

Iowa-Purdue video: Jordan Canzeri

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Iowa sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri rushed for a team-high 165 yards on 20 carries and had one touchdown run in the Hawkeyes' 38-14 win over Purdue on Saturday at Ross-Ade Stadium.

Iowa-Purdue video: Kirk Ferentz

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz addressed the media in a postgame press conference following the Hawkeyes' 38-14 victory over Purdue on Saturday at Ross-Ade Stadium. With the win, Iowa improves to 3-3 in Big Ten play and is now bowl-eligible with a 6-4 overall record.

Iowa at Purdue (What to expect)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

To get you all ready for Saturday's game between Iowa and Purdue, I put together a list of things you ought to know before these two face off at Ross-Ade Stadium.

At the end, I'll provide what I think are three keys to an Iowa victory.

Iowa Hawkeyes (5-4, 2-3) at Purdue Boilermakers (1-7, 0-4)

Ross-Ade Stadium; West Lafayette, Ind.

Nov. 9, 2013

11 a.m. Central

TV: BTN (Kevin Kugler, Glen Mason, Jon Jansen)

Radio: Hawkeye Radio Network (Gary Dolphin, Ed Podolak, Rob Brooks)

Weather: [57 degrees; sunny skies; winds from W/SW at 15-18 MPH with gusts from 25-29 MPH](#)

Brendan's Three Keys to the Game:

1. Impose will defensively

Purdue possesses the worst offense in the Big Ten and arguably one of the worst offenses in the entire country. Given how stout Iowa has looked defensively for most of the season, the Hawkeye defense has to flex its muscles early here and break the Boilermakers' spirit before they can get any sort of

rhythm going. Danny Etling is a true freshman quarterback. Force him to play like one. Force him into mistakes like other teams have done successfully. The only way Purdue should have any chance of actually winning this game is if Iowa's defense cracks. Last season, this might have been an issue. This year, it hasn't been and it shouldn't be on Saturday.

2. Keep it simple for Rudock

This isn't to suggest that offensive coordinator Greg Davis bog down the playbook because Rudock is a smart enough quarterback to run his offense. But given the knee sprain Rudock is dealing with, what's meant by "keep it simple" here is call plays where he doesn't have to push off on the knee more than necessary. Most of the pass plays here should be designed for him to stay in the pocket and not have to scramble out and then put Rudock in a position where his receivers and tight ends can pick up yards after the catch. This is what's meant by "keep it simple." Allow his play-makers to turn it up another level so he doesn't have to try and do it all on his own.

3. Find a back and stick with him

Honestly, this is a game that probably calls for Iowa running the ball at least 50 times as the Boilermakers are more susceptible against the run. The Hawkeyes struggled against Wisconsin's 3-4 look last weekend and while they might start out slow against Purdue's 3-4, they shouldn't have quite the trouble. All that being said, this is the week where Iowa sees what it truly has in all four of its running backs and then find one to stick with for the final two (and more than likely three) games of the season. Whether it's Mark Weisman, Damon Bullock, Jordan Canzeri or LeShun Daniels really doesn't matter. Whoever shines the brightest Saturday (any and all of the four should be capable of doing so) should be who totes the rock the majority of the way going forward. This is a good week for Iowa to find out who that guy should be.

11/7/2013: Talkin' Hawks podcast (Iowa at Purdue)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Every Thursday during the 2013 football season, *HawkeyeDrive.com* will feature "Talkin' Hawks," a podcast to get you ready for the Hawkeyes' upcoming game and other college football action.

This week, we preview Iowa's upcoming game against Purdue, which takes place Nov. 9 at Ross-Ade Stadium in West Lafayette, Ind. Former Iowa defensive back [Chris Rowell](#) joins me to provide insight on the Hawkeyes and share his thoughts on all the games featured in this week's [HawkeyeDrive.com Pick 'Em](#). Rowell will be a part of the podcast every week all season long.

Joining as a guest this week in the podcast's middle segment is Chris Emma, who covers Purdue football for [Boiler Sports Report](#). This week's edition is approximately 63 minutes long, so enjoy:

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Talkin-Hawks-podcast-1172013-Iowa-at-Purdue.mp3>

Twitter handles:

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Chris Emma – [@CEmmaFOX](#)

*Intro sound byte credit to my former Daily Iowan colleague Ryan Young for putting that together.

11/5/2013: Iowa football notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming game at Purdue during his weekly press conference held Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – One more victory makes the Iowa Hawkeyes something they weren't last season – bowl-eligible. After missing an opportunity to become bowl-eligible last weekend against now-No. 21 Wisconsin, Iowa gets three more cracks at a sixth victory, starting with – at least on paper – its best chance at a sixth win Saturday at Ross-Ade Stadium in West

Lafayette, Ind., against Purdue.

The Boilermakers, who are in their first season under current head coach Darrell Hazell and his staff, look every bit the part of a team entering Saturday's contest with a 1-7 record. Purdue has lost six straight and rank at or near the bottom of every offensive and defensive statistical category not only in the Big Ten, but the entire country. In fact, the only category in which the Boilermakers currently lead the league is in punting.

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz likened what Purdue is currently going through under Hazell to his first season in 1999, where the Hawkeyes went 1-10 and were winless in Big Ten play like the Boilermakers currently are. After Hazell left his head coaching position at Kent State to take the Purdue job, he hired John Shoop as his offensive coordinator and Greg Hudson as his defensive coordinator.

Shoop had previously held the same title at North Carolina and before that was the Chicago Bears' offensive coordinator from 2001-2003. Meanwhile, Hudson came to Purdue after serving as a defensive assistant at Florida State for three seasons and he also served five seasons on Glen Mason's staff at Minnesota as the Golden Gophers' defensive coordinator.

"There's a real feeling-out process in terms of your roster and what it is you're trying to do and then what you would like to do versus what your players can do," Ferentz said. "There's a lot of give-and-take there, so I'm sure they're going through that, too."

But one could also make the argument that the Boilermakers' struggles correlate with their schedule to this point. All seven of their losses have come to teams currently possessing records of 6-2 or better – Cincinnati (6-2), No. 24 Notre Dame (7-2), No. 21 Wisconsin (6-2), No. 21 Northern Illinois (9-0), Nebraska (6-2), No. 18 Michigan State (8-1) and most recently

a 56-0 shellacking by No. 4 Ohio State (9-0).

“They go out, compete and give their all, at least in every game that I’ve seen,” senior linebacker Christian Kirksey said in reference to what he notices scouting Purdue on film. “We’ve just got to be ready for an aggressive game. It’s a Big Ten game. You have to make sure you’re focused.”

While the coaching staff is different and even most of the player personnel is different, Purdue also has recent success against Iowa, beating the Hawkeyes 27-24 last season at Kinnick Stadium. That loss hasn’t been forgotten among current Iowa players and they use it a reminder to not look past the Boilermakers, numbers aside.

“It’s there,” sophomore center Austin Blythe said. “We’ve got that sour taste in our mouth a little bit and I think we kind of think of Purdue as a rivalry game. You know, we want to get after them, go out there, dominate and win the game.”

Injury update

On the injury front, the good news for Iowa is it’s expected to have back three offensive players – sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock, junior running back Mark Weisman and sophomore right guard Jordan Walsh – for Saturday’s game after all three left last weekend’s contest against Wisconsin with injuries.

Walsh left the game during the second quarter with a leg injury that looked more severe than it turned out being and was replaced by junior Andrew Donnal, who he has rotated series with at right guard all season. Weisman left the game with an elbow injury that he said Tuesday was fine.

“I was just trying to keep myself up and it gave out on me a little bit,” Weisman said. “It’s all right now. It’ll be fine. Just another football injury.”

Then there’s Rudock, who left the game with a knee sprain

during the third quarter after throwing an interception that led to a Badger touchdown the very next play. He was replaced by redshirt freshman C.J. Beathard, who completed just 4-of-17 pass attempts during the time he was on the field.

Ferentz said after Saturday's game how Rudock could've returned to action Saturday, but the decision was made to keep him on the sidelines and let Beathard finish the game. Rudock confirmed Tuesday afternoon "there was discussion" about him returning and he said he was itching to get back on the field. He also made clear he'd be back in practice Tuesday and play against the Boilermakers this weekend.

"Obviously, this one's a little more serious than some other ones that might have occurred," Rudock said. "I feel good right now and I should be able to be going."

The news isn't as fortunate for Iowa with senior defensive end Dominic Alvis. Ferentz said Alvis will miss his third straight game Saturday after re-aggravating an back injury from earlier this season during the opening series of the Hawkeyes' game at Ohio State last month. This means junior defensive end Mike Hardy will make his third consecutive start lined up opposite sophomore Drew Ott, with sophomore Nate Meier remaining part of the D-end rotation.

Establishing ground game vs. 3-4 look

For the second straight week, Iowa will be facing a defense that primarily plays with a 3-4 scheme, as Hazell has now implemented the 3-4 look with Purdue after the Boilermakers had traditionally run a 4-3 scheme.

The Hawkeyes struggled to establish much of a ground attack against Wisconsin last weekend, rushing for only 110 yards on 32 carries while using four different running backs. Take away the 43-yard run by sophomore Jordan Canzeri on his first carry during the third quarter, and the final rushing numbers would be 67 yards rushing on 31 carries (just over two yards per

carry).

Before last week, the only other time Iowa had seen a 3-4 defense this season came Sept. 7 when it played Missouri State. In that game, the Hawkeyes rushed for 296 yards on 58 carries and Weisman had 180 of those yards on 30 carries, most of which came in the second half after Iowa only led 7-0 at halftime.

“It just switches up the different combinations that you would have,” said Blythe, who as a center has to adjust to a nose guard being lined up directly in front of him whenever facing a 3-4 defense. “Instead of the guard and tackle blocking the 3-technique, it’s the center and guard blocking the zero nose.

“In terms of assignments, it’s a little bit different. But at the end of the day, we’re blocking the same five guys we usually do.”

One of the heavier topics of conversation Tuesday had to do specifically with Iowa attempting to run the stretch play against Wisconsin’s 3-4, which didn’t bode well for the Hawkeyes. Of Iowa’s 32 carries in the game, the Hawkeyes rushed for 77 yards on eight carries up the middle – including Canzeri’s run – and just 33 yards on 24 carries to either the left or right side of the field.

“I don’t know if that’s much more difficult,” senior left guard Conor Boffeli said. “You definitely have to execute a little bit better. There’s also a chance as an offensive lineman that you’re on a smaller, quicker guy, so it’s definitely something you have to kind of adjust to.”

Between the familiarity with the type of front they’ll be facing and the lack of production Purdue has received from its defense this season, the offensive line is optimistic it’ll fare better against the 3-4. It will also need to show improvement in the red zone, as the Hawkeyes have just one rushing touchdown in the red zone in their last four ball

games after having at least one in each of their first five contests this season.

“We’ve just got to be more consistent and make some plays down there,” Weisman said.

Collins out, Spearman in

Prior to Iowa’s game against Wisconsin last weekend, linebacker Marcus Collins arrested on an OWI charge the morning of Nov. 1 and was later dismissed from the football team that afternoon. When announcing that Collins would no longer be playing, Ferentz’s statement made mention of the reserve linebacker serving a three-game suspension.

On Tuesday, Ferentz gave further elaboration on that suspension. He revealed Collins “broke team policy” prior to Iowa’s game against Northwestern on Oct. 26, which is when Ferentz said the suspension first took effect. The following Monday (Oct. 28), Collins’ name was removed from Iowa’s 2-deep and was replaced by true freshman linebacker Reggie Spearman, who played a prominent role as a rusher in Iowa’s third-down “Radar” package the last two weeks against the Wildcats and Badgers. That 2-deep spot once occupied by Collins and now occupied by Spearman is as the No. 2 WILL linebacker behind senior Anthony Hitchens.

When assessing the play of his true freshman linebacker, Ferentz described him as “growing” and made mention of his efforts on special teams in addition to what Spearman has provided the last two weeks when being used in third-down situations. But what makes this story even more remarkable is that Spearman isn’t even old enough to vote yet. The Chicago native only turned 17 years old this past August.

“It’s just funny that he’s out there making plays and going out there, having fun playing the same sport we all love,” Kirksey said. “So it does amaze me that he’s not 18 yet.”

Kirksey also said what he admires most about Spearman is how he plays full speed all the time, saying, "It's something we need." Fellow senior linebacker James Morris made a point about how receptive Spearman is to others, whether it's coaches or other players pointing different nuances out to him from time to time.

"He's just doing a great job of listening," Morris said. "He just tries to come out and do his best, every day."

Strong note for Shumpert?

Iowa's offense didn't leave too much to be encouraged by in the Hawkeyes' loss to the Badgers. But one player who showed flashes during the second half of last weekend's contest was senior wideout Don Shumpert.

The St. Louis native hauled in two catches for 35 yards receiving, but consider that no one had more than three grabs for the Hawkeyes on Saturday and his 35 yards were third behind Damond Powell's 43 yards and Damon Bullock's 39 yards. Also consider that his two receptions both came during the second half while it remained a one-possession contest.

In the third quarter, Shumpert hauled in a 18-yard reception from Rudock that put Iowa in Badger territory. The Hawkeyes weren't able to capitalize on the field position though as that possession ended with them turning the ball over on downs.

Then in the fourth quarter with Beathard in at quarterback and Iowa trailing 14-9, the Hawkeyes faced 3rd-and-5 from their own 10-yard line and Shumpert caught a pass for 17 yards that helped Iowa get further away from its own end zone. However, the Hawkeyes would once again turn the ball over shortly thereafter when Beathard was intercepted on a pass that hit Donnal in the back of the head and led to a Wisconsin touchdown that put the game out of reach.

“Shump was kind of hobbled a little bit for a couple weeks there, but last week, he was able to practice full speed again and did a really nice job,” Ferentz said. “Made a couple grabs there, so that was good to see.”

As a team, Iowa didn't make the most of its opportunities on Saturday. But Shumpert left an impression – not just on Ferentz, but also his teammates. That impression that was on public display last weekend is something the players notice all the time with him.

“He's working his butt off every day. I'm pushing him, he's pushing me,” sophomore wide receiver Tevaun Smith said. “He has been here for a while, so he knows the ins and outs and he knows the offense as well, so it's definitely helping out.”

When the season began, Shumpert was starting alongside junior Kevonte Martin-Manley. But drops early on ultimately played a part in him being benched in favor of Smith and not seeing quite as many reps. But after what he showed against Wisconsin, the potential is there for him to be that No. 3 wideout Iowa will need for the remainder of the year.

“He's one of those guys that's very soft-spoken, but he wants the ball in his hands,” Rudock said. “He wants to make plays, just like all the receivers do. With this definitely being his senior year, I'm sure he wants to go out with a bang.”

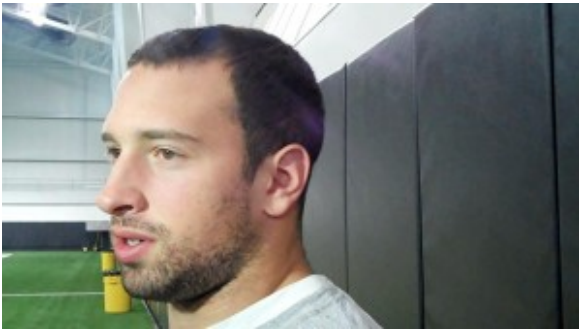
11/5/2013: Iowa player audio with photos (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

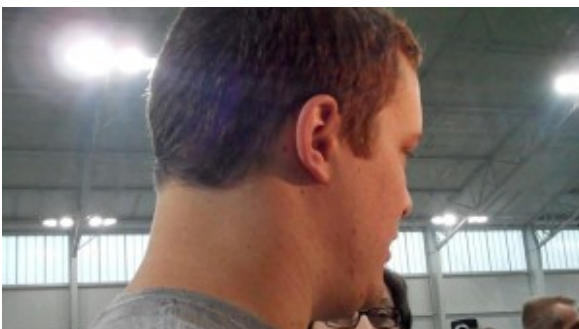
IOWA CITY, Iowa – On Tuesday, 11 members of the Iowa football team spoke with the media to discuss the Hawkeyes' upcoming game on Nov. 9 against Purdue at Ross-Ade Stadium in West Lafayette, Ind.

Below is audio from each of the following players – junior running back Mark Weisman, senior left guard Conor Boffeli, junior left tackle Brandon Scherff, senior right tackle Brett Van Sloten, junior defensive tackle Carl Davis, senior kicker Mike Meyer, sophomore center Austin Blythe, senior linebacker James Morris, sophomore wide receiver Tevaun Smith, senior linebacker Christian Kirksey and sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock:



Mark Weisman, Nov. 5, 2013

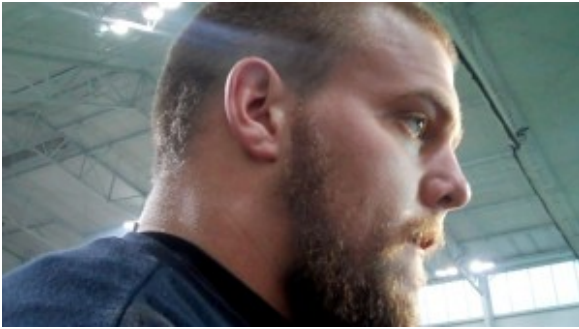
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Conor Boffeli, Nov. 5, 2013

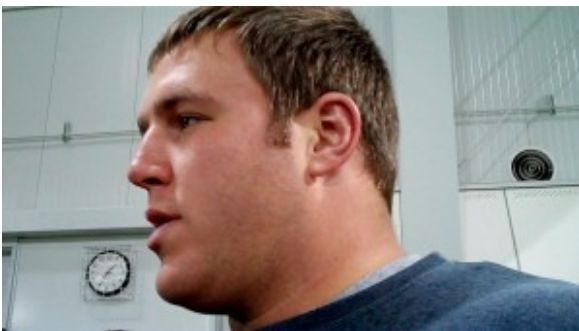
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Brandon Scherff, Nov. 5, 2013

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Brett Van Sloten, Nov. 5, 2013

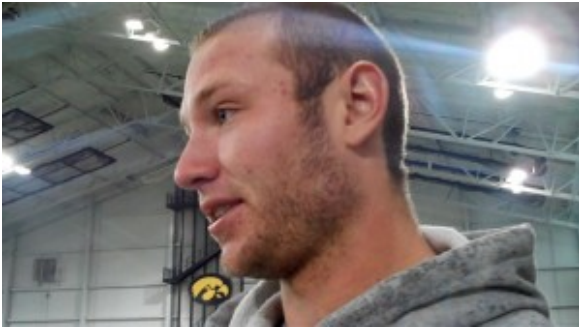
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Carl Davis, Nov. 5, 2013

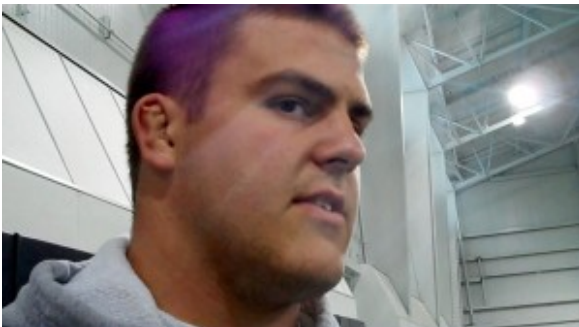
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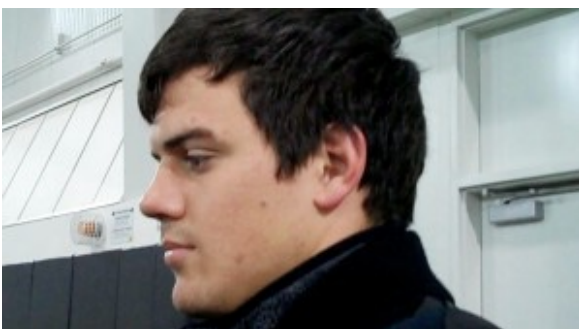
Mike Meyer, Nov. 5, 2013

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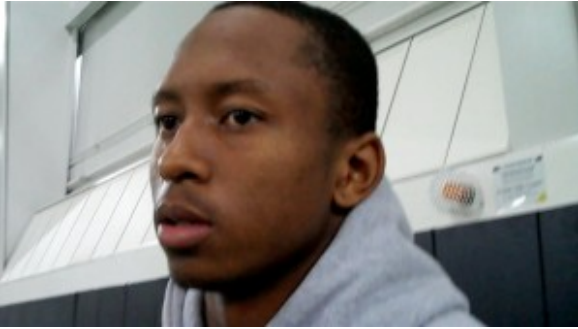
Austin Blythe, Nov. 5, 2013

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James Morris, Nov. 5, 2013

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Tevaun Smith, Nov. 5, 2013

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Christian Kirksey, Nov. 5, 2013

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Jake Rudock, Nov. 5, 2013

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Jake-Rudock-1152013.mp3>

11/5/2013: Kirk Ferentz press conference transcript

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Below is a PDF from the Iowa sports information department featuring the complete transcript from Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's press conference on Tuesday in Iowa City:

[Coach Ferentz – 11 5 13](#)

11/5/2013: 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:

"It was a tough loss Saturday to a very good Wisconsin team. Both teams really competed hard. It was an excellent football game and we give them a lot of credit. They're an excellent

football team. So we go back to work today and get ready for a trip to Purdue. It's conference play, on the road, so it'll be a tough contest."

On how much of a toll the losses during his first season as Iowa's head coach took on him and being able to stick to his plan long-term:

"Well you know, I think any time you make a transition to a new program, chances are there are going to be challenges. Not always, but chances are. It depends on the circumstance, certainly. But you take it a week at a time and from what I can see, from the outside looking in, they're doing a great job of that. You take it one week at a time, just worry about moving forward and give yourself the best chance possible each and every week."

On if there was moment where a belief system was created, such as beating Michigan State in 2000:

"Uh, you know, you always encourage your guys to work hard and at some point, it sure helps to get some feedback – some positive feedback – and that usually comes in the way of a win. So you know, the first victory was big and that was our first Big Ten victory and it wasn't pretty. I think they about doubled us statistically, but we found a way to win the game and that was ... it's huge. Any time you can win and then experience success, that's a good thing, so that's what you're working for."

On if anything jumps out at him when he studies the ineffectiveness Iowa has recently had in the red zone offensively:

"I'm more focused on what happened last week and you know, we had a couple of trips down there and came away with three points each and every time. The first half in particular, we had a drop, so there's no guarantee we would've made the first, but we would've given ourselves a chance to and we

didn't. The second time down, we had a couple penalties, which made it tougher. We overcame one, which was a major penalty then. It went from a 3rd-and-3/3rd-and-4 situation to a 3rd-and-8/3rd-and-9 situation, which is not good.

"So I think when you're playing a good football team like Wisconsin and a lot has been talked about their offense and rightfully so, but they're playing excellent defense and they have the majority of the season. So when you get down in that area and you can't come away with a touchdown, that just ... you're not going to beat them just kicking field goals."

On if he challenges his offensive line about getting in the end zone being something they need to improve on:

"Well, we challenge our whole team and we do it every week. I mean, that's the objective. You get down there and I don't think anybody wants to settle for field goals. If it's the best you can do, then you do that. But you know, everybody wants touchdowns. That's pretty elementary there."

On if he has to bring up the topic of bowl eligibility with his players so they avoid pressing too much during a week like this:

"Uh, you know, I don't know. I mean, we don't talk a lot about that in general. You know, I think most of these guys are smart enough. They're in college. I think most of them know if you win six, you're eligible for a bowl. So you know, we're all trying to do that and we're all trying to do better, obviously."

"I think we really just try to get our guys to focus on the week at hand. I think most coaches do that. So that's what it's all about. If you want to do better with each season, you better handle each step along the way. The more you put into it, the better the place you'll be in the end."

On the challenges of preparing for a 3-4 defense in a short

amount of time:

"You know, we played one early in the season, which probably helped us a little bit. At least we felt that, but you might not have known it on Saturday. It's just a little bit unique. There are some things, you know, that's probably more protection-ally, a little more mental there. You want to avoid match-ups that aren't good, mainly getting backs matched up on linebackers that might overpower them and over-handle them physically.

"But you know, it's a little bit different, it's a little bit unique and it affects the run game as well. When we looked at the film, we didn't do as well as we would've liked to have and that's probably one of the advantages of playing that scheme. But again, there's a reason why I think a lot of people don't do it, because it's easier said than done.

"I'm awfully impressed watching Wisconsin first-hand and I was awfully impressed watching Utah State tape, just how well they played it with their scheme. So they're well-coached in all areas and the defense is no exception there."

On if he sees it coming in cycles and whether the 3-4 becomes a more prominent look in college football:

"Um, I'm not sure about that. You know, it just doesn't seem like there are a lot of people nationally that are doing it. That doesn't mean it won't come back. But it just doesn't seem that way. But that's just one person's opinion. It has in pro football, for sure."

On the impact James Morris has had playing linebacker this season:

"You know, he's playing really well. We've got a great group of senior linebackers. All three guys are playing at a really high level and James and Anthony Hitchens have more notable stats only because of the positions they play. We're really

proud of all three of those guys. I'm thrilled there. They're doing such a good job.

"And then James, on top of it, last week I think he's one of four Big Ten players who were recognized by the National Football Foundation with the post-graduate scholarship. That's such a nice award and that really, to me, epitomizes what this is all about and James certainly embodies all the characteristics you're looking for. He's a tremendous football player, does an unbelievable job in the classroom and is also just a really strong team leader, a really respected team leader.

"If I had known the other three recipients personally, I think you'd probably say the same about all four of these guys. But it's just a really nice honor and that was great news last week for him and I'm sure all the other three recipients feel the same way."

On comparing the three best teams in the Big Ten – Ohio State, Michigan State and Wisconsin – after playing all three of them:

"You know, every game's different and you know, to that point, I guess what I'm trying to make reference to is sometimes you go into a game thinking it's going to be a defensive game and the score ends up being 28-27, so you just never know when teams mesh. I'm going back to Ohio State/Michigan in '06 or '07, it doesn't really matter. You know the game I'm talking about. Those were two outstanding defensive teams and it was 30-something to 40-something, if I remember correctly.

"The bottom line is all three of those teams you just mentioned are excellent football teams and they're just really well-coached, they have really good players and they're playing at a high level right now. At least they were against us."

On how compelling a match-up Ohio State vs. Michigan State

would be for this year's Big Ten Championship:

"I think my prediction would be with whoever ends up in the game, it's going to be a really good game. Those are two really good football teams and there's still a lot of football to be played. A lot of things can happen here in the next month. But my prediction would be whoever ends up in that game, it should be a really good contest."

11/4/2013: State of the Big Ten, Volume 105 (premium)

Every Monday, we will be running a weekly series titled "State of the Big Ten," which will be made available to all members of HawkeyeDrive.com. This series of columns will focus on one major headline regarding the conference and go in-depth on the subject at hand.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The Big Ten might still be No. 4 Ohio State's to lose, but the No. 18 Michigan State Spartans sent a loud message over the weekend to both the entire conference and the entire nation with their 29-6 drubbing of in-state rival Michigan.

Mathematically speaking, there are still three teams in the Legends Division that have a reasonable opportunity to win the division. But while both Minnesota and Nebraska may still mathematically be alive here, let's be realistic. Michigan State not playing Ohio State in the Big Ten Championship Game at this point would be a major shock.

And honestly, that match-up would be the best-case scenario for the Big Ten in terms of its perception. If the Spartans are 11-1 and reach that game by going 8-0 in Big Ten play, it would help give Ohio State something to boast about should the Buckeyes prevail in Indianapolis that night. But then again, it might also present enough of a challenge that maybe, just maybe, Michigan State pulls off the upset.

It's not too far-fetched, either. There's the creed in sports about how "defense wins championships" and the Spartans have as good a defense as there is in college football, period. Not just the Big Ten, but nationally.

Right now, Michigan State's defense gives up an average of 210.2 yards per game, the fewest of any team in the country. The next closest is Louisville giving up 244.5 yards per game. In terms of scoring defense, the Spartans give up an average of 11.6 points per game – third nationally behind Alabama and Louisville. But they've also played nine games while those other two teams have played eight.

No team has allowed fewer rushing yards than Michigan State and only three teams have given up fewer yards through the air. In terms of opponents' ground game production, it's almost non-existent. The most impressive aspect of the Spartans' 23-point victory over Michigan was that they held the Wolverines to -48 yards rushing. Yes, that's a minus sign in front of the 48. Which is absolutely absurd.

Since Mark Dantonio took over in 2007, dominance on the defensive side of the football has become the reputation in East Lansing. Most of the games Michigan State has lost in recent years have been a direct result of either being entirely outmatched (see the 2011 Capital One Bowl against Alabama) or the offense absolutely sputtering (see the one defeat this season at Notre Dame). The Spartans have always been elite defensively, which makes what they're doing this season even scarier.

Maybe this team has benefited from a weaker schedule than recent years past. One could argue last weekend's game against Michigan has been Michigan State's most impressive victory to date. But if the Spartans can get just enough from their offense, this defense has proven time and time again it can play with anybody and as a result, Michigan State's going to always find itself in a position to beat anyone it plays.

So yeah, the Spartans might not win the Big Ten. Heck, they could go 11-2 and possibly see a 10-2 Wisconsin get picked ahead of them for a BCS bowl like it was back in 2010 when there was a 3-way tie atop the Big Ten. But what's developing at Michigan State right now is worth highlighting because at the very least, it doesn't make predictions such as Ohio State winning the Big Ten or Wisconsin going to a BCS bowl as an at-large complete certainties.

Iowa at Purdue Game Notes, 2-deep

OFFENSE:

SE 4 Smith, 8 Shumpert

LT 68 Scherff, 76 MacMillan

LG 59 Boffeli, 58 Simmons

C 63 Blythe, 57 Gaul

RG 65 Walsh, 78 Donnal

RT 70 Van Sloten, 73 Ward

TE 86 Fiedorowicz, 82 Hamilton/87 Duzey

WR 11 Martin-Manley, 17 Hillyer

QB 15 Rudock, 16 Beathard

RB 45 Weisman/5 Bullock, 33 Canzeri

FB 38 Cox, 42 Plewa

DEFENSE:

LE 95 Ott, 34 Meier

LT 71 Davis, 67 Johnson

RT 90 Trinca-Pasat, 97 Cooper

RE 98 Hardy, 34 Meier

OLB 20 Kirksey, 39 Perry

MLB 44 Morris, 52 Alston

WLB 31 Hitchens, 6 Spearman

LCB 19 Lowery, 27 Lomax

SS 37 Lowdermilk, 21 Law

FS 5 Miller, 12 Gair

RCB 14 King, 7 Draper

SPECIAL TEAMS:

P 98 Kornbrath

PK 96 Meyer, 1 Koehn

LS 61 Kreiter

HOLDER 98 Kornbrath

PR 11 Martin-Manley

KR 23 Cotton, 33 Canzeri

[Iowa vs. Purdue Game Notes](#)