

9/7/2013: Iowa 28, Missouri State 14 (Links)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Check out all of these links to content posted on Saturday after Iowa's 28-14 win over Missouri State 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 down Bears, even record at 1-1](#)

COMMENTARY: [The rise of Rudock \(premium\)](#)

VIDEO:

[Kevonte Martin-Manley](#)

[Jake Duzey](#)

[Kirk Ferentz](#)

[Tanner Miller](#)

[James Morris](#)

[Mark Weisman](#)

[Anthony Hitchens](#)

[Dominic Alvis](#)

[John Lowdermilk](#)

[Jake Rudock](#)

Hawkeyes down Bears, even record at 1-1

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – For the first time in 343 days, the Iowa Hawkeyes got to end a game at Kinnick Stadium with the victory formation. After a 329-day span where Iowa lost seven straight games, it finally managed to eek out a 28-14 win over Missouri State inside Kinnick Stadium Saturday afternoon.

No, the Hawkeyes didn't win with any style points like many of their fans were probably hoping they would against an FCS opponent. Yes, the first half was an offensive display of offense by both teams with Iowa only mustering a 7-0 lead at halftime. Big picture context though, this was a game the Hawkeyes had to show they could win and they ended up doing just that.

“We definitely needed this,” senior defensive end Dominic Alvis said. “A win like this is good to have and we're going to build a lot of momentum from this win.”

What was strong for Iowa from start to finish Saturday was the play of its defense. While the offense had its early struggles, the defense held Missouri State to 67 yards of total offense in the first half and 197 yards for the entire game. It also got off the field on third down, as the Bears were just 1-of-10 on third downs all afternoon.

Part of that was the result of some blitzing done by Iowa on third down plays, even though the Hawkeyes stayed in their

base 4-3 the entire game and didn't feature any substitutions sans the 7-man rotation used along the defensive line.

"It worked out well," junior strong safety John Lowdermilk said. "We came after them on third down. [Defensive coordinator Phil Parker] likes to make sure we can cover the guys and that puts a lot of stress on the corners and safeties being able to cover man-to-man. But we know they don't have very much time to throw the ball because they can't block everybody."

The second half was when the Iowa offense started to put everything together. Igniting the offensive spark was junior running back Mark Weisman, who rushed for 180 yards on 30 carries. The Hawkeyes' first series of the second half resulted in Iowa turning the football over on downs when Weisman was stuffed for no gain on 4th-and-1 from the Missouri State 2-yard line. He then proceeded to rush for touchdowns on each of the next two drives.

The second touchdown drive of the quarter was capped off by a 3-yard run where Iowa ran zone read and Weisman got a block from his quarterback, Jake Rudock, as soon as he was handed the ball.

"I was like, 'if I could just nudge him a little bit.' I mean, on film it's not going to look like I touched him," Rudock said. "But hopefully, it did something to spring him through."

Iowa showed a pulse on offense because it managed to start converting on third downs, going 5-of-7 in the second half after only picking up two first downs on third-down plays in the first 30 minutes of action.

Missouri State crept back into the game early in the fourth quarter, scoring a pair of touchdowns 10 seconds apart from one another to trim the Hawkeye advantage to 21-14. The first score came on a 27-yard touchdown pass, while Iowa's first play from scrimmage on the ensuing drive was an interception

thrown by Rudock that was returned for a touchdown.

But Rudock would recover quickly and emphatically. Four minutes and 18 seconds after throwing that pick-six, the Florida native capped the ensuing 10-play series by leading the Hawkeyes 65 yards down field and scoring on the ground for the second time from two yards out, extending Iowa's lead back to the 14 points it won by.

"That was a really tough play," head coach Kirk Ferentz said about the interception. "But one thing about him, he's a resilient guy. He went right back to work and did a good job finishing the game for us."

Rudock finished with 33 yards rushing on seven carries and also completed 19-of-28 passes for 193 yards with 10 different players catching balls from him.

The Bears threatened late in the fourth quarter, but the Hawkeye defense sealed the victory when senior free safety Tanner Miller intercepted a pass in the end zone with 6:50 remaining.

"One of us needed to step up and make the big play and we challenged ourselves over there on the sideline. You know, 'Who was going to step up and make the big play?'" Miller said. "I had the opportunity and I stepped up and made it."

Now at 1-1, the Hawkeyes head on the road for the first time Sept. 14 when they travel to Ames for their annual showdown with Iowa State. Kickoff from Jack Trice Stadium is scheduled for 5 p.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on Fox Sports 1.

COMMENTARY: The rise of Rudock (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – Two games into the 2013 season and the jury remains out on how good the Iowa Hawkeyes will end up after they bounced back from a season-opening loss to Northern Illinois last week and defeated Missouri State 28-14 on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Two games into the 2013 season, there's one thing about Iowa that is certain. It has a reliable signal-caller leading the offense in sophomore Jake Rudock.

Sure, it's only two games – the first two starts of Rudock's career – and they've both come at home against teams that aren't in the Big Ten. But what became clear Saturday afternoon is that Rudock has a swagger to him. He might be quiet off the field, but he's demonstrating on the gridiron why Kirk Ferentz opted to go with him as the Hawkeyes' quarterback in 2013.

Watching Iowa's offense during the first half Saturday may have been like watching teeth get pulled or like watching paint dry. The Hawkeyes were moving the football up and down the field on Missouri State, yet only had seven points to show for it. That changed drastically in the second half and one of the biggest reasons why was because of Rudock's demeanor.

After the game, Ferentz called him "resilient." Multiple teammates who were asked about him used phrases like "tough-minded." These are traits needed in a successful quarterback and while this isn't to say he's going to become an all-Big Ten player and someone who goes on to have a lengthy NFL

career, it is safe to say he's the quarterback of now for Iowa. That's a very important thing for the Hawkeyes to have as this season gets more and more difficult in terms of competition.

Rudock has shown he is capable of not only making plays with his arm, but also with his feet. He didn't throw any touchdown passes on the afternoon and is actually on pace to throw fewer than Iowa had all of last season (7). However, he scrambled for two touchdowns and rushed for 33 yards on seven carries. The intelligence that has been talked about with Rudock goes beyond what he sees. It's also knowing what he doesn't see.

Say what you want about the Missouri State squad Iowa played Saturday. Most of it is probably on point. That shouldn't deter from what those on hand at Kinnick Stadium saw from a guy who made only his second career start. He completed 19 passes to 10 different Hawkeye skill players. He even made a block in the third quarter immediately after handing the ball off to Mark Weisman on a zone-read play that resulted in an Iowa touchdown.

Last week, he played well against Northern Illinois. But he made a costly mistake throwing a late fourth-quarter interception that led to a field goal in the final seconds to put Iowa at 0-1. He made a similar mistake Saturday throwing a pick-six in the fourth quarter that trimmed Iowa's lead over Missouri State to 21-14.

And then he responded in a big way. He proceeded to lead the Hawkeyes 65 yards down field and just minutes after making a bone-headed play, he ran in for his second touchdown of the game to extend the Iowa lead back to two scores. His ability to put his mistake aside and reignite the offense at a time when it was badly needed speaks volumes about his work ethic and his determination.

Again, there's no point in making any major proclamations

about what becomes of Rudock's career over the next three years. For the time being though, his evolution as Iowa's quarterback deserves respect.

Iowa-Missouri State video: Jake Rudock

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock completed 19-of-28 passes for 193 yards and also compiled 33 yards rushing and two touchdowns on seven carries in the Hawkeyes' 28-14 win over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-Missouri State video: John Lowdermilk

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa junior strong safety John Lowdermilk recorded six tackles (five of which were solo) in the Hawkeyes' 28-14 victory over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-Missouri State video: Dominic Alvis

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior defensive end Dominic Alvis recorded five tackles in the Hawkeyes' 28-14 win over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-Missouri State video: Anthony Hitchens

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior linebacker Anthony Hitchens recorded a team-high eight tackles (including two for a loss of yardage) and a sack in the Hawkeyes' 28-14 victory over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-Missouri State video: Mark Weisman

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa junior running back Mark Weisman rushed for 180 yards and two touchdowns on 30 carries in the Hawkeyes' 28-14 win over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-Missouri State video: James Morris

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior linebacker James Morris had six tackles and also forced a fumble during the second quarter of the Hawkeyes' 28-14 victory over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-Missouri State video: Tanner Miller

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior free safety Tanner Miller compiled three tackles and made an interception during the fourth quarter of the Hawkeyes' 28-14 win over Missouri State on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.