

# 11/26/2013: 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're happy to get the win on Saturday, certainly. It was a tough ball game that went the whole distance and a really competitive game both ways. So we just felt fortunate to get the win and we're on a short week playing on Friday, so you know, we hit the ground running on Sunday and so far have had a good week. We'll need a good week because we have to travel over to Lincoln and play an excellent Nebraska team. So we certainly have our hands full."*

## **On how gratifying it was to see fullback Adam Cox play as well as he did against Michigan:**

*"You know, we've had, really, one of the best stories on our team I think with our fullbacks – both Adam, and Macon Plewa. Both were scout team guys a year ago and playing on defense, then both of them moved over in the spring. They've done a wonderful job. So you know, you have a lot of other guys that are maybe getting more notoriety and a little bit more fanfare, better known. But certainly for us, you know, fullbacks are very, very important on our football team and have been historically."*

*"You know, we probably have as good a saddle at fullbacks as we've ever had. But both of those guys work hard, they've done*

*a good job and on top of that, they're just tremendous young guys. You know, Macon couldn't go Saturday, so we were down to Adam and Mark Weisman in the hole. Adam had a nose-bleed that they had to cauterize a little bit before the game, so he wasn't out there for much of pregame. It just keeps it exciting, but he's just a tremendous young guy, as well as being a good football player."*

**On if having a healthier offensive line as opposed to last season has factored into being more successful on offense this year:**

*"Uh, yeah. I think that has helped, but I think just overall continuity with the whole system. As you know, we've gone through pretty significant change here over the last two years. We've had six new coaches join the staff, so we're kind of re-tooling here for the second shift, if you will. You know, it has been a process, certainly, and I think the guys are certainly better-versed in what we're trying to do now. All of us are.*

*"You know, there was a lot of new stuff we incorporated a year ago in the spring, so it has been a process. But there's no question though that the development of the line has helped an awful lot and you know, last year at this time, we didn't have really have much, you know, depth at all and didn't know much about our running backs. I think we're a little bit healthier at that position and you know, gaining ground certainly at the receiver position, too, compared to last year.*

*"So I think all in all, we're improved in all areas, and then our young quarterback, who nobody really knew about coming into the year how he was going to play, he has done a great job this year also, so you know, a lot of positives and certainly more than a year ago."*

**On the type of patience it takes as a first-year head coach to develop a struggling program a la Darrell Hazell currently at**

## **Purdue:**

*"Well you know, the first thing, I mean, when you take over a program, you never know what it's going to be like. Darrell came from a Mid-American school. I was never a head coach, you know, in Division-I, so you know, typically in those circumstances, you know, there was going to be some work to be done and we were 1-10 in our first year.*

*"You know, probably a lot of that was coaching, probably a lot of that was we just weren't good enough at that point, so you know, whatever you walk into, that's what you walk into and you try to do your best each and every day. As far as timelines go, you know, I never really thought much about that other than, you know, you just try to maximize every day and try to get your players and staff to do the same thing and you know, every situation's different.*

*"There's no, I don't think, set time. The only thing I'd say as a general thought based on that, I don't think you can evaluate anything program-wise in less than five years. I think, you know, you have to let people get their programs established and their thoughts established and then give them a chance to implement those things and you know, if you look historically, there have been a lot of pretty good coaches that might not have survived. I mean right now, we kind of live in a quick-trigger society. You think of a guy like John Wooden, he wouldn't have survived.*

*"You just got to give things time and really evaluate it and it goes the other way, too. Sometimes, some people come out of the gate real fast and lose steam after a couple of years, so it's just ... you know, I think when you evaluate anything, you got to give it some time and look at it in a broad base, not just you know, five days, five weeks or five months."*

**On if it's as simple as starting with recruiting players that buy into your program:**

*"Well, recruiting is very important. But you know, I'll go back to when I was here. Some of our best players were already on the roster and two guys come to mind right away that were walk-ons. Dallas Clark, you're probably familiar with him, he was a walk-on here and was an outside linebacker, a third-team outside linebacker.*

*"Then you think about a guy like Bruce Nelson who was about a fourth- or fifth-team tight end, a redshirt freshman when we got here. We moved him to offensive tackle right away and he was under-sized, but you know, started every game for four years. Got banged around for a year or two, then those next two years, he banged a lot of people around.*

*"You know, Bob Sanders was recruited by one MAC school. So, you know, a lot of it is good fortune. But you just try to get the best out of the people you're around and you recruit to what it is you think is important to your school. Just like no situation is the same, I think that's the same thing about recruiting and you know, what you deem important. You just try to identify that in people and then try to get people to join you."*

**On if he sees benefits now after two years about playing Nebraska on Black Friday:**

*"Well, I warmed to it mainly because I don't have a choice in the matter. It's just the reality, so hey, embrace it. Personally, I still think it used to be nice when the kids had a week to go home and get away from football, get away from coaches and get away from everything school. But that has changed.*

*"We have gas-powered cars now and we're not driving the horse and buggies, so it's just not going to go back. So you embrace it. This year has been great because we've had two bye weeks, so we had two opportunities for our players to get off campus a little bit for a couple of days.*

*"I just think it's healthy that somehow, someway, guys just need to get away from things and you know, this isn't the NFL. We don't play a 16- or 20-game season and it's important for guys to have a chance to breathe a little bit and maybe spend some time on their classwork or with their girlfriends or whatever they want to do besides football. Somehow, I think you just got to fit that into the schedule."*

**On if Jake Rudock's second half performance can help elevate him or if too much is made of things like that:**

*"Well you know, I think not only quarterbacks, but teams. You know, it's all part of a process and until you've done something and experienced it and mentally gone through it, then you can talk about those things and cite illustrations. But it's good for players to go through everything. Sometimes losing and experiencing hardship can be of benefit, too."*

*"So it was certainly a positive and the game couldn't have started any worse. I mean, they had a perfect call against our call and had a touchdown in, you know, less than five seconds. So, the game couldn't have started any worse for us. But the one thing about Jake all season long, no matter what happens, he seems to be resilient to it and you know, we played a pretty significant wind the last time out before this game."*

*"On Saturday, it was, I think I read, the coldest game in Kinnick history and Jake's from Southern Florida, you know, so you'd never know it. He just seems to handle whatever comes his way, including his third Organic Chemistry test last Wednesday. You know, it just doesn't seem to affect him, which is a really good trade."*

**On Nebraska being the annual Black Friday opponent and that being the start of a rivalry:**

*"Yeah, I mean, hopefully we can make it one. We haven't beaten them in a while. I mean, like, decades. So you know, I think it's probably good. We used to play Minnesota at the end of*

*the year. Now it's tiered this way. I'm not a fan of the short week, other than I would say, you know, when you get into Week 10, 11, 12, then I'm all for it. Things happen a lot faster, so it's great.*

*"After the game, our guys will be free to go home for a couple of days, too. So I think that's a benefit and you know, they just happen to be the 12th game. But to play them, it's always a great challenge and one we're going to have to get ready for."*