

Kaeding retires from NFL after nine seasons

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Former Iowa kicker Nate Kaeding announced his retirement from the NFL on Thursday after playing nine seasons in the league. The news of Kaeding's retirement [was first reported by Pat Harty of the Iowa City Press-Citizen](#) and comes one month after signing as a free agent with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

During his four-year Hawkeye career, Kaeding played in three bowl games and was part of the 2002 squad that won a share of the Big Ten title with eventual national champion Ohio State. As a sophomore, the Coralville native made the game-winning field goal in Iowa's 19-16 victory over Texas Tech in the 2001 Alamo Bowl. In 2002, Kaeding won the Lou Groza Award, which is given annually to college football's top kicker and he was first-team all-Big Ten during both his junior and senior seasons with the Hawkeyes.

Kaeding was a third-round selection of the San Diego Chargers in the 2004 NFL Draft. The pick San Diego used on the Iowa City West High product was acquired as part of a trade with the New York Giants that involved quarterbacks Eli Manning and Philip Rivers.

During his eight-plus years in San Diego, Kaeding was named to two Pro Bowls and was named first-team All-Pro in 2009. He reached the postseason five times in his first six seasons and was part of three playoff wins over that stretch. During the 2007 season, the Chargers reached the AFC Championship Game where they lost 21-12 to New England. All 12 of their points in that game came courtesy of Kaeding's leg.

Injuries over the past two NFL seasons to his knee and groin led to the end of Kaeding's tenure with San Diego last fall. He was picked up by the Miami Dolphins late last season and appeared in their final two games.

As of Thursday, Kaeding retires as [the NFL's fourth-most accurate kicker all-time](#), converting on over 86 percent of his field goal attempts.

Big Ten officially approves new divisions, 9-game schedule

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The Big Ten made new formats for football divisions and scheduling official Sunday afternoon as its Council of Presidents and Chancellors unanimously approved decisions of splitting divisions into an East and West and eventually going to a nine-game conference schedule in 2016.

According to the release sent out by the conference, the divisions will take effect next year when Maryland and Rutgers become official members. [As previously reported by ESPN last week](#), each division will feature seven teams with Iowa being placed in the West.

Starting next year, Iowa will play six games every season against Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Northwestern, Purdue and Wisconsin. The Hawkeyes will have two games against teams from the East division in 2014 and 2015, and then three

opponents starting in 2016 when the schedule goes to nine games.

In the same release sent Sunday, Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany said six prior discussions were held by league athletics directors between the months of December and March. Maryland and Rutgers both announced their intentions to join the conference last November.

“The level of cooperation and collaboration was reflective of what we’ve come to expect from this group of administrators, who have worked extremely well together on a number of complex matters over the past several years,” Delany said in a statement. “We are all looking forward to ushering in this new era of Big Ten football.”

Another key detail regarding the nine-game schedule is with the unbalance of four home games versus five home games. All teams in the East division will have five home games during every even-numbered year, starting with 2016, while every team in the West division gets five home games every odd-numbered year starting in 2017.

As that pertains to Iowa’s annual game against Iowa State, the format allows the Hawkeyes to continue playing seven home games at Kinnick Stadium per season if they desire. Iowa is scheduled to play Iowa State at Kinnick Stadium in 2016 and then play at Jack Trice Stadium in Ames during the 2017 season, when the current deal on the rivalry is set to expire.

Hyde picked by Packers

By Brendan Stiles

Former Iowa defensive back Micah Hyde was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in the fifth round of the 2013 NFL Draft on Saturday. The Packers used the 159th overall pick on Hyde, who was the only Hawkeye taken in this year's draft after six Hawkeyes went off the board each of the past three years.

Hyde was a three-year starter at Iowa, spending the majority of his collegiate career at cornerback. He did start two games at free safety during his junior season before switching back over to corner. Last season, the Fostoria, Ohio native was a team captain and went on to win the Woodson-Tatum award, given annually to the Big Ten's top defensive back.

"He's a smart kid. He's a tough kid, a willing tackler," Packers cornerbacks coach Joe Whitt, Jr., told the Green Bay media Saturday afternoon. "He'll be able to go in and play the nickel, play outside at the corner if he has to.

"He understands football. That's one thing that I really like, bringing guys in that have a high football I.Q."

His selection made him the seventh defensive back to be taken from Iowa in the last six years, a stretch dating back to when Charles Godfrey was picked by Carolina in 2008.

This marks the third time in four years Green Bay has selected a Hawkeye player in the NFL Draft. The Packers used a fourth-round selection last year on former Iowa defensive tackle Mike Daniels and in 2010, former offensive tackle Bryan Bulaga was taken 23rd overall.

2013 NFL DRAFT:

Round 5 (159th overall) – Micah Hyde, CB, Green Bay Packers

UNDRAFTED FREE AGENTS:

James Vandenberg, QB, [Minnesota Vikings](#)

Matt Tobin, OL, [Philadelphia Eagles](#)

Keenan Davis, WR, [Cleveland Browns](#)

Hawkeyes conclude spring football with Kinnick scrimmage

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The theme of difference resonated throughout Kinnick Stadium on Saturday, and really, throughout the entirety of Iowa’s spring football period.

Instead of conducting an open practice similar to what took place in West Des Moines two weeks earlier, the Hawkeyes added some spice to their regimen and treated those who trekked over to Kinnick Stadium with a controlled scrimmage that looked closer to an actual spring game than a typical practice like they’ve done many times before.

“This was definitely fun,” senior defensive end Dominic Alvis said. “When you can line up for a scrimmage, man, I mean that’s perfect. You know what I mean? There’s tackling involved. There’s game situations. That was great.”

At the quarterback position, the 3-way battle rages on between sophomore Jake Rudock, junior Cody Sokol and redshirt freshman C.J. Beathard. All three signal-callers worked with the first-string and second-string offenses during Saturday’s scrimmage and as mentioned earlier in the week by offensive coordinator

Greg Davis, the QBs rotated series rather than every two snaps like they did at the West Des Moines open practice.

“I think it’s good,” Sokol said. “You know, when you’ve got that practice kind of format where you’re working on situations, I think going 2-and-2 is a great thing.

“But I think it’s great getting to own your own drive because you get a chance to see what each guy is made out of and what are they going to do? Are they going to take it all the way down the field and put it in or 3-and-out? I think it’s great.”

The battle itself remains ongoing. While one might argue based on Saturday’s showings that Rudock has the slight edge on the other two QBs, head coach Kirk Ferentz said the competition will carry over into fall camp before a decision gets made on who starts the Hawkeyes’ opener Aug. 31 against Northern Illinois.

“I think they’re all doing some things well. They all have some things to work on,” Ferentz said. “But the good thing is we’re not playing until the end of August, so we have a lot of time to let things kind of sort themselves out, if you will.

“At some point, we’re going to have to start differentiating a little bit and steer it one way or the other. But right now, we still want to let them continue to compete.”

As for the scrimmage itself, it consisted of offense against defense for four quarters – the first two of which lasted the typical 15 minutes and the last two periods shortened to 12 minutes. The offense ultimately outscored the defense (who could score points in a variety of ways), 61-37. While the result is moot, the progress displayed on both sides of the ball wasn’t.

The offensive squad was rewarded a point for every “explosive play,” which Iowa defines as any running play for 12-plus

yards or any pass play of 16-plus yards. Opportunities for “explosive plays” presented themselves Saturday in large part to the offense running no-huddle most of the afternoon, another thing that shows difference from years past.

“We don’t do it every time, but it’s definitely a little wrinkle,” senior offensive tackle Brett Van Sloten said.

Making the two most explosive plays of the entire afternoon for either squad was sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri. In the first quarter, he shook off defenders and reversed field on a big run play that set up a touchdown near the goal-line from redshirt freshman running back Michael Malloy. Then in the third quarter, Beathard called an audible when the defense sent an all-out blitz and he proceeded to dump the ball off to Canzeri, who had nothing but green in front of him en route to a 46-yard score.

“When you know that audible gets called for you, you just know, ‘You got to make it,’” Canzeri said. “You got to just make it a successful play. I was happy that it worked out.”

Defensively, the player who stood out the most Saturday was junior defensive tackle Carl Davis. Whether it was disrupting the ground game, batting down passes, or getting to the quarterback, Davis showed a little of everything Saturday.

He also continued to look like someone having fun.

“I love coming to practice and I can’t say I was always like that my freshman and sophomore year,” Davis said. “I love coming to practice now. This spring, it was great. I just feel like since I’m an older guy and I got all the guys around me, it’s just fun. We make it fun every day.”

Overall, it ended up being the kind of day one would expect. The monotony break-up was apparent to the players and the response seemed to be there in front of 16,500 spectators estimated to be on hand.

4/27/2013: Iowa spring football scrimmage video

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The Iowa Hawkeyes conducted an open scrimmage at Kinnick Stadium on Saturday that took the place of their final spring football practice.

Below are six videos from the first quarter of Iowa's spring football scrimmage on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium, plus video of Kirk Ferentz's post-scrimmage press conference. All three quarterbacks in the running for the starting job this fall – sophomore Jake Rudock, junior Cody Sokol and redshirt freshman C.J. Beathard – are seen working with both the first- and second-string offenses and against both the first- and second-string defenses in these videos.

VIDEO #1: 1s vs. 1s; QB: Rudock

VIDEO #2: 2s vs. 2s; QB: Sokol

VIDEO #3: 1s vs. 1s; QB: Beathard

VIDEO #4: 2s vs. 2s; QB: Rudock

VIDEO #5: 1s vs. 1s; QB: Sokol

VIDEO #6: 2s vs. 2s; QB: Beathard

4/24/2013: Iowa spring football notebook

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – In years past, the Iowa Hawkeyes have concluded their spring football period by conducting their final practice at Kinnick Stadium and making it open to the public. This essentially became an alternative to Iowa having an actual spring game like most schools have.

On Wednesday, the Hawkeyes made a tweak to their itinerary and appear to be inching closer to the spring game concept. Fans who gather at Kinnick Stadium on April 27 will be treated to what is being called "[a controlled scrimmage](#)" that will feature four 15-minute quarters, as well as scoring that can be done by both the offensive and defensive sides of the football.

"We're excited about that," junior wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley said. "You know, we watch other teams around the country, around the Big Ten. They're having games and we always pushed for that. We always wanted a game as well."

"It just brings a little more excitement, a little more reality, to the field."

The players seem enthusiastic about the change of pace, but they also realize that what will be expected of them won't be

too different, thus their demeanor can't be completely different either.

"I don't think it changes my approach," senior linebacker James Morris said. "When I'm going out there, I'm going out there to get better and work and improve. Whether it's a game format or a traditional practice format, it doesn't really change much for me."



Iowa offensive coordinator Greg Davis discusses the end of spring practices during his press conference held Wednesday, April 24, 2013, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

Quarterbacks "owning drives"

When Iowa offensive coordinator Greg Davis took the dais Wednesday, he first explained the scoring for Saturday's scrimmage, then immediately said the coaches still "have no idea" who will end up being the starter at quarterback this season.

Much like head coach Kirk Ferentz has throughout the spring, Davis said the 3-way battle between sophomore Jake Rudock, junior Cody Sokol and redshirt freshman C.J. Beathard remains heated and that no separation has occurred yet. But after spending the majority of the spring rotating the three QBs every two snaps, separation might start happening here soon.

The quarterbacks have recently started practicing what Davis called, "owning drives." In other words, instead of rotating after every two snaps, the three signal-callers are now rotating after every offensive series. Davis said this type of rotation will be on full display Saturday afternoon during the team's scrimmage, meaning not all three signal-callers are going to take the same number of snaps.

At the top of Davis' criteria for who ultimately wins the starting job are three things – making plays off schedule, not turning the football over and creating big plays. With that in mind, how a quarterback "owns" a drive could play a heavy emphasis in what happens.

"The quarterback is busy taking his team from here to there. That will be a big part of it," Davis said. "But also taking care of the ball, getting us in the right plays and creating explosive plays. That has been a big emphasis in evaluating those guys. If they've had an opportunity, did they create that play?"

Meanwhile, the criteria isn't nearly as complex from other offensive skill players. Among the things they're looking for in who emerges as quarterback are leadership skills, intelligence, and smooth delivery throwing the football.

And then there's the emphasis again on explosive plays.

"Our goal every week going into the game is make nine explosive plays – five in the run, four in the pass," senior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz said. "You do that, you get a good chance to win the game."



Iowa defensive coordinator Phil Parker discusses the end of spring practices during his press conference held Wednesday, April 24, 2013, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

Parker returning to secondary

One possibly overlooked part of the coaching shuffle made by Ferentz this offseason was the decision to have defensive coordinator Phil Parker hold two job titles – his current one and his former one.

A year after being promoted to defensive coordinator, Parker came to what he said Wednesday was “a mutual decision” between him and Ferentz to also work specifically with the secondary again after last season’s secondary coach, Darrell Wilson, left to take an assistant coaching role at Rutgers. Parker served as Iowa’s defensive backs coach during the first 13 seasons of Ferentz’s Iowa tenure.

“I didn’t really give it a lot of thought,” Parker said about taking over coaching the secondary again. “I was doing it for such a long time. The year before when we went through and I wasn’t actually in meetings, I kind of missed it.

“I was looking for the opportunity to come back, so I was pleased to get back there.”

One thing Parker does remain hesitant on right now though is where he'll coach from during games this fall. When he previously served as Iowa's defensive backs coach, Parker coached from the sidelines. Last season when he took over as defensive coordinator, he moved up to the press box and coached from there.

Nevertheless, he finds himself enthused to work with the secondary again and the players in that group have also taken notice of that enthusiasm.

"I think it makes a difference," junior strong safety John Lowdermilk said. "He's a great coach. He obviously played, so he knows everything that's going on. He's a really good teacher. He points little things out on film. If you take one wrong step, he's correcting you right away.

"He jokes around and says he misses us and I think he's excited to be back."

Canzeri reflects back on ACL injury

The journey back to the gridiron was a little longer than expected for Jordan Canzeri. An ACL tear last spring ultimately led to the running back redshirting as a true sophomore. Now fully healthy, Canzeri returns for the first of three remaining seasons of eligibility he has left as a Hawkeye.

On Wednesday, Canzeri was a bit more forthcoming about the injury and what ultimately led to him being redshirted. He said he felt ready to return before Iowa's season opener against Northern Illinois last season, but the coaches elected to remain cautious with him.

"I was just really head-strong and really focused to come back, to get my knee 100 percent and get back on the field with everybody," Canzeri said. "Right before the beginning of the season, I felt like I was ready to go, but I understood

the coaches' decision to hold me unless I needed to play."

Canzeri said it was a few weeks into last season when the possibility of him redshirting altogether first dawned on him, yet he continued to practice in the event he might end up being called upon due to injuries.

He also revealed the redshirt nearly got burned during Iowa's 24-21 loss to Indiana back on Nov. 3. Mark Weisman was already sidelined due to injury and there was a point in that game where Damon Bullock got hurt, only to continue playing through the pain.

"I was actually told to get ready and get warmed up," Canzeri said. "But it was good to see Damon get back up and he was fine the next couple of plays. It was so hard to be able to be so close to playing, but I understood why I wasn't, so it was fine."

Fiedorowicz looking to be more effective

A year older and now with a new position coach who has more familiarity working with tight ends, Fiedorowicz has noticed himself becoming a different player this spring. Not just in terms of maturity – which one would expect with someone entering his senior season – but also in terms of play-making ability.

Iowa's tight end group is now coached by graduate assistant D.J. Hernandez, who joined Ferentz's staff this past winter after previously working as a GA at Miami (Fla.) under Al Golden. Hernandez's brother, Aaron, is entering his fourth season playing for the NFL's New England Patriots, where he and fellow tight end Rob Gronkowski are changing the way tight end is being played.

Fiedorowicz said D.J. Hernandez has already had an enormous impact on him, from showing him and the rest of Iowa's tight ends cut-ups of his brother and other NFL tight ends, to

giving him new pointers in his game to allow him to get open more frequently in passing situations.

“I’ve learned a lot of things that I didn’t even know,” Fiedorowicz said in reference to little things in route-running he has picked up on from Hernandez. “Grinding on a defender, getting on their toes, just how important the head in the route is, getting out of your break fast. Just a lot of things that I never really thought of.”

This newfound knowledge of the position he plays has made enough of a difference during spring practices that Fiedorowicz feels he’s becoming better at route-running and getting open downfield, which in effect could create more of those explosive plays he and everyone else feels were lacking a year ago.

“I’ve had trouble with my release at the line when there’s a D-End head up on me,” Fiedorowicz said. “He has given me a move so I can avoid kind of getting bumped, so I’m still running my route. That’s the biggest thing – just getting out fast and getting into the route.”

[4/24/2013: Greg Davis/Phil Parker press conference transcripts](#)

4/24/2013: Iowa player audio with photos (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – On Wednesday, eight members of the Iowa football team spoke to the local media to discuss how things

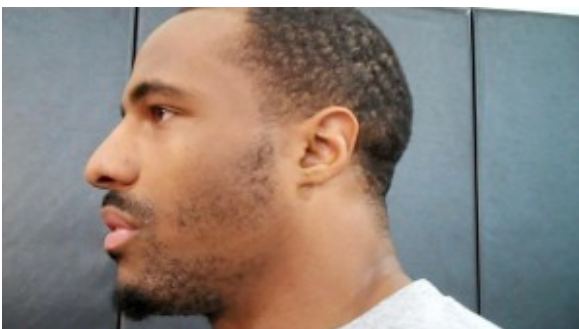
have gone entering the Hawkeyes' final spring practice on April 27 at Kinnick Stadium.

Below is audio from the following players – sophomore center Austin Blythe, junior wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley, junior strong safety John Lowdermilk, junior running back Mark Weisman, senior linebacker James Morris, sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri, senior linebacker Christian Kirksey and senior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz:



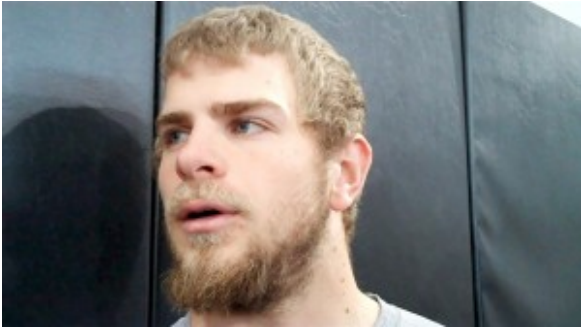
Austin Blythe, April 24, 2013

[Austin Blythe, sophomore center](#)



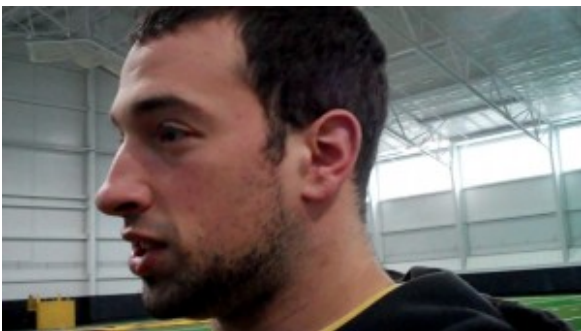
Kevonte Martin-Manley, April 24, 2013

[Kevonte Martin-Manley, junior wide receiver](#)



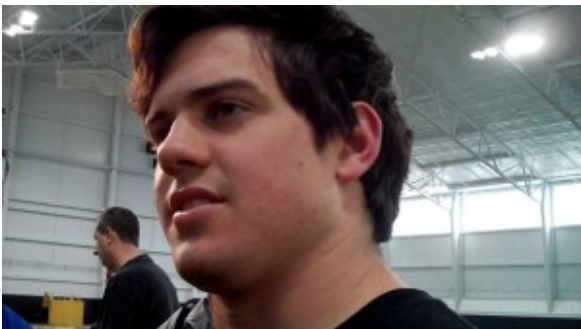
John Lowdermilk, April 24, 2013

[John Lowdermilk, junior strong safety](#)



Mark Weisman, April 24, 2013

[Mark Weisman, junior running back](#)



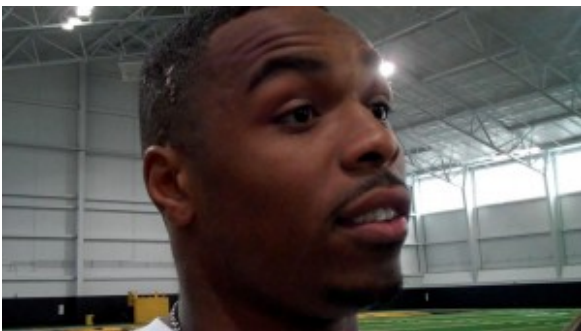
James Morris, April 24, 2013

[James Morris, senior linebacker](#)



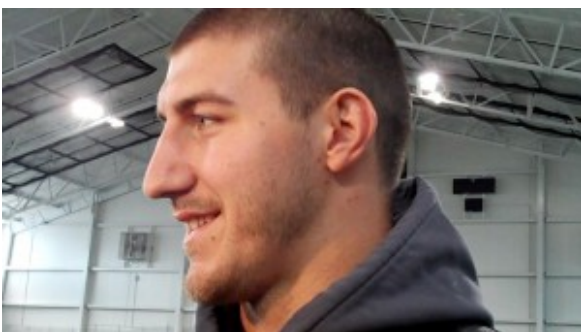
Jordan Canzeri, April 24,
2013

[Jordan Canzeri, sophomore running back](#)



Christian Kirksey, April 24,
2013

[Christian Kirksey, senior linebacker](#)



C.J. Fiedorowicz, April 24,
2013

[C.J. Fiedorowicz, senior tight end](#)

2013 Iowa spring football 2-deep (as of 4/24/2013)

OFFENSE:

WR 4 Smith, 17 Hillyer

LT 68 Scherff, 73 Ward

LG 59 Boffeli, 74 Keppy

C 63 Blythe, 58 Simmons

RG 78 Donnal, 65 Walsh

RT 70 Van Sloten, 64 Croston

TE 86 Fiedorowicz, 82 Hamilton

YB 87 Duzey, 80 Krieger-Coble

QB 15 Rudock/19 Sokol/16 Beathard

RB 45 Weisman/5 Bullock, 33 Canzeri

FB 34 Cox, 42 Plewa

DEFENSE:

DE 95 Ott, 94 McMinn/56 Ekakitie

DT 71 Davis, 98 Hardy

DT 97 Cooper, 67 Johnson

DE 79 Alvis, 91 Venckus-Cucchiara

OLB 20 Kirksey, 39 Perry

MLB 44 Morris, 52 Alston

WLB 31 Hitchens, 36 Fisher

LCB 19 Lowery, 28 Fleming

SS 37 Lowdermilk/21 Law, 25 Lile

FS 5 Miller, 12 Gair

RCB 27 Lomax, 7 Draper

SPECIAL TEAMS:

P 98 Kornbrath, 15 Mullings

PK 96 Meyer, 1 Koehn

LS 61 Kreiter

Campbell, Buford leave football team

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Sophomore defensive backs Torrey Campbell and Kevin Buford have both left the Iowa football program, the UI announced in a release Tuesday afternoon.

According to the release, Campbell will remain at Iowa as a full-time member of the track and field program after competing in both football and track for two years. Buford, on the other hand, is expected to transfer and play football elsewhere.

After redshirting in 2011, Campbell saw action in one game

last season – Iowa’s 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Sept. 22 – and never really climbed up the Hawkeyes’ 2-deep. Buford played in nine games as a true freshman in 2012 and was one of seven true freshmen to see playing time for Iowa last year. He recorded five tackles, two of which (including his lone solo tackle) came in Iowa’s 24-21 loss to Indiana on Nov. 3. Buford mostly saw the field when Iowa lined up in its dime package during games.

2013 NFL Draft: One-on-One with James Ferentz

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

While he waits to find out whether or not he’ll be selected in the 2013 NFL Draft later this week, former Iowa center James Ferentz recently took time to talk with *HawkeyeDrive.com* about what lies ahead for him in the future, as well as reflect back on his days playing for the Hawkeyes.

If Ferentz is drafted, he would also be the first Iowa City native selected in the NFL Draft since 2004 when former Iowa kicker Nate Kaeding was picked by the San Diego Chargers and the first Iowa City High graduate since 2002 when the Atlanta Falcons drafted former Hawkeye wideout Kahlil Hill. Ferentz would also become the third member of his family to work in the NFL in some capacity.

Below is a complete transcript of *HawkeyeDrive.com*’s interview with Ferentz:

HawkeyeDrive.com (HD): Since the last time we talked after your game against Nebraska, what have these last few months been like for you as far as just getting acclimated to moving past college football and preparing for the NFL?

James Ferentz: I think the biggest difference is just not being part of a team for the first time. For almost 10 years, I've been part of a football team since junior high, all the way through college. Now, I will have been a couple of months now not belonging to anybody.

HD: I would imagine most of your time has been spent here in Iowa City, but have you gone anywhere else for workouts, whether for specific teams or just with different people in general?

Ferentz: No. The only time I've really been out of Iowa City was when I went down to the Shrine Bowl for a week in January there. I had a great experience there, a lot of fun. But no, we've been working out with Coach [Chris] Doyle and his staff. In my mind, there's no reason to leave Iowa City. I have a coach here who knows everything about me – knows my strengths, my weaknesses. He's someone that I feel 100 percent comfortable working with and there was just no reason to look anywhere else. You know, Coach Doyle and his staff are the best in the nation, in my mind.

HD: You mentioned playing in the East-West Shrine Game and you got to do that with both Micah Hyde and Keenan Davis. What was the experience like, if you could elaborate a little more on that?

Ferentz: It was a blast, start to finish. The Shrine Bowl committee did a tremendous job. The hotel was top of the line. We practiced at a local high school, but you know, there really wasn't anything I would say was disappointing by any means. It's just really well done. A great product. I got to visit one of the Shriners' hospitals down there in the Tampa

Bay area. It puts a little bit of meaning behind the game and it was really humbling and an honor to play in that game.

HD: What did you take away from that experience in terms of talking with various scouts and GMs that were down there looking at all of you?

Ferentz: It was a good introduction to the process that has been unfolding here. You know, you just kind of learn everything about it. It's exciting, it's nerve-wracking. You don't really know what anybody thinks about you. Do they like you? Do they not like you? It was a good introduction to just kind of how you need to re-adjust your focus for these next few months and just worry about training and improving your skills as much as you can.

HD: Given the coaching backgrounds that both your father and older brother Brian have in the NFL, did you feel prepared for what to expect as you were first getting acclimated to everything you've had to do these last few months?

Ferentz: I mean, that's kind of a tough one to answer. I feel like my knowledge of the game has grown a lot in these past five years and I think it has grown a lot even in these past couple of months. But I also understand that once you get to where you end up, whether you're drafted or a free agent, it's a whole other game and everything kind of starts over again from scratch. You're at the bottom again on the totem pole. The speed of the game is going to be faster than it has been. You kind of have to re-learn everything and hopefully, I'm able to re-learn it quick and do some good things. But I also just know it's going to take a lot of hard work and it's going to be a long road.

HD: Since you didn't get invited to the NFL Combine, did that make you more anxious for your Pro Day since that was going to be your first major audition for NFL teams since playing in the Shrine Game?

Ferentz: Yeah, it was a nerve-wracking experience because kind of like you said, it was our first real chance to get out there and show what we can do. It was a lot of fun. But at the same time, even with the nerves, I felt very prepared. Again, Coach Doyle and his staff do a tremendous job preparing us. We went out there and I thought it went really well. It's hard to tell. Hopefully, it went well. In my mind, I thought things went pretty well. But you know, like I said, nobody really says anything, so it's kind of hard to tell what anybody thinks.

HD: What have the different interactions with NFL teams been like for you, whether they came at the Shrine Game or during Pro Day or just when teams come to Iowa City to see you work out?

Ferentz: I feel like a lot of it is just them trying to get to know you, what kind of person you are, what kind of team player you are. You know, obviously they're going to bring up any questions if you've had any issues off the field, which I have, so I had to explain that a handful of times. But you know, nothing really out of the ordinary. I just feel like they're trying to get a better sense for you as a person and what you're all about.

HD: Since you brought this up and this was actually going to be my next question, about the two incidents from your true freshman year, did you prepare yourself for the likelihood of being asked about those again even though they happened 4-5 years ago?

Ferentz: Yeah. I think naturally, anybody who would be interested in me, that would come up. But you know, I tell the truth. It was my first year on campus. It was part of growing up, being immature, not being a real team player. You know, those experiences were unfortunate. They're part of my history and my career. But at the same time, they helped shape who I became. Obviously if I could go back in time, I wish they

never happened. But at the same time, I think it helped take me to places where I've gotten to.

HD: As far as your football qualities go, what are teams saying to you about what you could provide to them on the field?

Ferentz: You know, there really hasn't been a lot. Just a lot of personal information they ask you about. You know, nobody has really talked much about what could I bring to their team. I think those are discussions that are left for them and their coaches. Right now, I'm just trying to make a good impression and trying to help show the kind of player I am, the type of team player that I could be. Hopefully, I've been able to sell some strong point where I can contribute in some way.

HD: Now have teams been looking at you as a center like you played in college, or have they talked to you about possibly moving over to guard? I ask because I know some people probably look at your height and are thinking you're too short to play center. Is that something that has come up?

Ferentz: I think my height would make me too short to be a guard. But no, it comes up. People wonder, "Can you play guard?," and that's something that I did do early in my career. You know obviously, I just tried to get into whatever I could being a third-string player. But I think I'm mostly being looked at as a center. But like I've said to everybody, I'm totally open moving to guard. I have nothing against it. I think I could go and play it. I feel the most comfortable at center, but that doesn't mean I'm limited to center as well.

HD: How many teams would you say you have talked to at this point?

Ferentz: That's probably not something I'm supposed to talk about. My agent Neil Cornrich has said not to.

HD: And just to clarify, you have the same agent your father

has then?

Ferentz: Yeah. Neil represents my dad and James Vandenberg as well right now as a current guy coming out.

HD: As far as your plans the weekend of the draft, do you see yourself watching it or are you just going to be with family and completely tuning it out until the time comes you get a call from somebody?

Ferentz: Yeah, I don't think my phone call would come until Saturday, if it was to come at all. I mean, I've always enjoyed watching the draft growing up. I always like watching the first round. That's something my mom has always scratched her head at is, "How can we sit there and watch the TV for three hours and nothing ever really happens? They just sit there and draw names." But I'm looking forward to spending that weekend with my family. I know the Hawks are practicing that Saturday and I think that Thursday, so I'm sure my dad will be busy with the team, as will both my brothers. But I have two dogs I'll probably spend the day with, my fiancée and my mom hopefully will be around if she can. But you know, it's just some time that I'll probably spend with the family and just try to enjoy time with them.

HD: So to be clear, there won't be any storyline of you being at Iowa's open practice Saturday and you getting the call while that's going on?

Ferentz: Hahaha. No. No. I'll probably be at my home just trying to relax a little bit and try to enjoy these last few weekends with the family.

HD: I brought up earlier how both your dad and Brian had chances to coach in the NFL. What advice have they given you, not just preparing for it, but as far as what to expect once you know where you'll be?

Ferentz: You know, they said you just got to be ready to do

whatever's asked of you and try to make a good impression every time you walk into the building, whether it's on the field or off. That's something that I think is one of my strengths. I've always been a hard worker. I've always understood my role. I've always embraced that role. And really, if I get the chance to go anywhere, I'm just excited to try and take advantage of that and hopefully find a way to stay.

HD: Just from some things you've said earlier, I almost get the sense that not getting drafted (if that happened) wouldn't completely disappoint you then?

Ferentz: No. Like I said, I'm not sure what to expect, what teams think of me. It could be only one team likes me and they might not have to waste a draft pick on me. I'm just excited to try and get an opportunity to get somewhere and then obviously, regardless of if I'm drafted or I'm a free agent, you know, it's all about what I do once I get there. So I can't get too worked up with what happens this upcoming weekend. I think my focus should be on making a good impression, trying to show that I can contribute to their team somehow, somehow and you know, just find a way to stick to a team.

HD: Have you gotten a chance to talk to any former teammates that have gone through this process before as well?

Ferentz: Yeah, I've brought it up a little bit. We haven't gotten into too much of the details, but we've talked a little bit. Marshal Yanda has been around the building. You know, I'm just trying to get a gauge for what to expect and the storyline has been kind of the same. Once you get there, you got to show what you can do for them and just take advantage of every opportunity you get.

HD: When you do get a chance to reflect back on your Iowa career, I know obviously last year wasn't what you envisioned,

but looking back on the last five years, what do you feel you'll take away from that?

Ferentz: You know, just the memories. I had a great five years at the University of Iowa. I know this past season didn't go as expected, but it's funny you bring that up. We were just talking about that the other day and this past season didn't go as expected, but what I think is a great representation of Iowa is that last game. We're not going to a bowl game, but it's still a rivalry game and 70,000 fans still were in the stands. So that's something I'll always remember, coming out of that tunnel, the goosebumps. That's just a feeling that's hard to describe and I know I'll be chasing the rest of my life.

HD: Finally, when the dust settles for you and you at least know where you're going, whether you get drafted or not, what makes you feel you will be successful at the next level?

Ferentz: I just think my love for the game. I just can't envision my life without football. You know, at times, football can be a real pain. But it's just something that I don't think I can live without and I'm just hoping that wherever I get an opportunity, my work ethic can help drive me forward and show that I can contribute to a team. I'm just really excited and you know, the future, it makes you nervous, it makes you excited, it makes you feel a lot of things. But I'm just really anxious to take on the next chapter of my football life.