

# 8/27/2012: Dave Doeren teleconference (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

Northern Illinois head coach Dave Doeren took part in the MAC's weekly teleconference on Monday to discuss the Huskies' game on Sept. 1 against Iowa at Soldier Field in Chicago, Ill.

Below is the audio from Doeren's teleconference:

[Dave Doeren Teleconference](#)

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## 2012 Big Ten football TV schedule: Week One

Every week, we will post the TV schedule for all games featuring Big Ten teams. Here is where and when you can watch them this week:

Aug. 30:

Minnesota at UNLV, 10 p.m., CBS Sports Network

Aug. 31:

No. 24 Boise State at No. 13 Michigan State, 7 p.m., ESPN

Sept. 1:

Western Michigan at Illinois, 11 a.m., ESPNU

Miami (Ohio) at No. 18 Ohio State, 11 a.m., BTN

Ohio at Penn State, 11 a.m., ESPN

Northwestern at Syracuse, 11 a.m., ESPN2

Southern Miss at No. 17 Nebraska, 2:30 p.m., ABC/ESPN2

Eastern Kentucky at Purdue, 2:30 p.m., BTN

Northern Iowa at No. 12 Wisconsin, 2:30 p.m., BTN

**Iowa vs. Northern Illinois (at Chicago, Ill.), 2:30 p.m.,  
ESPNU**

Indiana State at Indiana, 7 p.m., BTN

No. 8 Michigan vs. No. 2 Alabama (at Arlington, Texas), 7  
p.m., ABC

**\*All times listed are Central Standard Time.**

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# **Iowa vs. Northern Illinois Game Notes, 2-deep**

## **OFFENSE:**

WR 6 Davis, 17 Hillyer

LT 68 Scherff, 78 Donnal

LG 60 Tobin, 58 Simmons

C 53 Ferentz, 59 Bofelli

RG 63 Blythe, 65 Walsh

RT 70 Van Sloten, 76 MacMillan  
TE 86 Fiedorowicz, 82 Hamilton  
QB 16 Vandenberg, 15 Rudock  
WR 11 Martin-Manley, 83 Staggs  
RB 32 Bullock, 4 Garmon  
FB 45 Weisman, 38 Rogers/92 Gimm

**DEFENSE:**

DE 54 Bigach/99 Gaglione, 49 Spears  
DT 71 Davis, 98 Hardy  
DT 90 Trinca-Pasat, 97 Cooper  
DE 54 Bigach/79 Alvis, 49 Spears  
OLB 20 Kirksey, 39 Perry  
MLB 44 Morris, 42 Plewa/52 Alston  
WLB 31 Hitchens, 55 Collins  
LCB 19 Lowery, 2 Castillo  
SS 13 Donatell/21 Law  
FS 5 Miller, 37 Lowdermilk  
RCB 18 Hyde, 14 Buford

**SPECIAL TEAMS:**

P 98 Kornbrath, 14 Wienke  
PK 96 Meyer, 1 Koehn  
LS 61 Kreiter, 54 Bigach

HOLDER 14 Wienke

PR 18 Hyde

KR 6 Davis, 32 Bullock

[Iowa vs. Northern Illinois Game Notes](#)

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# 8/24/2012: Big Ten preseason bowl projections

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

Before we shift our attention towards the first week of the college football season, I wanted to first conclude my preseason coverage with some bowl projections I have for games featuring Big Ten teams.

Two things before I delve into these: 1. This wasn't easy to put together. Not only did I have to think about where I foresee Big Ten teams ending up this winter, but also had to think about the other conferences and know the bowl orders for all of them so I can attempt to justify opponents. 2. I believe this year the Big Ten's streak of sending two teams to BCS bowls ends this year for two reasons. First, the fact that only 10 teams are even bowl eligible to begin with is significant, especially with one of those teams being an Ohio State squad that would probably compete for a conference title this year if it didn't have a postseason ban. Secondly, I ultimately believe both the Big 12 and ACC are more top-heavy entering this season, which is why I think they're the two conferences that end up having two BCS teams and not the Big

Ten. I also don't see any non-AQs ending up in BCS bowls this season either.

*\*The four BCS games I don't have a Big Ten team playing in I see shaking out as follows: BCS National Championship – USC (No. 1) vs. LSU (No. 2), Fiesta – West Virginia (Big 12 champion) vs. Virginia Tech (at-large), Sugar – Alabama (replacement for LSU) vs. Texas (at-large), Orange – Florida State (ACC champion) vs. Louisville (Big East champion).*

This year, I see the Big Ten sending eight teams to bowl games. Below are those projections:

**Rose Bowl – Michigan (Big Ten champion) vs. Oregon (replacement for USC)**

***Jan. 1, 2013; Pasadena, Calif.***

I have Michigan winning both the Legends Division and Big Ten Championship Game this season. I also have the Wolverines being the lone Big Ten team that reaches a BCS bowl. Assuming USC – who I have winning the Pac-12 – plays in the national title game, I'm projecting Michigan's opponent to be defending Rose Bowl champion Oregon.

As a sidebar, this and the 2013 NHL Winter Classic at The Big House both happening the same afternoon would make for quite an eventful New Year's Day in Ann Arbor.

**Capital One Bowl – Wisconsin (Big Ten No. 2) vs. South Carolina (SEC No. 2)**

***Jan. 1, 2013; Orlando, Fla.***

Since I don't foresee the Big Ten sending two teams to BCS games this season, Orlando is my landing spot for Wisconsin, who I have winning the Leaders Division by default, but losing the Big Ten Championship Game to Michigan. I'm projecting the Badgers to face South Carolina, who would be making a second straight trip to this bowl after beating Nebraska last season.

If this match-up happens, it would feature two of the best running backs in college football – Wisconsin's Montee Ball and South Carolina's Marcus Lattimore.

**Outback Bowl – Nebraska (Big Ten No. 3) vs. Arkansas (SEC No. 3/4)**

***Jan. 1, 2013; Tampa, Fla.***

If the Big Ten sends two to the BCS, Nebraska's a team that could ideally get that at-large spot. With Michigan State having played in this bowl last season, my hunch is the Outback would prefer to invite Nebraska if this scenario unfolds since the Cornhuskers have never played in this game. As for Nebraska's opponent, I'm throwing in a twist here and projecting it to be Arkansas. Usually, a team from the SEC East winds up in this game. But if the Cotton Bowl opts to take Georgia instead of having the Razorbacks for a second straight year, then I have a hard time seeing any other SEC team be considered for this bowl.

**Gator Bowl – Michigan State (Big Ten No. 4) vs. Auburn (SEC No. 6)**

***Jan. 1, 2013; Jacksonville, Fla.***

With the Gator receiving the fourth pick of Big Ten teams, I have it selecting Michigan State, a team that has played four bowl games in the state of Florida under head coach Mark Dantonio. I'm projecting the Spartans' opponent to be Auburn because I don't see the Chick-Fil-A Bowl taking the Tigers two years in a row. This would also be the third straight bowl game Michigan State has played against an SEC opponent.

**Buffalo Wild Wings Bowl – Purdue (Big Ten No. 5) vs. TCU (Big 12 No. 4)**

***Dec. 29, 2012; Tempe, Ariz.***

This game formerly known as the Insight Bowl has featured Iowa

each of the past two seasons. I also think there's enough in place at Purdue that the Boilermakers could win at least seven games in 2012. Past history suggests Purdue would be picked before Iowa if the Boilermakers finish with a better record. In 2006, the Champ Sports Bowl opted to take an 8-5 Purdue squad that got destroyed by a 6-6 Iowa head-to-head, and the Alamo Bowl followed by taking the Hawkeyes. Also in 2003, Purdue finished second in the Big Ten and was selected over an Iowa team it beat head-to-head for the Capital One Bowl while the Hawkeyes played in the Outback Bowl.

Now with all that established, I foresee Purdue playing TCU, who would be the beneficiary here of the Big 12 sending two teams to BCS bowls. With this being the Horned Frogs' first season in that conference, this wouldn't be a bad bowl destination for them at all.

**Meineke Car Care Bowl of Texas – Iowa (Big Ten No. 6) vs. Baylor (Big 12 No. 6)**

***Dec. 28, 2012; Houston, Texas***

So this is where I have Iowa winding up in 2012. This is a season where the Hawkeyes would be a huge beneficiary of the Big Ten sending two teams to the BCS because then a bowl game in Florida on New Year's Day becomes a lot more realistic. If this does play out and Iowa ends up playing in Houston on Dec. 28, I'm projecting the Hawkeyes' opponent to be Baylor, who I have finishing seventh in the Big 12 this season. This would be the Bears' second trip to this bowl game in three seasons.

**TicketCity Bowl – Illinois (Big Ten No. 7) vs. Marshall (C-USA)**

***Jan. 1, 2013; Dallas, Texas***

My feeling on Illinois is that it will be good enough to reach a bowl game for the third straight year in what is Tim Beckman's first season as the Fighting Illini head coach. This

game would match Illinois against an opponent from C-USA, who I'm projecting in this scenario to be Marshall.

**Little Caesars Bowl – Minnesota (Big Ten No. 8) vs. Ohio (MAC No. 1)**

*Dec. 26, 2012; Detroit, Mich.*

You're reading this correctly. I think Minnesota goes 6-6 and gets rewarded with a trip to Detroit for the Little Caesars Bowl. I have the Golden Gophers playing Ohio, who I'm picking to win the MAC in 2012 and be the logical choice for this bowl, which gets its first choice of MAC teams.

**Indiana – no bowl**

**Northwestern – no bowl**

**Ohio State – ineligible for postseason play in 2012**

**Penn State – ineligible for postseason play from 2012-15**

I'll post new projections sometime in October after Big Ten play gets going, but for now, this is what I have and I'm willing to stick with it, no matter how right or wrong these ultimately wind up being.

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**8/23/2012: Talkin' Hawks  
podcast (2012 Iowa season  
preview)**

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*



The 2012 college football season is upon us, meaning it's time for the return of the "Talkin' Hawks" podcast for the third straight autumn here on *HawkeyeDrive.com*.

Now during the past two years, the first podcast has taken place the week of Iowa's season opener. I've decided to take a different approach this year by posting the first podcast of the fall one week sooner, one that previews the Hawkeyes' upcoming 2012 season.

Joining me for this season preview edition of "Talkin' Hawks" is former Hawkeye defensive back Chris Rowell, who was a weekly part of the podcast last year and will be again in 2012. Rowell played five seasons at Iowa and was a member of the 2009 squad that finished 11-2 and defeated Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl.

In this nearly two-hour podcast, Rowell and I discuss the reshuffling and new hires made to the Iowa coaching staff as well as examine the Hawkeyes position by position and give our thoughts on each of the six BCS conferences, giving those who subscribe to or visit this site a taste of what teams will be mentioned regularly in the *HawkeyeDrive.com* Pick 'Em, [which has officially begun accepting entries for the season's first week](#). At the end, we also share both our Heisman Trophy and BCS National Championship predictions, and provide final thoughts we have about the Hawkeyes prior to the season starting.

Our next edition of the "Talkin' Hawks" podcast will be posted Aug. 30, as Rowell and I preview Iowa's season opener against Northern Illinois at Soldier Field and share our picks for each of the 10 games featured in the season's first *HawkeyeDrive.com* Pick 'Em. For now though, I hope you enjoy our 2012 season preview edition of the "Talkin' Hawks" podcast:

[Talkin' Hawks podcast \(2012 Iowa season preview\)](#)

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

#### ADDITIONAL FOOTBALL COVERAGE:

\*Below are links to the eight position breakdowns written earlier this month about the Iowa Hawkeyes: [Quarterbacks](#), [Running Backs](#), [Wide Receivers and Tight Ends](#), [Offensive Line](#), [Defensive Line](#), [Linebackers](#), [Secondary](#), [Special Teams](#)

\*Below are links to season previews of the other Big Ten teams, each of which include audio from players recorded from Big Ten Media Days last month in Chicago (please note you must have either a paid monthly or yearly subscription, or a three-day free trial, to [HawkeyeDrive.com](#) to access all of these): [Penn State](#), [Ohio State](#), [Indiana](#), [Illinois](#), [Purdue](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Northwestern](#), [Minnesota](#), [Nebraska](#), [Michigan State](#), [Michigan](#)

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## 2012 Big Ten football previews: Michigan (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

We've discussed [Penn State](#), [Ohio State](#), [Indiana](#), [Illinois](#), [Purdue](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Northwestern](#), [Minnesota](#), [Nebraska](#) and [Michigan State](#). Now our attention shifts to the No. 8 Michigan Wolverines. Iowa visits Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Nov. 17.

Year One of the Brady Hoke era at Michigan proved to be a far greater success than many envisioned it being. While the Wolverines didn't win the Big Ten – or the Legends Division –

for that matter, they did manage to finish with a 11-2 mark that was capped by a 23-20 overtime win in the Sugar Bowl over Virginia Tech last January.

As Michigan enters 2012, expectations around the program are the highest they've been since Lloyd Carr's tenure. On paper, this is probably the most talented team in the entire Big Ten this year. The Wolverines are also my pick to represent the conference on New Year's Day at the 2013 Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif.

Let's start with the fact that Michigan returns the Big Ten's most dynamic player in senior quarterback Denard Robinson. Does he have a great arm? Not really. But I got to say I was impressed with the strides he made last season. While he was clearly a better fit for the Wolverines when Rich Rodriguez was the head coach, Hoke managed to find a balance with Robinson that still allowed him to make plays in an offense not nearly as suited for him. Because of Hoke, Robinson became mentally tougher and as a result, he's a more confident quarterback now.

Statistically speaking, Robinson didn't quite have the numbers last season he had as a sophomore in 2010. But he did managed to throw for more touchdowns while completing fewer passes and he actually rushed for more touchdowns despite fewer carries. The talent around him also got better and looks to still be better in 2012. This is something I see playing to his benefit again this year.

It appears Michigan has finally found a clear-cut No. 1 running back in junior Fitzgerald Toussaint, but he's currently serving a suspension after a DUI arrest this offseason. Last year, he came on in the season's second half and wound up rushing for 1,041 yards and nine touchdowns. When Toussaint returns, he gives the Wolverines even more punch to their ground attack.

The receiving corps took a hit losing leading receiver Junior Hemingway, who had 34 catches for 699 yards and four touchdowns in 2011. Junior wideout Jeremy Gallon is back following a season where he had 31 catches, 453 yards and three touchdowns, but the pressure on being the No. 1 receiver falls squarely on the shoulders of senior Roy Roundtree.

Last year, Roundtree hauled in 19 catches and had 355 yards receiving and two scores, one of which was the game-winning touchdown against Notre Dame. But he also changed his number to No. 21, the same number worn by Desmond Howard during his Heisman Trophy winning 1991 season. Roundtree has to evolve into that true No. 1 threat in order for Michigan to fully reach its potential.

Up front, the Wolverines will be led by junior left tackle Taylor Lewan, one of three returning starters along the offensive line. Also back are senior right guard Patrick Omameh and junior left guard Michael Schofield. However, Michigan has a massive void at center left by David Molk, who won the Rimington Trophy in 2011 as the nation's top center. The name to watch at center this year will likely be senior Ricky Barnum, who hasn't been a regular starter along the line but has plenty of experience.

Molk was the huge loss on offense. On defense, it's defensive tackle Mike Martin. Last season, Martin compiled 64 tackles and 3.5 sacks leading a Wolverine defense that resurrected back into a respected group under defensive coordinator Greg Mattison after spending three years as a complete laughingstock.

While Michigan returns seven defensive starters, three of the four who aren't returning are along the front four – including Martin. The Wolverines also lose the services of Ryan Van Bergen, who started games at both the tackle and end spots and recorded 45 tackles as well as a team-high 5.5 sacks in 2011. Senior defensive end Craig Roh will be counted on to lead this

inexperienced group after finishing with 32 tackles and four sacks while starting every game as a junior.

If there is good news for this defense, it's returning the trio of linebackers that started the majority of Michigan's games in 2011. The clear leader of this linebacking corps is senior middle linebacker Kenny Demens, who led the Wolverines with 94 tackles last season and also recorded three sacks. Joining him are a pair of sophomores in Desmond Morgan and Jake Ryan. Morgan finished with 63 tackles while Ryan had 37 tackles as well as a pair of fumble recoveries.

The secondary returns three starters, with the mainstay being senior strong safety Jordan Kovacs. After finishing second in the Big Ten with 116 tackles two years ago, Kovacs had 75 tackles in 2011, as well as four sacks. Again, this is a strong safety. Michigan also brings back junior free safety Thomas Gordon, who had 67 tackles and four fumble recoveries, as well as senior cornerback J.T. Floyd, who had 48 tackles and led the defense with eight pass break ups and two interceptions. Most likely to join the defensive backfield in 2012 is sophomore cornerback Blake Countess, who recorded 44 tackles and broke up six passes as a freshman.

As for special teams, junior punter Will Hagerup, junior kicker Brendan Gibbons and sophomore kicker Matt Wile are all back. Hagerup averaged 36 yards per punt, while Gibbons connected on 13-of-17 field goals last season, including the game-winner in the Sugar Bowl. Wile began the season handling punting duties while Hagerup served an early-season suspension and was Michigan's kickoff specialist, a role he'll keep in 2012. Gallon will likely be the main player to watch in the return game for both punts and kickoffs.

Onto the schedule, which make no mistake, is brutal. The Wolverines open the season at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas against defending BCS national champion Alabama, who enters this season ranked second nationally. As if that's not

enough, Michigan also plays at Notre Dame in what will be a prime time game in South Bend and the Big Ten slate features road games at No. 17 Nebraska on Oct. 27 and of course, the regular season finale Nov. 24 at No. 18 Ohio State.

Now it's conceivable that the Wolverines lose all four of those games being played away from the Big House, and still do enough to win the Legends Division and play in the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 1 in Indianapolis since Alabama and Notre Dame are both non-conference. The key game, strangely enough, is the one big game Michigan does get at home – Oct. 20 against No. 13 Michigan State.

The Spartans have won the last four meetings between these teams and while Michigan State looks to have another stout team in place this season, this year's contest at the Big House is Michigan's best chance at winning since its last victory over the Spartans in 2007. If the Wolverines are able to prevail here – and I think they will – I have a hard time seeing them not winning the Legends Division.

Should Michigan draw No. 12 Wisconsin in the Big Ten title game like many (including myself) are anticipating, I believe the combination of experience the Wolverines are getting this season playing mammoth games away from the Big House, as well as the overall talent they possess, bodes well enough that they dethrone the Badgers and come up smelling roses in 2012, even if they take a 9-4 record with them to Pasadena.

**AUDIO:** [Michigan QB Denard Robinson](#)

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# 2012 Big Ten football previews: Michigan State (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

We've written about [Penn State](#), [Ohio State](#), [Indiana](#), [Illinois](#), [Purdue](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Northwestern](#), [Minnesota](#) and [Nebraska](#). Now we set our sights on the No. 13 Michigan State Spartans, who won the Legends Division last season. Iowa will visit Spartan Stadium in East Lansing, Mich., on Oct. 13.

After winning a share of the Big Ten title two years ago, Michigan State proved its 2010 season wasn't an aberration by not only winning the Legends Division, but being able to bounce back from a heartbreaking 42-39 loss to Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship Game by winning its first bowl game under head coach Mark Dantonio, defeating Georgia 27-24 in overtime to win the 2012 Outback Bowl.

Looking at the Spartans this season, there are key pieces from last year's squad gone and there are definite areas of concern. But there's no reason to think this team is going fade back into mediocrity anytime soon.

On the offensive side of the ball, Michigan State has two things going for it. One is at running back, where junior Le'Veon Bell is the clear No. 1 for the Spartans. Although Michigan State had its issues running the football in 2011 – it ranked 11th in the Big Ten in rushing – Bell emerged as a dependable back late in the season, starting six of the Spartans' final seven games and compiling 948 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns on 182 carries. He's the one known commodity at the skill positions that Michigan State will rely even more

on in 2012.

The other area of the Spartan offense that looks to be real good this fall is up front. Michigan State returns four of its five starters along the offensive line, and this year's group might be the Spartans' best since Dantonio first took over in 2007. The leader of this unit is senior Chris McDonald, who has started 26 straight games at right guard for Michigan State. Senior Fou Fonoti should be the right tackle again, while sophomore Travis Jackson handles reps at center.

If there is concern here, it'd be on the left side and having to replace Joel Foreman at left guard. If junior Dan France remains the team's left tackle, then junior Blake Treadwell is a likely candidate to start at left guard. However, Michigan State could also move France over to guard, letting sophomore Skyler Burkland take reps at tackle. Either way, this isn't a bad problem for the Spartans to have.

Now come the questions surrounding this offense, with the most obvious being who replaces Kirk Cousins at quarterback. Dantonio has fully invested in junior Andrew Maxwell as Cousins' heir apparent. Not only is Maxwell a lock to start behind center, but his experience in the system has been enough to convince the coaches he can be as successful as Cousins was.

With that being said though, Michigan State needs playmakers at the receiver and tight end positions to make up for all the productivity lost. The Spartans lost five guys – three wideouts and two tight ends – that were all integral parts of the offense in 2011. None of Michigan State's returning wideouts caught a single touchdown pass last season and the most TD catches of any returning Spartan is three from junior tight end Dion Sims, who will be the No. 1 tight end this fall.

The receiver most likely to become the focal point of Michigan



State's passing attack is junior Bennie Fowler, who only played in five games last season due to a foot injury. One name to keep an eye on though is sophomore DeAnthony Arnett, who transferred from Tennessee and has been ruled eligible to play this season by the NCAA. If Arnett can provide any sort of positive impact for this offense, that would be huge for Maxwell and the Spartans going forward.

Now, let's get to the defense, which is far and away the best in the entire Big Ten. This unit ranked at or near the top in most Big Ten categories in 2011, and this season, it returns eight starters.

The front four has one massive void to fill with Jerel Worthy opting to forego his senior season for the NFL (Worthy was a second-round pick of the Green Bay Packers). Worthy had 30 tackles and 3.5 sacks last year, with 10.5 of those tackles resulting in a loss of yardage. But Michigan State does bring back junior defensive end William Gholston, who for my money is the best defensive player in the entire conference. Gholston recorded 70 tackles and five sacks for the Spartans last year, and those are both numbers that are likely to go up in 2012.

Michigan State brings back its entire linebacking corps, which is what makes this defense as talented as it is. Juniors Max Bullough and Denicos Allen and senior Chris Norman were three of the Spartans' top four leading tacklers in 2011. Bullough led the team with 89 tackles while Allen had 83 tackles and a team-high 11 sacks, second in the Big Ten to Illinois' Whitney Mercilus. With this trio of guys, productivity shouldn't be that much different.

Last year, the Spartans' four defensive backs accounted for 14 interceptions. This year, three of those four return to the Michigan State secondary. The one loss is at free safety with Trenton Robinson, who was the team's third-leading tackler and had four interceptions his senior year. Junior strong safety

Isaiah Lewis tied Robinson with a team-high four interceptions last season, while senior cornerback Johnny Adams and junior cornerback Darqueze Dennard each had three picks. Adams was picked by the coaches as first-team all-Big Ten and is regarded as the conference's top corner entering 2012. This is a unit that looks to build off a stellar 2011 campaign.

On special teams, Michigan State brings back sophomore punter Mike Sadler and senior kicker Dan Conroy to handle those respective duties again. Sadler averaged 41.1 yards per punt as a freshman and pinned opponents inside their own 20-yard line on 25 occasions. Meanwhile, Conroy connected on 100 percent of his PATs and was 17-of-23 on field goal tries. Sophomore Nick Hill is expected to be the focal point of the Spartans' return game – both on punts and kickoffs.

I got to say, Michigan State has quite the home schedule in 2012. No. 24 Boise State, Notre Dame, No. 18 Ohio State, Iowa and No. 17 Nebraska all pay visits to Spartan Stadium this fall. There is one particular stretch during Big Ten play that will be grueling, however. Following their Homecoming game against Iowa, the Spartans make back-to-back trips to No. 8 Michigan on Oct. 20 and No. 12 Wisconsin on Oct. 27. Then after it plays both its biggest rival in Ann Arbor and the Big Ten title game grudge match in Madison, that home contest against Nebraska takes place the following week.

Michigan State has the defense to play with anyone in the country. Not just the Big Ten, but the entire country. It's that good. If the offense can click as it did in 2011, a return to Indianapolis on Dec. 1 is possible. But this schedule seems demanding, maybe even too demanding, for the Spartans to duplicate that sort of success. One thing is for sure though, people have taken notice and Michigan State is now in the rather unfamiliar role of being the team with a target on its back.

**AUDIO:** [Michigan State LB Max Bullough](#)

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# Hawkeyes in the NFL: 2012 Preseason Week Three

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

The third week of the 2012 NFL preseason, also known as the “dress rehearsal” week since starters play the majority of the games, begins Thursday. As of Wednesday morning, there currently remain 41 former Iowa football players listed on NFL rosters, with three listed on injured reserve.

**\*UPDATE:** *Former Iowa offensive lineman Eric Steinbach [announced his retirement](#) from the NFL on Wednesday. Steinbach was listed on the Miami Dolphins' roster. His retirement means there are now 40 former Hawkeyes currently playing in the NFL.\**

Below is a list of this week's preseason games in the NFL, including which former Iowa players are with which teams. For those in Eastern Iowa, KGAN-TV (CBS affiliate) will carry the Minnesota Vikings' preseason game on Friday against the San Diego Chargers via tape delay following the national CBS' coverage of the Chicago Bears against the New York Giants.

In addition, there are six nationally televised preseason games this week including Sunday's contest on NBC between Charles Godfrey and the Carolina Panthers against Shonn Greene, Matt Kroul and the New York Jets.

## **Thursday, Aug. 23:**

Green Bay at Cincinnati, 6 p.m. – **Packers:** Bryan Bulaga, Mike Daniels; **Bengals:** Shaun Prater (IR)

Jacksonville at Baltimore, 6:30 p.m. – **Ravens:** Sean Considine, Marshal Yanda

Arizona at Tennessee, 7 p.m. (ESPN) – **Titans:** Karl Klug

**Friday, Aug. 24:**

Philadelphia at Cleveland, 6:30 p.m. – **Eagles:** Marvin McNutt, Julian Vandervelde

Atlanta at Miami, 6:30 p.m. – **Falcons:** Jonathan Babineaux

New England at Tampa Bay, 6:30 p.m. – **Patriots:** Jeff Tarpinian, Markus Zusevics, Brad Herman (IR); **Buccaneers:** Dallas Clark, Adrian Clayborn, Eric Guthrie

Seattle at Kansas City, 7 p.m. – **Chiefs:** Rob Bruggeman, Tony Moeaki, Ricky Stanzi

San Diego at Minnesota, 7 p.m. (KGAN-TV with 10:30 p.m. tape delay) – **Chargers:** Nate Kaeding; **Vikings:** Christian Ballard, Chad Greenway, Tyler Nielsen, Allen Reisner

Chicago at NY Giants, 7 p.m. (CBS) – **Giants:** Tyler Sash

**Saturday, Aug. 25:**

Indianapolis at Washington, 3 p.m. (NFL Network) – **Colts:** Seth Olsen, Pat Angerer (injured), A.J. Edds (IR); **Redskins:** Jordan Bernstine, Adam Gettis

Pittsburgh at Buffalo, 6 p.m. – **Bills:** Scott Chandler

Detroit at Oakland, 6 p.m. – **Lions:** Ryan Donahue, Riley Reiff, Amari Spivey; **Raiders:** Brandon Myers

St. Louis at Dallas, 7 p.m. – **Rams:** Bradley Fletcher, Bryan Mattison

Houston at New Orleans, 7 p.m. (CBS) – **Texans:** Mitch King

**Sunday, Aug. 26:**

San Francisco at Denver, 3 p.m. (FOX)

Carolina at NY Jets, 7 p.m. (NBC) – *Panthers: Charles Godfrey; Jets: Shonn Greene, Matt Kroul*

*\*All times listed are Central Standard Time*

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## 2012 Big Ten football previews: Nebraska (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

Thus far in our Big Ten season preview series, we have discussed [Penn State](#), [Ohio State](#), [Indiana](#), [Illinois](#), [Purdue](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Northwestern](#) and [Minnesota](#). We now turn our attention to the No. 17 Nebraska Cornhuskers. Iowa will play against Nebraska on Nov. 23 at Kinnick Stadium.

In its first season as a Big Ten member last year, Nebraska was solid. The Cornhuskers didn't win the Legends Division, but they still won nine games and played in the Capital One Bowl, losing 30-13 to South Carolina. Now entering Year Two of Big Ten play, Nebraska's a team that has pieces in place to make a legitimate run at winning its division and playing in the Big Ten Championship Game on Dec. 1. While I don't think personally think the Cornhuskers will win the conference or division for that matter, I get the optimism surrounding this team.

At quarterback, Nebraska has junior Taylor Martinez. His passing mechanics leave a lot to be desired, but what he does for the Cornhuskers' rushing game makes up for any throwing

deficiencies there might be. Martinez threw for 2,089 yards but only had 13 touchdowns and also tossed eight interceptions. However, he did compile 874 yards on the ground and had nine rushing touchdowns as well. Basically, Martinez gives you good and bad. If Nebraska is able to improve its passing game in any matter, then he could have a big year.

Also providing an enormous boost to the Cornhusker rushing attack is senior running back Rex Burkhead. In 2011, Burkhead rushed for 1,357 yards on 281 carries – good for third in the conference – as well as 15 touchdowns. His best performance of the season came in Nebraska's regular season finale against Iowa, as Burkhead had 160 yards rushing on a Cornhusker single-game record of 38 carries. Once again, he'll be the one player opposing defenses will game plan for and another 1,000-yard season out of him should prove beneficial to Nebraska.

The one name to watch in the receiving corps this fall will be sophomore Kenny Bell. As a freshman, Bell led the Cornhuskers in receiving with 32 catches for 461 yards receiving and three touchdowns. Also coming back in 2012 is junior Quincy Enunwa, who had 21 catches for 293 receiving yards and a pair of TDs. Nebraska will also have the benefit of two experienced tight ends that could be incorporated in the passing game as well – seniors Ben Cotton and Kyler Reed. This duo combined for 29 catches and 446 receiving yards in 2011. The offensive numbers might not be staggering, but the Cornhuskers have options on this side of the ball.

Up front, Nebraska loses its center and both starting tackles from one year ago. Junior Cole Pensick has a chance to take over at center for previous two-year starter Mike Caputo. The experience comes at the guard positions, where three names to watch are junior Spencer Long (who started every game at right guard in 2011), senior Seung Hoon Choi and junior Andrew Rodriguez. Another name that could re-emerge along this Cornhusker offensive line is junior Jeremiah Sirles, who was a reserve last year, but started every game at tackle back in

2010.

As for the defensive line, the bad news here is Nebraska no longer has Jared Crick, who was taken in last spring's NFL Draft by the Houston Texans. Crick saw his senior season cut short due to injury, but he was the heart and soul of that defensive line. If there is good news though, it's that first-year defensive line coach (and former Iowa assistant) Rick Kaczynski has a pair of seniors along the front four that can be depended on.

One of those guys is defensive end Cameron Meredith, who has started 27 straight games at defensive end for the Cornhuskers. Last year, Meredith recorded 58 tackles and was second on the team with five sacks. Inside, Nebraska will have the services of Baker Steinkuhler, who had 40 tackles and two sacks during his junior campaign.

The linebacking corps is similar to the front four in that it's a good news/bad news scenario for the Cornhuskers. The good is that they return a pair of seniors here in middle linebacker Will Compton and outside linebacker Sean Fisher. The bad, however, is Nebraska no longer features Lavonte David, who was a third-round pick of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after leading the Cornhuskers in tackles, tackles for loss, sacks, interceptions, forced fumbles and fumble recoveries. In other words, his loss is huge. Compton was the second-leading tackler on the team with 82 of them, while Fisher had 24 tackles.

Nebraska's secondary also lost a big-time cornerback in Alfonzo Dennard, who was selected in the NFL Draft by the New England Patriots following a season where he had 31 tackles and six pass break ups. The defensive backfield also lost safety Austin Cassidy, who had 70 tackles in 2011. Senior safety Daimion Stafford is the name to watch from this group though in 2012 after coming in last season and compiling 80 tackles and a team-high 10 pass break ups. The Cornhuskers

will need to figure out the direction they'll go at corner, which is why there's probably more concern here than with any other part of the defense.

If there's one area where Nebraska might be the conference's best team, it's special teams. The Cornhuskers possess the Big Ten's top specialist from last year in senior Brett Maher, who handled both the kicking and punting duties for this team. Maher made 19-of-23 field goal tries and contributed 100 of Nebraska's points in 2011, more than any other kicker on any other Big Ten team. He also led the conference with an average of 44.5 yards per punt on 59 attempts. Nebraska also has one of the league's top return men in sophomore Ameer Abdullah, who averaged 29.3 yards per kickoff return as a freshman.

Now, looking at Nebraska's schedule, the Cornhuskers have a semi-tough non-conference slate that features home games against Southern Miss and Arkansas State and a road trip on Sept. 8 to UCLA. Nebraska should be 4-0 when it hosts No. 12 Wisconsin on Sept. 29 in a primetime game that will feature the Cornhuskers looking for payback after being thumped in their inaugural Big Ten contest 48-17 by the Badgers last season.

It only gets more grueling from there though as October features two more night games – one at No. 18 Ohio State and one at Memorial Stadium on Oct. 27 against No. 8 Michigan. After that home contest with the Wolverines, Nebraska has to play at No. 13 Michigan State the following weekend. The season concludes with the second annual "Heroes Game" against Iowa that will take place on the Friday after Thanksgiving.

Again, Nebraska's one of three teams that I think has a realistic chance of winning the Legends Division this season. I just don't see it happening. With that being said though, the Cornhuskers could be a team that benefits by season's end if the Big Ten successfully has two BCS teams again in 2012 and Nebraska has the type of season many believe it can have.



The offense should be better, but the question will be how much better the defense can be after being subpar last year.

**AUDIO:** [Nebraska RB Rex Burkhead](#)

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# Hill, Lile both out for 2012 season

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

A pair of true freshmen will miss the entire 2012 season due to ACL injuries.

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz announced in a release that defensive back Ruben Lile and running back Barkley Hill will both be sidelined as a result of injuries that occurred this month while the Hawkeyes were in fall camp. In Hill's case, his knee injury came on the final play of the scrimmage conducted during Iowa's open practice on Aug. 18 at Kinnick Stadium.

Ferentz said Hill would have ACL reconstruction surgery done later this week, while Lile has already been operated on successfully for his knee injury.

Hill's loss has a bigger impact as Iowa was already getting thin at running back. The Hawkeyes are now down to sophomore Damon Bullock, true freshman Greg Garmon, junior Brad Rogers (who is also a fullback), true freshman Michael Malloy and sophomore Andre Dawson. Bullock is expected to be the starter for Iowa's season opener in Chicago on Sept. 1 against Northern Illinois.