

11/12/2013: 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:

"It was good to get the victory Saturday. You know, both teams really competed hard and I'm just happy that our guys came out with the win, so that was certainly good. This is an unusual year in that we have two bye weeks and I think it probably came at a good time. Certainly, they're a little bit tired right now, so it gives them an opportunity to get rested up a little bit and then we'll try to get ready for our last two ball games."

On the perception of playing "old-fashioned football" en route to returning to bowl eligibility:

"Uh, you know, I guess my first response would be just look at the first Big Ten Championship Game. You know, both of those teams didn't necessarily run the offense that's the flavor of the day or flavor of the week. You know, they were a little bit more traditional and if you look at it, there have only been two Big Ten champions so far out of the championship game at least and it has been Wisconsin two times."

"You know, there are perceptions about a lot of things out there, especially about styles of play and that type of thing. But the bottom line is doing the best thing for what your players can do and you know, if it means being more 'old-

school' or whatever, then that's one thing and then there are other places. You look at what's going on at Baylor right now. They're certainly very well-suited to play the way they play. So I think everybody just tries to do what they think is best, given their personnel."

On how the bye week is used in terms of keeping the three running backs Iowa typically uses being fresh:

"Well, the biggest thing is both [Damon] Bullock and [Mark] Weisman have had a lot of work, so we're probably resting those guys and we're going to try to do that with all of our guys that have accumulated a lot of snaps. We've got guys that, you know, have played upwards of close to 800 plays, so some of those guys you want to try to let them get their legs back a little bit and freshen up.

"Then the other guys, we'll continue to push forward a little bit and I think that's the one thing we saw with Jordan [Canzeri] Saturday. You know, his legs a little bit fresher maybe than some of the other guys. He hasn't had the wear and tear, so hopefully it's a chance to rest the guys that have gone hard and then maybe push the other guys forward a little bit.

"The biggest thing I think is to try and get the guys who are nicked up healthy, so we can have a really good week of preparation next week for our next opponent."

On how the defenses this season of teams like Michigan State, Ohio State and Wisconsin compare with other Big Ten defenses he has seen over the years:

"You know, probably the first thought I would have is we played Michigan in '85 and I don't think they had given up a touchdown. That was, I believe, in late October. You know, we kind of got physical or maybe got nasty or whatever. I think we did score a touchdown, it just never went through. Anyway, we won the game 12-10. You know, we got the victory, but they

came out of it still not giving up a touchdown.

"Then go back to, I think it was 2006. I think it was. You would probably know better than I. Michigan and Ohio State were both extremely good on defense and then they met and it was a score-fest in that last ball game. So it's very hard to predict sometimes, but all three of those teams that you just mentioned are all playing really, really well on defense. You know, they play a different style. All three of them play a different style of defense, yet they're all very, very effective.

"I think it goes back to the question earlier about offense. There's no one way to be successful in football, but the bottom line you have to have good players and they have to be well-coached and they've got to play hard on Saturday. I think that's certainly describes all three of the teams that you mentioned."

On what the next two games against Michigan and Nebraska will say about how successful Iowa's season ends up being:

"Well you know, I mean, it's pretty easy. We'll be 6-6, 7-5 or 8-4 and you know, one's two better than the other and then one's right in the middle there. So they're all important. Certainly, we surpassed last year's total, which is a positive and that was certainly a goal of ours. But we still have two games left.

"We're thrilled to be at this point. When we got together last Tuesday, that was really the message and the best we could do coming out of that week was six wins and we got that done. So you know, we've got two games left to play.

"You know, we live in a world where everybody wants to predict the future and it used to be know in August. But now I think everybody wants to know in February what the record's going to be next year and that's why everybody plays. I think that's the exciting part about it. There are a couple of conference

races going on right now, or division races, and the national scene. All of those things.

"This, to me, is when football is really enjoyable, in November where you've got a lot of different levels, but everybody is playing for something and every game means a lot."

On whether how Iowa finishes this season can tell him anything about next year's outlook:

"Um, you know, I'm not really too focused on next year right now. I'm just worried about the next two games and hopefully we'll have a bowl game to go with it. But you know, our thoughts are ... right now we have a bye week, so I can think a little bit more globally and I'll worry about the rest of this month. but when Sunday comes, we'll just worry about the next game out there."

On the progress made by defensive end Drew Ott and how his career has reached this point:

"Yeah, I think he has really progressed well and, you know, last year we made the decision to go ahead and play him, knowing that he wouldn't start necessarily. Now you know how much he can play. Right now, we have four freshmen who are doing the same thing and they're playing for us. None of them are starting. Well, one is starting, but that was out of injury and necessity.

"But I think the benefit of playing a guy in his first year is it just makes him better suited to go into his second year and that was kind of our thought last year. We thought that Drew would have an excellent chance of earning a job this year, which he has done. And you know, seeing him progress and improve immensely even during the fall last year, but more so during the spring and summer ... he's hardly there yet, but the one thing about him is he's just a tough-minded guy. An extremely hard worker and he's a great team guy and he has got

that attitude that a lot of our really good players have had.

"So he's not there physically yet and how could he be? He's only in his second year and he was 'under-sized' coming out high school. But you know, he's working really hard and I'm just thrilled he's on our team. I mean, he has done a really good job and we're very excited about what's in front of him."

On not voting in the Coaches Poll and if that's something he would consider a tough responsibility to have during the season:

"Yeah, I've got a couple of thoughts on that. First of all, I'm the last guy to ask about BCS stuff. I have no idea how all that works, other than I know if you win, that's good. The more you win, the better it is. Secondly, I'm not on that poll and that's for a reason – only because the only teams I ever feel I can comment on are the teams that we see week-to-week on film or the ones we've already played. But you know, I see a lot less than the average fan as far as how Oregon or Stanford looked, that type of thing.

"Then the third thing is I guess a couple of years ago, they started making the BCS voting or poll voting public, which that's just one more nightmare for everybody to have to endure. So, that's the world we live in and I'm just trying to stay out of that one, if at all possible. Unless they mandate it, you can count on me staying out of it."