school and Jake did a tremendous job at St. Thomas Aquinas in football and he was a good baseball player. Ken got to see him compete at playing baseball and the more we learned about him, the better we felt, certainly.

"Then he came up here after we had offered him for an unofficial visit and he actually volunteered to compete in our camp on a Saturday. He didn't have to do that, but he really impressed us there, too. So that just made us even that much more confident that he was the kind of player we'd feel comfortable with. So he has been here and worked hard and I think it's just the byproduct of doing things well for a real long time. That's kind of his nature."

On if he likes having a tough opponent such as Northern Illinois to open a season:

"Yeah, we didn't get the option. Nobody asked us. But you know, it really doesn't matter how we feel about it. All I know is we're playing an excellent football team. I think the good thing is I think all of our players fully realize it. We played Northern last year and we were very fortunate to beat

them.

"So all of our players, at least the guys who were here last year, realize how good Northern Illinois is, and for the ones who weren't here, all they have to do is look at film of them playing in the Orange Bowl and I think they can figure that one out. You know, we're playing an excellent opponent and that means we better be at our best and I think that's a really good thing, quite frankly. I think it's a healthy thing."

On having to possibly rotate players in and out more due to expected heat:

"Uh, you know, we'll see how it goes. This weather – and I don't know what it's going to be Saturday; I don't think anybody knows – but you know, it's not totally uncommon. Our guys have trained in heat before, just like others have too. You know, the good news is it's kind of like snow and rain. If it's a factor, it will affect both teams equally, so we'll just play it as it comes."

On if any injuries have occurred since the first 2-deep was released:

"You know, we've had a good camp and I think a big part of it is our health has been probably as good as you could have hoped for. We've had some camp-type injuries that have been a couple days here and there, but overall, I think we're about as healthy as you could ask to be. That's a good thing and now we still have three days to get through. That being said though, we feel good about our status."

On what makes Jordan Lynch an effective QB for Northern Illinois and what other weapons the Huskies present:

"You know, both good questions, first of all. Northern Illinois is much more than Jordan Lynch. I'm not trying to minimize his role because that would be really silly, but

they've just got a really good football team and I think if you look at it, they've won 34 games in the last three years now. I don't know who has done that nationally. I'm sure there might be one or two teams maybe, maybe Alabama. But that's pretty exceptional and they've lost one game in conference now in three years. So they've played really well and you don't just do that with one player.

"You know, they're really well-coached in all three phases. They've got a lot of good players in all three places and the thing about them defensively last year was we couldn't catch up to their defensive ends, who are both in pro camps right now. They've had a lot of good players there, so they do a great job. That's just a very, very strong program.

"Jordan Lynch, in a word, is a winner. You know, he can throw the football and beat you. He can pull the ball down and run if you don't keep your rush lanes the way you should. He's a tough guy. He wins throwing, he wins running and then he's also a smart guy. Again, he has got a good supporting cast. Their running back is an outstanding football player, a really tough guy. They've got good guys outside and their line is a veteran line that's extremely tough and physical. It's just a very good football team, but I got to assume he'd be the catalyst, the spark plug for them. He's just a tremendous leader."