

# 10/29/2013: 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 – 10 29 13](#)

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# 10/29/2013: 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:**

*"Obviously, just happy for James [Morris] to be recognized. A lot of great performances over the weekend by a lot of people, so it was nice of him to be recognized and then we were pleased to get the win. It was a hard-fought game. Both teams really competed hard, obviously. It went into overtime. So it was a tough ball game, happy to get the win, and we've got a*

*big challenge on our hands now playing a very good Wisconsin team this weekend."*

**On what makes Iowa's rivalry with Wisconsin unique:**

*"Well, I think it starts out with the geographic proximity and then the history of this series. I only go back to '81, but we've had some outstanding games through the years. They've done a wonderful job up there and it has been a real challenge to play them, usually. If you like football, it's a fun game to be competitive in."*

**On what has been his favorite moment coaching against Wisconsin:**

*"I don't know about a favorite. I guess what I remember most distinctly is when I left here in '89, the program there, for whatever reasons, had really taken a turn. Attendance was not good and the team wasn't doing really well on the field. I left here to go to Maine and that was the same time Barry Alvarez was hired there at Wisconsin."*

*"I come back nine years later and it's the exact opposite. In fact, we were the people invited to the celebration at the end of the '99 year. You know, Ron Dayne ran it up and had a great performance and his team clinched the Rose Bowl that year in that last ball game. That's a little contrast to what I had seen nine years previous and it's a real credit to Barry and everyone involved – the players and coaching staff."*

*"And then since that time, they've really done a great job. That began before the '99 season, certainly. So it's a real tribute to what can happen at a place where people work hard and work together."*

**On the importance of his program being able to have a consistent identity throughout the years:**

*"Um, I think most teams ... you know, everybody involved –*

offense, defense, special teams – if you're somewhere long enough, I think your thoughts evolve and you have changes and shifts. We just played Northwestern and I talked a little bit about that last week. If you look at them historically at least, at least in my opinion for sure, I was back in '99 and they were one team offensively and very distinctly different the next year.

"They went and visited, I think, the Rams, who at that time were 'The Greatest Show on Turf.' They had a very different style and that, I think, has continued to evolve. But I think they certainly have an identity and you know, they've really established one defensively, too. So I think teams that are successful and that sustain success tend to do good that way.

"You know, at some point, you just have to decide, 'Hey, who are you? What do you believe in?' and then try to work to that end. But it's I think a challenge to change – every year or every two months, change – what you think is important. It's tough to get anywhere doing that."

**On if he ever considered making radical changes:**

"You know, that has happened. If you look back at Alabama and read about Bear Bryant's life, at one point they were a Wishbone team with Johnny Musso and some of those players and I think they were impacted a little bit.

"He was impacted by a coach when they played Southern Cal and you know, some of the players you recruit first and foremost, you have to recruit the best players you can and you bend towards what they do best. I think that happens everywhere. But ultimately, there are certain things that I think everybody believes in, certain parameters and principles, and you have to have some sort of identity in that way or it's hard to get anywhere.

"But everybody bends a little bit and that's the thing with college football. We're not drafting, so you get the best

*players you can get. If you've got a great option quarterback in your state, my guess is you'd recruit him unless you've got five other guys to choose from. You recruit the best players and then try to fit your system towards those guys."*

**On the key to keeping Wisconsin RB Melvin Gordon in check and whether he's as effective now between the tackles as he is out on the edge:**

*"Yeah, I think his average from the running back position is over six yards a carry than his overall average. I mean, he's effective in other ways, too. But you know, he's no surprise. We tried to recruit him for obvious reasons. A lot of people did. They did a great job of keeping him home. He's an outstanding football player, as is James White. James has done an outstanding job throughout his football career. He has been a four-year player for them and has done a wonderful job.*

*"They lose one outstanding running back and then they pick up another, install another. I think that has been part of the deal. When Ball was there, Ball and White were a great combination. Now you've got the same thing going with White and Gordon. You know, how you slow these guys down or contain them, that's probably easier said than done because they have really good guys up front to block for them. The fullback's a good blocker. The tight ends block well and they throw the ball very effectively.*

*"I don't know if there's a better player in our conference than the receiver [Jared Abbrederis] at any position. So they make it hard for you. It's a different challenge than what we faced last week, but another challenge in the same that you can't just load up for one area. You have to try to defend everything and that's easier said than done."*

**On what he recalls from his recruitment of Gordon, who originally committed to Iowa before de-committing and then signing his letter of intent with Wisconsin:**

*"Well, if you want an honest answer on that one, I remember the day he committed to us and all that. But I never got the feeling everybody was on board with that in his entire family. You know, recruiting's an emotional thing and all that stuff. It didn't work out that way. It's hard to recruit across state borders. I'm not saying that was the sole deciding factor, but Wisconsin, I think it's a matter of fact that they've done a wonderful job of recruiting their state and that all starts with having a program that players in the state want to be attracted to and identify with.*

*"I alluded to Barry a little while ago. I think Barry clearly established that back in the '90s and they've been going strong. Maybe some other people have gone in there and done a good job plucking guys out, but it's not easy. It's tough to take a guy out of Ohio that Ohio State wants and it's tough to take a guy from Wisconsin that Wisconsin wants. It's just a tough thing."*

**On if Gordon reminds him of any other running backs he has seen:**

*"Yeah, you know, I'm not real good at the comparison game. But all I know is boy, is he explosive and dangerous with it. James White is a different kind of runner, but they're both equally effective and very, very tough to contain. So they fit very well with the system and have been very productive, and then they've got a young guy coming up, too, that's awfully good as well. So it's the same old story. They usually have 2-3 guys that can hurt you and that's the same case again this year."*

**On if C.J. Fiedorowicz is doing something different that's allowing him to haul in touchdown catches like he has this season:**

*"Well you know, I think it's probably well-stated or well-documented that we were not a really explosive offense last*

*year. You know, we had a hard time scoring, period, and it was just one of those deals. So we're moving the ball a little bit better now and we're scoring a little bit better than a year ago, certainly. You know, when you have a tight end with his kind of size and his ball-catching ability, it just kind of makes sense that he's going to be a good target down there in the red zone.*

*"He has done a wonderful job. He has made catches and the one the other day was a little different than some of the ones he had made prior, but he has made some great catches and that was a great play on his part as well. It's a real credit to him."*

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## **10/28/2013: State of the Big Ten, Volume 104 (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*

With the calendar turning to November later this week, there's a question worth asking – what defines "strength" in the world of college basketball?

If strength is a matter of how many legitimate Final Four contenders sit atop a conference, then the Big Ten might not

appear as strong entering 2013-14 like it was at this time last season. In fact, one could argue last season was as good as the Big Ten has ever looked in college basketball. There was nearly a four-way tie for first place at season's end, yet the team finishing fifth was the one who got hot in the NCAA tournament and nearly won the national championship as a No. 4 seed.

When the AP preseason poll gets released later this week, three Big Ten teams are safe bets to be ranked – Michigan State, Ohio State and Michigan. The Spartans return all but one player from a team that went to the Sweet 16 last year, while the Buckeyes came one win away from a second consecutive Final Four appearance last March and the Wolverines reached the national title game where they lost to Louisville. Ohio State and Michigan bring back enough to legitimately be viewed as top 10 teams like Michigan State will be.

There could be four, five or even six teams that appear in that initial top 25 later this week. This is because many regard teams like Wisconsin, Indiana and Iowa to all be NCAA tournament-caliber this season. But compared to last season, 4, 5 and 6 aren't going to appear as strong this year. Again, if strength is determined by what's at the top, the Big Ten isn't as good as it was last year and there might be a valid argument for the ACC being better.

But, if strength is determined by how good a conference is from top to bottom, then the Big Ten will be better this season. Both the middle and bottom of the league are stronger now as opposed to last year. Purdue might finish seventh again like it did a season ago, but will be a much improved seventh place team this year, one that could sneak its way into the NCAA tournament. Illinois might not be as good, but John Groce has proven himself already as a solid recruiter.

Teams like Minnesota and Northwestern who underwent coaching changes still have star players to center their teams around.

The Golden Gophers bring back point guard Andre Hollins and the Wildcats will have the services of Drew Crawford after being injured and missing all of last season. In Chris Collins' system, he could become a more dynamic player than he already was.

Much like Crawford at Northwestern, Penn State will have Tim Frazier back in 2013-14. That alone makes the Nittany Lions better. Add in this being Patrick Chambers' third season at the helm, and Penn State's a team that could sneak up on other teams during league play. The same can also be said for Tim Miles and his Nebraska squad, a team opening Pinnacle Bank Arena next week following a season that saw the Cornhuskers beat Purdue in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament.

Indiana won the Big Ten with a 14-4 conference mark last season. This season, 12-6 might win the league because with the Big Ten's depth, upsets are bound to happen. Teams being viewed at the bottom are going to shake the standings up winning a game or two they shouldn't have any business winning. To take it a step further, this is also shaping up to be a season where a team that finishes between that 5-8 range could put together a run during the Big Ten Tournament and play its way into the NCAA Tournament.

The national perception will primarily take into account the top of the conference, which as stated, isn't as strong as it was in 2012-13. The reality is there are going to be a handful of teams that can win anywhere between 7-11 games in conference play, which should make the match-ups more intriguing than they'll initially sound.

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# Iowa vs. Wisconsin 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. Wisconsin Game Notes](#)

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# Morris receives second weekly honor from conference

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

Iowa senior linebacker James Morris was named the Big Ten's Defensive Player of the Week, the conference announced Monday. This is the second time Morris has received this accolade.

In the Hawkeyes' 17-10 overtime victory over Northwestern last weekend, Morris finished with eight tackles, had two sacks of Wildcat quarterback Kain Colter and recovered a fumble forced by fellow senior linebacker Anthony Hitchens during the second quarter. Morris is also the first player in the FBS this season to reach minimums of 50 tackles, three sacks and three interceptions.

This comes just four weeks after Morris' first weekly honor from the Big Ten following the Hawkeyes' 23-7 win over Minnesota on Sept. 28 and it marks the third time an Iowa player has been recognized by the league as Defensive Player of the Week (senior cornerback B.J. Lowery garnered the honor back in September after the Hawkeyes' 59-3 win over Western Michigan).

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## 2013 Big Ten football TV schedule: Week Ten

Every week, we will post the TV schedule for all games featuring Big Ten teams. Here is where and when you can watch them this week:

Nov. 2:

**No. 22 Wisconsin at Iowa, 11 a.m., [ABC/ESPN2](#)**

Illinois at Penn State, 11 a.m., ESPN

No. 4 Ohio State at Purdue, 11 a.m., BTN

Minnesota at Indiana, 2:30 p.m., BTN

No. 23 Michigan at No. 24 Michigan State, 2:30 p.m., ABC

Northwestern at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m., BTN

**\*All times listed are Central Standard Time.**

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# **10/26/2013: Iowa 17, Northwestern 10 (Links)**

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

Check out all of these links to content posted on Saturday after Iowa's 17-10 overtime win over Northwestern at Kinnick Stadium. Please note, anything with "premium" in parentheses are links that can only be accessed by those logged in as either a paid subscriber or three-day free trial member to *HawkeyeDrive.com*:

**RECAP:** [Hawkeyes survive in overtime to beat Wildcats](#)

**COMMENTARY:** [The adjustment game \(premium\)](#)

**VIDEO:**

[Mike Meyer](#)

[Kirk Ferentz](#)

[Mark Weisman](#)

[Nate Meier](#)

[Damon Bullock](#)

[C.J. Fiedorowicz](#)

[James Morris](#)

[Christian Kirksey](#)

[Kevonte Martin-Manley](#)

[Anthony Hitchens](#)

[Carl Davis](#)

[Jake Rudock](#)

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# Hawkeyes survive in overtime to beat Wildcats

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Saturday’s game inside Kinnick Stadium wasn’t so much an elimination game. Whichever team – Iowa or Northwestern – lost would still have four more games to keep itself in the Big Ten’s bowl picture. For whoever won, it was simply going to be a matter of survival.

For all the concerns surrounding the Hawkeyes’ ability to finish games, on this day at least, they found a way to survive. It took an overtime period, but Iowa emerged 17-10 victors over Northwestern to snap a two-game losing streak and put itself at 5-3 overall – already one win better than it was last season and now one win away from becoming bowl-eligible.

“It was good for us,” Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said. “This one came hard, which is part of winning in conference play. There’s nothing easy about it.”

Much like last week's contest at Ohio State, the Hawkeyes imposed their will on the opening drive after Northwestern opted to have the 20 MPH winds at its back to open the game. Iowa marched 74 yards on 14 plays – 12 of which were run plays – and went ahead 7-0 when junior running back Damon Bullock scored from three yards out.

"We had to pretty much set the tone that at the beginning of the game, we were going to run the ball," Bullock said. "For the most part, we did that."

The Hawkeyes were also able to set a tone defensively. After only forcing one turnover on downs against Ohio State, Iowa forced a 3-and-out on Northwestern's opening possession. Highlighting this was a third-down sack of Wildcat quarterback Kain Colter by senior linebacker James Morris that came with the Hawkeyes lined up in their "Radar" package – a look similar to a 3-4, but with the three linemen up front all lined up like blitzing linebackers.

In the "Radar," junior defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat was the nose tackle, while the rush ends were sophomore Nate Meier and true freshman linebacker Reggie Spearman. Junior Quinton Alston was lined up at linebacker along with Morris and seniors Christian Kirksey and Anthony Hitchens.

"We knew [Colter] was going to be a fast quarterback, just like the previous game we had played," Meier said. "We just wanted more speed on the field."

Iowa would extend its lead to 10-0 in the second quarter when senior kicker Mike Meyer connected on a 38-yard field goal and that would remain the score entering the third quarter. Then it became a matter of survival.

Once again, the offense started to struggle with sustaining drives and the defense started to struggle getting off the field. Northwestern would trim the Iowa lead to 10-7 when Colter hit superback Dan Vitale for a 10-yard touchdown strike

in the third quarter. Then in the fourth quarter, the Wildcats tied the game with a 16-play series ending with a 29-yard field goal from Jeff Budzien.

On the ensuing possession, the Hawkeye offense would regain a rhythm when junior wideout Kevonte Martin-Manley caught a third-down pass from quarterback Jake Rudock to move the chains.

“They played man-to-man and I had an in-route,” Martin-Manley said. “I was able to get open. Jake scrambled just a little bit and I popped open at the last second, caught it and we were able to move the chains.”

Iowa would get all the way to the Northwestern 24-yard line when Meyer attempted a 42-yard field goal. The snap bounced to holder Connor Kornbrath and Meyer’s kick – which was already going against the wind – hooked to the left, giving Northwestern 76 yards and 4:58 to work with.

“I kind of just got ahead of myself and just lost concentration at the end,” Meyer said.

The Wildcats got to the Iowa 21-yard line before a 15-yard illegal block penalty was called. The very next play, Northwestern running back Mike Trumpy coughed up a fumble that was recovered at midfield by freshman cornerback Desmond King.

Iowa got to Northwestern’s 31-yard line, but ended up moving backwards and out of field goal range. The Wildcats had two timeouts remaining, but never used them. Iowa then used a timeout with 15 seconds in regulation and opted to go for it on 4th-and-11. Rudock threw an interception and the Wildcats took a knee to send it to overtime.

“We wanted to get at least inside the 25,” Ferentz said when asked what the ideal field goal range for Meyer would’ve been at the end of regulation. “The situation we ended up in, we just figured let the clock go down and try to convert. If we

did, we had two timeouts.”

Northwestern won the overtime coin toss, but both teams went toward the South end zone with the wind at their backs. Facing 3rd-and-7 from the Wildcat 8-yard line, Rudock sensed a blitz coming and with two defenders right in his face, he lofted the ball toward the corner of the end zone to a wide open C.J. Fiedorowicz for a touchdown that gave Iowa a 17-10 advantage.

“It all felt like it was in slow motion. That ball was in the air forever,” Fiedorowicz said. “I just ran underneath it and happened to be right there.

“For how young he is, he has got a lot of poise and confidence. He has been in these situations and has played big-time ball.”

From there, the Hawkeye defense stepped up. Following a sack and a 3-yard run, King again made a key play by breaking up a Colter pass at the last possible second that would’ve resulted in a first down had it been completed. Then on 4th-and-8, Colter found himself scrambling to the outside, but was denied by Trinca-Pasat.

Iowa survived.

Now with a shot at becoming bowl-eligible, the Hawkeyes return to action at Kinnick Stadium Nov. 2 when they play No. 22 Wisconsin for the first time since 2010, when the Badgers escaped Iowa City with a 31-30 win that propelled them into the first of three straight Rose Bowl appearances. Kickoff is set for 11 a.m. Central and the game will be nationally televised on either ABC, ESPN or ESPN2.

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# COMMENTARY: The adjustment game (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Week to week and game to game, there's a common theme in the game of football – being able to make adjustments. Certain teams are better at doing this than others.

For the past week, adjustments was a heavy topic of conversation when it came to the Iowa Hawkeyes. Playing on the road against the No. 4 team in the country, Iowa looked as well-prepared schematically as it could possibly be. It just wasn't enough against Ohio State, in part because the Buckeyes were able to adjust to what the Hawkeyes were doing well and Iowa simply didn't have an answer.

It looked like deja vu was about to occur Saturday at Kinnick Stadium. Iowa jumped out to a 10-0 lead on Northwestern, a lead it took into halftime. But the Wildcats would score 10 unanswered points to ultimately force overtime before the Hawkeyes prevailed 17-10. Even then though, Northwestern was in a position late in regulation to steal the game altogether.

Quite frankly, Iowa's very fortunate it came away with this win. In fact, the Hawkeyes should feel fortunate this game went to overtime, which is already a dicey situation in and of itself because both teams start with a clean slate. The overtime masked what looked eerily similar to second halves in each of Iowa's three defeats this season.

The one positive with Kirk Ferentz and his coaching staff is with preparation, mixing in new wrinkles that force other teams to adjust. Last week, it was on offense with the "13"

personnel consisting of three tight ends on the field at once. On Saturday, it was on defense and more specifically on third down.

Instead of using a nickel package – which the Hawkeyes haven't used since losing to Michigan State earlier this month – Iowa employed what it calls the “Radar” package on third down plays where it didn't stay in its base 4-3 look. The “Radar” was essentially a 3-4 without any of the three linemen up front lining up in a 3-point or 4-point stance. Junior defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat, sophomore defensive end Nate Meier and true freshman linebacker Reggie Spearman all stood up near the line of scrimmage, alongside Iowa's trio of senior linebackers and junior linebacker Quinton Alston.

The first time “Radar” was used, James Morris came away with a sack. Much like the nickel, there were mixed results. In some instances, it worked. In others, it didn't. The times it didn't, Northwestern was able to utilize its short-passing game, specifically in the middle of the field.

There is one difference here, however. The instances where “Radar” didn't work didn't result in the Hawkeyes abandoning the scheme altogether. When it comes to offensive wrinkles, that hasn't always been the case.

This team was on its way toward another week of hearing about how it can't finish off games, how it abandons what works on either side of the ball whenever opposing teams adjust. These are still valid concerns and the odds of them resurfacing in November appear good. Iowa winning this game shouldn't fool one into thinking everything's fine and dandy.

But with that said, Saturday was an instance where the Hawkeyes didn't completely shy away from what served them well early on. They didn't abandon the run game once Northwestern loaded the box with 8-9 guys. They weren't afraid to roll the dice with the “Radar” in the fourth quarter just because there

was a play in the third quarter where the Wildcats garnered a first down against it. The players made play, which is why winning this game shouldn't be fully diminished.

When Iowa plays to its strengths, it can beat almost anybody. The fact that it has led at halftime in every game this season despite being only 5-3 at this point in the season is all the evidence needed here.

But it has to continue doing so in these last four games in order to feel certain about getting a bowl game somewhere. Anywhere. That's the ultimate difference between winning and losing games like Saturday's and games like the seven ones before.

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## **Iowa-NU video: Jake Rudock**

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock completed 19-of-27 passes for 169 yards through the air, one touchdown and one interception, and also rushed for 22 yards on seven carries in the Hawkeyes' 17-10 overtime win over Northwestern on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.