

9/22/2012: Central Michigan 32, Iowa 31 (Links)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

Check out all of these links to content posted on Saturday after Iowa's 32-31 loss to Central Michigan at Kinnick Stadium. Please note, anything with "premium" in parentheses are links that can only be accessed by those logged in as either a paid subscriber or three-day free trial member to *HawkeyeDrive.com*:

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Chippewas stun Hawkeyes in Kinnick

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, IOWA – Picture an Amana steak that's poorly cooked, only to go back on the grill and come out burnt and lacking the flavor Amana steaks typically have when cooked properly.

This might be the best analogy to what happened with the Iowa Hawkeyes on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium. An abysmal first half where everything that could've gone wrong did, combined with a colossal meltdown in the game's final minutes led to Central Michigan, not Iowa, walking off the field with a 32-31 win to the disappointment of 70,585 spectators expecting that good meal.

The Hawkeyes saw an eight-point lead collapse in the final 2:18 thanks to Central Michigan scoring a quick touchdown, recovering an onside kick, and nailing a 47-yard field goal with three seconds left to steal the victory from Iowa.

"We're just down about it," redshirt freshman right guard Austin Blythe said. "We just didn't do enough to win today. Give Central Michigan the credit. They just outplayed us."

While the special teams debacle is what will sting the most for the team and its fans, it was a series of unfortunate events for the Hawkeyes throughout the game that ultimately proved to be the difference in Iowa now sitting at 2-2 instead of at 3-1 entering Big Ten play next week.

Iowa got things going right away when senior quarterback James Vandenberg threw his first touchdown pass of the season on the opening drive – a 10-yard connection with sophomore wideout

Kevonte Martin-Manley that gave the Hawkeyes a 7-0 lead. But Central Michigan became the third straight team to score a touchdown on its opening drive against Iowa's defense to tie the game at 7-7.

The Hawkeyes took a 14-10 lead with them into the second quarter, only to leave their fans with that under-cooked steak at halftime. Central Michigan outscored Iowa 13-0 in that second stanza to take a 23-14 lead with it into the locker room. In that first half, the Chippewas had the ball for nearly 20 minutes and were 4-of-4 inside the red zone. Meanwhile, the Hawkeyes hadn't converted a single third down and racked up seven of their nine penalties on the day, including three personal fouls.

"That's tough to overcome," head coach Kirk Ferentz said. "That's tough to be a winning football team doing that, so I'd start right that."

Over the next 27:42, it looked as though Iowa had made the proper adjustments to leave its audience satisfied. During this stretch, Central Michigan could only muster a total of 85 yards on offense. Meanwhile, the offense got the ball rolling with Weisman scoring his second touchdown of the day from five yards out, and later picking up a 46-yard field goal being kicked into the wind by junior Mike Meyer that gave the Hawkeyes a 24-23 lead.

"I knew if I kept my head down and kicked it, it'd have a good leg swing and go in," Meyer said.

Weisman would score again to extend Iowa's lead to 31-23. In his first start at running back, the Buffalo Grove, Ill., native compiled 217 yards rushing on 27 carries to go along with his three scores.

"When you get him with a head of steam, he's a really good back," senior quarterback James Vandenberg said.

It looked like that once under-cooked steak was still going to come out nice for the Hawkeye faithful. Then came the steak getting burned – or in this case, the Iowa defense getting burned.

The Chippewas would score a touchdown with 45 seconds remaining to make it 31-29, but couldn't convert the 2-point conversion that would've tied it. Senior cornerback Micah Hyde got abused by Central Michigan wideout Titus Davis on his 13-yard TD catch, but was the one who made up for it by breaking up the 2-point try.

"They dialed up a good play and it's unfortunate they scored a touchdown," Hyde said. "The quarterback made a good play and stuck it right in his chest. After that, the two-point conversion, we were fortunate to get a stop. But we knew the game wasn't over."

Then came that onside kick. Actually, Central Michigan was called for a delay of game before an attempt that was actually recovered by junior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz. Because it was a delay of game penalty, Iowa couldn't decline it and the Chippewas got a chance to re-kick it. Just as the ball went past the 40-yard line, it was touched by Central Michigan's Jesse Kroll. As it turned out, no one on Iowa would even get a hand on the onside kick attempt.

"Typically, some guys are assigned to go block the guys that are pursuing and other guys are assigned to catch," Ferentz said. "We looked very confused out there and that's not a good thing. Very indecisive."

After retaining possession, the Chippewas got their break when senior defensive end Joe Gaglione was called for a personal foul following an incomplete pass on 2nd-and-8. Instead of facing 3rd-and-8, Central Michigan had 1st-and-10 on Iowa's 39-yard line.

With eight seconds left, Chippewa kicker David Harman came on

the field on 3rd-and-1 to try a 47-yard field goal, which sailed straight and just above the crossbar, giving Central Michigan the one-point lead it wouldn't relinquish.

"It went down to the wire," senior wide receiver Keenan Davis said. "We know we fought. There's going to be a lot of stuff on the film we got to pay attention to, a lot of stuff we've got to get better on. Yeah, it's tough."

Now sitting at 2-2, Iowa hopes to cook something more satisfying for its fans Sept. 29 when it opens Big Ten play with its Homecoming game against Minnesota. The Golden Gophers have won each of the last two Floyd of Rosedale battles. Kickoff is scheduled for 11 a.m. Central.

COMMENTARY: A game lost before it was actually lost (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – The Iowa Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss on Saturday to Central Michigan will be forever remembered for the Chippewas overcoming a eight-point deficit in the final 2:18 to escape Kinnick Stadium with a victory. The onside kick recovered between Central Michigan scores will be what gets the most publicity.

But if those of us who saw this game from start to finish are being honest with ourselves, Iowa lost this game in the first half. The Hawkeyes should have never allowed themselves to be

in the position where an onside kick recovery would make the difference between winning and losing.

Iowa lost this game in numerous ways. It lacked discipline, especially when it really mattered. Offensively, it couldn't convert on third down. Defensively, it couldn't get off the field in the first half. Central Michigan made the most of its opportunities despite looking completely inept offensively for all but the last 2:18 of the second half.

The Hawkeyes committed seven of their nine penalties in the first half. Of those seven first-half penalties, three of them were personal fouls. To add insult to injury, the three personal fouls were one from each phase – offense, defense and special teams. If that doesn't sum up the lack of discipline, I'm not sure what does.

Offensively, Iowa did manage to show some balance once again. It received an unbelievable performance from sophomore fullback Mark Weisman, who made the start at running back and proceeded to rush for 217 yards and three touchdowns on 27 carries.

Let me repeat that: 27 carries, 217 rushing yards, and three touchdowns. This is from a walk-on who wasn't even eligible to play last season and a guy who has pretty much become the last resort at running back right now. As disastrous as the offense has looked as a whole this season, imagine how much more atrocious it'd be without Weisman.

But even with his stellar effort, it comes back to not executing on third down. Iowa was 1-of-8 on third downs, and that one third down conversion came late in the fourth quarter while the Hawkeyes were ahead. In other words, Iowa nearly pulled off winning this game without converting a single third down. Even more significant is that every single time the Hawkeyes faced a third down, they needed at least five yards to pick up a first down. That's bad all-around.

Defensively, this team has shown it can make proper adjustments at halftime. But once again, it allowed a team to march down the field and score a touchdown on its opening drive for the third straight week. For 27:42, it pitched a shutout in the second half. But when it mattered most, it couldn't make the plays necessary to secure a win. It's also worth mentioning that Central Michigan had the ball for a little over 60 percent of the game. In the second and third quarters alone, the Chippewas had possession for over 21 minutes. Iowa's defense couldn't get off the field.

Credit goes to Central Michigan, as it should. In a game that Iowa should've been able to win handily, the Chippewas compiled 283 yards passing despite coming in with the MAC's worst passing offense and one of the worst passing offenses in the nation. They did just enough to hang around and not only make Iowa sweat, but ultimately make the Hawkeyes crack.

Did the better team win? It's still too early to tell. But did the more deserving team win? Absolutely. Iowa spent the majority of this game – and the majority of the first half – playing with fire. In the end, that's why the Hawkeyes got burned.

Iowa-CMU video: Micah Hyde

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior cornerback Micah Hyde tied for a team-high 14 tackles and had one pass break up in the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-CMU video: Mark Weisman

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa sophomore fullback Mark Weisman made his first career start at running back and rushed for 217 yards and three touchdowns on 27 carries in the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa - CMU video: James Vandenberg

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior quarterback James Vandenberg completed 16-of-25 passes for 218 yards through the air and one touchdown in the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-CMU video: Kirk Ferentz

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz addressed the media in a post game press conference following the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium. Iowa enters Big Ten play next week with a 2-2 overall record.

Iowa-CMU video: Keenan Davis

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa senior wide receiver Keenan Davis caught six passes for 88 yards receiving – both of which were team-highs – in the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium.

Iowa-CMU video: Austin Blythe

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa redshirt freshman offensive lineman

Austin Blythe started at right guard in the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium. Iowa compiled 430 yards of total offense in defeat.

Iowa-CMU video: Mike Meyer

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – Iowa junior kicker Mike Meyer made a 46-yard field goal and connected on all four of his PAT attempts in the Hawkeyes' 32-31 loss to Central Michigan on Saturday at Kinnick Stadium. Meyer has now made 64 straight extra points, breaking a school record previously held by Nate Kaeding.