

9/17/2013: 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 happy to get the win on Saturday. It didn't come easy. We knew that it wouldn't and I'm just happy to get out of there with the win and happy for our players, certainly. And then moving on to this week, we've got Western Michigan coming in here. We've got a lot of work to do and hopefully we'll be ready to go on Saturday."

On whether Mark Weisman can continue his current carry pace and if he likes having that kind of bell cow:

"Yeah. Certainly, we're really pleased with what he has done thus far. I'm not surprised. He works extremely hard and practices really well. He's really doing a lot of things he did last year, so we're really pleased with that and pleased with the rest of the backs as well."

On what it takes for a running back to have 30-35 carries a game like Weisman has had and like Shonn Greene did:

"You know, the other guy to throw out there is Fred Russell, and even Albert Young in '05, did a great job. Um, they're all different type guys. Shonn was a big, strong guy. Fred Russell was not nearly as big, but very durable, too. You know, it takes mental toughness, starting there. I think it helps that

Mark's a guy who stays in phenomenal shape all the time. Shonn was a little different because he was coming off a period where he wasn't training here for a little while, so he had to get in shape as the year went on.

"But you know, it's not easy for anybody that's playing a lot of plays. We have a lot of guys playing a lot of plays and you know, they've got to really take care of themselves and they've got to be mentally tough, too, because anybody's that playing college football, most of them are sore by now."

On whether he has found a way to move the ball through the air against Western Michigan's secondary:

"We'll find out. It's a challenge. I think that is a strength of their defense and I don't mean that in a bad way to the rest of the guys on the team. They're all playing really hard. Their scheme, they make it tough for you to run the football and they do that because they've got a group of DBs that are very, very good against the pass. It's going to be a real challenge for us and we're not the most prolific team anyway. It's going to be a challenge for us."

On what he thinks of Western Michigan head coach P.J. Fleck:

"Uh, I just know what I see on film. It looks like they're playing hard in all three phases. It looks like they're playing with good energy and enthusiasm. We've just got a lot of respect for them coming in here."

On the play of his secondary during the Iowa State game last weekend:

"Well you know, it was kind of a tale of two cities in the game. We played really well the first three quarters of the game defensively and then we struggled a little bit there in the last 5, 6, 7 minutes. So you know, the good news I guess is we did a really good job for quite a while and then just gave up a couple of plays there. That's something we've been

plagued with a little bit and we've got to continue to work on that and I think part of that is communication, part of that is learning how to finish the game a little better.

"That's something we really haven't done a great job of three games in now. There are some really good plays, some really good highlights out there, but there are also some plays that we really need to improve on and get cleaned up. If we don't, that will be a problem not only in Big Ten play, but also this week."

On if he expects going into games against up-tempo offenses to give up a lot of yards:

"Not to jump on you here, but I don't really look at statistics until the season gets going a little bit. I did peek Sunday night and gosh, it's amazing how many yards ... I'm just looking at the Big Ten stats, but how many yards and points are being scored. It really makes you wonder if anybody's playing defense anymore.

"So I think in part to your point, I think you have to keep scoring points. I don't know if it's a record pace right now, but it's got to be close to. You know, football is still football. You know, I look back at last year, Oregon only had one loss and when they did against Stanford, it was one of those 17-14 games, whatever it might have been. So there's still a place for good defense, but it's becoming more and more of a challenge. That's for sure."

On if it gets tough on the defensive mindset:

"Yeah, you know, I've always believed that winning is winning, whether it's 3-0 or 43-45. It really doesn't matter. It's good if you win, it's bad if you lose. But it does seem like right now, the scores that you're seeing are a little further down the road than they used to be, at least in general terms."

On the play of Anthony Hitchens against Iowa State and the

entire defense holding the Cyclones to 59 yards rushing:

"I'm just really pleased with Anthony and with our whole group of linebackers. I think they're playing well now and they should. They're all seniors. But I think Anthony is a good discussion point in that he had a lot of tackles and I expected him to have a lot this year, too.

"But the big thing is where he's making those tackles. He's just playing a lot more decisively now and clearly to me at least throughout the course of the spring and summer, that's the great thing about experience. He's seeing things quicker, reacting quicker. It's nice to be a veteran player and he has taken advantage of that.

"So it's a real credit to him, but I would also say James Morris and Chris Kirksey have all done a great job, too. The whole group – all three of them – are playing well and have given us great leadership, which is really a positive thing."

On having a place to privately vent in light of the audio recently revealed of Bo Pelini:

"You know, it's kind of like I tell our players. Unless you're in a closet, you better assume someone is recording you or filming you or both. It just seems like that's the world we live in right now. So to your point, I guess probably not.

"I'm kind of fuzzy on the details. I had heard a little bit about what happened and yeah, it's an interesting world right now. I guess the moral of the story is you better wait until you get home and then hope your wife's on your side, which is a 50-50 shot on a good day."

9/16/2013: State of the Big Ten, Volume 98 (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

This past weekend provided plenty of storylines from the Big Ten. Nine Iowa players and coaches had personal property stolen from the team's locker room at Iowa State's Jack Trice Stadium. Minnesota head coach Jerry Kill suffered his fourth seizure during a game as a result of him having epilepsy and on Monday received reaffirmed support from his athletics director.

There was even a controversial ending to Wisconsin's game at Arizona State that resulted in the Badgers losing 32-30 without being given the opportunity to win the game with a field goal. In the aftermath of that outcome, the Pac-12 reprimanded the officiating crew that worked the game.

All of those would've been worth the time talking about. But the situation at Nebraska has (in a way) trumped all here because it has a known long-term effect. The Cornhusker fan base has been slowly aligning against head coach Bo Pelini for awhile now and two events made things more complicated.

Following Nebraska's 41-21 loss to UCLA last weekend at Memorial Stadium – one where the Cornhuskers surrendered 38 unanswered points after being up 21-3 in the first half – former quarterback Tommie Frazier took to Twitter and voiced

his displeasure of the program's direction, particularly on the defensive side of the ball. Pelini dismissed the comments and said he doesn't need Frazier, a line that obviously was going to make headlines in Lincoln.

As if that wasn't enough though, Deadspin dropped a bombshell Monday afternoon when it was tipped off to audio it obtained of Pelini speaking in a negative light about the Nebraska fan base following a come-from-behind win over Ohio State in 2011. Pelini didn't realize a recorder was on him and cursed away.

It's only a matter of time before Pelini's tenure at Nebraska ends and this now might end it abruptly. In all honesty though, what Pelini did has probably been done off-camera/off-mic a bunch by coaches all around the country. And his short fuse back then wasn't a secret.

But here's why this is going to eventually do him in – what he said was directed at the same people who travel across the state to see his football team play in Lincoln on fall Saturdays. From a business perspective, this isn't good for Nebraska's public image.

Add in the fact that he already had detractors that have only gotten louder the past two years since that recording took place and this only adds fuel to their fire. No matter how "fair-weather" Cornhusker fans might actually be, they now have a reason to not speak with the money in their pockets.

The longer Pelini's around as Nebraska's head coach, the more overwhelming the pressure is going to be on Nebraska AD Shawn Eichorst (who by the way, took over for Tom Osborne last year, so he's not the one who hired Pelini in the first place) to relieve him of his coaching duties.

This isn't an indictment of Pelini as a coach because he was exactly what the Cornhuskers needed after the Bill Callahan saga and he is a good coach. He has won games. He just hasn't won enough of them to the liking of Nebraska fans and unlike

Frank Solich, the frustrations with Pelini are going beyond wins and losses here.

And as mentioned here when Eichorst first took over, he owes nothing to Pelini. He's under no obligation to keep him around if he doesn't want to. Before Monday, there was no justification for firing Pelini before Nebraska's season ended. This audio, on top of everything else, now gives Eichorst grounds for dismissing Pelini this week if he wants to and at this point, maybe that's really for the better of all involved, including Pelini.

Iowa vs. Western Michigan 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. Western Michigan Game Notes](#)

9/16/2013: P.J. Fleck teleconference (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Western Michigan head coach P.J. Fleck took part in the MAC's weekly teleconference on Monday to discuss the Broncos' game on Sept. 21 against Iowa at Kinnick Stadium.

Below is the audio from Fleck's teleconference:

<http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/P.J.-Fleck-Teleconference-9162013.mp3>

2013 Big Ten football TV schedule: Week Four

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:

Sept. 21:

Western Michigan at Iowa, 11 a.m., BTN

San Jose State at Minnesota, 11 a.m., ESPN2

Florida A&M at No. 4 Ohio State, 11 a.m., BTN

Purdue at No. 24 Wisconsin, 2:30 p.m., ABC/ESPN2

Maine at No. 18 Northwestern, 2:30 p.m., BTN

South Dakota State at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m., BTN

Kent State at Penn State, 2:30 p.m., BTN

Michigan State at No. 22 Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m., NBC

Missouri at Indiana, 7 p.m., BTN

No. 15 Michigan at Connecticut, 7 p.m., ABC

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

9/14/2013: Iowa 27, Iowa State 21 (Links)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Check out all of these links to content posted on Saturday after Iowa's 27-21 win over Iowa State at Jack Trice Stadium in Ames, Iowa. 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 pound way to Cy-Hawk trophy](#)

COMMENTARY: [Small, but important step forward \(premium\)](#)

VIDEO:

[Cy-Hawk Trophy postgame celebration](#)

[Kirk Ferentz](#)

[Austin Blythe](#)

[Brandon Scherff](#)

[Drew Ott](#)

[Jake Rudock](#)

[B.J. Lowery](#)

[Carl Davis](#)

[Kevonte Martin-Manley](#)

[James Morris](#)

[Mark Weisman](#)

[Anthony Hitchens](#)

Hawkeyes pound way to Cy-Hawk trophy

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

AMES, Iowa – The satisfaction was evident. As the final whistle was blown and the Jack Trice Stadium scoreboard showed 0:00 on the clock, the Iowa Hawkeyes raced toward Iowa State's sideline and the celebration had begun.

On both sides of the football, Iowa did the dirty work Saturday night in reclaiming the Cy-Hawk trophy for the first time since 2010 after beating Iowa State 27-21 to move to 2-1 on this young 2013 season. This game was won because for the majority of the evening, the Hawkeyes controlled the line of scrimmage.

“It’s awesome,” junior offensive tackle Brandon Scherff said on a night where Iowa had 378 yards of total offense. “Rivalry games are big games. Any game is a big game. I thought we prepared well during the week.”

Iowa’s defense set the tone on this night, as the Cyclones were only able to muster 61 yards of total offense in the entire first half. Iowa State only managed 10 yards rushing during those first 30 minutes, enabling the Hawkeyes to experiment more with nickel packages on third down and make the Cyclones one-dimensional on offense. Iowa State only managed 59 yards rushing on 24 carries for the entire contest.

“That’s prideful,” junior defensive tackle Carl Davis said. “We take pride in stopping the run and that’s what we did.”

After overcoming a first quarter that featured a turnover, Iowa’s offense got more in sync during the second quarter and a big reason why was the Hawkeyes’ ground game. For the second straight game, junior running back Mark Weisman handled the bulk of Iowa’s carries as he touched the ball 35 times Saturday and rushed for 145 yards.

Because he got it going on the ground, it allowed sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock to make more plays with his arm and he did just that when he connected with junior wideout Kevonte Martin-Manley for a 5-yard touchdown to give Iowa a 7-0 lead.

Senior kicker Mike Meyer made a 28-yard field goal to make it 10-0, then one of the game’s biggest plays happened when senior linebacker James Morris hauled down an interception of Iowa State quarterback Sam Richardson on a play where

sophomore defensive end Drew Ott brought the pressure. Iowa got another Meyer field goal out of the turnover and took a 13-0 lead with it into halftime.

"I don't remember if he was hurried or if the ball was tipped, but it was a soft throw," Morris said about his interception. "It wasn't a bullet coming out. I reached for it and the receiver reached for it. It was contested. I ended up catching it off the bounce and saw the end zone in front of me, but a big, ugly lineman got in the way so I spun around."

The Cyclones would strike with a huge play in the third quarter when Richardson hit Quenton Bundrage for a 67-yard touchdown following a missed tackle by senior linebacker B.J. Lowery. But much like it did last week against Missouri State, that one-possession Hawkeye lead immediately went back to two possessions.

Iowa responded with a 9-play touchdown drive that saw the Hawkeyes convert three third downs, the last of which went for a 26-yard touchdown pass from Rudock to sophomore wide receiver Jacob Hillyer to make the score 20-7. On the evening, the Hawkeyes faced 20 third downs and moved the chains on 11 of those plays.

"They brought a weak-side blitz and the line did a great job, gave me enough time to stand in there and deliver him the ball," Rudock said about his touchdown pass to Hillyer. "All of sudden, I heard our fans screaming, so he apparently spun out of it and made a great play. I didn't see it, but it was awesome he got in."

The rushing attack of Weisman, junior Damon Bullock and sophomore Jordan Canzeri was on full display in the fourth quarter when Iowa would build its lead up to 27-7. On a 15-play series capped by Rudock running in from one yard out, all but one of those 15 plays was a run. As a team, the Hawkeyes finished with 218 yards on the ground.

“We came into this game wanting to run the ball,” Weisman said. “I thought we did it pretty well. I thought we could’ve done it a little better, but it was definitely an improvement.”

Iowa State would score 14 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to get back within six points, but junior tight end Ray Hamilton would recover an onside kick that allowed the Hawkeyes to run the clock down to 12 seconds. The Cyclones got that one last attempt to run a hook-and-lateral, but to no avail.

The Cy-Hawk trophy took multiple players to carry it off the field, but the satisfaction of being able to do just that was worth it to this Iowa squad, which will look to finish non-conference play 3-1 next week when it hosts Western Michigan.

“It’s a great feeling to win any game, but especially this one,” senior linebacker Anthony Hitchens said.

That contest against Western Michigan is slated to start from Kinnick Stadium at 11 a.m. Central and will air nationally on the Big Ten Network. The Broncos will enter 0-3 after losing to No. 17 Northwestern on Saturday in Evanston, Ill.

**COMMENTARY: Small, but
important step forward
(premium)**

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

AMES, Iowa – The Iowa Hawkeyes left Jack Trice Stadium Saturday evening with the Cy-Hawk Trophy and a 27-21 victory over intrastate rival Iowa State to cap the first quarter of its season with a 2-1 mark.

In terms of the big picture, this was merely a small step forward for Iowa. But nevertheless, it was an important step forward that this football team needed to demonstrate it could take.

When it comes to the grand scheme of things, this was just one win. The Hawkeyes still need to win four more games to become bowl-eligible and looking at the remaining three quarters of their schedule, doing that might be a tall order. Iowa has to continue building up its record now before the calendar turns to October and November and the competition becomes fierce.

Sure, Iowa got its first victory over Iowa State for the first time since 2010. But let's be blunt about something – this Cyclone team isn't that good and that 27-21 final was deceiving thanks to Iowa State scoring 14 unanswered points late in the fourth quarter.

This was a game the Hawkeyes dominated on both sides of the ball. They knew going in that controlling the line of scrimmage would be important and they did just that on both sides of the football. Defensively, Iowa State had 59 yards rushing on 24 carries. Offensively, Iowa ran 80-plus plays for the third straight week and had possession of the football for over 38 minutes on Saturday.

Sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock scored from one yard out to cap a 15-play drive in the fourth quarter that extended Iowa's lead to 27-7 and it really could've been much worse. The Hawkeyes had a couple of second quarter possessions where they had to settle for field goals. Had those two drives resulted in touchdowns, Saturday's game would've been a bloodbath.

Putting past history aside, Iowa came into this game the

superior team and played like it and that's where the "important" part of this small step comes into play. The Hawkeyes weathered the early storm that was expected to exerted their strength in the second quarter.

This was a game where Iowa converted 11-of-20 third downs, which is the best that has been in a long time. Junior running back Mark Weisman went over 100 yards rushing for the third straight week, Rudock avoided the costly interception and for most of the night, the Hawkeyes were crisp on offense.

Then there was the defense, which featured guys on all three levels making plays when they were needed. This wasn't one of those games where one guy was the sole difference-maker.

Iowa earned this victory in all three phases Saturday. It entered a favorite and played like one. If you're Kirk Ferentz, you really had to like what you saw from your team.

Again, no one should lose focus of the big picture here. Iowa could still fail to reach a bowl game and the fact that Iowa State nearly pulled off an epic fourth-quarter comeback has to be somewhat concerning. But the Hawkeyes cleared a hurdle they badly needed to clear and that could potentially become more beneficial down the road than anyone realizes now.

This was a small step for Iowa to take, but an important one.

Iowa - ISU video: Anthony Hitchens

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

AMES, Iowa – Iowa senior linebacker Anthony Hitchens recorded 10 tackles in the Hawkeyes' 27-21 victory over Iowa State on Saturday at Jack Trice Stadium.

Iowa-ISU video: Mark Weisman

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

AMES, Iowa – Iowa junior running back Mark Weisman rushed for a team-high 145 yards on 35 carries in the Hawkeyes' 27-21 win over Iowa State on Saturday at Jack Trice Stadium.