

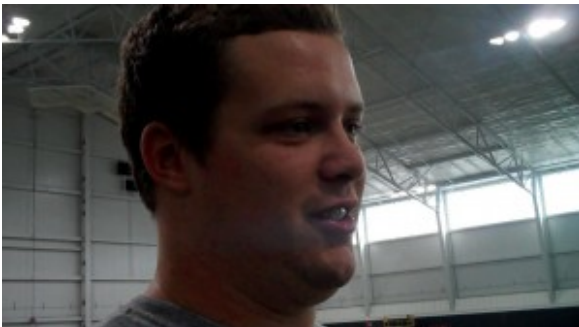
10/1/2013: Iowa player audio with photos (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

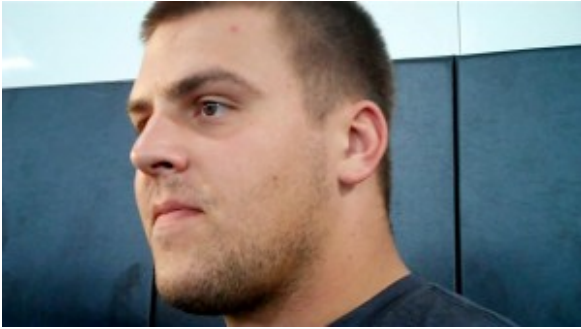
IOWA CITY, Iowa – On Tuesday, nine members of the Iowa football team spoke with the media to discuss the Hawkeyes' upcoming game on Oct. 5 against Michigan State at Kinnick Stadium.

Below is audio from each of the following players – senior offensive guard Conor Boffeli, sophomore center Austin Blythe, junior running back Mark Weisman, junior offensive tackle Brandon Scherff, senior linebacker James Morris, junior defensive tackle Carl Davis, senior defensive end Dominic Alvis, senior kicker Mike Meyer and sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock:



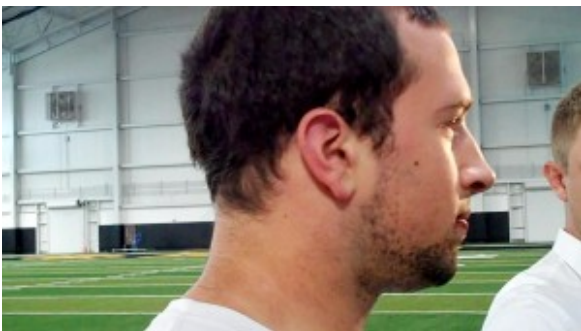
Conor Boffeli, Oct. 1, 2013

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Conor-Boffeli-1012013.mp3>



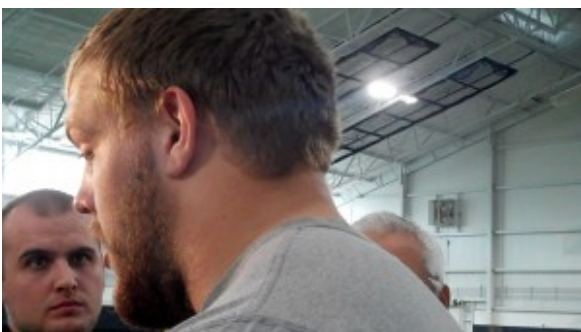
Austin Blythe, Oct. 1, 2013

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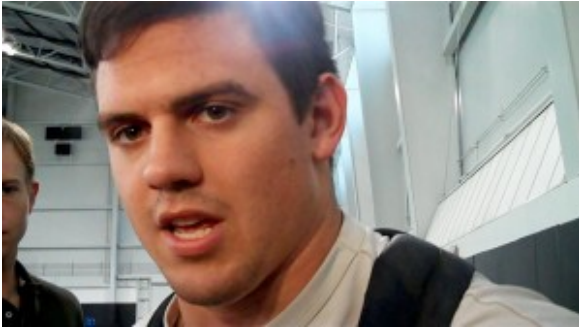
Mark Weisman, Oct. 1, 2013

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Mark-Weisman-1012013.mp3>



Brandon Scherff, Oct. 1, 2013

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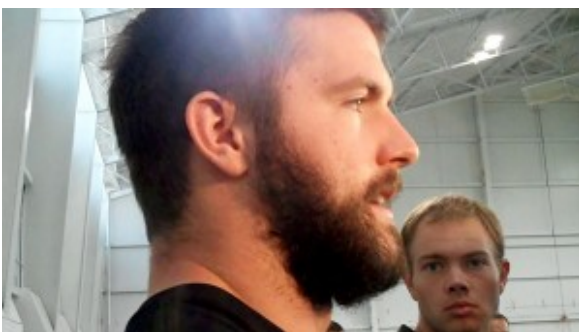
James Morris, Oct. 1, 2013

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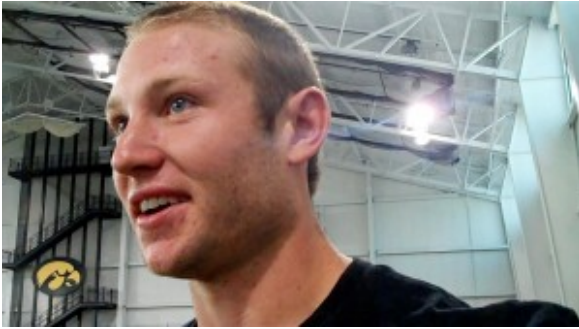
Carl Davis, Oct. 1, 2013

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Dominic Alvis, Oct. 1, 2013

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Dominic-Alvis-1012013.mp3>



Mike Meyer, Oct. 1, 2013

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Mike-Meyer-1012013.mp3>



Jake Rudock, Oct. 1, 2013

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Jake-Rudock-1012013.mp3>

10/1/2013: 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:

10/1/2013: 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:

"We were really happy to get a win on the road against a very tough Minnesota team. It was a really hard-fought ball game on both sides and we're just pleased to get out of there with a win. Now we turn our sights towards a really tough opponent in Michigan State. They're playing good football and it will be a big challenge for us this week."

On what the most difficult element is in maintaining a solid Big Ten program like he has and like Mark Dantonio has at Michigan State:

"I just think any time you play in a conference like ours, you know, there's going to be a challenge every week, certainly, and every season. So that doesn't ever change and every season is unique, every game is unique, so it's just a matter of trying to stick with what you believe in and moving forward."

"From my observation, it seems to me like Mark and his staff

started that well before they got there. They did a great job at Cincinnati and then when they moved to Michigan State, they just continued on with real quality work."

On if there's any element of recruiting at a school like Iowa or Michigan State that's more difficult:

"You know, it's always difficult because you just never know how things are going to materialize. Even if you're getting all 5-star recruits, there are no guarantees. It's kind of like the NFL Draft. Not every first-rounder turns out to be a first-rounder in terms of production, so there's always going to be that element."

"But you know, that's what makes college football so interesting, I think. I think you can look at just about any program. Those programs go through ups-and-downs and the other thing I would say is just like every program has, you have to decide who you are and try to play towards those things that you believe in. There's no one right answer or right way to do things."

On if there's any point during the first month of the season where the team's confidence level takes a jump:

"I don't know if there's one point, but I think it's gradually building. You know, we lost our opener, which didn't do a lot for anybody's confidence. But we knew it's just like any game. Anything can happen in any game, so we knew we were playing a really good football team and they were and are."

"You know, so you just keep pushing and every week's a different adventure, if you will. It's a different challenge and you just take it a week at a time. But I think if you're doing things right and if your team stays healthy, at least you have a chance to grow."

On the play this season of junior left tackle Brandon Scherff:

“Yeah, you know, he was really starting to play well a year ago and unfortunately, he suffered that injury. But he came back, he had a great attitude through the injury and the rehab. Then when he came back in the spring, he just went back to work. So it’s good to see him hammer on.”

“He struggled through some injuries two years ago, so his performance was a little bit up-and-down. But last year, he was starting to come into his own and he’s playing good football for us now. He’s a very respected guy on our football team just because he works so hard and does things so well. He’s one of those guys that practices hard every day and just has a really good demeanor. So as a result of that, as you might imagine, everyone on the team and in the program really respects him.”

On how he would characterize Iowa’s series with Michigan State and how close and physical it has been:

“You know, not to sound like Pop Warner, but I could go back to the ’80s and think of how many close games we’ve had with Michigan State in the ’80s and it seems like it has been more of the same since Mark came back to Michigan State. If you look at it, we’ve had two games that got away – they got away from us once and we got away from them once – but the other four games, two points, three points and then two double overtime games.”

“I can’t tell you why that is, but we’ve had some fantastic games. In close games like that, it usually comes back to there’s always a handful of things that take place, you know, that really impact the game. My guess is we’re probably looking at one of those again.”

On what makes it difficult to run against Michigan State’s defense and what Iowa will have to do this week:

“Two things. I think they’ve got a very challenging scheme. If you look at them on paper, it’s not like they do all that much

on paper. But I remember when I was in the NFL, the Steelers, they didn't really do all that much in terms of trying to stop the run, but there was a real method to their madness.

"Most importantly – I think this is kind of my recollection of the Steelers, too – is they had good players that played extremely hard and were very well-coached. You know, again, it wasn't that much. But what they did do kept you from being able to feel like you were comfortable. It was just always a challenge. Their numbers, it's just a really tough team to run the ball against. Really tough."

On how much credit Jake Rudock deserves for Iowa's success on third down as an offense so far this season:

"I think you've got to give him a lot of credit. It starts with your quarterback, certainly, and that's, quite frankly, one of the more pleasing things I think that has happened in the last couple of weeks because we were really struggling in that area recently. So when you have a chance to convert, especially in the 3rd-and-5 plus deals, at least that obviously keeps you on the field and gives you a chance to keep moving and maybe score.

"But it's a team thing. The protection is always paramount and then certainly, receivers looking to get open and knowing where the chains are and doing the things necessary. So that's a positive and I just talked about the run game. It's the same thing. Their pass defense is really stellar. I think they might lead the country in pass defense as well, so you look at it and there's just not a lot of plays that are going to be easy, that's for sure."

On Rudock's poise and mental approach playing roles in his ongoing development:

"I would agree totally, and I think that's the thing that we've been the most pleased about. I don't want to say it was a surprise, but you just never know until you get in games. To

be a successful quarterback, it sure does help if you have an awareness and just a self-control, if you will. So far, so good.

“He has done a really great job with that and when he does make a play that you know he regrets, he comes right back and keeps playing. He doesn’t let it affect him and I’m not saying it doesn’t bother him, but it doesn’t affect him. That’s a good sign as well.”

On if he notices anything different about Michigan State’s offense given the number of quarterbacks the Spartans have used this season:

“You know, they’re probably fairly similar in the sense that I don’t think necessarily ... you know, every quarterback has his own personality, his own style. But it seems to me, and again, I’m an outsider looking in, but it seems to me like that they’re kind of where they want to be.

“They probably didn’t score as many points as they would’ve liked to in their last game, but it looked to me like they’re moving down the road they want to move down, which is a good, power running attack and throwing the ball. They’ve got dangerous receivers.

“So it looks to me as an outsider looking in that last game plus a bye week to work on things, my guess is they’re going on the path they want to go on and they’ve had great success. I mean, they’ve had 10 wins a year the last few years.

“You know, I don’t think we’re expecting a run-and-shoot or an option attack this week. I think the things we’ve seen them do through the years, I think those are the things we can expect to see them do, certainly, on Saturday.”

9/30/2013: State of the Big Ten, Volume 100 (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

In five days, the entire college football universe will lay its eyes squarely on Ryan Field in Evanston, Ill., for what is the biggest Northwestern football game in years.

Make no mistake about this. When the 16th-ranked Wildcats take the field to play No. 4 Ohio State, it will certainly be the biggest game Northwestern has played since Pat Fitzgerald took over for the late Randy Walkers as head coach in 2006. This game is going to be a watershed moment for Fitzgerald's program, one that will either pay huge dividends should the Wildcats win or provide consequences should they lose.

Northwestern has accomplished an unprecedented amount of consistency during Fitzgerald's tenure, which is at its peak right now with the Wildcats starting this season 4-0 after winning 10 games a year ago and finally getting over that bowl drought of 64 years that stuck with the program. This is as good as Northwestern has had it in over a decade and Saturday's contest is the most significant contest to be played at Ryan Field in years.

Sure, the Wildcats have played a game at Wrigley Field back in 2010. But no marketing is needed for this game on Saturday. The quality of the two teams speaks for itself here and it doesn't matter where the game's being played. Northwestern (at least historically) might not bring in the best crowds on game days, but with this weekend being the school's homecoming, plenty of alumni will flock to Evanston knowing full well the magnitude this has on Fitzgerald and his program going forward.

Here is what's at stake in the short-term: Beat the Buckeyes, and Northwestern becomes the clear favorite to win the Legends Division and quite possibly set up a rematch with Ohio State on Dec. 7 in Indianapolis. Lose to the Buckeyes, and the schedule becomes a bit more daunting and record-wise, a step back to something like 7-5 wouldn't be out of the realm of possibility.

Now for the long-term effects: Win this game, and the momentum currently surrounding the Wildcats will only get bigger. More people in the entire Chicagoland area will take notice, bigger-named recruits (should they qualify) would be more likely to commit and with division realignment going into effect next year, this could potentially set up where Northwestern becomes a viable contender in the West division for the next 4-5 years and possibly longer if Fitzgerald stays around.

But lose this game, and the perception that has been around the program for years not only comes back, but would return stronger than ever. It will be said that Northwestern can't win the big ones and years like 2012 will be more the exception as opposed to the norm for Fitzgerald. Speculation would build up even more with Fitzgerald, as many national media types will wonder why he'd want to stay at Northwestern (his alma mater) if the ceiling is nothing more than maybe 8-4 on average.

This is a chance for Northwestern to take a monster step forward not only in the Big Ten, but nationally as a football program. Everyone will be watching Saturday night. The question now is this – are the Wildcats ready to take that next step in this line of consistency they've been on the last few years? The outcome of Saturday night's game is going to go a long way in determining that – win or lose.

Iowa vs. Michigan State 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/23 Cotton

QB 15 Rudock, 16 Beathard/19 Sokol

RB 45 Weisman/5 Bullock, 33 Canzeri

FB 34 Cox, 42 Plewa

DEFENSE:

LE 95 Ott, 98 Hardy

LT 71 Davis, 97 Cooper

RT 90 Trinca-Pasat, 67 Johnson

RE 79 Alvis, 34 Meier

OLB 20 Kirksey, 39 Perry

MLB 44 Morris, 52 Alston

WLB 31 Hitchens, 55 Collins

LCB 19 Lowery, 7 Draper

SS 37 Lowdermilk, 21 Law

FS 5 Miller, 12 Gair

RCB 14 King, 35 Smith

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. Michigan State Game Notes](#)

Morris receives conference accolade

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa senior linebacker James Morris became the second Hawkeye in as many weeks to be named the Big Ten's Defensive Player of the Week, the conference announced Monday.

A week after senior cornerback B.J. Lowery received the same honor, Morris earned it this week following the Hawkeyes' 23-7 victory over Minnesota in what was their Big Ten opener. In that game, the Solon native recorded eight tackles, a sack and an interception late in the fourth quarter to seal the win.

Morris is the third Iowa player to receive any honors from the conference this season. In addition to him and Lowery, junior wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley was named the Big Ten's Special Teams Player of the Week last week.

2013 Big Ten football TV schedule: Week Six

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:

Oct. 5:

Penn State at Indiana, 11 a.m., BTN

Michigan State at Iowa, 11 a.m., ESPN2

Illinois at Nebraska, 11 a.m., ESPNU

Minnesota at No. 19 Michigan, 2:30 p.m., ABC/ESPN2

No. 4 Ohio State at No. 16 Northwestern, 7 p.m., ABC

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

9/28/2013: Iowa 23, Minnesota 7 (Links)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Check out all of these links to content posted on Saturday after Iowa's 23-7 win over Minnesota at TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minn. 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 retain possession of Floyd](#)

COMMENTARY: [Davis' vital role \(premium\)](#)

VIDEO:

[Floyd of Rosedale postgame celebration](#)

[Kirk Ferentz](#)

[Louis Trinca-Pasat](#)

[Austin Blythe](#)

[Brandon Scherff](#)

[Carl Davis](#)

[Mark Weisman](#)

[Jake Rudock](#)

[Anthony Hitchens](#)

[Christian Kirksey](#)

[James Morris](#)

Hawkeyes retain possession of Floyd

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – For the past week, the talk surrounding Iowa's game Saturday against Minnesota was it being a battle of strengths vs. strengths. Both teams entered with strong rushing attacks and both had defenses that were stingy against the run.

In a game where a bronze pig was at stake, the stronger team was going to survive. That stronger team was the Hawkeyes, who defeated the Golden Gophers 23-7 and left TCF Bank Stadium retaining possession of Floyd of Rosedale for the second consecutive year. The victory gives Iowa a 1-0 mark to start Big Ten play and the Hawkeyes also moved to 4-1 overall.

Both strength battles went Iowa's favor Saturday afternoon. When the Hawkeyes had the ball, they were able to run up and down the field on Minnesota's defense. Junior running back Mark Weisman led the attack with 147 yards rushing on 24 carries.

Conversely, the Golden Gophers' ground game got absolutely nothing going against Iowa's defense. An offense that ran the ball almost three quarters of the time entering this game could only compile 30 yards rushing on 27 carries.

"We knew that they were basically a vertical team. They go Point A to Point B," said junior defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat, who had four tackles, one sack and alongside fellow D-tackle Carl Davis made it nearly impossible for the Golden Gophers to penetrate inside the hashes. "We were just getting off blocks, taking on blocks and just making plays inside. They had a good O-line, but we were just able to shed blocks well."

This game took a turn in the Hawkeyes' favor during the second quarter. Leading 3-0, sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock connected on a 3rd-and-3 play-action dump-off to fullback Adam Cox, who picked up 35 yards on the play before being brought down at the Golden Gophers' 27-yard line. Rudock would cap the drive with a four-yard rushing score of his own to extend Iowa's lead to 10-0.

"I thought he was going to score on it," Weisman said about Cox's catch. "It was a great play and it really sparked the offense. I think it was a huge turning point."

The Hawkeyes missed a chance to go for the jugular following a highlight reel interception from senior linebacker Christian Kirksey when a 39-yard field goal attempt by senior kicker Mike Meyer hit the left upright. But Iowa would get the ball back minutes later and appeared to put the game out of reach when Rudock completed a tunnel screen pass to junior wide

receiver Damond Powell, who proceeded to scamper 74 yards to pay-dirt and give Iowa a 17-0 lead it would take with it into halftime.

“Big plays are hard to come by and I was just hoping,” Rudock said. “I’m thinking, ‘He’s fast. Let’s hope he can outrun them.”

Following another field goal by Meyer – who made three of them on the day – a 66-yard kickoff return by Minnesota’s Marcus Jones set up the Golden Gophers’ lone touchdown of the game when quarterback Philip Nelson connected with Derrick Engel for a 23-yard strike. Nelson ended up starting and playing the entire game even though the anticipation was Mitch Leidner starting his second straight game due to Nelson having a hamstring injury.

But even with Nelson back playing, there wasn’t much for Minnesota on this day. Senior linebacker James Morris would seal the victory with a interception in the final minutes of the fourth quarter and instead of sprinting to the opposite sideline, the Hawkeyes got to huddle around Floyd of Rosedale on their own sideline before celebrating with Iowa fans who made the trek.

“Didn’t have to run too far. We like it that way,” Morris said. “We didn’t have to carry it so far to the crowd.”

Iowa returns to action Oct. 5 when it plays its Homecoming game against Michigan State. The Spartans visit Kinnick Stadium after having a bye this week. Kickoff is slated for 11 a.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on ESPN2.

COMMENTARY: Davis' vital role (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Last season, there was a lot of warranted criticism directed the way of Iowa offensive coordinator Greg Davis. After all, his first season at the helm for the Hawkeyes resulted in one of the most disastrous seasons Iowa has ever had offensively. Nothing seemed to work at times when it was needed.

On Saturday, Davis called his best game since joining the Hawkeyes. At least I feel he did, anyway. The evidence of Iowa making strides throughout the offseason and through five games of this 2013 season was on full display inside TCF Bank Stadium Saturday afternoon, particularly in the first half.

I make mention of the first half specifically because this is where the Hawkeyes took the most command en route to a 23-7 victory over Minnesota that looked more dominant than the final score may indicate.

Three plays – all of which came during the second quarter – showed Davis' play-calling at its absolute best. The first play came on a 3rd-and-3 where Iowa ran play-action following three Mark Weisman rushes. Jake Rudock, who went on to score a touchdown on the ground from four yards out on this specific drive, connected with fullback Adam Cox, who went 35 yards deep into Minnesota territory.

The second play is one that actually didn't work for the Hawkeyes, but nevertheless was a necessary and aggressive play-call. Following a spectacular interception by linebacker Christian Kirksey, Iowa attempted to go for the jugular on the

ensuing play, only for Rudock to throw an incomplete pass the direction of tight end George Kittle. Say what you will about the actual play itself, but I personally commend any coach who gets aggressive like that right after a key turnover. Iowa was at the Minnesota 23-yard line and a touchdown there would've made it 17-0.

Finally, the third call was the 74-yard touchdown pass via the tunnel screen, where Rudock completed a short pass to junior wideout Damond Powell, who found an opening and showcased his speed all the way to the end zone. This did make the score 17-0 and was for all intents and purposes the play that broke Minnesota's back Saturday. This was a play Iowa hadn't revealed prior to this game and the Hawkeyes executed it to perfection.

Now do the players deserve as much credit for making these plays happen on the field. Of course, and I'm not trying to dismiss anything they did. But I bring Davis to focus here because this game showed me that what he wants to accomplish can work. For all the criticism he has gotten throughout his brief tenure in Iowa City, the man deserves a ton of credit for what transpired in this game.

The personnel to play his type of offense is starting to reveal itself. Rudock continues to show poise with each week. The Hawkeyes have found a way to utilize all their running backs and tight ends, and the receivers are slowly but surely starting to become more confident with each repetition.

It's easy to get on coaching when teams lose. But make no mistake here. Coaching had just as much to do with Iowa beating Minnesota on Saturday as anything else, and if Davis continues to call games like he has this month, then the Hawkeyes are going to reach heights no one foresaw them reaching during the offseason.