

2013 Big Ten football previews: Penn State (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The first team I'll discuss in our series of Big Ten season previews is the Penn State Nittany Lions. Iowa does not play Penn State in 2013.

Once again, Penn State is the one Big Ten team I've found to be the most challenging to dissect as the 2013 season inches closer. A huge reason why is because the Nittany Lions continue to deal with sanctions levied by the NCAA last year that included a postseason ban of four years (this is now the second season) and reductions in scholarships. The latter of these two most notable sanctions is the part that I feel will really begin to become noticeable to those watching this team on fall Saturdays.

Looking back at last season, Penn State's season began how I figured it might with a loss in the season opener at home to Ohio. It got worse the following week with the Nittany Lions losing a game at Virginia where kicker Sam Ficken's numerous misses on both field goal and PAT attempts stood out. But then something happened. Things started clicking offensively and Penn State assembled a far better offense and ended up having a far better season than I could envision in the first year of Bill O'Brien's coaching tenure.

Now entering Year Two under O'Brien, I look at Penn State as a team that shouldn't surprise myself or anyone else no matter how its 2013 season goes. This team has potential to be really good. There's also a good chance of the Nittany Lions taking a

step back.

The biggest question mark surrounding Penn State is who emerges as its starting quarterback. Gone is Matt McGloin, who remarkably led the Big Ten with 24 touchdown passes and was the lone quarterback in the conference to throw for over 3,000 yards in 2012. Now the Nittany Lions have a battle going on between two newcomers – sophomore Tyler Ferguson and true freshman Christian Hackenberg. Ferguson is a junior college transfer from California who threw for 2,614 yards and 22 touchdowns as a freshman at College of the Sequoias last year. Meanwhile, Hackenberg was a five-star recruit considered by many as one of the top high school quarterbacks in the nation and to this date the biggest recruit O'Brien has landed at Penn State.

Beyond QB though, most of the Nittany Lion offense from last season remains intact. The backfield is led by junior running back Zach Zwinak, who led the team with exactly 1,000 yards on the ground and six touchdowns in 2012. The receiving corps returns junior wideout Allen Robinson, who led the Big Ten in just about every receiving category during his sophomore campaign with 77 catches for 1,013 yards and 11 touchdown receptions. Also returning are senior wide receiver Brandon Moseby-Felder and sophomore tight ends Jesse James and Kyle Carter. James was second in touchdown receptions with five of them, while Carter was the Nittany Lions' second-leading receiver behind Robinson, so the use of the tight ends should continue to be big for Penn State.

The offensive line lost a pair of starters, but brings back plenty of experience, particularly on the left side. Donovan Smith started nine games as a freshman at left tackle last season, while Miles Dieffenbach returns for his junior campaign after starting 11 games at left guard. Seniors Ty Howle and Adam Gress both made starts last season and are the likely candidates to start for Penn State in 2013 at center and right tackle, respectively. The best lineman of the bunch

though is senior right guard John Urschel, who is coming off a 2012 season where he was first-team all-Big Ten.

While the offense appears to be in decent shape, it's the Nittany Lion defense surrounded with questions. For starters, Penn State promoted John Butler to defensive coordinator during the offseason to replace Ted Roof after Butler served as the team's secondary coach.

If there is good news regarding the Penn State defense, it's that three of its four starters in the secondary from last year are back in 2013. Stephen Obeng-Agyapong had offseason shoulder surgery, but the senior is back at safety along with fellow senior Malcolm Willis, which allows junior Adrian Amos to return back to his normal spot at cornerback. The challenge will be finding someone to replace Stephon Morris, who led all defensive backs in 2012 in both tackles (60) and pass break-ups (5).

The defensive line returns a pair of starters in DaQuan Jones and Deion Barnes, who led the Nittany Lions with 10 sacks a season ago as a redshirt freshman. However, it no longer features Jordan Hill, who was considered by many to be one of the Big Ten's best defensive linemen last year after compiling 64 tackles and 4.5 sacks.

Finally, there's the linebacking corps, which took the biggest hit of any group. Gone are Penn State's top two leading tacklers from 2012 – Gerald Hodges and Michael Mauti, who were two of the biggest influences in keeping last year's group together during a timeframe where players were free to transfer wherever without having to redshirt. Not only did these guys lead the Nittany Lions in tackles, but Hodges also had a team-high seven pass break ups and Mauti had a team-high three interceptions.

The one returnee at linebacker is in the middle with senior Glenn Carson, who was third in tackles last year behind Hodges

and Mauti. Also returning with a little bit of experience at least is junior Mike Hull, who started the last game against Wisconsin in place of an injured Mauti and had a 2012 campaign consisting of 58 tackles, four sacks and two fumble recoveries.

On special teams, Penn State brings back a pair of returners in juniors Jesse Della Valle and Bill Belton, plus the aforementioned Ficken at kicker and senior Alex Butterworth returns as the Nittany Lions' punter in 2013.

In terms of the schedule, Penn State has a rather difficult opener against Syracuse at MetLife Stadium that could end up being telling as far as the direction its season heads. Also featured on the non-conference slate is UCF, who visits Beaver Stadium this year and then faces the Nittany Lions again next year in Dublin, Ireland. The Big Ten slate will be more of a challenge as well with home games against Michigan and Nebraska, and road trips to current Leaders Division rivals Ohio State and Wisconsin.

Overall, the amount of starting experience returning this year has to be encouraging for O'Brien. But the question becomes what happens should Penn State find itself getting decimated with injuries over the course of 2013? It's a hypothetical, yes, but given the reduction of only being allotted 65 scholarship players, this is a fair question to ask because it's the one thing that could keep Penn State from having another season like it had in 2012.

AUDIO:

Bill O'Brien, Penn State head coach – <http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Bill-OBrien-2013-B1G-Media-Days.mp3>

John Urschel, Penn State right guard – <http://hawkeyedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/John-Urschel-2013-B1G-Media-Days.mp3>

2013 Iowa position breakdowns: Running Backs

This week, HawkeyeDrive.com presents an eight-part series of position breakdowns as the Iowa Hawkeyes continue preparing for the 2013 season. [After previously focusing on quarterbacks](#), our second part examines the team's group of running backs.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

When Chris White was first brought on board to replace Lester Erb as Iowa's running backs coach, he placed an emphasis on what he refers to as the four Bs – Base, Bend, Balance and Burst. These four Bs are the traits he believes makes a quality running back and things he believes the Hawkeyes' crop of backs have made strides with this offseason.

The base comes first for a reason. Without it, the others can't take place.

"As a runner, you're very rarely running full stride, full speed down the field," said White, who joined Kirk Ferentz's staff after spending the last four years as an assistant with the Minnesota Vikings. "You're always in a base, trying to make a cut. That's what I'm trying to do. When they're getting in contact areas, they need to be in a base so they're not getting knocked over."

Compared to recent seasons past, Iowa has a deep backfield entering 2013. It features what looks to be a 1-2 punch in juniors Mark Weisman and Damon Bullock. Both had their shares

of injuries in 2012, but when healthy, were among the few bright spots for a dreadful Hawkeye offense. Weisman led the Hawkeyes in rushing last season with 815 yards on the ground and eight touchdowns. Bullock, who dealt with an early-season concussion that allowed Weisman to get reps at running back in the first place, appeared in six games for Iowa and had 513 yards rushing and three scores.

It also includes a sophomore in Jordan Canzeri, who looks to make a major statement this fall after an ACL injury prevented him from playing entirely in 2012. Behind Canzeri are a pair of redshirt freshmen in Barkley Hill and Michael Malloy.

But regardless of which back is on the field and what formation is being utilized for a given play, they all echo White's sentiments about base being most important.

"It just makes everything else come in together," Canzeri said. "When you have the base, you have the balance. When you have the bend from that base, and then the burst, it just all comes from that base."

In Weisman's case, the area where he made the biggest improvement from when last season ended to when Iowa concluded spring practices earlier this year came with the second B, bend. Part of the reason for this improvement with bend not only is a result of what he's doing on the field, but also off of it.

"It's just about stretching and staying loose between practices, getting your rest so you're not so sore," Weisman said. "It has been good so far and I love what Coach White brings to the table."

For Bullock, the most important stride for him came with balance.

"Being a running back, you've always got to have your balance," Bullock said. "I just feel like a way more complete

player this year. I'm ready to go and I feel comfortable."

Finally, there's burst. This is what fans are wanting to see out of Iowa's running backs when the Hawkeyes open the 2013 season against Northern Illinois in three weeks. This is also an area Canzeri believes every running back on the team (not just him) has gotten better with as a result of White's tutelage.

"We all run a lot better and we all feel a lot better with the running technique," Canzeri said.

When observing Iowa running backs this season, the four Bs are what should be examined most closely considering this is the barometer for how White measures his group of players and what type of improvement is being made by them on a daily basis.

"I think too many times last year on film, they were in open space and they were getting tackled," White said. "We're going to get to the second level – the safety level – and we're going to try to do a better job of breaking tackles, ripping through tackles, making people miss. Those types of things. That's what I think the four Bs are all about."

2013 Iowa position breakdowns: Quarterbacks

This week, HawkeyeDrive.com presents an eight-part series of position breakdowns as the Iowa Hawkeyes continue preparing for the 2013 season. Our first part examines the team's quarterbacks.

By Brendan Stiles

Throughout a 9-month long offseason that has presented a heated 3-way battle for the starting quarterback spot, a lot has been made about how similar Jake Rudock, Cody Sokol and C.J. Beathard all are. Whether it's leadership in being able to command the huddle or being able to grasp the playbook of offensive coordinator Greg Davis, the manners in which this trio of signal-callers is similar has been heavily highlighted by Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz and other Hawkeye players on the offensive side of the ball.

But when three people are fighting for one job – regardless of whether it's playing quarterback for a Division-I football program at Iowa or in any other walk of life – the differences between the three candidates will likely play a greater part in the final outcome.

Davis reiterated during Iowa's Media Day how he wants separation to take place – preferably sooner than later – between the three QBs, none of whom have any experience taking a single snap in a game for the Hawkeyes. Through the first week of fall camp, all three guys have continued splitting reps with the first-team offense.

“The truth is, I would like them to make that decision,” Davis said.

So what makes all three different? For starters, all three are different ages and barring any transfers next offseason would all return to Iowa in 2014 as well. Rudock is a sophomore, but has the most experience in the program of the three as he redshirted in 2011, which was Iowa's last season under then-offensive coordinator Ken O'Keefe before he left the program to take an assistant coaching role with the Miami Dolphins.

Rudock was the clear No. 2 last season behind James Vandenberg while the other two signal-callers were redshirting to make way for this 3-way competition currently taking place. The

Florida native hates being asked about his strengths, but the one aspect of the position where he appears to have a strong edge is intelligence.

“I like the cerebral part of the game, seeing the little details,” Rudock said. “Throwing the ball a split-second earlier when the guy hasn’t even turned his head, that makes a huge difference. So I’d say the little details are very important.”

Sokol might not have as many years in the program as Rudock, but he’s actually the oldest of the three. After playing two seasons at Scottsdale Community College in Arizona, he transferred to Iowa and redshirted in 2012, giving him two years of eligibility remaining.

The junior realizes that the label of “gunslinger” has been associated with his style of play, being able to make plays off-schedule (something Davis said last spring he covets) and out of the pocket. Rather than fight it off or take it in a derogatory manner since that label could also be associated with making ill-advised plays resulting in turnovers, Sokol has embraced that “gunslinger” mentality.

“Iowa is all about eliminating turnovers, but creating explosives,” Sokol said. “I do a good job of creating the explosive plays, but eliminating turnovers will probably be the biggest factor for me. Going into camp, that was my biggest focus – take what the defense gives you, but don’t force anything.”

Then there’s Beathard, who will be a redshirt freshman this season. At one point in time, he was clearly behind the other two not just because of his age, but because he didn’t have that complete grasp yet of the playbook. Beathard said it’s the one area of his game he believes has improved the most this offseason.

As for what sets him apart, Beathard believes he has the most

laid-back personality of the three both on and off the gridiron.

“I don’t like to get uptight about things,” Beathard said. “When I make a mistake, if Coach is yelling at me, I’ll take the words he’s giving me and I won’t let it get to my head. I’ll take those explanations and use them to my advantage.”

For now, the battle continues on. But if and when separation does occur, it will likely be a result of which traits of difference among the three players matters the most to Ferentz and Davis.

8/8/2013: Iowa Media Day notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz addresses the media during his press conference at Iowa’s Media Day on Thursday, Aug. 8, 2013, at Carver-Hawkeye Arena in Iowa City. Ferentz is entering his 15th season as the Hawkeyes’ head coach.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – A revelation about Iowa's current quarterback situation came from the team's Media Day on Thursday. Head coach Kirk Ferentz revealed true freshman signal-caller Nic Shimonek is the clear No. 4 QB on the depth chart.

OK, that's not much a revelation seeing how true freshmen just arrived on campus last week and Shimonek has only had four practices with the team during fall camp. The "3-horse race" between sophomore Jake Rudock, junior Cody Sokol and redshirt freshman C.J. Beathard remains as such, or so Ferentz and just about everyone else in the program was saying Thursday.

"It's going to take some time," Ferentz said.

Of course, this is nothing new. Since former quarterback James Vandenberg graduated following last season, this trio of quarterbacks have been battling for that No. 1 spot and part of the reason for it at least starting out so evenly is the inexperience. Rudock, who was the No. 2 behind Vandenberg last season, hasn't taken a snap in a live game before and both Sokol (who transferred from Scottsdale Community College in Arizona) and Beathard redshirted in 2012.

Both Ferentz and offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Greg Davis would ideally like to have a starter in place well before the Hawkeyes' season opener against Northern Illinois on Aug. 31. But one thing Davis made clear Thursday is he wants one of the three – whoever steps up to win the job – to make the decision for him.

He also said if Iowa does end up playing more than one quarterback against the Huskies, so be it.

"I would like to see some separation at some point, whatever

point that may be," Davis said. "If not, then we may have to go into the season alternating guys and then see what happens.

"We're not going to set a timetable. We would like for them to make that decision."

Other unmade decisions

The quarterback matter obviously draws the most attention. But there are other personnel decisions that haven't been made yet either.

In the backfield, there's the question of which junior running back – Mark Weisman or Damon Bullock – receives the bulk of the carries. Two things might be leaning the direction of it being Weisman. One is Ferentz being pleased with the progress made at fullback by both Adam Cox and Macon Plewa when plays involving a fullback instead of two tight ends have been run in practice. The other is Bullock's versatility being able to also play receiver if called upon there.

"I think you can go a lot of different ways," Ferentz said. "Some things are looking pretty firm and we have good, healthy competition. It's not like we're just trying to fill a hole. Guys are really competing."

Meanwhile, there's a decision that hasn't been made yet at strong safety. Juniors Nico Law and John Lowdermilk have been listed as co-starters since the spring while the other three spots in the secondary have clear No. 1 options.

Then there's the return game. On one hand, there's senior wide receiver Jordan Cotton being used as one of the return guys on kickoffs. But what isn't clear yet is who will join him back there and who will replace former cornerback Micah Hyde with returning punts.

As of Thursday, Ferentz said the top three guys in line to return punts this season are junior wideout Kevonte Martin-

Manley, redshirt freshman receiver Riley McCarron and sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri, who is currently listed behind both Weisman and Bullock on the 2-deep.

New coaches catching on

For the second straight offseason, there were shake-ups made on Ferentz's coaching staff as three new assistants came on board – wide receivers coach Bobby Kennedy, co-linebackers coach Jim Reid and running backs/special teams coach Chris Wilson.

In Kennedy's case, Iowa gave him the chance to reunite with Davis, who he worked alongside for seven seasons on Mack Brown's staff at Texas. It allowed for a quick transition, as Kennedy already had plenty of background on the type of offense Davis wants to assemble.

"I kind of understand what he expects, and even being with him for seven years, he knows I'm not afraid to ask if I'm not sure about something," Kennedy said. "If we're going to coach the kids, let's make sure it's right and let's make sure we're talking about it the same way. But there is a comfort level and it has been good.

"I've been around a lot of offensive coordinators. There are some really good ones and some really good offensive minds. He's as good an offensive coordinator as I've been around."

Reid also found himself making a rather seamless transition. Unlike Kennedy, the former Virginia defensive coordinator didn't have an established rapport with others on the coaching staff. But what made the transition to Iowa smooth was being embraced from the start by those who were already in place, most notably fellow linebackers coach LeVar Woods.

"I'd like to say we're friends, but the difference in age is more father-son," Reid said. "We've gotten along great together and he has really transitioned me in beautifully into

the linebacker room and then also the university.”

The continuity might not quite be where it was two years ago when Ferentz had assistants such as Ken O’Keefe and Norm Parker on board, but it’s easy to sense him having more of a comfort with what’s in place now as opposed to the start of last season.

“Going through spring practice, it felt like things were really coming together,” Ferentz said. “Everybody was working well together. It starts with your coaching staff.

“You can’t expect the team to play like a good team if the staff is not on the same page and I think certainly we’ve been together enough now that we’re there.”

**Be sure to visit HawkeyeDrive.com throughout the coming weeks for stories examining each position group, as well as previews of every other Big Ten team, coverage from Iowa’s Kid’s Day event Aug. 17 and the return of the “Talkin’ Hawks” podcast later this month, which will once again be co-hosted by myself and former Iowa defensive back Chris Rowell.*

Hawkeyes in the NFL: 2013 Preseason Week One

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The first week of the 2013 NFL preseason begins with the Pro Football Hall of Fame Game on Sunday, followed by a weekend slate of games between Aug. 8-11. As of Saturday, there are currently 34 former Iowa football players listed on NFL

rosters.

Below is a list of this week's preseason games in the NFL, including which former Iowa players are with which teams. Included will be a list of television stations in Iowa carrying preseason games of four Midwest teams – the Chicago Bears, Green Bay Packers, Kansas City Chiefs and Minnesota Vikings (The St. Louis Rams no longer carry local preseason games in Iowa).

In addition, there are also five nationally televised preseason games this week including the Aug. 9 contest on NFL Network between the New England Patriots and Philadelphia Eagles, which features six former Iowa players (three on each team).

Sunday, Aug. 4:

Miami vs. Dallas (Pro Football Hall of Fame Game in Canton, Ohio), 7 p.m. (NBC) – **Dolphins:** Keenan Davis, Marvin McNutt

Thursday, Aug. 8:

Baltimore at Tampa Bay, 6:30 p.m. – **Ravens:** Marshal Yanda;
Buccaneers: Adrian Clayborn

Cincinnati at Atlanta, 7 p.m. (ESPN) – **Bengals:** Shaun Prater;
Falcons: Jonathan Babineaux

St. Louis at Cleveland, 7 p.m.

Washington at Tennessee, 7 p.m. – **Redskins:** Adam Gettis;
Titans: Shonn Greene, Karl Klug

Denver at San Francisco, 8 p.m.

Seattle at San Diego, 9 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 9:

NY Jets at Detroit, 6:30 p.m. – **Lions:** Riley Reiff, Amari

Spievey

Miami at Jacksonville, 6:30 p.m. – **Dolphins:** Keenan Davis, Marvin McNutt; **Jaguars:** Allen Reisner

New England at Philadelphia, 6:30 p.m. (NFL Network) – **Patriots:** A.J. Edds, Jeff Tarpinian, Markus Zusevics; **Eagles:** Bradley Fletcher, Matt Tobin, Julian Vandervelde

Chicago at Carolina, 7 p.m. – **Panthers:** Colin Cole, Charles Godfrey

***TV stations in Iowa carrying Bears/Panthers:** KFXA-DT 28.1 (Eastern Iowa); KLJB-DT 18.1 (Quad Cities); KDMI-THS 19.1 (Des Moines); KPTM-DT 42.1 (Council Bluffs/Omaha)

Arizona at Green Bay, 7 p.m. – **Packers:** Bryan Bulaga, Mike Daniels, Micah Hyde

***TV stations in Iowa carrying Cardinals/Packers:** KGCW-DT 26.1 (Quad Cities); KCWI-CW 23.1 (Des Moines); KMTV-DT 3.1 (Council Bluffs/Omaha); WXOW-DT 19.1 (NE Iowa/La Crosse)

Houston at Minnesota, 7 p.m. – **Vikings:** Christian Ballard, Chad Greenway, Seth Olsen, James Vandenberg

***TV stations in Iowa carrying Texans/Vikings:** KGAN-DT 2.1 (Eastern Iowa); WHBF-DT 4.1 (Quad Cities); KCCI-DT2 8.2 (Des Moines); KPTH-DT 44.1 (Sioux City); KTTC-CW 10.2 (Mason City/Austin/Rochester); KSFY-DT 13.1 (NW Iowa/Sioux Falls); WKBT-DT 8.1 (NE Iowa/La Crosse)

Kansas City at New Orleans, 7 p.m. – **Chiefs:** Greg Castillo, Tony Moeaki, Ricky Stanzi

***TV stations in Iowa carrying Chiefs/Saints:** KDSM-DT 17.1 (Des Moines); KTV0-DT2 33.2 (Ottumwa/Kirksville)

Dallas at Oakland, 9 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 10:

NY Giants at Pittsburgh, 6:30 p.m. (NFL Network) – *Giants:* Brandon Myers, Tyler Sash

Sunday, Aug. 11:

Buffalo at Indianapolis, 12:30 p.m. (NFL Network) – *Bills:* Scott Chandler; *Colts:* Pat Angerer

**All times listed are Central Standard Time*

Wilson leaves football program

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Iowa officially announced the departure of redshirt freshman wide receiver Cameron Wilson from the football program Saturday morning via release. The news of Wilson's transfer was [first reported last week by Hawkeye Insider's Rob Howe](#).

According to the release sent out by Iowa, Wilson asked for and was granted a release from his scholarship in early July by head coach Kirk Ferentz and had since not been participating with the rest of the team in any summer workouts. It also said the roster listed in the team's media guide would be updated online following the Hawkeyes' first practice of fall camp, which is Monday. Iowa conducts its annual Media Day on Aug. 8 in Iowa City.

Wilson redshirted in 2012 and looked as though he could be in the mix at receiver during spring practices. He was never listed on the 2-deep during spring practices and wasn't listed

on the 2-deep put out by Iowa last week.

Most intriguing Big Ten football games of 2013 (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

With the college football season kicking off four weeks from now, I thought it'd be worthwhile now to look at the entire Big Ten schedule and pinpoint the games that should prove to be most intriguing and most significant in terms of the conference's perception in 2013.

This isn't necessarily a list of the best games each week, but ones that I believe could make a difference in one way or another for various teams across the conference.

Week 1 (8/29/2013-8/31/2013): *Northern Illinois at Iowa*

The first Saturday of the season provides plenty of intrigue with match-ups like Northwestern visiting California, Purdue playing at Cincinnati and Penn State playing against Syracuse at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. While the Nittany Lions' game versus the Orange intrigues because of Penn State entering the year as a complete wild-card while continuing to deal with sanctions, Iowa's contest against Northern Illinois at Kinnick Stadium grabs my attention more than any other this first weekend.

Yes, the Hawkeyes are coming off a 4-8 season in 2012, but one

of those four victories came in Chicago against Northern Illinois and as it turned out, that was the only regular-season game the Huskies would lose all season en route to a second straight MAC title and a trip to the Orange Bowl against Florida State. Northern Illinois brings back quarterback Jordan Lynch, who had a 73-yard touchdown run in last year's showdown with Iowa. Meanwhile, the Hawkeyes' new signal-caller remains undecided entering fall camp.

Given how much tougher Iowa's schedule is in 2013 as opposed to a year ago, this is the kind of game that could dictate whether the Hawkeyes bounce back this season and earn a bowl trip of some kind or find themselves staying home again for the holidays like they did last winter.

Week 2 (9/7/2013): *Cincinnati at Illinois*

Michigan's game against Notre Dame is by far the best game on this Saturday involving a Big Ten opponent. But I'm pinpointing Illinois' contest against Cincinnati here for a couple of reasons.

The Bearcats were good last year under Butch Jones and will probably be decent again this season under their new head coach, Tommy Tuberville. But if the Fighting Illini are going to develop any kind of momentum under second-year head coach Tim Beckman, winning a game like this at home could give Illinois some much-needed confidence entering its game against Washington the following week at Soldier Field in Chicago.

Not to mention that at least on paper, the Fighting Illini will likely be underdogs in all four of their home games during Big Ten play this season – Wisconsin, Michigan State, Ohio State and Northwestern all visit Memorial Stadium. Part of this also hinges on how Cincinnati does at home against Purdue the week prior, but I look at this as the type of game that could be a potential springboard for Illinois and more importantly for Beckman if it were to somehow win.

Week 3 (9/14/2013): *Ohio State at California*

Honestly, I think Nebraska probably has the most at stake during this week when it plays UCLA at home, mainly because the Bruins absolutely ran all over the Cornhuskers' defense last year in Pasadena. But the most intrigue comes in another Big Ten/Pac-12 battle (one of four on this date) when the Buckeyes visit Cal over in Berkeley.

For starters, these teams met last season in Columbus and while Ohio State managed to win, the Golden Bears provided more of a challenge than anyone anticipated. Now Cal has a new head coach in Sonny Dykes, who coached a high-octaned offense in Louisiana Tech last season. This is also the Buckeyes' first road contest of 2013 and one of three games that we currently know for certain they will play without the services of running back Carlos Hyde. It's also worth keeping in mind that the Golden Bears will also be two weeks removed from playing another quality Big Ten opponent at home in Northwestern.

On paper, the Buckeyes should win this game because Cal will probably struggle once it dives into conference play, especially in a division that features the likes of Oregon, Stanford and Oregon State. But I do think Ohio State could be tested heavily here and this is the type of game that people are going to look back at should the Buckeyes meet the many outside expectations of them that there will be and that there already are.

Week 4 (9/21/2013): *Missouri at Indiana*

In years past, Week Four has usually consisted of stinkers as most Big Ten teams look to play a cupcake before diving into league play. This year's Week Four slate is decent in that it actually involves one conference game featuring two new head coaches – Darrell Hazell (Purdue) and Gary Andersen (Wisconsin). It also features Michigan State playing at Notre

Dame and Michigan making an unusual road trip to Connecticut.

But the game I want to focus on is Indiana's contest against Missouri, which has already been slated for prime time by the Big Ten Network. Yes, Missouri's in the bottom rung of SEC teams entering 2013 and not what it once was in the Big 12 under Gary Pinkel. But keep the Big 12 thing in mind here because there's familiarity between Pinkel and Indiana head coach Kevin Wilson, who was Oklahoma's offensive coordinator back when Missouri was in the Big 12 and playing marquee games year after year against the Sooners.

This will also be the Hoosiers' fourth straight game at home. They play eight home games at Memorial Stadium this season, including all four of their non-conference games. Indiana's also being regarded as a team on the rise in the Big Ten, even with an absolutely brutal road slate in league play. Simply put, the Hoosiers will be in the spotlight here, albeit against a below-average SEC opponent. But Big Ten/SEC regular season games are scarce to begin with and this game could potentially make a difference not only in whether Indiana makes a bowl in 2013, but whether it does so as a 6-6 team or as a team that could go 7-5 or even 8-4.

Week 5 (9/28/2013): *Wisconsin at Ohio State*

There are four games involving Big Ten teams this week, two of which are conference games. I almost went with the other league match-up – Iowa at Minnesota – because the winner probably avoids the cellar of the Legends Division and dramatically increases its likelihood of a bowl appearance in 2013. But this game between the Badgers and Buckeyes is just too difficult to ignore, especially because recent meetings between these two teams have been memorable in some shape or fashion.

Last year, Ohio State won in overtime at Camp Randall Stadium. But because the undefeated Buckeyes had a postseason ban,

Wisconsin reaped the reward and ended up winning the Big Ten Championship Game. Also throw in the familiarity between the two head coaches. Gary Andersen might be in his first season at Wisconsin, but he was an assistant once upon a time at Utah on Urban Meyer's staff before Meyer left for Florida and now Ohio State.

Even if the Badgers don't come into the Horseshoe undefeated, two things could be in their favor beforehand. The first is having already played a road night game two weeks prior at Arizona State, who will be a contender this season in the Pac-12 South. The other is being a game into Big Ten play already as Wisconsin plays Purdue the week before at home while everyone else is still playing non-conference. Ohio State will likely be favored, especially since it's at home and the better team right now. But this is the kind of game fans will want to tune into regardless.

Week 6 (10/5/2013): *Ohio State at Northwestern*

This is one of the most important games in the Big Ten this season and in the case of Northwestern, there might not be a bigger game in its program's history, especially if the Wildcats get through their non-conference portion undefeated.

Northwestern won 10 games last year, including its first bowl victory since 1949, and has ridden a ton of momentum through this offseason. Gary Barnett brought this program to consecutive Big Ten titles in the 1990s, but Pat Fitzgerald is taking it into uncharted waters. The Wildcats' 2013 schedule is nothing short of brutal, yet this might be as deep and talented a team as Fitzgerald has ever had in Evanston. In my mind, the build-up that will likely surround this game will parallel the build-up back when Iowa played Ohio State at Kinnick Stadium in 2006. If Northwestern somehow wins this game, everyone will take notice and the Wildcats suddenly become a clear favorite to win the Legends Division.

Conversely, this game could also have huge ramifications for Ohio State if it manages to win those aforementioned contests against Cal and Wisconsin in September. This is easily the biggest test standing between the Buckeyes and that Nov. 30 edition of "The Game" up in Ann Arbor. Should Ohio State enter this contest 5-0 and then proceed to leave Ryan Field 6-0, the Buckeyes will probably be 11-0 when they meet Michigan in that regular season finale. There aren't too many opportunities for signature wins this season for Ohio State, but there's no question this would be one of them.

Week 7 (10/12/2013): *Indiana at Michigan State*

There are four Big Ten games on this Saturday and all four present a little intrigue. Nebraska plays its first road game at Purdue, Michigan travels to Penn State and Northwestern plays at Wisconsin. But I want to focus here on the Old Brass Spittoon battle between Indiana and Michigan State that will be played at Spartan Stadium.

First of all, think back to last year's game. Michigan State ended up 6-6 (7-6 after winning its bowl game) and one of those victories was the Spartans overcoming an early 17-0 deficit to win at Indiana 31-27. That game was right there for the Hoosiers' taking. Now let's look at this year's game. It's the first road contest for Indiana in 2013 after opening with five straight home games and as I mentioned before, the Hoosiers' road slate this season is absolutely brutal. If Indiana finds a way to leave East Lansing with a victory, it will be heavily noticed.

As for Michigan State, this is a game the Spartans will probably be favored in regardless and if they're going to have any real shot at winning the Legends Division this season, they have to be able to rack up wins in October playing this game, at Iowa, Purdue at home and at Illinois. This game features one of the conference's top offenses versus one of its best defenses. The winner of this game is probably looking

at a 7-8 win season in 2013 if everything else were to go as expected.

Week 8 (10/19/2013): *Iowa at Ohio State*

If there's any blah week in the Big Ten this season, it's this one. But I find a couple of things intriguing about this match-up between the Hawkeyes and Buckeyes.

For starters, both teams will be coming off byes the week before, so the whole notion of whether rest leads to potential rust comes into play is canceled out. From Iowa's perspective, the Hawkeyes play five teams ranked in the top 25 of the preseason Coaches Poll recently released and this is the first contest. Five of Iowa's last six games are against teams that will likely be ranked when the Hawkeyes play them after Iowa only played two ranked teams all of last season, both taking place in its final two games of 2012.

I'm curious to see how Ohio State responds here because it should be an overwhelming favorite to win this game. How much of a hangover could there still be from playing both Wisconsin and Northwestern beforehand? That remains to be seen. But it's worth pointing out that Ohio State's bye week last season came before its overtime win at Wisconsin, and Iowa under Kirk Ferentz is at its best when it's able to do things similarly to what the Badgers did under former head coach Bret Bielema. By no means should anyone expect this game to be like the instant classic these teams played at the Horseshoe back in 2009, but it shouldn't be too much of a surprise if Iowa (assuming it enters this game in relatively decent shape) gives Ohio State just a little more than Buckeye fans bargain for.

Week 9 (10/26/2013): *Nebraska at Minnesota*

If there's any sort of trap game on Nebraska's 2013 schedule, it's right here when the Cornhuskers visit TCF Bank Stadium to play Minnesota. Nebraska will be coming its bye week and this

game comes up right before the Cornhuskers start a very brutal November slate that will determine whether they repeat as Legends Division champions or not.

Meanwhile, Minnesota has a brutal Big Ten schedule as a whole in 2013 and this is the Golden Gophers' lone home game during the month of October. This comes after a three-week stretch that features a bye sandwiched between trips to Michigan and Northwestern. I'll be very curious to see what Minnesota's psyche looks like when it enters this contest because it could very well determine whether the Golden Gophers make a second straight bowl game under third-year head coach Jerry Kill.

Nebraska's a better team and should probably win this game with ease like it has the last two times it has played Minnesota. But I'm telling you, this (at the very least) has all the ingredients in place to be considered a trap game and it would make quite a statement if the Golden Gophers found a way to win this one.

Week 10 (11/2/2013): *Michigan at Michigan State*

I could easily make a case for the game between Northwestern and Nebraska here as well, but the Big Ten game that will likely have everyone's attention this particular weekend is this one in East Lansing.

After Michigan State reeled off four straight victories in this intrastate rivalry, Michigan finally ended that losing streak to the Spartans last season winning at home on a last-second field goal. The Wolverines' last victory at Spartan Stadium came in 2007, which was Mark Dantonio's first season as Michigan State's head coach. The other intriguing aspect here is these teams historically have met in October, so having this game the first weekend of November could potentially lead to bigger stakes for both teams than they're accustomed to when they play each other.

While I don't think this actually happens, it isn't completely

unrealistic to imagine both the Wolverines and Spartans being undefeated beforehand. Frankly, I'd be surprised if either team is worse than 5-2 coming into this game. Both play Notre Dame in September and both have difficult road games in league play beforehand with Michigan State visiting Iowa on Oct. 5 and Michigan playing at Penn State the following Saturday. Both programs will likely be in the discussion for winning the Legends Division and this is a rivalry that really might be at its height right now, so it should make for an entertaining football game.

Week 11 (11/9/2013): *Nebraska at Michigan*

If both Nebraska and Michigan enter this match-up coming off victories the week prior, then this is the game that will likely decide who wins the Legends Division and plays in Indianapolis next December because the potential is there for this to be a showdown of 8-0 teams.

From Nebraska's perspective, I believe this to be the most difficult game on its schedule, period. The Cornhuskers will have played against UCLA and Northwestern beforehand, but both of those games are in Lincoln. This is easily the toughest road game on their schedule (no offense to Penn State). Meanwhile, this is merely another big November game for Michigan and for the second straight year, the Wolverines play Nebraska the week after playing Michigan State.

These are two teams that seem to parallel one another coming into this season, which is why I feel the stakes are going to be extremely high when they meet up. Even if both teams enter this game with blemishes to their records, the stakes will be big because it's Nebraska against Michigan and it also happens to be the last regular-season meeting between these teams until 2018 at the earliest.

Week 12 (11/16/2013): *Michigan State at Nebraska*

This is a real toss-up right now because both this game and

the one being played in Evanston between Michigan and Northwestern could be equally intriguing and a lot will likely depend on what happens the previous two weeks. But for the sake of this, I'll make the case for this game in Lincoln between Michigan State and Nebraska.

One thing to consider off the bat, the Cornhuskers were aided by a missed call in last year's game that allowed them to leave East Lansing with a one-point win over the Spartans. The year before, Nebraska handed Michigan State its lone Big Ten defeat prior to playing Wisconsin in that inaugural Big Ten title game. These are the two teams that have won Legends Division crowns since division play entered the Big Ten.

The other thing to consider is that the Spartans will be coming off a bye week while the Cornhuskers will have played the week before in Ann Arbor against Michigan, so how this game starts could be big. What type of momentum is carried into this game if either beats Michigan earlier in the month? In my eyes, this game has just a bit more luster than Michigan/Northwestern, but I won't be surprised if both turn out to be marquee games that go down to the wire.

Week 13 (11/23/2013): *Michigan State at Northwestern*

I feel like I've completely ignored the Leaders Division here, but all the compelling Legends Division match-ups are happening in November this season. A case could be made for Nebraska's game at Penn State being bigger (especially if the Cornhuskers beat both of these teams at home earlier in the month). But if either Michigan State or Northwestern gets wins against either or both of Michigan and Nebraska, this game becomes huge.

Before this game, both teams will have had Novembers consisting of bye weeks, home games against Michigan and road trips to Nebraska. Michigan State has a slightly easier schedule, especially in Big Ten play, than Northwestern does.

But I feel as though these teams could be on very equal footing here as both also end the season with very winnable games the following week.

Even if the Legends Division doesn't end up being at stake here, bowl positioning will likely be affected. Northwestern found itself in the Gator Bowl and securing that first bowl victory in 60-plus years in large part because it won at Michigan State late last season. If neither wins their division, both these teams will likely have similar records, so the winner is at the very least going to play in a more marquee bowl game this winter.

Week 14 (11/29/2013-11/30/2013): *Ohio State at Michigan*

As if there was any doubt here what the most intriguing/significant game of the regular season's final weekend will be. Right now, these two are being viewed nationally as the two best teams in the conference once again and the storyline here will be whether this is the first of two consecutive meetings between these teams.

Next year when the Big Ten realigns its divisions upon the arrivals of Maryland and Rutgers into the conference, Michigan and Ohio State will share the same division after being apart the last three years. In other words, this is the Big Ten's best (and perhaps only) chance of getting a championship game at Lucas Oil Stadium involving these two teams the following week.

Since Brady Hoke's arrival at Michigan two years ago, this storied rivalry has produced compelling games and the animosity between the two programs has arguably gotten as strong as it once was back when it was the "Big Two, Little Eight." Even if the 2013 Big Ten Championship Game doesn't feature a rematch between these two teams, there's still going to be plenty at stake for both schools when they meet in the Big House.

2013 Big Ten Media Days – Kirk Ferentz transcript, Day Two

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

So Thursday morning during the second day portion of the 2013 Big Ten Football Media Days, I placed a recorder at Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's table and managed to record the entire 2-hour duration he spoke to various reporters from both the state of Iowa and nationally.

Afterwards, I agreed to a collaboration of transcribing the entire 2-hour segment with Jon Miller from *Hawkeye Nation* and Marc Morehouse from *The Cedar Rapids Gazette*. We each spent our nights back home transcribing 40 minutes worth of Ferentz speaking on Thursday and have it all presented here on each of our platforms.

Two things worth mentioning beforehand: 1. As I said, this was broken into three parts. Miller transcribed the first 40 minutes, Morehouse the middle 40-minute portion and I wrote out the final 40 minutes worth of Ferentz audio. 2. The questions came from all different reporters throughout the morning, so it's not as though we each spent 40 minutes talking to Ferentz ourselves. I'm making this distinction now in the event you see some repeat questions and answers in this transcript.

All questions are labeled with the letter "Q" while Ferentz's responses are labeled with his initials, "KF." Without further

ado, here's everything (literally) that Ferentz said Thursday in Chicago.

PART ONE (as transcribed by Jon Miller of *Hawkeye Nation*):

Q: Are you guys doing any different jerseys this year?

KF: We are not really planning on it. No. I kind of like our black and gold, get back to looking like we should look, hopefully. There is nothing in the works right now.

Q: You have had a hand in putting together Iowa rosters for 24 years. What is the crux of an Iowa roster? What is your strategy?

KF: It's true in any program, you have to get players who are going to fit into what it is you are going to ask them to do. That is the key. It is true of any program and probably the biggest thing I learned in the 1980's was that some schools have certain parameters they use. They have absolutely standards and make few exceptions about size. We don't have that luxury. You think back to a center like Joel Hilgenberg; he weighed 235 or 240 his senior year and he might be as fine of an offensive lineman as I have ever coached. Mark Sindlinger might have been six-feet tall. He backed up Hilgy in 1983 as a true freshman and started three years on three very good teams. One thing about coaching is your learn from your players. you fast forward with us in the Orange Bowl in 2002...after we did our first joint press conference, Pete Carroll and I were talking. He was talking about Palamalu being the last guy they took. Pete wasn't there when Troy came to school. His uncle was on the staff, they had a scholarship pop open late and they drafted him. You had two of the best strong safeties in the last few decades playing in that game with he and Bob Sanders, who wouldn't pass the size card most places. We can't be a size or speed team, a combine team. . I think about the Giants in the 1980's. their defensive linemen looked like offensive linemen. Every team

has their personnel quirks. I just saw a film on the Steelers..it was not at our house, as we don't have the NFL Network at our house, which is a sore subject. We were at one of our kids houses and they had a film on the Steelers defense one of the best of all time. You look at how teams are formed. At Iowa, you need to keep an open mind. It's more about mentality and personality and perseverance. You have to have requisite skill and ability, but the mental part is more important because it's a hard race to run. It;s not for everybody.

Q: How much does that color what you do on the field and the players you get. If I recall correctly, you wanted another player and then wound up with Bret Van Sloten. It seems like you can just go find them.

KF: We had our eye on him for some time. Once you meet him and his parents and his sisters happened to be with him the first time I met him, you met the whole family and you knew he was a winner. He is an exceptional young man. I have told people in the private sector that I don't know when his career will be over, but I would hire him in a heartbeat. If he can't outsmart you, he will figure out a way to win somehow, someway. He is a tremendous purpose and great student.

Q: Was Iowa his only offer?

KF: I think we were then some other people got involved. With him, it was more about intangibles than anything else. We had heard a lot of good things prior to meeting him. It was kind of like Mike Elgin. that happened later and we were 'supposed' to offer him a scholarship, but sitting there with his mom and dad, we couldn't not offer him.

Q: The theme here seems to be Iowa guys..

KF: Something about them conveys to you that they will find a way to be successful. They did it in the classroom at a really high rate. On the field, they were not the most gifted for

athletic of guys, but boy they were determined, smart, physical and tough. Those guys have a chance...they find a way to rise to the top.

Q: You have had some Cadillacs thought...

KF: Adrian developed into one, Christian walked in as one. They don't walk in here often like that. The bottom line, I learned from our wrestling program in the 1980's, it's not where a guy is when he gets here it's where they are when he leaves. To be a good college football player, it takes a lot. It's a sacrifice time wise, energy wise. It;s not for everyone. To be really good, you look at Elgin; he carried a 3.85 in Engineering and started three years in the Big Ten. That is not your average bear.

Q: This day and age, do you find four and five star players who are overrated?

KF: All the time. The NFL blows it on draft picks and they have a lot more invested. They get to do a lot more research. They have so much information and they blow it on picks. People change. College aged students change. they change as students, people and athletes. Wherever you may be when you get there, it's what you do once you get there that determines things. It happens frequently. In basketball vs football, in football you don't see a guy from Decorah compete against a kid from Chicago or Ohio, because they don't play them. Decorah doesn't play St Ignatius in Cleveland. You don't get that opportunity. Whereas in basketball, you see a kid from a small town compete against a kid from a bigger town. In that sport, you have a chance to make more of an educated projection I guess, as to how a guy will be. But even then, Drew Ott when he came to our camp a year ago, June, 14 months ago, I think we had offered him. We really liked him, but he got destroyed in our camp. But no kidding, you weight 207 pounds, would you mind getting in a three-point stance and going against a tackle. No kidding. We put him in

an uncomfortable position and he didn't look good, but he showed up last year and worked hard every day and the reasons we thought he would be a good player, we saw that every day last year and he is not 207 pounds anymore. We made that projection and they are not always right. Just like Ike Boettger, he is a quarterback in camp and we asked him to put shoulder pads on and blocked and he looked terrible, but he ran like AJ Edds. We do more projecting. There are ten schools in the country where you can pick guys. There is nothing wrong with that, that would be OK. But they don't all pan out.

Q: Could you coach them?

KF: I think I could coach anywhere, but I like where I am at.

Q: I think you like that challenge.

KF: It's a part of our challenge. The guys we are talking about, Bob Sanders, Nelson, Clark, those guys were fun to coach. Someone made a point yesterday about a walk on carrying something extra throughout their careers...same way with someone injured...they have a different appreciation for being healthy than someone who has never missed time. Those things can be advantages. I don't pretend to know all of our wrestlers, but talking to the Brands' and Dan (Gable), it sounds like they have had a lot of guys who have done their best wrestling in college. That is the whole idea of anything you do in collegiate sports; a guy improving, striving to push his boundaries and seeing how good he can be. You can get some unique stories.

Q: What is the verbal clock now like what it was in 80's and 90's

KF: Back in the 1980's, early verbal commitments came much later, as a rule. you might have a guy who grew up in Iowa City and wanted to play at Iowa his whole life, but as a rule everything happened so much later. It wasn't always peaches

and cream then, either. Those were the days of four or five coaches sitting in a kid's house on signing day. I remember spending at least four days in Marceline, Missouri...myself and another coach. It was comical...we were at an eight unit hotel, it was like spy vs spy for the first day...but after a few days we were eating every meal together, thinking "will this kid make his mind up?" I bought two shirts at the Marceline clothing store because I ran out of clothes. He didn't come to our place and a year and a half later he called and wanted to transfer to Iowa and we said thanks but no thanks. That was in late January. I could have been home with the wife and kids. It's never been perfect. With earlier commitments, there will be more decommitments That stands to reason. Consumers have all the rights. It's true in recruiting, too.

Q: You talk about a leap of faith in recruiting..as the commitment clock accelerates, does that leap gets larger?

KF: As coaches, you have to be careful about writing it down in ink. Where it really gets tricky...lets say a quarterback would commit to you and you are not 100% sure he is totally committed..it gets tricky to try to recruit other ones. It's a new dimension that has been added to the game. It is interesting. Things can happen. teams have bad seasons, a guy might jump off the ship. Coaches change jobs frequently and guys might jump off the boat then. It will be a fluid process, but that is a good reason for early signing period. Everyone in our conference is totally in favor of that.

Q: Do kids want that?

KF: Why wouldn't they? It's an industry now. This is hard for anyone to deal with. Flattery and attention is nice but it can affect people. Parents have most definitely changed. Any high school coach would tell you that who has been in it for 20 years. Any high school teacher would tell you that...any teacher, any level. The world is different. There is a lot

more...it's all about me kind of stuff. That is the world we live in, too. If you are involved in team sports, that is one of the challenges you have in coaching.

Q: Is that more of parents wanting their kids to star, they've invested a lot of money in the process?

KF: Best way I could say it, there was a time recently where I would tell you most players if you give them truth serum and read their minds, they want to know when they would hit the field and how much will they play and where will they end up. That is what they were thinking. You could count on the parents to ask about the education, what are the graduation rates, etc. Parents are still saying that, but there are a lot of them more interested in the playing time than education, and that is just my opinion and in generalities. There has been a shift. There is one 'what is in it for my son as a player'. We should all be interested in careers, but there is so much more involved here.

Q: Do you have to be more careful with projections?

KF: They don't all work out. I would counter it and say...I can't compare percentages but when you draft first rounders, sometimes they don't work out, either. A lot of them can disappoint you. My second year in Cleveland, we drafted a linebacker at 19. He wasn't on the roster two years later and wasn't a good special teams player. The one thing in the NFL, when you draft a first rounder the one rule is they better play. If you want the owners to be patient with you and believe in you, they are not happy when first rounders don't play. That happens a lot. In our case, we are further down the line in development. Sometimes kids peak earlier and things like that. There are a lot of variables. I just read an article recently, I think they had a series on the basketball draft, recruiting classes from the last 15 years, it's amazing how many of those guys you never hear of and they were can't miss coming out of high school. There is no fool

proof system. No 100 percent. When Christian Ballard came in, he could have gone anywhere in the country. Adrian didn't have that chance, he was more of a Midwest recruit. Four years later, Adrian is a 1st round draft pick. Riley Reiff, Nebraska hit him late. He wasn't heralded and if he would have stayed he would have been a top five pick. He still made a good decision to go, I am not saying that. There is no absolute.

Q: You know the players you can and can't get. When you meet the parents, how much of that goes into the decision?

KF: When we came here 14 years ago, we had a good idea of who and what we wanted to be and how we wanted to do it. That hasn't changed much.

Q: What shaped that?

KF: 30 some years of coaching...

Q: But at Iowa, when you came here as a head coach, you knew what the challenges were here, the kind of players you could get...

KF: In general terms, I will double talk here a little bit...we have not had an extraordinary amount of NFL receivers. In the 1980's we didn't have any NFL backs or D-linemen, but we have a lot of guys in the NFL now who have been in the secondary or defensive line. There are certain things we thought were important and certain things you look for in players. The bottom line, we know we are not going to start on the inside lane year in and year out. That is not how we are. Maybe there were some exceptions in the 1950's. you know where you are going to start, so you have to figure out how you are going to get to the front of the pack.

Q: Was this a longer out of season? Do you look harder at things, any bullet points you wanted to change?

KF: I don't know if it was longer. I guess it was, because we had a lot of free time in December and January relative to things I would normally be doing. We did our player personnel evaluations prior to Christmas last year and you don't do that when you are in a bowl game. Everything got moved up a little bit. We tried to pretty retrospective on everything we do, every segment of the program. I think the clear thing we had to do was what factored into our lack of success you can't do anything about and what are the things you can do something about and spend your time there.

Q: You have said Greg Davis will be a better Iowa coach this year. What does that mean?

KF: We had two transitions, with Norm and Ken leaving. The difference being that Phil was already in the program. He knew the program and payers and we didn't wholesale changes things defensively. That was a modest transition as opposed to Greg not knowing anyone; the players, the staff. Things were moving faster. I was committed to not wholesale...a very high percentage going his direction, with the terminology and all that stuff. So there was a lot of learning and teaching going on. That was traumatic for everyone, coaches included. Those of us who had been here, it was all new. Brian hadn't been there, and it was all new to him too. This year, we are all a little more comfortable with everything and Greg is more comfortable with our personnel with what we can do and can't do. that will show up. Greg is an excellent coach, teacher and human being. He fits the profile of the guys we have had as coaches and coordinators. He is right in there with the class of people we have.

Q: Chuck Long brought up a point yesterday, bringing Bobby Kennedy in, someone Greg knows, could make a world of difference.

KF: They are not quite like a married couple, but it's close. They go back and forth pretty well. There is a real comfort

level. That is what happens when you are with someone you have been with for a long time. They have a great relationship. That is an advantage.

Q: What do you see as Chris White's secret in recruiting right now? He has been away from game a few years and has hit the ground running.

KF: I am smiling..he has a great personality. I am laughing at a text he sent out on his first or second day of vacation. It centered around a lobster they were getting ready to eat...but anyway.

Q: I think he tweeted that picture.

KF: That was a classic. I have a flip phone, so I was trying to figure out what it was. I did see it on an iphone, transferred it over. I was entertained. He has a great personality. He is a real intelligent guy. Our players have taken to him very quickly and that is our backs as well as the guys involved ins special teams. They enjoy his demeanor and it seems like some have been receptive to him as well.

Q: Are you surprised to see recruits committing without a campus visit?

KF: Yeah, that is concerning, too. What if they show up and don't like it? I think we have given them a good framework. When I came out there in 1981, they used to have the college blue book. What I knew about Iowa was a lousy record and the head coach was a square jawed ex-Marine from Texas. that is what I knew about Coach Fry, because the blue book said it. I got a haircut and a tie and came out and interviewed. Now, there is so much information out there so it can happen more. Kids didn't commit early back in the 80's and 90's. They didn't get an offer from Coach Fry until the end of the weekend. The dating stuff is gone, this is all mail order stuff now.

Q: You seem to place an emphasis of the student in student athlete, you have a few guys here taking summer classes..how much pride do you take in your program's graduation rates?

KF: I was talking with Bret Van Sloten yesterday. Both of those guys were studying in the car and they were studying yesterday morning. People throw numbers out in recruiting visits and people don't check the numbers. I've told a few young people that they might be talking about their women's basketball team, but I know their football numbers. We are really proud of what our guys do. Our players get great support when they get on campus from the get go. We think it's important. I have had three kids in the program. The most lasting accomplishment a player will achieve in college is to get a degree. Football will end at some point but that degree is there for a lifetime. In this day and age, if a player doesn't get a degree it's because he chose not to. That is where coaches and support folks have to step in, because when you are 22 years old that is not #1 on your list, but we have to emphasize that. That being said, there will always be a player or two who chooses not to finish. It's sad, but you hope they come back at some point. Dallas came back after they won the Super Bowl and got his degree after the Super Bowl. Andre Tippett did it, Mike Titley did it too. He was doing well in his professional life, but he had a young family and he didn't want to be a hypocrite with his kids. He came back and got it. Those are good examples of the way things should be done.

Q: There are three QB's in the running here. Have you thought about practice structure and how you want to let them have the same looks and all that?

KF: That is what we did in the spring. Everyone got an equal opportunity, good and bad. What I mean there, a mix of first team and third team. We will start out that way. There is no blueprint for this thing. You have to be fair to the players in the competition and fair to the team. My suspicion is

things will look a little different in August than they did in April. The entire team will. We assess that as fast as we can and work it accordingly. Having three in the race, it's not easy. It's easier with two, but that is not the case.

Q: What do you expect to see from them?

KF: I don't have any expectations other than hoping all three will look improved and I think they will. You can't predict it, but looking back on things, after going through a spring where they were really running the offense and looking at film all summer and then 7 on 7's, I would assume they are all farther down the road. It will be a matter of what they do in camp but that will be based on how the rest of the team supports them. Whomever is playing quarterback this year has a good chance to be better supported than James Vandenberg was last year.

Q: Does that include wide receiver?

KF: I am including everything. Still our biggest question marks outside of QB is our receiver position. We are young, we don't have the depth or the firepower we need. But the good news is we have a fairly veteran line, a group of tight ends that are veteran and runnings backs we didn't have last year. there is a chance on the whole to have a better starting point than we had last year.

PART TWO (as transcribed by Marc Morehouse of *The Cedar Rapids Gazette*):

Q: Do you see Mark being a 20-carry back

KF: I could see that. I could see that.

Q: Would that be good for this offense?

KF: What did he have, 5.3 [yards] a carry? Twenty times five, I'd take that.

Q: For a while he averaged 8 yards a carry.

KF: Twenty times eight is even better. That's unrealistic. I think right now we have a chance to have a nice combination, whereas last year I didn't know if we even had a back.

Let's not forget, Damon Bullock refused to block anybody a year ago, including the last day, where I . . . it just looked like he was allergic to blocking. He has improved so much. We had a couple of guys who had good springs. I'm not sure he's No. 1 on the list, but he's right at the top. He did a good job. I think he's really starting to understand the game and really enjoy the game. That's fun.

Q: Is versatility his biggest strength?

KF: I would say that, yes. In some ways he's like Albert [Young], though I'd say Albert was a little better runner. He'd lean a little more to the run game, but he was capable in the passing game. Damon is really capable in the passing game and a better runner than I thought, actually, so I think that will keep improving.

Q: Do you see Bullock and Weisman on the field together? Maybe Canzeri?

KF: It's possible. We'll see. Jordan had a really good spring. That's encouraging. He got better as the spring went on. The last time you guys saw him was one of his better days. That's encouraging. So, at least we have three guys who've been on the field and who've been tackled in real games and things like that. That's a good starting point.

With our lack of experienced depth at receiver right now, we have to use anybody we can use to move the ball down the field.

Q: Have you had a chance to see your incoming freshmen receivers?

KF: We don't see them at all. I see them in the building.

Q: Will QB be 100 percent won on the field? There are certain things you'll need to see.

KF: There's a lot that goes into it. Leadership is a part of it, and that's on the field and off the field. I think all three guys – I don't want to speak for our whole staff, but they aren't here, so I guess I should – but we're comfortable with all three guys. It's like when we had Stanzi and James in the room together. You felt if either one of these guys takes the ball, you're going to be OK. They act like Big Ten quarterbacks. Jake, C.J. and Cody, they all handle themselves well. They have different personalities and all that, but I could envision all three of those guys playing for us. That's a good thing. All we can judge this August is what they do on the field. If I find out one of them is sleeping through meetings – I know that's not going to happen, these guys aren't wired that way.

Q: Will part of the evaluation be them being able to handle that pressure?

KF: That's part of it, going through tough times. Nobody went through a worse time than Brad Banks in the second half of that Iowa State game. I think that's an overlooked part of the Brad Banks story. It doesn't get much lower than that, the way that game ended and his role in that. For me, when I think about Brad Banks, I think about how he came back from that and what he did to move beyond that. That to me is the best part of the Brad Banks story. I don't know when it's going to happen, but whoever's in there is going to go through [tough times]. It's part of football. You're going to experience things you wish you hadn't gone through. So, what are you going to do? Get in the fetal position and get the crap kicked out of you? Or are you going to get up and play? Going back to '02, Brad got back up on his feet and went to work and ends up being the player of the year in the conference. You want that

kind of resiliency, for a quarterback especially. I'm not sure who's fault it was when we lost that game. I'm sure it was a dead heat between Brad and me. He and I were 1 and 2 on the hit list in that game, so what are you doing to do? Surrender? That's what you're looking for, because it's going to hit the fan. Whoever it is, it's going to hit the fan.

Q: Last year, CJ Fiedorowicz was a bit streaky in his production. Most of it came after game six. How does that happen? Were defenses taking him out?

KF: It can be both. We don't go in saying we're not going to throw to a guy. Defenses dictate that. Part of it is he improved, too. We recruited CJ really hard and we had to. He came in with a lot of hype. That's one of the dangers of all the recruiting hype. These guys are still first-year players. Let them be first-year players, let them grow. You're not afforded that luxury when you're highly recruited. He progressed, he's improved. I'm hoping to see his best football this fall.

Q: Forty five catches is high end for a tight end at Iowa. Can he be more than that?

KF: I hope he has 60. That'd be great, I'd be OK with that.

Q: Do the other tight ends have that kind of potential?

KF: We like our group. Ray is just effective. He gets it done in his way. We think Henry is more of a blocking-type guy, more of an H back player. Jake Duzey and Kittle are guys we think can be effective in the passing game, too. We have five guys we feel comfortable putting on the field. That's position we have some depth. We don't have many, but that's one.

Q: Do coaches discuss at all how you could be better in the perception game with the SEC?

KF: We had a meeting in February. We had another one in April,

the Monday before we finished spring practice. The focus was more on some of these NCAA legislation issues and what we could do to slow that train down. I think those were effective meetings. We got a lot accomplished. Certainly, we met with the commissioner [Jim Delany]. We met with him yesterday. Those are topics we talk about, but I think we've all been trying to win, from day 1. I've been in the league for 14 year now and have worked with a lot of great coaches. Some results have been better than others, they've all come in and tried to recruit as well as they could and they all tried to win as much as they can. I think as a conference we're doing the same thing. I think it all comes and goes a little bit, but right now, I don't think there's a question with the SEC. They're playing on a little different playing field. Some of the teams, not all of the teams. Some of the teams are really healthy. I'll go back, too, we played South Carolina [2009 Outback Bowl]. I think I'm correct in saying they lost to Georgia at Georgia 14-7. I think it was 14-7. Georgia had three No. 1 draft picks on that offense and they came up with 14 points against South Carolina. The team that Alabama had last year and the last couple of years, to say their whole league is like that, I think we deal in generalities sometimes. I'm not knocking Georgia, but that was at home, 14 points, three first rounders on their offense – the quarterback, a back and a receiver. We ended up beating that South Carolina team. Things are relative, but there's no denying and just looking at how those guys have been drafted or will be drafted out of South Carolina, what they've got going right now is unique. I'd say the same thing about Southern Cal five years ago. What happened to it? I'm not saying that's going to happen at Alabama. One thing in college football, it doesn't seem like anything lasts forever. Just look at our conference. You've just got to keep working, keep pushing forward.

Q: [Alabama and NFL draft]

KF: That's rare. We had one guy picked. Maybe that's part of the reason we were 4-8. That's going to happen. My point is five years ago, who was ever going to beat Southern Cal? Well, a lot of teams beat them last year. I don't mean that disrespectfully to them. Now the question is who's going to beat Alabama? That's a good question. The team with the Heisman Trophy quarterback might, but outside of that, I don't know who came close.

Q: Is speed the biggest thing between the SEC and the Big Ten?

KF: I think that's stereotypical. We're a grind-it-out offense kind of a conference. Mike White [Illinois coach from the '80s] threw the ball 70 times in 1982 against us. Was anyone paying any attention to that? Coach Fry threw the ball a lot. We've had a lot of fast guys in our conference. We've had a lot of skill position guys get drafted through the years. If you just study recruiting, the population swing to California, the south, warm-weather states. There are differences. There are a lot of ways to be successful. You have to figure out what's best for you at you're given school, given conference and just try to maximize it.

Q: As the dean of the Big Ten coaches, what does that mean to . . .

KF: That's the first time I've been asked that today. Dean Farber. I'm not sure I want to be Dean Farber, though. That's what I think of every time. First of all, you never want to call a football coach a dean. That's a misnomer. But no, I've been around awhile.

Q: Pretty proud of that? It's hard to stay at one place for a long period of time.

KF: I think it's a reflection of two things. I work with great people, day in and day out. And then I work at a place that's a little like the Pittsburgh Steelers. I think traditionally our administration gets it. They understand there are going to

be highs and lows. Fortunately, our administration hasn't panicked when things haven't gone as well as we would all like them to go. They've been steady. It's a little like the Pittsburgh Steelers owners. They operate the same way. Growing up in Pittsburgh, I have an appreciation for that. I feel fortunate to be at Iowa.

Q: Do you put Scherff with Bulaga, Reiff?

KF: Time will tell. Those have finished their careers, both ended up being first-round draft picks. Brandon, first of all, has a great attitude. He has a nice skill set, good size, speed all those types of things. Going back to 10th grade, it's really amazing the road that he's traveled. He's got a great opportunity in front of him. I think I know him pretty well now after however many years it's been, I'd be really surprised if he doesn't keep getting better. He was starting to play really well before he got injured. It's a shame he got hurt, but he's back and he's got a lot of football in front of him. He's got a chance to be a really good football player.

Q: NFL? Have you guys talked about that? You must have a plan for that.

KF: For about 30 seconds [they talked NFL]. As you get down the road, if there's a discussion to have, we'll have it. It's realistic to think that could happen. If he ends up in the same seat as Riley or Bryan, that's a good seat to sit in. You can't really make a bad decision. What I would say the challenge for him is to get in that seat. That's the challenge.

Q: Hayden had opportunities (USC). I'm sure you've had some of the same opportunities. Why stay?

KF: I can't speak for coach Fry, other than I would speculate, I know he was excited when he came to Iowa. I don't mean that he wasn't excited when he came here. I doubt he had any idea

how good it would be. That's just my guess. How could you at that point? I told you about that Blue Book. – Iowa, 19 straight losing years. I know I didn't have idea in '81. I was going to be one and done and get out of here. I just wanted to get a resume started, really, and get back east. I know what I went through. I think a lot of our coaches on the staff in the '80s went through the same thing. I don't want to speak for coach Fry, but I think he found out what a great place it is to live, to work, all of those things. We've gone through the same thing, my wife and I have gone through that, twice. First, it was a no-brainer to come back because of what we learned, but you know, it was nine years later, too, so you never know quite what it's going to be like. I didn't know anyone in our administration when I came back. That's an important thing in my job. Coaching is an interesting profession. I probably appreciated more than any thing, Iowa has given us a great opportunity to have a great coaching life. Personally, I've had a great coaching experience. We've also had a great personal experience. We've been allowed to be a part of the community. That's something really hard to do in the NFL. I think that's really hard to do in the NFL. I think it's also hard to do if you're changing jobs every five or seven years. I don't know how deeply rooted you can become. In our case, we have five kids, which makes it a little bit unique, too. The tradeoff of a better job, or what the experts call, quote, unquote, a better job, how do you define better? What's your criteria? For us, it's worked really well. I've appreciated that.

Q: What I meant by better was a school that recruits itself.

KF: When I'm talking about that, the national people say, this is a better job, like everyone would assume even the worst job in the NFL is better than the a good job in college. I've been in the NFL, and I would disagree with that. I don't think there are that many great jobs in the NFL. There are some that are outstanding and there are a lot that are OK. I don't mean

that in a negative way, I mean comparatively. To me, if you don't have a compelling reason to do something, why do it? That's how I look at everything, especially the profession. If you get fired, that's a compelling reason to look for another job. That's rule No. 1 in coaching.

Q: The word "commitment" gets thrown around a lot. It seems to have change over the years. Have you had to change with it?

KF: I think we all do a little inventory, personally, on players who are, quote, unquote, committed. You try to get a sense of what that means exactly. One thing about recruiting that's never changed is the consumer has all the rights. The customer is always right. They can change their mind all the way up to February. It's always been that way and until we get an early signing, that's going to be the way it is. I developed a motto when I was at Maine. I told my wife if I ever come home and say I'm surprised by something, just hit me with a pan. That's kind of the same thing in recruiting. You can't be surprised. You have to realize things can change, anything can happen and keep pushing forward.

Q: Is it a case-by-case basis?

KF: It is, but I think know with the commitments, an early commitment would be fall of a guy's senior year. Now, that needle has moved a long way on the charts. The farther away it gets from February, the more chance those could change. Your team could go 0-12. The coach could get hit by a bus or might change jobs, all of those things. If I were a prospect and something did happen, maybe you would want to consider a change. It's part of the game. It's changing every day.

Q: Do you think there will be an early signing day?

KF: I think there will be, yeah. I think there has to be.

Q: Where would you put it?

KF: I think as a conference I think we're all in agreement the best time would be that December signing, when junior college kids sign, that third Saturday in December. Right during that dead period, right after the three week contact. To me, that'd be the perfect time. I still don't understand the resistance. All it is is an opportunity to sign. They don't have to sign. I don't think anyone is going to lose a scholarship. It just gives everyone a chance to lay their cards on the table and say I'm 100 percent sure now or still not quite there. That'd be great for both parties, I think.

Q: Some coaches have star treatment in recruiting. If you're recruiting a kid with a few more stars and you really need him, do you give them a little more leeway in terms of them looking around?

KF: That's one of the benefits of early signing. It would give you chance to find out how firm that commitment really is. We're still talking about December. There are exceptions, but until you get into the thick of the winter time and who's who and what's what, You just have to keep an open mind about everything and cover your flanks. All of your flanks.

Q: Is September too early for a signing period?

KF: I think down the road that could happen. I could see this thing moving up farther and farther. I would be in support of official visits in June. With the way it's going right now, I think that would be a good thing. I think we'd all like to see one parent involved if not two or guardians involved in the process on official visits. We've got some catching up to do. Recruiting has changed so quickly. The standards we operate by, the regulations, haven't changed. There's a lot of work to be done there. It's got to be good work and logical work, well-thought-out work, not some of the stuff that was presented back in the winter time. I think we need to be a little more thorough and develop more of a consensus on what needs to be done.

Q: More like basketball?

KF: Two things. I'm smiling because, and I tease Fran, but they've done a much better job lobbying than we have, basketball guys. They get things done, I give them credit. They're a lot smarter. They go to the Caribbean and Hawaii to play tournaments, we go to Syracuse and Pittsburgh. So, they're a lot smarter. But again the differences, and I said this earlier, as a basketball coach you get the opportunity to go watch camps where a young guy from West Branch might be competing against name a great basketball school, maybe one from Indianapolis. They get to watch guys compete head-to-head. We don't get that opportunity. There's a lot more projection in football. I don't think we want to go as far as they've gone calendar-wise, because I think it's a little bit easier for them to evaluate their prospects. To that point, I think in the years forward we'll see a shift towards the spring. Realistically, in the last few years, prospects hit it hot and heavy starting in March. Families visiting campuses unofficially. Last year March, that was really a landmark. Before our spring break, we had a young guy in, a scholarship guy and his family, I can't ever remember that happening for an unofficial visit. I can't ever remember that happening, and it just kept coming.

Q: Do you speed up the evaluation now, too?

KF: Yeah, yeah, everything is accelerating. We'll be doing a lot of junior recruiting this winter.

Q: [Question on projecting verbal commits]

KF: I think you have to understand what appears in front of you might not look that way in October, November, December. That's what you have to understand.

Q: [Getting what you want out of recruiting as far as the personnel you need]

KF: Those are questions you ask yourself every day. You've got to keep a bullpen going and you've got to keep looking. The good news is in our sport, there will be good stories that emerge in the fall. This is one of the biggest phenomenons to me is that I'm still trying to figure out how a guy in January who's a two-star guy becomes a four-star guy in March. So what happened? I think remember a guy we visited at a high school in a Midwestern high school, I was there in high school, and the young guy had been on our campus for junior day and I went to his high school and watched him play some basketball and thought, we're nuts if we don't offer this guy. So we offered him and then I think it was just a dog pile. We were the second team to offer him. Two weeks later, it was just like a dog pile. I'm trying to figure out what happened in that two-week period. Maybe all the other coaches came in and saw the same thing I saw. It's an interesting phenomenon and it happens to a lot of guys. But again, there will be a lot of new stories that emerge this fall. So, our list right now that we're working off of, we'll put the brakes on it and then in October, November, we'll see what it looks like. There'll be some new prospects added, so if someone jumps off the boat, there will probably be someone there to put on the boat. Some schools will have their guys locked up and they won't be worried about that. They'll be working on juniors in September.

Q: What's your number of scholarships this year?

KF: Probably 20, 19 or 20, somewhere in that ballpark like usual.

Q: Made some inroads into Nebraska the last couple of years. What have you seen out of Drew Ott?

KF: We took the redshirt off Drew last fall during the season. It was two things, we were inexperienced on the defensive line and had a real need. We also were really impressed with the way Drew was working everyday. It was a 50-50 proposition. We

decided it would be the best thing for him and he was in agreement with it, so we through him out there on the field and thought he did a really good job. The good thing is I think that experience would help him moving forward. That was our thought process. He wasn't really ready to play Big Ten football last fall, but I think that experience will push him forward faster than we could've done. He had a really good spring and we're looking forward to seeing him on the field the next three years.

Q: Has he developed the way you thought he would?

KF: Absolutely he has. He's got a great attitude, mindset. He doesn't say a lot but he works hard.

Q: I know you're not out on social media . . .

KF: How do you know that?

Q: You're right, I don't know that.

KF: I read some of those sites. The NBC stuff, they have the "Talk." Those are some awful reports, by the way. I guess they're short because they have to be, anyway.

Q: Some of the stuff that I get it about James and his career has been pretty bruising at times. I don't get it. The expectations he faced coming in as basically the best high school player Iowa has had in a long time, do you think there was some incongruence there?

KF: I don't get that. I've gotten some feedback on that. I just don't get that. I don't know. Other than the fact he's had an appendicitis attack, I'm trying to think of something negative I could say about James and even there, he had it at a good time as opposed to October, November. It started with his first appearance, the Penn State game [2010]. It was pretty phenomenal really. He's an outstanding football player. If there's anything negative being said, I don't get it.

What's the knock on him?

Q: He hasn't taken his game to an all-Big Ten level, based on his reputation coming out of high school.

KF: I read the preseason watch lists. There are like five Ohio State guys on there. There is a good group of linebackers in our conference right now. I'll go back to when I was here in the '80s. In the '80s, for awhile at least, every year Michigan had three offensive linemen on the all-Big Ten team. I told our guys your all-Big Ten will come in April when the draft comes. The best evaluators in football are the NFL people. They're they best evaluators of college football players. And I'll put an asterisk by that, you can be a great college player and not be a great pro prospect. The objective is to be a great college player if you are a college player.

James Morris is going to play for a long time when he gets out of college. He's an excellent player, he's a great athlete. His attitude and the things he does where the fans can't see and the media can't see, he's over the top. He's in an elite category. [LB Christian Kirksey also was at the B1G media days.] The last time we brought two linebackers to media day it was Pat Angerer and A.J. Edds. Certainly, two very different personalities now we're talking about. Two totally different personalities, and yet in a way very similar. Edds plays a position, as you guys know, that position is invisible in our defense, pretty much, but we don't play very well if we don't have a good player at that position. Chris is as talented of a guy as we've had at that position since I've been here. You guys have met him. Tremendous young man, unbelievable attitude. And then James, I mean this guy is a really good football player and he's a tremendous guy. Pat was a great leader and he had his own delivery. James' delivery is certainly different, but I listen to James talk and the depth of his thoughts, (whistle). What award did he win? That political science award? I was definitely not a candidate for that award. He's just on a different level.

I know this, I wouldn't trade him.

Q: [Are Iowa's LBs underrated?]

KF: I don't know if they're underrated. There are a lot of good players in our conference. I'm not slighting anybody. It's conceivable there could be six or eight [candidates for all-Big Ten linebacker]. [Max] Bullough is one, right? [Ryan] The guy Shazier at Ohio State. And there's another one . . . [Chris] Borland from Wisconsin. Those three guys are really good players, but our guys are really good players, too. We have a lot of good quarterbacks this year, which one do you want? There are four or five you'd love to have who are coming back. In '02, there wasn't anybody. In '02 at this meeting, quarterbacks were terrible in this league. The sky is falling, our conference is getting beat. So, Ohio State wins the national championship that year and Brad Banks is player of the year and runner-up for the Heisman. You just never know, but our three guys are really good players. If James is a lightning rod, that's a shame. I thought you were talking about Vandenberg. I know he was a lightning rod. Greg, me and him. I was just visiting with someone last night who was up in Minnesota visiting with Chad. Chad said they love James. It wouldn't shock me at all if he made their team. Sometimes, you're in the wrong place at the wrong time, but you're still you. There are a lot of things that go into it, but it's easy just to say it's that guy. I'm trying to figure out what James Morris' downside would be. If we could find 10 more of him . . .

Q: Is it as simple as you guys were 4-8 last year?

KF: Yeah, it's as simple as that. When you're 4-8, everything is bad. Believe me, first-hand I understand that.

Q: Could it also be he's the local guy? The expectation is four-year all-American.

KF: Marv Cook was a local, too. He was pretty good. They're

the same kind of guy. I don't know what people are expecting or what they want him to be, but we're thrilled he's on our football team.

Q: QB question [Freshmen maybe and the possibility that Nic Shimonek could play next year?]

KF: I don't think ever. Tate was a run-and-pass guy. I can tell you one who was good as a freshman was Dan Marino. I was there when he was a sophomore. He did pretty well when he got in there and the rest is history. It happens. If a guy is good enough, it's not impossible.

Q: [Question on Northwestern and the difficulties of prepping for two QBs]

KF: They're both good players. They're very different players, but they're good players. We certainly had a hard time containing their offense. [The one-two QB punch keeping Iowa off balance.] It's like preparing for two different offenses, absolutely.

Q: You always use baseball metaphors. What does that go back too?

KF: I love baseball. I loved it when I was younger. My dad coached it. It was to the point where I almost played that in college. I thought about that. I got derailed for a good reason, but I just like baseball. There's carryover in all sports. I wasn't a great basketball player and I didn't wrestle. Baseball was something I enjoyed. I don't follow it closely, but I just like baseball. It's part of my DNA.

Q: Do you follow the Pirates much? They're in second place.

KF: [Someone got hurt, didn't catch the name.] Keep your fingers crossed. Clint Hurdle is an excellent manager. He's got one downside and it's that he's a Michigan fan. That's a downside. So is Jim Leyland, by the way. I got to meet Tony

LaRussa through Cal Eldred. That's one of the thrills of my life to get to visit with him a little bit. All three of those guys would've been great football coaches, too. They're great guys.

Q: Do you get a chance to go to any games at all?

KF: We used to go to an Indians game every summer in July. We haven't done that now in a couple of years, but our kids were Indians fans. We went to a Pirates in the new stadium. I remember it being 105 degrees in the sun. Not a lot, though. I still like baseball, but my wife doesn't especially, so that ends that discussion, right?

Q: You could go to a Kernels game?

KF: We just never seem to find the time.

Q: You're enjoying the Pirates?

KF: This is the year. This is the year. They finally invested a little bit and they're keeping their players.

Q: Who was your favorite player growing up?

KF: Baseball? Probably the most memorable thing I can give you, my first trip to Forbes Field. I was in elementary school or might've been in junior high. I'll never forget seeing Roberto Clemente for the first time. You just talk about beauty and grace. There was a certain charisma and electricity that he gave off. And then in the bottom of the ninth, he drilled one to center. When he hit a ball, it went on a line. When he threw a ball, it went on a line. There wasn't much out his way that he wasn't going to track down. He was a great defensive player. If he had played in Chicago or New York, he'd be an all-time legend. He comes to mind. I was born in Detroit. I saw a guy wearing an Al Kaline T-shirt the other night. I checked in the other night and saw a guy in a No. 6 Al Kaline T-shirt. I thought, you've got to be kidding me. No.

6 Bill Russell, a great number. Al Kaline, Clemente, those are two pretty good guys. I always liked Manny Sanguillen. He was enthusiastic and unorthodox, but a great player.

Q: Where were you when you heard about Clemente?

KF: You never forget that. My dad always had the radio on in the morning. I remember laying in bed and his room was around the corner and both doors were open and I heard the news. It was really a sad day. The guy who wrote "When Pride Still Mattered" also wrote the Clemente book. Brian has read it and said it was excellent. I haven't gotten to it. My eyes are bigger than my stomach. If I retire, I'll at least get to read that. It's unfortunate. He's misunderstood a little bit because of the language barrier. He wasn't comfortable with the media, so he got unfairly slammed a little bit sometimes. Tremendous human being. That was a tragic thing. Tremendous player and a great person.

Q: Northwestern question on the two QBs, Trevor Siemian and Kain Colter.

KF: It's like preparing for two different offenses. Whatever the solution is, we have to come up with a better one because we sure didn't contain them last year. We really struggled. We'll have to find a better way to defend them. It's a challenge.

Q: Have you ever used a two-QB system?

KF: We did in 1981. I'm dating myself a little bit. Probably not the same ratio, but there are some parallels. It puts more pressure on defense. You have to prepare for a throwing game and option game. The only good news is depending on who's in the game, at least you have some idea of what to expect. Nonetheless, there are only so many hours a week to practice.

Q: What do you think is tougher to defend, the pass or the read option?

KF: I'd say based on last year, they ran for about 380 on us or 400. It seemed like 500. We'll have to stop it a little bit better. That's the starting point.

Q: Question on Northern Illinois

KF: We had tremendous respect last year. They've done a great job there, going back to coach Novak. He really built a great program there. The coaches who have come after him have done a wonderful job. They've been a good football team, a good program, for quite awhile. We went into that game last year with tremendous respect for them, knowing that they had just graduated a quarterback. So here we are a year later, they have a Heisman candidate replacing a guy who could've been a Heisman candidate. It's going to be a heckuva game. We were fortunate to win last year. It's going to be a big challenge for us this year.

Q: [Rather play them at home than Soldier?]

KF: I'd rather play at home against anybody. We lost at home plenty last year. That doesn't guarantee anything. Home or on the road, they're a good football team. To do what they've done over the years, that means you can win on the road. They've been in Big Ten stadiums, BCS stadiums, that's not a big deal to them. It can only be a factor if we make it a factor. We have to play well.

Q: [Familiarity with NIU help?]

KF: We're familiar with them, but they're familiar with us. That stuff is all a wash. They were a good team last year. They lost to us in a game we easily could've lost and then they didn't lose again. That didn't surprise me. When we left Soldier Field, they were every bit as good as we thought they were going into it. The quarterback just kept getting better and better and that's a good combination.

PART THREE (as transcribed by Brendan Stiles of

HawkeyeDrive.com) :

Q: What's your policy for students and players who are dealing with off-the-field issues and disciplinary problems?

KF: In terms of...

Q: In terms of getting arrested or having issues, just what's your policy that you have established from the beginning?

KF: Uh ... OK, behavior or academics?

Q: Either way.

KF: Well, both sort of go either way. You know, if I become aware of something, probably like most people, you want to gather all the facts and then you do what you feel is appropriate. And it's probably about as simple as that, but it's hardly simple typically. And then, you know, every case has its own individual set of circumstances and there are different levels of conduct issues if you're talking about underage possession of alcohol versus something a little bit more egregious. It may require an immediate suspension. I don't know about immediate dismissal. We'd have to have all the facts in front and that's possible I guess if something is just obvious. But if you're not sure, I think if it's something very severe and bad, then we'd probably suspend the player, get all the facts and then make an appropriate decision.

Q: Some other coaches have said it starts with recruiting. Would you agree with that? Like, looking for...

KF: Policies?

Q: Yeah, kind of like looking for if you see any red flags with a prospect who has issues?

KF: That's a whole different discussion. Yeah, if you want to talk about evaluating prospects, certainly yeah, those are red

flags and if we're aware of those types of things, yeah, that's a huge factor. I'm talking about players on our team that we've brought into our program. Once we brought them in, they're our players and we're going to try to be as fair, much like you would as a parent. And I'm not saying you'd never kick a child out of the house. Sometimes, I guess you do that with an older child. But again, it's important to have all the facts and if it's something that I'd consider to be very severe and egregious, then yeah, there might be an immediate suspension until you have all the facts. There's something that I would consider to be a typical college violation. Speeding tickets, underage possession. I doubt a suspension would be merited at all for that. But it's a really subjective process and the big thing is to be fair. Because you have a lot of people ... it affects not only that player, but your entire team, your entire population.

Q: What do you feel Gary Andersen brings to Wisconsin?

KF: You know, we're going to find out. Obviously, Gary did a wonderful job. We played Utah State back in 2002 and I'm not sure if he was the second or third coach since that time. But it's really obvious they did a great job, not only last year – they had a really good team last year – but that didn't happen overnight. I got to see them on TV a couple of times last year. They were very well-coached and played extremely well. The fact that Gary is hired by a guy that knows a little something about football, he knows Wisconsin about as well as anybody, you know, I just think it's probably going to be a great marriage and my guess is we're going to continue to see great football out of the Wisconsin football program.

Q: How much do you feel like you've changed over the years? I think the speculation outside is Kirk Ferentz is conservative with play-calling, stubborn, doesn't want to change with the times, things like that. How much of a misperception is that?

KF: I think everybody evolves. In any profession, you have to

do it. You know, we work with a young population and particularly in recruiting, things change and have changed just really dramatically. You have to evolve. I don't know if you change because you don't want to lose, I don't think ... not that you don't constantly evaluate your core beliefs, but I don't want to change those everyday. I don't think you always want to change your identity. But things evolve and things change each week and all those types of things. But you know, I would just suggest this: Not to make this too general, but in sports, when you're winning, whatever you're doing is pretty good and when you're losing, whatever you're doing is the reason you're losing. So it really kind of boils down to that. You know, whether a coach is stoic or demonstrative on the sidelines for instance, if that coach wins, you need to be more stoic and that's the answer. Or if you're a very demonstrative coach, 'Hey, that's why that team's winning. The coach is very demonstrative.' And then when you lose, it's exactly the opposite. You know, it's interesting. If you watch NFL teams and they fire coaches, which happens, you know, 6-10 times every year, if you read the stories, typically, you know, 'We need a player's coach.' So they hire a player's coach and then two years later when they go to the next guy, 'Hey we need a guy that's stern.' You can write the scripts and the bottom line is there's a lot more upside when you're winning. Everybody's happier and everything you're doing looks a lot better. Case in point, up-tempo offenses, spread offenses, that's what you got to do. So ironically, that in our first championship game in the history of the Big Ten, you've got two teams that didn't get the memo. 'Oh my gosh, how did that happen?' We've had two teams go to the Rose Bowl, or emerge as championship teams out of the Big Ten championship game, that didn't get the memo. 'How could that be?' So it's simple as you got to do what you do and do it well.

Q: When Ken [O'Keefe] decided to go to Miami and you were looking for an offensive coordinator, were you looking to

change what you guys were doing on offense?

KF: I was looking to get the best coach and part of being the best coach for Iowa is being the best fit for Iowa and believe it or not, I'm not so set in my ways. I don't want to call every play and I don't want to tie a guy's hands. But there are certain things that I just don't want to see and you know, those are discussions you all have when you're in the dating process...

Q: Would you say it's what you don't want to see in terms of personality or what's going on on the field?

KF: Yeah, just how we play. I mean, there are certain plays and axioms in football, no matter what style you play, that just based on your belief system aren't going to work. You know, there's some common ground that has to be there, but the onside of that, I was looking for the best possible coach and I had a list that covered a lot of ground. I mean, a lot of demographics, a lot of age groups, different levels – NFL, Division-III – you know, I had a pretty wide range of people. I wanted to spend time investigating, but the bottom line is you really want to get a guy that you really thought would fit with our staff, with our program and fit at Iowa.

Q: Do you and Greg ... I guess, how much do you interject on your opinion of what you feel Iowa football is under Kirk Ferentz with a balanced attack...

KF: Yeah, it's, I think we've had a good communication system and it started right from the first conversation I think. You know, Greg was no stranger to who we are or what we were. You know, he knew Joe and he knew Ken. Joe Philbin worked with Greg. He knew Ken. Those guys had visited with him and then the Jim Caldwell connection. So there's some commonality there and Greg and I had met each other socially. But it became really apparent to me the first time he came in and visited with us that it was a consensus when he left campus that

there's a common ground here. So I think he was comfortable with what he knew about us and I think it was a two-way street. You know, it's funny we get these H.R. memos about, 'Do this, do that.' In football, you work with each other in such a close proximity and there's daily communication. It's a really different working environment than apparently a lot of jobs on campus are. So I think we have great communication on our staff and I think we're all, as I said earlier, he has been here a year now, so he knows us and knows our players. When he came here, he knew nobody. He knew nothing, he knew nobody. So it's hard when you're the new guy coming in and you've got to learn everything and everybody and what have you. It's a lot easier on the other side.

Q: How much of a departure has there been from what you and Ken have done up to last year with what Greg is trying to do offensively? I mean, is it night and day?

KF: Uh, you know, I don't think night and day. There are some differences in some ways. But you know...

Q: Well like you said, everybody wants you to do spread, 5-wide, no backfield...

KF: Yeah. Throw in the Wildcat. That had a crash landing. A quick crash landing. But you know, that's just football. The 46, up and down, all that stuff. But you do what you do best with your players and I think we're a lot further down the road than we were a year ago at this time. I really do. But you know, it has all gone really well. Greg is an excellent coach, an excellent teacher.

Q: In terms of change, how much do you get involved with and pay attention to what's going on with social networks and different forms of communication?

KF: We talk about it a lot. Yeah, we talk about it a lot. I'm still trying to figure out what Glide is. Do you know what Glide is? You got that one down?

Q: No.

KF: Yeah, OK.

Q: What is it?

KF: Well, I don't know. I know what Vine is. I've got Vine, I've got Instagram.

Q: Video.

KF: Yeah, so... but we talk about it a lot. Young guys keep us ... you'd be amazed. Believe it or not, we're not all dinosaurs. Jim Reid is a phenom on social media. But I mean, that's a good example. Jim's a really veteran coach, but Jim also understands you can't coach if you can't recruit and the way to get to recruits is through Facebook and all that stuff, so... and that really impressed me with Jim. But I'm not surprised because Jim wants to be the best coach he can be and realizes that's a part of. If I get to the point where I absolutely deem it necessary to Facebook or Twitter or tweet, whatever the proper term is, then I guess I'll do it. But right now, I think we have enough guys covering ground on it and I understand that's a big part of the world we live in. And then once guys get in our program, I still want to encourage them when they're in our building to look at each other and talk to each other. Communicate with each other. Do the same thing in the dining hall. I guess that's the healthy thing to do and I encourage them to do it with their friends and their girlfriends occasionally, too. You know, look them in the eye and actually talk. I think some of that old-fashioned stuff is still good, just like blocking and tackling still works in football. It'll never change.

Q: Hey Coach, speaking of football, as the longest-tenured coach in the Big Ten, what is some advice you have for the newcomers in the conference in Andersen and Hazell.

KF: Hahaha. I'm not real good at giving advice. You know, both

guys got to where there at based by what they've done, just like every other coach in the room had to obviously accomplish something to get to the point they're at in their careers. You know, you just keep doing what you do. Obviously, whatever they've done has made them successful. They're both very successful coaches already. Much more so than I was when I came to Iowa. They come in with the good résumés, I didn't. So I don't think I'm one to be giving them advice. Maybe they could give me some.

Q: Who are some the leaders on the team that you feel will help get Iowa back on track?

KF: Well, I think you start with the three players I brought here. It's unfortunate you can't bring more. I'm just sitting here thinking about B.J. Lowery right off the bat. I don't know if we have anyone who had a better spring than B.J. I would've loved to have brought him and we've got some underclassmen too who have done a really good job. So I'm really happy with the leadership of our team since we last met in November and the feedback I get is it has been great all summer as well. So we've got some seniors, juniors, even some underclassmen and some lower guys that are all, I think, doing a good job and it's going to be a group effort. But if you look at the three guys who are here, I think they're really representative of the group of guys on our team that are thinking right and doing right.

Q: Looking at some players that maybe at the end of last year you think may have really turned it on that you think will have a breakout season this season. Are there any guys that you've noticed?

KF: Uh, really, we just got to let it all happen if it happens. I hope it does. We'll start with our backs. Last year in August, or July, I'm not sure we had a Big Ten back. In fact, I was really wondering if we did have one. I think we have two really good backs right now. How good in the Big Ten,

we'll see. That's what this year's for. So we have a lot of examples of players like that, that are further down the road than they were a year ago. We'll also have to have some new guys who haven't played much step up and do a good job. Obviously, our quarterback position, if we're going to be successful, whoever wins that job is going to have to play well. But I think we have three guys who are capable of that.

Q: [inaudible; something about if it makes doing business easier with Rutgers joining the Big Ten next year]

KF: You know, realistically it probably helps them. I think they have more to gain than we do, personally. So I think we gained a lot of TV sets, a lot of exposure. Certainly, I think we're all thrilled about that. But now they can say they're members of this conference. They couldn't say that before. I don't know if they wanted to say that. Apparently, they wanted to join. So it's probably more of a positive for them. But you know, we'll all do our part and recruiting is all about trying to identify people with whom your message will resonate with and then I can say from experience, I did coach at Pittsburgh back in 1980, there is a big difference between college football in the East and in the Midwest. I didn't know that until I went out to Iowa back in 1981. That's one of the reasons I stayed for nine years and one of the reasons I went back 14 years ago. It gets down to a matter of choice, but the first thing you have to do is get someone interested in really comparing and then they've got to make that choice. But obviously if someone would leave New Jersey or New York to come to Iowa, they've got to overcome that distance factor and you can't do a thing about that. So we have to overcome that hurdle.

Q: What differences do you see?

KF: Uh, you know, the interests, and I'll just stick with my example with Pittsburgh. You know, the year I was there, we were second in the country. I had nothing to do with it. I was

a lowly GA. But, you know, if we weren't playing Penn State or Notre Dame, which we didn't play either of them in Pitt Stadium that year, we did play West Virginia, and their fans travel like Iowa fans travel, so it was a sellout. Otherwise, you know in Pittsburgh, at that time – I don't want to talk about now, but at that time – it was all about Sundays and the Steelers. You opened up any sports section, it was all about the Steelers on Page One. Pitt was on Page Five. So I guess there's a little bit more of a pro mentality when you're in a pro area. I lived in Baltimore for three years and witnessed that. I lived in Cleveland for three years and witnessed that. You know, so we don't have to fight over that in our state. We don't have any pro teams in Iowa – major league teams or National Football League teams. So we really do have the state's undivided attention in the fall. That could be a good thing or a bad thing. But it has been a good thing most of the time.

Q: You mentioned getting to New Jersey regularly...

KF: Absolutely. Didn't get there this year. I had a wedding. I love it.

Q: What location...

KF: I'm not giving that up. Are you from New Jersey? No, I'm not giving that up.

Q: What have you seen when you've been there...

KF: We go to Ocean City. I'm teasing you. Mainly because I love it, and I screamed and kicked the first time I went there. So I'm more used to the outer banks where things are spread out. I thought my wife was insane. Actually, one of my good buddies who coaches the Falcons, he's from Philly. And who from Philly doesn't go to Ocean City, right? So she started going up there when I was in Baltimore. During training camp, I wouldn't be home for four weeks, so she took the kids up there. They all love it, so she dragged me out

there the first year. 'Look at all these people.' I was miserable. Then after two days, I loved it. So that's my place to disappear. I love it.

Q: Do you think the Big Ten will be well-received there?

KF: Absolutely. I think the whole thing will be very well-received and I think it's great for the conference.

Q: When you look at the growth of the Big Ten Network, how has that changed the Iowa recruiting pitch over the years?

KF: Well you know, it has just benefited our whole conference. Everybody looked at our commissioner, I think they looked at him funny when the idea got hatched. He was sort of an enemy of the people. I can't remember the name of that character, that guy ... he was the crazy doctor. Well, that's Commissioner Delany and now everybody wants to copy him and is trying to copy him. Commissioner Delany, he's a very visionary guy and it has been great press. On the financial aspects, it has been great, but more importantly, I think we have a great conference to sell. I think we all want the conference to do well and I think it's great for everybody.

Q: How has it helped your ability to get guys outside the state of Iowa?

KF: You'd be surprised. When you talk to both fans and alums, and then obviously prospects, high school coaches. They have a feel for the Big Ten and they have a feel for Iowa via the Big Ten Network. That's something that wasn't available at one time and obviously too, the information on the Internet and all that stuff now is much different than it used to be. So there's just so much more communication and that's true in every fashion of life. But I think the Big Ten Network has been a huge deal for our conference and has really helped us.

Q: Have you thought about targeting at all?

KF: Yep. We haven't had that discussion, but it can be anybody on defense you can get nailed on it. Again, I'll just add that I think we need to really be careful about our approach to this. You know, I think I'm factual in saying there was one ejection last year in our conference and we watched it as a group of coaches last February. It was a bang-bang play and I'll just say it – if it was one of those ones where everybody in the stands and my sister in Fort Collins watching it on TV says, 'Hey, that guy should be ejected,' then eject the player. But if there's a gray area, I think you really need to be – and again, we're not talking about a 15-yard penalty – and I can't imagine anybody involved in the game not interested in player safety and I think it was that way 30 years ago. Certainly, the rules have been tweaked and changed in a positive way, but you really need to be careful about human error and the analogy I'll give you is officiating an onside kick without instant replay. It's impossible. Even if you know it's coming. If you don't know it's coming, forget it. It's a hard play to officiate and I'd say the same about targeting, unless again, it's just a blatant ... we saw it a couple of years ago. There was one team in particular where they had a guy that was, you know, just intentionally hitting punt returners before and it was obvious. Kick the guy out. But on these ones that are too close to call, don't call them. You can't call them. It's ridiculous.

Q: Does doubt creep into the defender's mind?

KF: I think it has become more and more challenging each and every year. It still gets down to the interpretation of the rules. And then the other thing about the targeting thing, in my opinion, like the onside kick rule, it puts undue pressure and unwanted pressure on the officials and if I were the commissioner of sports, one of the objectives would be to take some pressure off them. They have enough pressure on them already, I think. I mean, that's a hard job. I have a great appreciation for their job. So I think personally, you have to

be careful how much you put on them just like I would with how much you put on your quarterback. I mean, just blame it on him, right? I told the guy. I mean, that's easy.

Q: [inaudible; about targeting]

KF: I don't think anybody is teaching targeting. I can't imagine anyone doing that. But there are players who do dumb things sometimes. I remember one we had our first year, at Northwestern, who was guilty of a really dumb act on the field and more guilty of a dumb comment afterwards. Like he thought it was OK. Yeah, you know, those need to be dealt with, those kinds of things. But you've got to be careful. It's a slippery slope and really tough for the officials, quite frankly.

Q: There are officials who would do that.

KF: Yeah. And I think the guy who got ejected last year was a DB. And it was a bang-bang play. To me, if you look at it three times and it's like, 'Yep,' there's that. 15 yards? Sure. Personal foul? Sure. That's a pretty steep penalty to me.

Q: Did you see the Clowney hit? It has been talked about recently as an example of targeting.

KF: That looked like a good football play to me, and it looked like a guy blew an assignment, from what I could tell. I mean, it was a great play on his part, but somebody blew an assignment. I mean, you don't let a guy... it was a great play on his part, but when that guy's unblocked, bad things are going to happen if you're an offense.

Q: Going back to social media, you're still a no with Twitter for your guys, right?

KF: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: But they're able to do Vine and Instagram and...

KF: They are. Yeah, it's...

Q: A lot of gray area for you.

KF: I mean, where do you draw the line? I could cite a lot of examples on Twitter. We just had one very recently in our country, right, where a very national news item took place, a news event took place, and a couple of NFL players predictably and emotionally tweeted afterwards. I'm not passing judgment on it, yay or nay, but predictably, a day later they wanted to retract their statements and the one fact about all this stuff is whatever you put out there is out there and it's part of your DNA. So that's my concern and you know, there are countless examples of people that are older and more experienced than college athletes or college students that have regretted what they said. And it's probably a very small percentage of what gets put out there. But I've heard the argument, 'Well, if it was only one time, that's a great learning experience.' Sometimes, it can be painful. Sometimes, it can come at the absolutely worst time and the thing is, I think about my own children. Sometimes you make mistakes that really stick with you for a long time and mistakes, they're just like anything when something bad happens. It takes a lot longer to get that off your ledger. I don't see the upside to having guys out there and vulnerable to that, knowing they could do numerous other things.

Q: Do you talk about that in recruiting?

KF: I don't really talk about it. But I think if you asked any of our players, you know, if that's the most important thing to them in a college selection, then they probably don't fit well with us anyway, so that's OK.

Q: Has there ever been an instance where you've pulled an offer from someone you were recruiting because of something they said on social media?

KF: I'm not going to say that's necessarily true, but I can

remember a call to a prospect. We saw some things on a social media site that were more than questionable in our minds, so I had a private conversation with the prospect about it and asked him to maybe consider taking that off his site. Then the question that would probably get asked is, 'Would your mom be OK if she looked at that? How would she feel about that?' And it frightened me a little bit when the prospect informed me that his mom was OK with it. So that was a little bit of a scary moment, so we did make a decision to probably go in a different direction. It was a mutual decision that it probably wasn't going to be a great marriage. That's frightening.

Q: Could you talk about the progress of Cole Croston? You coached his father as well.

KF: As you know, Cole looks like a colt, or a big puppy. He has got the big hands and he's really not that much lighter than Dave was when Dave came in. But that was a little different era. But I tell you, Cole did a great job last year. He has great football instinct. He really practices hard. He works hard. He is a very good listener and yeah, he works hard. So I think he has got a really good chance to develop into a ... and we've had some really good walk-on linemen. You know, Matt Tobin started two years for us and to compare the two, I would say he's a little bit further along than Matt was at this point. But the key now is with moving forward and it's interesting. If you think about it, I coached his dad in 1982. It really puts it in perspective. It's neat. But Cole is a great young man.

Q: Have you ever coached a father and son before?

KF: Dan Hartlieb was on our team last year. Dan's just going to school now. But we have had a few instances like that and it's kind of neat we're getting to that point now where we get sons of former players that I associate with as their assistant coach.

Q: You've had some bad luck at the running back position in terms of injuries. Are you going to have to use bubble wrap this year?

KF: No. No. I wish we could, but we're not allowed. They wouldn't run fast enough.

Q: In all seriousness, is there any pressure that you could take off of them in practice?

KF: Well, one thing that I, and we've done this forever, guys that have been tackled in Big Ten games usually don't get tackled much in practice, if at all. You know for instance, Fred Russell in 2003, he didn't get tackled once in camp, carried the ball a million times in 2002. So I felt like we really didn't need to see him get tackled live. So I think it's probably a safe barometer that Bullock and Weisman will not be tackled much this camp. But the guys that we haven't seen tackled a lot, you have to see players get tackled and then conversely, our defensive team needs to do some tackling, too. But it's a question that every coach asks – What is an intelligent ratio? So it's an age old discussion dilemma.

Q: Have you seen a run of injuries at one position like you've had at running back?

KF: Yeah, you know ... I mean, probably. You know, we had a bad run last year at the line. If you think about two guys that ended up missing ... they came off the field for the seasons. Blythe never really got back to full speed once he was hurt, so there was three of our starters. And then you know, when it happens with running backs, it's a pretty noticeable position and we've had some unusual circumstances, to say the least.

Q: What's your recruiting number for this year?

KF: 18-20 like every year. You know, could be 22. Could be 18. Time will tell.

Q: How have you looked at recruiting different areas with new assistants and are you pleased with what you've seen thus far?

KF: Yeah, I've been really pleased and it's like this technology stuff. Of all the things that are evolving, nothing is evolving faster and things aren't changing any more than they are in recruiting, more so than offense, defense, special teams. So that's just something we're just constantly looking at and then you the industry part of it is changing things, social media and how its effect is changing things, conference realignment is changing things. I mean, there are just a lot of variables. So we'll continue to look at areas and we gave a lot of thought to that one morning last week. That was one of the things I wanted to kind of go back and review. We'll have some discussion on it when we get together next week, see what we think about it. Yeah, we'll continue to look at it. But the areas we've settled in, we're not to change that, obviously. We have our core Big Ten areas, and then Texas. I don't see us changing that. The peripheral areas, it's really just how much and how little. It's not really an area we quantify. We don't have official statistics. But that's a continuing discussion.

Q: In what ways would you say you've changed as a college football coach from when you first got to Iowa up until now?

KF: It's daily. I mean, maybe not daily. That might be an exaggeration. But probably weekly or monthly. Just because things are changing around us, as I said. Our conference looks a lot different than it did in '99. It's going to look a lot different next year. So I'd start there. Recruiting has changed. To me, the game hasn't changed all that much. You could make some arguments, but not all that much and the things that are going to make you successful don't ever change. But the peripheral does change routinely and you just have to constantly be thinking about it, talking about it and then assessing how much or how little do we want to make an indentation. That's I think the key.

Q: I know you said the football stuff doesn't change as much, but when you do notice different nuances that pick up speed, do you find yourself looking at them as things you have to do more of or do you feel being the way you've been will just carry on?

KF: Well, I'll just go back to when I got here. The two biggest complaints I heard were, 'We didn't spread it out enough,' which I assume means four wides because Purdue was having success with "Basketball on grass" and 'We didn't blitz enough.' That was the other complaint. That talk died down a bit in '02, '03 and '04. Then you know, '06 and '07 it went back up. Now it's not just spreading out, but up tempo, down tempo. I find it really ironic the championship team the only two years we've had a championship game, they didn't get the memo on tempo, they didn't get the memo on spreading it out. But I think a lot of times, you know, when it comes to football – not the other stuff, just football – we deal with a lot of generalities and whatever the buzzwords of the day were or whatever's up on the board. Again, I go back to '82. Mike White threw the ball 70 times at Kinnick Stadium, set a Kinnick Stadium passing record when we played Illinois in '82, scored 10 or 13 points. I can't remember, but I know we won. He threw the ball up and down the field, but they couldn't score when they had the ball at the 20. So you know, and at that time, we were a conservative conference. My point is, you can't just bunch things in there. The bottom line is this – if you're successful, if you win enough games, then what you're doing is pretty good, no matter what your style may be. If you're losing, it ain't good enough. Your personality, your style, whatever. The color jersey you wore. The shirts. The uniforms. I mean, Alabama's throwback uniforms look pretty good to me. They look the same as they did 40 years ago. So they didn't jump on board with the "You got to have a different uniform every week." They're the best team in college football right now. So you know, it's kind of, it's what you choose to do.

Q: Of all the labels you've heard about yourself through the years, is there one you find more annoying than the rest or one where you're thinking, "Of all the things you could say, why is this what you say"?

KF: Ah, I wouldn't call it annoying. I think they're entertaining, actually. You know, but it has always been that way. I mean, you go back, I imagine when the forward pass got invented, that was big news, you know. And that was a big change in our game. But you know, it's one of the things you talk about in sports and what Purdue was doing was pretty good and they had great, great success doing it. But Wisconsin got their thing done a whole different way and that was probably a more renovation project that Barry did in the 90s. Just as impressive as what Joe Tiller did. I would actually argue what Barry did was more impressive just because their program was down lower. I don't think there was anybody lower in the conference in '89 when we left and Barry went there. So you know, but he did it one way and Joe Tiller did it another way, but I would say those are two of the great coaching jobs that I've witnessed in our conference in my lifetime. So you know, you just got to figure out what your best method is and both those guys changed and tweaked to along the way. It's just what you think is best.

Q: Going back to offensive philosophy, do you sense that in Year Two of Greg Davis, that the returning guys have really picked up and really impressed?

KF: Oh, there's no question about it. Greg came in last year and he was new to everything and everybody. If you've ever been through that, that's an uncomfortable thing. When you're new to an organization or group, or in our case a team, there's a lot of learning that goes on. Starting with "I know No. 14. What's his name? Does his name go with the number?" And then it just goes from there. So yeah, there's a lot of learning on that end and in his case, pretty much what he does is what we chose to do, so there's a lot of learning on the

other end, too. We don't want a lot of guys learning who he was and what he was. So needless to say, you know, it's not an easy process and I think there's probably a much better comfort level with everybody involved. It'd be nice to have a veteran quarterback like we had last year, but it just didn't work that way. James ended up being a victim of circumstance more than anything, I think. James is a great football player and a great young man. Greg is a great football coach and a great man. So yeah, I think it should be a luxury.

Q: Do you think a new offensive system takes multiple years before it becomes a luxury?

KF: Every situation is unique. You know, every situation is unique. I mean, you can find examples of it being one year before, poom, taking off. So every situation is unique.

Q: Do you think there are some offensive players that maybe fly under the radar a little bit?

KF: Well, I'll kind of go both ways on that. You know, if you go back to last year, OK. I don't know if we had a running back – a single Big Ten running back – on our team. It turns out Bullock, who would not block as a freshman, became a good running back and Weisman, who we thought could be a good fullback, became a good running back. So part of our challenges last year was we didn't have enough firepower. You probably noticed that if you watched us. We had I think a pretty a good quarterback, but we just didn't have a lot of firepower, so I think we're a little further down the road that way and we're a little further down the road communicationally. How good we'll be? I don't know. But I think we have good players like our running backs who will be better than they were a year ago. I think our line has a chance to be better because we have more experience now. That doesn't mean we don't get three players injured like we did a year ago. I can't predict that. Our tight ends, we're a little bit deeper there and we have more experience. You know, there

are some things that are better than they were a year ago. But we still have some questions to answer, too. So that's what seasons are all about and that's where great stories unfold, hopefully.

Q: How would you assess from your view how Bill O'Brien handled last season at Penn State?

KF: Flawlessly from my perspective. I've got a little bit of an insider's advantage because my son worked with Bill for several years before he was named the head coach at Penn State. First of all, he was a tremendous selection. I give them a lot of credit for finding Billy. But he's a tremendous coach, a tremendous person. Great family guy. So all those things, walking into an extremely challenging situation, there's no handbook for things like that and from my perspective looking 700-800 miles away, he just did a wonderful job. I mean, he had a lot of things to accomplish before they could even practice back in August. But again, from an outsider's perspective, he handled every step as in depth as anybody could. I think he showed during the year the kind of coach he is. He has got a great staff. Penn State has always been a tremendous program, so you know, just give him an awful lot of credit. To say it's a surprise, I can't say that. I kind of anticipated that and I only anticipate it getting better and better for him because ... that's a whole separate discussion and one I'll never really understand. That's commentary. I'm not going down that path. But I know this: Whatever's in front of Bill, he'll meet it as well as anybody can and he'll do a wonderful job, just like he did last year. And whether it's one year or five years, 10 years, growing up in that part of the country, I can never envision the day where Penn State's not a strong, well-represented program and just having a little personal knowledge about Bill O'Brien and who he is, because Bill is there, I can't imagine that program being anything but a model program.

2013 Big Ten Media Days (complete coverage)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

In case you missed anything, here is complete coverage from *HawkeyeDrive.com* of the 2013 Big Ten Football Media Days held at the Hilton Chicago, featuring links from both Days One (July 24) and Two (July 25):

7/24/2013: DAY ONE COVERAGE

[Iowa preseason 2-deep](#)

[Day One takeaways](#)

[Video: Kirk Ferentz](#)

[Video: James Morris, Christian Kirksey, Brett Van Sloten](#)

7/25/2013: DAY TWO COVERAGE

[Day Two observations](#)

[Video: James Morris, Brett Van Sloten, Christian Kirksey](#)

**Be sure to visit [HawkeyeDrive.com](#) for ongoing coverage of Iowa football all season long.*

2013 Big Ten Media Days, Day Two video – Iowa players

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

CHICAGO, Ill. – Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's contingent of players at the 2013 Big Ten Media Days consisted of senior linebacker James Morris, senior offensive tackle Brett Van Sloten and senior linebacker Christian Kirksey.

Below are video interviews featuring Morris, Van Sloten and Kirksey that took place Thursday morning at the Hilton Chicago during the second day of Big Ten Media Days:

James Morris:

Brett Van Sloten:

Christian Kirksey: