

Iowa-PSU video: Mike Meyer

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa junior kicker Mike Meyer made two PATs, but was 0-of-2 on field goal attempts Saturday in the Hawkeyes' 38-14 loss to Penn State at Kinnick Stadium. Meyer missed kicks of 49 and 37 yards, respectively.

Wiegmann first to appear on ANF Wall of Honor



Casey Wiegmann became the first former Iowa football player to have his name etched onto the ANF Wall of Honor on Friday, Oct. 19, 2012. The Wall of Honor is located in the NW corner of Kinnick Stadium. Wiegmann played center for the Hawkeyes and was a member of

the 1995 squad that won the Sun Bowl. He played 16 seasons in the NFL.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – It has been almost 17 years since Casey Wiegmann last suited up the Iowa Hawkeyes. As a senior in 1995, the former center helped guide Iowa to a 38-18 victory over Washington in the Sun Bowl.

On Friday, Wiegmann was back in Iowa City to receive an honor he never expected to get, let alone be the first to have bestowed upon him.

Wiegmann became the first former Hawkeye football player to have his name etched on the ANF Wall of Honor, located in the ANF Plaza at the Northwest corner of Kinnick Stadium. The ceremony coincided with Iowa holding its second annual ANF Day on Saturday as part of the festivities surrounding the Hawkeyes' game against Penn State.

ANF ("America Needs Farmers") was an initiative started by former Iowa head coach Hayden Fry in 1985 that served as a reminder of the farming crisis taking place during the 1980s and stressed the importance farmers had in the lives of all Americans.

"I couldn't believe it," Wiegmann said. "Just all the players that have come through the University of Iowa and have been forces in the agricultural field that probably should have got it, I don't know. I'm just honored to be the initial member. It's something that won't be able to be taken away from me and it means a lot to me."

Wiegmann's football career began by playing at Aplington-Parkersburg High School for the late Ed Thomas. That dream

continued when Wiegmann earned a scholarship to play for Fry at Iowa. He spent five years as a member of the Iowa program.

While he went undrafted, Weigmann went on to play 16 seasons in the NFL, the bulk of which came as the starting center for the Kansas City Chiefs. Wiegmann still lives in the Kansas City area today with his wife and their two sons.

He and fellow Parkersburg native Jared DeVries (who was a defensive end at Iowa) run a farming business together, owning 1,250 acres of land around both Clear Lake and Aplington.

“It’s a way for me to keep my roots in Iowa, besides coming back for football games and stuff like that,” Wiegmann said. “It’s definitely a way to keep my ties to the state of Iowa.”

Below is video of Wiegmann from Friday’s ceremony:

10/19/2012: I-Club breakfast video



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz was presented with a plaque by athletics director Gary Barta commemorating his

100th win at Iowa during the Johnson County I-Club Breakfast held Friday, Oct. 19, 2012 at the Sheraton Hotel in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – As he does every Friday morning before a home football game, Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz spoke at the Johnson County I-Club Breakfast inside the Sheraton Hotel. This week, he discussed the Hawkeyes' upcoming game against Penn State.

Ferentz was introduced by Iowa men's basketball head coach Fran McCaffery, whose team will partake in the Black & Gold Blowout Friday night at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Three other items of note from Friday morning: First, Ferentz was given a plaque by Iowa athletics director Gary Barta commemorating his 100th win as the Hawkeyes' coach, which came last week when Iowa won at Michigan State. Secondly, freshman punter Connor Kornbrath was recognized Friday morning as the 24th recipient of the Marshall Stewart Scholarship. Lastly, former Iowa offensive lineman Casey Wiegmann was recognized. Wiegmann is being honored later Friday as the first to grace the ANF Wall of Honor, located inside the ANF Plaza at Kinnick Stadium.

Below are videos of both McCaffery's and Ferentz's speeches:

Iowa vs. Penn State (What to expect)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

To get you all ready for Saturday's game between Iowa and Penn State, I put together a list of things you ought to know before these two face off at Kinnick Stadium.

At the end, I'll provide what I think are three keys to an Iowa victory.

Iowa Hawkeyes (4-2, 2-0) vs. Penn State Nittany Lions (4-2, 2-0)

Kinnick Stadium; Iowa City, Iowa

Oct. 20, 2012

7 p.m. Central

TV: BTN (Eric Collins, Derek Rackley, Jon Jansen)

Radio: Hawkeye Radio Network (Gary Dolphin, Ed Podolak, Rob Brooks)

Weather: [41 degrees, clear skies](#)

Brendan's Three Keys to the Game:

1. Be ready on fourth down

Penn State comes into this game having converted 13 of 20 fourth-down attempts already this season, and the Nittany Lions have been aggressive enough that it doesn't matter where on the field they happen to be if they're facing fourth down. Iowa's defense has to come ready to play four downs as opposed

to the typical three and forcing a punt. If the Hawkeyes can thwart Penn State whenever it attempts to go for it on fourth down, they're going to be providing the offense a short field to work with, which leads to the second key...

2. Take advantage of the short field

As good as Penn State's defense is, Iowa will get opportunities in Nittany Lion territory Saturday night. When these opportunities present themselves, the Hawkeyes have to be able to come away with points. Along those same lines, this is a game where the plays down field are also going to present themselves. Those are opportunities Iowa has to be able to recognize and take advantage of.

3. Deliver the first blow

Iowa has momentum right now stemming from an improbable double overtime win last weekend. Meanwhile, Penn State comes into this game off a bye week. The Nittany Lions have two major challenges Saturday night: Recapturing the energy and emotion they played with during the six weeks prior, and facing what will undoubtedly be the most hostile road environment they've played in to date. If Iowa manages to get on the scoreboard first, the crowd could become enough of a factor that Penn State plays uncharacteristically, which could lead to turnovers, penalties, and Iowa being able to dictate both tempo and field position.

10/18/2012: Talkin' Hawks

podcast (Iowa vs. Penn State)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Every Thursday during the 2012 football season, *HawkeyeDrive.com* will feature "Talkin' Hawks," a podcast to get you ready for the Hawkeyes' upcoming game and other college football action.

This week, we preview Iowa's game on Oct. 20 against the Penn State Nittany Lions at Kinnick Stadium. Former Iowa defensive back [Chris Rowell](#) joins me to provide insight on the Hawkeyes and share his thoughts on all the games featured in this week's [HawkeyeDrive.com Pick 'Em](#). Rowell will be a part of the podcast every week all season long.

Joining as a guest this week in the podcast's middle segment is Ben Jones, who covers Penn State for [StateCollege.com](#). This week's edition is approximately 80 minutes long, so enjoy:

[Talkin' Hawks podcast \(Iowa vs. Penn State\)](#)

Twitter handles:

HawkeyeDrive.com – [@HawkeyeDrive](#)

Brendan Stiles – [@thebstiles](#)

Chris Rowell – [@Crowell34](#)

Ben Jones – [@Ben_Jones88](#)

***Intro sound byte credit to my former Daily Iowan colleague Ryan Young for putting that together.**

10/16/2012: Iowa football notebook



Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz discusses the Hawkeyes' upcoming game against Penn State with the local media during his weekly press conference held Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2012, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – When the Iowa Hawkeyes face the Penn State Nittany Lions at Kinnick Stadium on Oct. 20, there's a good chance they'll be minus someone who has been a key ingredient to the Hawkeye offense over the past month.

Sophomore running back Mark Weisman continued his remarkable story last weekend in Iowa's 19-16 double overtime win over Michigan State by rushing for 116 yards and scoring the game-tying touchdown with 55 seconds left in regulation. But it came at a price. Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz confirmed Tuesday that Weisman has a sprained ankle, which kept him from finishing out the game.

After the game, Weisman was wearing a boot and said [he couldn't go back in because he couldn't cut on his leg like he wanted to](#). Ferentz said an MRI was done on the ankle Monday confirming the sprain. He didn't completely rule out Weisman from playing against Penn State, saying he'd be able to practice lightly this week. But right now, the odds look stacked against him being out there.

"I think realistically, you're talking about a guy trying to be a running back," Ferentz said. "I think he would have a lot of progress to make to be able to play, so we'll just have to take the mental approach, 'He's not going to be here. If he does join us, it will be great.'"

Should Weisman be unable to go against Penn State, the next man in would be true freshman running back Greg Garmon, who is a native of Erie, Pa. Garmon has played in five of Iowa's six games this season (he missed the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan due to an arm injury) and has 35 yards rushing on 14 carries thus far.

Perhaps just as intriguing though as Garmon getting his first career start is sophomore running back Jordan Canzeri listed behind him on Iowa's 2-deep this week. Canzeri was the Hawkeyes' No. 1 back in spring practice before tearing his ACL in late March.

"He's doing well," senior quarterback James Vandenberg said. "I think he's getting more confidence week in and week out. We're definitely going to need him down the road."

D-line progression

When the 2012 season began, the biggest question mark surrounding this defense was up front. Now with the Hawkeyes at their season's midway point, the D-line has slowly evolved into a group that's not only formidable, but one that could change the impact of an entire game at any given point.

Take for instance Iowa's win over Michigan State last weekend. Sophomore defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat only registered one tackle the entire game. But by the fourth quarter, he just might have been the most dominant player on the entire field. Whether it was overpowering the guy in front of him, forcing the Spartans to double-team him, or get his finger on a throw that ultimately landed in the hands of defensive back Greg Castillo to preserve the win, Trinca-Pasat came up huge.

And he knew it.

"Around the end of the third/beginning of the fourth, I started to get a feel for how they were blocking," Trinca-Pasat said. "I felt like I could make some plays just speed rushing the guard and I was able to get around him."

He's not the only story to emerge up front however. Take a player like senior defensive end Joe Gaglione, who dealt with multiple injuries throughout his career only to finally get his chance to start this season. Statistically speaking, Gaglione had his best game against Michigan State, compiling 11 tackles in the win. On the season, Gaglione has 35 tackles, four sacks and two forced fumbles.

Throw in the two guys who were the most experienced D-linemen coming into 2012 – senior Steve Bigach and junior Dominic Alvis – and Iowa a front four that has exceeded many outside expectations through six games. But despite evolving from a question mark to one of the most vital parts of this year's squad, this group feels like it still has a lot more left to prove.

"We're a bunch of junkyard dogs," Alvis said. "Nobody really wanted us. We came to Iowa a bunch of no-names. We are the underdogs because we've really been through a lot together."

"We're just a bunch of guys that go to work every day and do our job. Nobody special. Just a bunch of guys that work hard."

Not your typical Penn State offense

Make no mistake about it. The offense being showcased by Penn State this weekend is unlike anything Ferentz or anyone else has seen.

The Nittany Lions historically have been known for their ground attack. But with first-year head coach Bill O'Brien in charge now, the passing prowess he displayed as the New England Patriots' offensive coordinator has carried over to State College, Pa., in a big way.

Penn State senior quarterback Matt McGloin had been part of a quarterback rotation the past two seasons and had developed a reputation for being ill-advised throwing the football. That has completely changed in 2012. McGloin currently averages 250 yards passing per game, which leads the Big Ten.

"He has improved a lot," junior linebacker Anthony Hitchens said. "You can just tell he's leading out there now. He's more confident in his calls. He knows where he wants to go now with reading defenses, so we've got to make it hard for him."

There's another key element to Penn State's offense – one of surprise. Due in part to having an atrocious kicking game, the Nittany Lions in six games have gone for it on fourth down 20 times already this season, converting on 13 of those 20 attempts.

"It just makes us have to be that much more focused and detailed," Gaglione said. "They're very unpredictable and they run a different offensive scheme than they did in the past. I think we're really going to have to be prepared this week."

Fired up sideline

Senior wide receiver Keenan Davis said he had never witnessed anything like it. The Hawkeyes won the overtime coin toss and just as the Iowa defense began to take the field, rap music

began to blare through the P.A. system at Spartan Stadium.

Three words, "ball so hard," were being recited over and over again. A large group of Iowa players – mostly underclassmen – began jumping around on the sideline, jamming to that well-known song performed by Jay-Z and Kanye West.

"We've all been excited in our own way, but to see the sideline get up like that and be ready to play, even the guys who aren't playing being into the game, it was great to see," Davis said.

Previously, the team as a whole was being criticized for not showing enough emotion on the sideline during games. This moment not only put some of that prior criticism to rest, but the players truly believe the team cohesiveness on display at that moment played a part in its overtime performance.

"It was a big situation and we were just having fun," senior cornerback Micah Hyde said. "It was a great feeling going out there in overtime knowing that everyone was having fun.

"As a senior and as a leader, you like to see the young guys having fun, jumping around, because when everyone's uptight and it's a pressure situation, it's not a good situation to be in. I play a lot better having fun than when I'm uptight."

Castillo's father fired by Eagles

Three days after senior cornerback Greg Castillo sealed Iowa's win over Michigan State by intercepting an Andrew Maxwell pass during the second overtime, his father found himself unemployed.

Greg's father is Juan Castillo, who until Tuesday morning was the defensive coordinator of the Philadelphia Eagles. Juan was fired less than two seasons after being promoted to defensive coordinator from coaching the Eagles' offensive line.

Ferentz has always had a friendship with Juan, even before

Greg became a Hawkeye. The link between the two was Ferentz's high school coach, Joe Moore. Ferentz also crossed paths with him during the 1990s when he was an NFL assistant and Juan Castillo was working at Texas A&M-Kingsville.

"Juan is one of the best people and one of the best coaches I've been around at any level," Ferentz said. "The good news is he'll have a long line of suitors when the time comes. That's one of those temporary bumps in the road."

Greg wasn't made available for comment Tuesday, but a teammate of his who could relate was. Senior strong safety Tom Donatell also has an NFL coach as a father in Ed Donatell, who is currently the defensive backs coach for the San Francisco 49ers.

Like Juan Castillo, Ed Donatell was once a defensive coordinator in the league for both the Green Bay Packers and Atlanta Falcons. Ed was fired by the Packers in 2004 shortly after they lost a playoff game in overtime to the Eagles. Philadelphia tied the game with a field goal right near the end of regulation thanks in large part to Green Bay giving up a first down on 4th-and-26.

"It's tough at times," Tom Donatell said. "But you just want to be a good friend, a good teammate to [Greg Castillo] and support him. I told him, 'You and I both know your dad's a great coach, a great human being, works hard.'"

"Sometimes that's just part of the business. You've got to take the good with the bad and just kind of take it for what it's worth."

10/16/2012: Iowa player audio with photos (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – On Tuesday, 13 members of the Iowa football team spoke with the media to discuss the Hawkeyes' upcoming game on Oct. 20 against Penn State.

Below is audio from each of the following players – senior cornerback Micah Hyde, senior strong safety Tom Donatell, senior center James Ferentz, senior quarterback James Vandenberg, junior kicker Mike Meyer, junior wide receiver Jordan Cotton, junior linebacker Anthony Hitchens, senior defensive tackle Steve Bigach, sophomore wide receiver Kevonte Martin-Manley, senior wide receiver Keenan Davis, senior defensive end Joe Gaglione, sophomore defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat and junior defensive end Dominic Alvis:



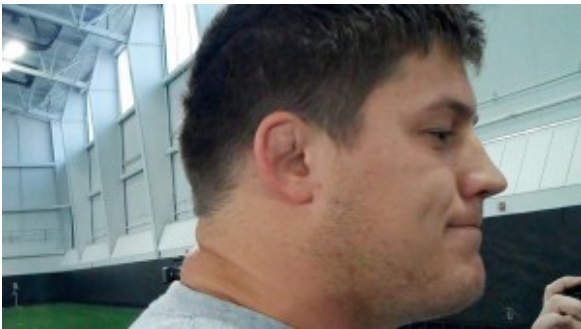
Micah Hyde, Oct. 16, 2012

[Micah Hyde, senior cornerback](#)



Tom Donatell, Oct. 16, 2012

[Tom Donatell, senior strong safety](#)



James Ferentz, Oct. 16, 2012

[James Ferentz, senior center](#)



James Vandenberg, Oct. 16,
2012

[James Vandenberg, senior quarterback](#)



Mike Meyer, Oct. 16, 2012

[Mike Meyer, junior kicker](#)



Jordan Cotton, Oct. 16, 2012

[Jordan Cotton, junior wide receiver](#)



Anthony Hitchens, Oct. 16,
2012

[Anthony Hitchens, junior linebacker](#)



Steve Bigach, Oct. 16, 2012

[Steve Bigach, senior defensive tackle](#)



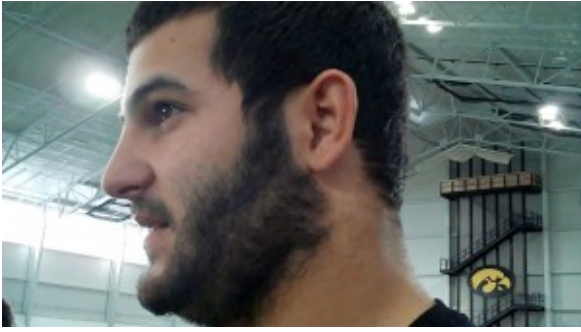
Kevonte Martin-Manley, Oct. 16, 2012

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



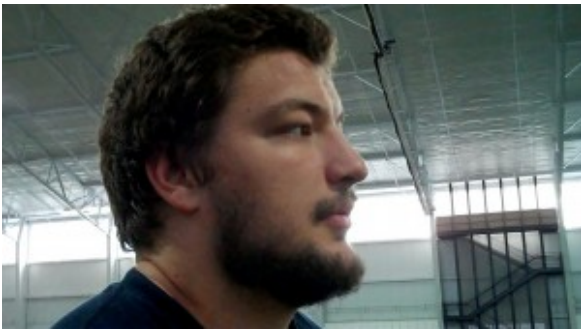
Keenan Davis, Oct. 16, 2012

[Keenan Davis, senior wide receiver](#)



Joe Gaglione, Oct. 16, 2012

[Joe Gaglione, senior defensive end](#)



Louis Trinca-Pasat, Oct. 16, 2012

[Louis Trinca-Pasat, sophomore defensive tackle](#)



Dominic Alvis, Oct. 16, 2012

[Dominic Alvis, junior defensive end](#)

10/16/2012: Kirk Ferentz press conference transcript

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Below is a PDF from the Iowa sports information department featuring the complete transcript from Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's press conference on Tuesday in Iowa City:

[Coach Ferentz 10 16 12](#)

10/16/2012: Kirk Ferentz teleconference transcript (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Below is a written transcript of Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz's teleconference on Tuesday with the Big Ten media:

Ferentz's opening statement:

"It was a really hard-fought game the other day and we feel very happy to come out with the win. I'm happy to see [Mike Meyer]'s efforts recognized. He has been playing really well for us and obviously he was a big part of the ball game on Saturday."

On what the key to success has been for Iowa's defense this season, particularly in the front seven:

"I think the guys have just worked hard, pretty much daily, and we're making progress. We were hopeful that we could during the course of the season and I think some weeks have been a lot better than others, obviously. But I think the group's growing. We're getting leadership from Steve Bigach and Joe Gaglione, our two seniors, and the linebackers are doing a good job. So you know, we've been growing a little bit, but we're hardly out of the woods at this stage."

On whether anything has surprised him about the way the defensive line has played so far:

"Um, it's still early. But you know, I thought they improved during the course of the spring. I thought they improved with preseason work. I think we've been making incremental progress week-to-week, but we're not there yet. But the guys are working hard. I think they're giving their best and Reese Morgan has done a great job of working with a very young and inexperienced group. We're not there, but I think the good news is we can continue to improve if everybody just keeps working."

On the playing status for running back Mark Weisman:

"Yeah, he has got a sprained ankle. So that much, we do know. The MRIs were encouraging. They took that [Monday]. We'll have him work lightly today and just see where we're at. But you're asking a guy to play a position that's really demanding on the lower body to go out there and play."

"We really won't know until we see him in practice and even if he could play, I don't know how effective or long he could play. I think the bottom line is we just have to assume he's not going to be there. If he's there, that's great, but we just have to take the approach mentally that he's not going to be with us."

On whether running back Jordan Canzeri could see action against Penn State:

"Yeah, he's one of the last guys standing. So right now, if he can stay on both feet and know the plays, he has got a good chance to be in there. The good news is he got cleared, I don't know, about 4-5 weeks ago from a medical standpoint and has practiced well. His attitude's great and I think he has looked better with every week.

"So you know, that's good because we're running out of guys, but the bad news is I think we talk about him like he's a grizzled veteran player. I think he has one start here and I don't know how many carries career-wise. But at least he has been on the field as a Division-I football player, so that's a positive."

On what the key is to get the passing game going more this season:

"Well, we've been trying and we'll continue to try. You know, just in a quick nutshell for you, our passing game was pretty ineffective the first two games. I think it was pretty good for three games and then last Saturday, we were involved in a really tough defensive ballgame.

"So in a nutshell, that's where it's at and going back to those three games in-between, we were scoring at a pretty good rate but it happened to be on the ground and the quarterback was checking to a lot of those plays. As long as we're scoring, we don't care how we do it. The main thing is to score."

On what Penn State brings to the table this weekend and its success in the passing game:

"Well, they are and they're doing a great job. To me, it starts with their quarterback. He's really playing well. I think he has thrown for just at 250 [yards] a game right now.

But beyond that, he's really from my vantage point, I don't coach there but looking from the outside, it looks to me like they've got several leaders on that football team. But I'm guessing he's a really strong leader for that football team. So that's what you hope for from your quarterback.

"He's doing a good job of getting the ball to a variety of guys and they're using their tight ends very effectively, and certainly their receiver's having a really good year. It's a real credit to all of them and Coach [Bill] O'Brien has done a great job with that group."

On Penn State's defense:

"They look like Penn State's defense from the last – I started watching them in the late '60s. I'm dating myself a little bit, but I'm trying to remember a Penn State defense not looking good. The same thing with this group. Their front seven is as good a group as you're going to find anywhere and they're very athletic in the back end. They're playing really good football right now and have four straight victories. It has been a real team effort, but boy has their defense been very impressive."

On if he believes his team has started to gain momentum going through its Big Ten slate:

"Well, you know, all you got to do is go back a couple of weeks ago. We went through a very, very tough loss and we deserved it. The team we lost to played better than we did that day. You know, that's not that far in our rear-view mirror and I think that's just a good reminder of the kind of team we are. We almost have to do everything perfect and that's impossible."

"But for us to have a chance to win, we're really going to have to be doing things well, in any game on our schedule. That's kind of our focus right now. We just need to see what we can do this week to give ourselves a chance to win Saturday"

and then we'll figure it out after that."

On whether having Brian Ferentz on staff gives insight into what O'Brien might want to do this weekend:

"Well, I think if you just watch the tape, you can see Coach O'Brien's impact already. He has been a tremendous football coach and I think this is just my personal commentary, but what he did in New England was – obviously, that's documented – but if you look at the depth of his experience and the broadness of it, the various offenses and styles of offense he has played in, it's important at every level but it's certainly important in college. You just never know when your players are going to do well and not do well. He has done a great job in a short amount of time with what they're doing offensively.

"Brian has got his hands full just trying to work with our line right now, so I don't know how much of a benefit that will be to us. But we just have such respect for Coach O'Brien's depth and knowledge and his expertise. There's a lot of respect on our end and it's for obvious reasons. He has just been a tremendous coach throughout his career."

On what it has been like working with his three sons this season:

"Well, it has been fantastic. I started back – however many years ago – back in our program and that was a treat. I don't know if it happened by design, but it just happened. I think any dad would tell you anytime you're with your kids, that's pretty special. Especially when you're in coaching or any profession that works hard. Coaching, you miss a lot of time with your kids, so in some small way, it's a little bit of a payback. But I think in the end, it just happened to happen. It's not like there was any master plan."

10/15/2012: State of the Big Ten, Volume 69 (premium)

Every Monday, we will be running a weekly series titled "State of the Big Ten," which will be made available to all members of HawkeyeDrive.com. This series of columns will focus on one major headline regarding the conference and go in-depth on the subject at hand.

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The Purdue Boilermakers sit at 3-3 overall and 0-2 in the Big Ten at their halfway point of the 2012 season. While Purdue still has an outside shot of becoming bowl-eligible for the second consecutive season under fourth-year head coach Danny Hope, the Boilermakers saw their odds of representing the Leaders Division in the Big Ten Championship Game diminish greatly this past weekend after losing 38-14 at home to Wisconsin.

Purdue wasn't expected to win either of its first two Big Ten games against Wisconsin, or against Michigan, who beat the Boilermakers 44-13 at Ross-Ade Stadium back on Oct. 6. It's not that Purdue didn't beat these teams at home, but rather how it got embarrassed on its field by both teams.

When the 2012 season was about to begin, the Boilermakers were the trendy pick to dethrone Wisconsin in the Leaders Division. Coming off a 2011 season where it beat Western Michigan in the Little Caesars Bowl combined with the number of starters returning on both sides of the football, this year's squad was supposed to be the best one yet under Hope.

Add in the fact that both Ohio State and Penn State are currently dealing with postseason bans and this season looked to be the best shot Purdue had at playing in a Big Ten Championship Game anytime soon. With the Badgers looking pedestrian during the month of September, the opportunity was ripe for the picking.

Instead, it was Wisconsin jumping out on Purdue and not looking back. The Badgers essentially have a three-game lead on the Boilermakers (among eligible teams in the Leaders Division), meaning Wisconsin would only have to win three of its remaining five games to secure a second consecutive trip to Indianapolis.

Now the question for Purdue moving forward is just how much more will it actually be able to accomplish under Hope? If this season's any indication, Ohio State is going to become a perennial power in the Leaders Division next year and beyond. Also, Wisconsin isn't going away anytime soon and even a program like Indiana that is currently on the rise under Kevin Wilson is only going to get better.

Can the Boilermakers become a team that can win 8-9 games on a regular basis and at least be in the thick of things year in and year out? It's hard to answer this question with a "yes" response. If the answer isn't a definitive "yes," then Purdue's a program that's going to have some serious soul-searching to do here in the near future.

Make no mistake about it: Hope's seat is getting warmer by the minute. Perhaps even worse is that if the dwindling attendance at this past weekend's game against Wisconsin is an indicator, apathy is really starting to sink in towards this football program. This isn't a program that's going to compete with the likes of an Ohio State or Wisconsin year in and year out. This is why 2012 was such an important season for the Boilermakers both in the present and looking ahead to the future.

If this season starts to completely spiral out of control, Hope might not make it to 2013, even though he just recently signed a contract extension this past offseason. If this season does managed to be salvaged with a second consecutive bowl appearance, then more pressure will be placed on Hope entering 2013.

Right now, Purdue is at a crossroads and the future doesn't appear to be promising. How the Boilermakers respond in the here and now could potentially dictate the direction of this program for years to come.