

9/17/2013: Kirk Ferentz teleconference transcript (premium)

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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 were happy to get the win on Saturday. It didn't come easy. We knew that it wouldn't and I'm just happy to get out of there with the win and happy for our players, certainly. And then moving on to this week, we've got Western Michigan coming in here. We've got a lot of work to do and hopefully we'll be ready to go on Saturday."

On whether Mark Weisman can continue his current carry pace and if he likes having that kind of bell cow:

"Yeah. Certainly, we're really pleased with what he has done thus far. I'm not surprised. He works extremely hard and practices really well. He's really doing a lot of things he did last year, so we're really pleased with that and pleased with the rest of the backs as well."

On what it takes for a running back to have 30-35 carries a game like Weisman has had and like Shonn Greene did:

"You know, the other guy to throw out there is Fred Russell, and even Albert Young in '05, did a great job. Um, they're all different type guys. Shonn was a big, strong guy. Fred Russell was not nearly as big, but very durable, too. You know, it takes mental toughness, starting there. I think it helps that

Mark's a guy who stays in phenomenal shape all the time. Shonn was a little different because he was coming off a period where he wasn't training here for a little while, so he had to get in shape as the year went on.

"But you know, it's not easy for anybody that's playing a lot of plays. We have a lot of guys playing a lot of plays and you know, they've got to really take care of themselves and they've got to be mentally tough, too, because anybody's that playing college football, most of them are sore by now."

On whether he has found a way to move the ball through the air against Western Michigan's secondary:

"We'll find out. It's a challenge. I think that is a strength of their defense and I don't mean that in a bad way to the rest of the guys on the team. They're all playing really hard. Their scheme, they make it tough for you to run the football and they do that because they've got a group of DBs that are very, very good against the pass. It's going to be a real challenge for us and we're not the most prolific team anyway. It's going to be a challenge for us."

On what he thinks of Western Michigan head coach P.J. Fleck:

"Uh, I just know what I see on film. It looks like they're playing hard in all three phases. It looks like they're playing with good energy and enthusiasm. We've just got a lot of respect for them coming in here."

On the play of his secondary during the Iowa State game last weekend:

"Well you know, it was kind of a tale of two cities in the game. We played really well the first three quarters of the game defensively and then we struggled a little bit there in the last 5, 6, 7 minutes. So you know, the good news I guess is we did a really good job for quite a while and then just gave up a couple of plays there. That's something we've been

plagued with a little bit and we've got to continue to work on that and I think part of that is communication, part of that is learning how to finish the game a little better.

"That's something we really haven't done a great job of three games in now. There are some really good plays, some really good highlights out there, but there are also some plays that we really need to improve on and get cleaned up. If we don't, that will be a problem not only in Big Ten play, but also this week."

On if he expects going into games against up-tempo offenses to give up a lot of yards:

"Not to jump on you here, but I don't really look at statistics until the season gets going a little bit. I did peek Sunday night and gosh, it's amazing how many yards ... I'm just looking at the Big Ten stats, but how many yards and points are being scored. It really makes you wonder if anybody's playing defense anymore."

"So I think in part to your point, I think you have to keep scoring points. I don't know if it's a record pace right now, but it's got to be close to. You know, football is still football. You know, I look back at last year, Oregon only had one loss and when they did against Stanford, it was one of those 17-14 games, whatever it might have been. So there's still a place for good defense, but it's becoming more and more of a challenge. That's for sure."

On if it gets tough on the defensive mindset:

"Yeah, you know, I've always believed that winning is winning, whether it's 3-0 or 43-45. It really doesn't matter. It's good if you win, it's bad if you lose. But it does seem like right now, the scores that you're seeing are a little further down the road than they used to be, at least in general terms."

On the play of Anthony Hitchens against Iowa State and the

entire defense holding the Cyclones to 59 yards rushing:

"I'm just really pleased with Anthony and with our whole group of linebackers. I think they're playing well now and they should. They're all seniors. But I think Anthony is a good discussion point in that he had a lot of tackles and I expected him to have a lot this year, too."

"But the big thing is where he's making those tackles. He's just playing a lot more decisively now and clearly to me at least throughout the course of the spring and summer, that's the great thing about experience. He's seeing things quicker, reacting quicker. It's nice to be a veteran player and he has taken advantage of that."

"So it's a real credit to him, but I would also say James Morris and Chris Kirksey have all done a great job, too. The whole group – all three of them – are playing well and have given us great leadership, which is really a positive thing."

On having a place to privately vent in light of the audio recently revealed of Bo Pelini:

"You know, it's kind of like I tell our players. Unless you're in a closet, you better assume someone is recording you or filming you or both. It just seems like that's the world we live in right now. So to your point, I guess probably not."

"I'm kind of fuzzy on the details. I had heard a little bit about what happened and yeah, it's an interesting world right now. I guess the moral of the story is you better wait until you get home and then hope your wife's on your side, which is a 50-50 shot on a good day."