

**September 6, 2011**



An interview with:

## **COACH FERENTZ**

COACH FERENTZ: Welcome. Just real quickly, medically, obviously, Mika'il McCall will be out for a while. It's a setback certainly and just disappointing. Certainly feel bad for him.

Just a reminder that I think that's the toughest part about football is when players have to deal with injuries. Here's a guy that's been on campus for two weeks, and he's going to be on crutches here for a couple of weeks. It's tough, and it's certainly disappointing. He's invested a lot of work. He'll bounce back, but we feel badly for him, certainly.

Our captains are the same guys as last week. We've got Mike Daniels, Marvin McNutt, Tyler Nielsen, and James Vandenberg will lead the team on this week. Then last week, it was a good win certainly and we are pleased to get the win.

The conditions were more than unusual, so it's probably a good learning experience from that standpoint. Certainly got some opportunity to work with a wet ball and experiencing a delay, that type of thing. Hopefully it won't happen again this year, but you never know. So hopefully we've learned something there.

Then moving forward, obviously, this is a big game for us. Going up to Iowa State, it's a big game for, both teams. Certainly a tough place to play. It's a place we can anticipate a lot of intensity in all areas. Not only from our opponent but from the fans.

That being said, we've got a lot of work ahead. We've got a young football team right now that hasn't gone on the road. We have a lot of guys who haven't gone on the road and had to encounter something like this.

It's going to be a big week for us. We've got a lot of improvement to do knowing what waits for us on Saturday, and we'll get back to that work this afternoon.

**Q. What did you think overall of Marcus Coker's play? I mean, certainly 41 yards and a couple fumbles weren't really what most people were expecting out of him right out of the chute?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not sure what everybody's expecting. If they're expecting 220 yards a game, that's not realistic. But Marcus is a good football player. The most important thing for us offensively Saturday, in my mind, was the fact that we put the ball on the ground four times. That's not a good thing in any circumstance. One of those was a special teams play. But we're not going to win consistently doing that.

In this case, Marcus had his hands or was involved in a couple of those plays. But we've been around Marcus now for over a year. He's a tremendous young man, quality person, quality player, and he'll bounce back would be my guess. He'll have a great week and come back ready to go Saturday.

**Q. Was it a wet ball or people getting hit with the helmet?**

COACH FERENTZ: There were a lot of guys that touched the ball Saturday. It was wet start to finish, basically. Tough to keep balls dry in that environment. So that might have factored in.

But we'll probably play in rain again. We haven't practiced in it. Had a 15-minute shower and one day got some rain, but that's just part of the deal. That's why you've still got to hang on to it.

**Q. Coach Rhoads said this is the best team he's had at Iowa State. Would you agree with that?**

**ASAP** sports  
...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

**Coach Ferentz - 09 06 11**

COACH FERENTZ: I would. They're third year into the program, certainly. A lot of good players back that have played well for them. You know, they've had a lot of good moments. So we're going over there expecting a real tough game.

We know we have a lot of work right now too, so it's going to be a real test for us.

**Q. What are your impressions of Steele Jantz?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think it's pretty obvious there were three quarters where he struggled. Looked like a guy that was new, and a guy that wasn't comfortable. Then in the fourth quarter he did a great job of helping his team win.

At the end of the day, that's what counts in that ballgame. They got the job done kind of like us two years ago against UNI. UNI is an excellent football team, and they knew that, we knew that. But the bottom line is he made some really good plays in that fourth quarter and gave them a chance.

That's what quarterbacks try to do, so I think he's got his jitters, the first game jitters, down the tubes now and he's ready to go.

**Q. What were your overall impressions of how the defense played? You've got six new guys, but essentially the starters pitched a shutout.**

COACH FERENTZ: There were a lot of good things on the film and communication was good to start with. I thought the guys ran around really well. But we didn't tackle well as a defense. We didn't tackle great on special teams. We didn't tackle real well.

There are some things we can improve upon certainly in all areas defensively. But that being said, it was good. You've got a couple new safeties out there. You've got guys up front, more than a couple, but two positions in the line. Probably about six guys that haven't played a lot. Can't say get their feet wet, but they did, right, in more ways than one.

Kirksey did a nice job for a first time player, too, so it was good to get those guys running.

**Q. Is the strong safety position open?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, two guys that looked to me from the sidelines were going a little different tempo than everybody else were McCall and Bernstine. I thought those guys had it going pretty good on Saturday.

Jordan's still in the mix. We're playing him at safety, playing both safeties, actually, playing him at corner. We plan on him playing and he did a nice job on special teams with that return as well.

So he's really been one of the of positive stories, I think, of this camp, if you will. If you include all the whole month of August, I think he's done a good job.

We're not disappointed with Collin either, Collin Sleeper. I think it's developing into a situation where we've got a little depth, which is good. We don't have many of those on our team.

**Q. Have you thought about taking the red shirt off Canzeri at this point?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think anybody that can help us right now is going to play. There is a chance Mika'il could be back at the end of the year. That's possible. If he can, we're trying to win today, so that's possible.

We'll just let all the backs practice this week and see who does the best. We'll take it off anybody. We'd have taken it off Saturday if we had to.

**Q. What did Bullock show you in camp where you threw him at a wide receiver or I guess slot, whatever you might call it?**

COACH FERENTZ: As you can imagine, one thing is good hands. He had good ball skills. Something we didn't see a lot on his high school tape, so it's a little bit of a surprise for us, a pleasant surprise he's got pretty good ball skills. He performed overall over the three-plus weeks. Just acted like he belonged out there, so we felt like we could go ahead and push him forward.

We'll probably change his role a little bit. We're leaning towards the passing game, but we'll just shift him back to the back field now.

**Q. When you look back at the last two Cy-Hawk games, what do you think it is that's allowed you to be so successful in?**

COACH FERENTZ: Turnovers are one thing that jumps out right off the bat. If you go back to '05, it was the other way. We got ambushed pretty good over there. I think we turned it over seven times, I think. I think it was 7. Seemed like 17. I think they only turned it over twice.

So turnovers throughout this series have historically been big. In '07 we went over there

and fell behind 12-0. I think right off the bat or in the first half had a field goal blocked in the second half after we had ten guys on the field. Then they had a big play on us at the end and converted the field goal.

Anything can happen. Two teams are going to be playing hard and the stakes, those obvious things, those old cliché things are usually pretty true in a rivalry series like this one. So it's the team that plays the cleanest will probably have the best chance to win.

**Q. With all that, you've won 6 of 8. Do you get a sense that your team has some confidence playing against Iowa State?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I don't know about that. But we've won whatever you just said, but I know we've lost like 7 out of 13. Does that sound right? Bigger picture.

I don't know about our players. I know what it's like on the other end. We've seen it both ways as a staff. So the last two years went a different route, but it wasn't that long ago going over there we had a tough day, really tough day. And we've had a couple tough days over there, and those aren't much fun.

It's not like we've really accomplished anything yet. This team right now, we're really young. They've got a young quarterback. But we don't have John Elway back there. Our guy hasn't played. He's started three games so far, I think. So we're pretty young in that position too. It's going to be an interesting challenge.

**Q. What did you think of Vandenberg's performance?**

COACH FERENTZ: He got off to a good start. Really pleased, certainly. I think he was for the most part in control out there. Threw the ball pretty well, again, given the circumstances and conditions.

But it was a good start. It will be tougher this week. It's going to be -- the environment's going to be tougher, and the opponent's going to be a lot tougher. So it will be a tough step forward for us.

**Q. When he played that Ohio State game, how much do you think that helps him?**

COACH FERENTZ: It can't hurt. It doesn't get any louder or tougher than that in that environment, certainly. That's really kind of when you travel to Ames, it's like playing in the toughest

places in the Big Ten in my vantage point. So at least he's gone through it once.

That was about 18 years ago, that's the bad news. I think he'll be okay. But we've got a lot of other guys that haven't been on the road yet and been through that, so it's going to be interesting.

**Q. What did you learn about your defensive line, especially the new guys going in and out?**

COACH FERENTZ: Again, it was a good start, a positive start. But it will be tougher this week, and I don't say that with any disrespect to Tennessee Tech. But if you look at their players compared to what we're going to see this week, we're going to be outweighed. I haven't done the math on it yet, but we're going to get dwarfed here up front.

Again, wasn't that long ago we couldn't get off the field, and they ran the ball right down our throats. At the end of the '07 game, we couldn't get off the field. So those are things you don't forget about. If we're not doing a good job with our technique and trying to get off blocks, it can be tough.

**Q. Is Jason White number two?**

COACH FERENTZ: He is. I mean, he's a guy that we've got total faith in, and we'll see who looks the best after that this week in practice.

**Q. Any idea what trophy you'll be playing for and do you even care?**

COACH FERENTZ: It really doesn't matter. They could put a whatever out there. Just anything, a piece of paper, it's still big. It really doesn't matter to us.

**Q. What is it about a first road start for a quarterback? You brought up Ohio State, tough environment. Iowa State similar, smaller, but similar.**

COACH FERENTZ: It will be similar. It will be every bit as loud. You couldn't hear yourself think. We've been through that, so it's hard. It's just hard.

It's a lot easier if things are quiet and can you communicate. You've got a tennis crowd up there. The home fans are usually pretty polite when you've got the ball, but it's just the other way around.

They don't cheer at tennis matches, do

they? I mean, you're not allowed to talk until -- it's like golf. You can't make noise until it's the appropriate time.

**Q. Does James have the make-up to get through that?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not as worried about him as the other ten guys that we've got, not knowing who some of those might be.

**Q. Is that because of his personality?**

COACH FERENTZ: Well, at least he's been there a little bit. But he's hardly -- I don't want to start talking about him like he's a seasoned veteran. He's only played three games. He'll be okay, but it's a little tougher to communicate and those types of things.

**Q. The forecast in Ames on Saturday, 75 and sunny. How does that sound?**

COACH FERENTZ: I just know the last two days have been beautiful, just absolutely beautiful. Not that I got out much yesterday at all. But we were out there Sunday and it was just gorgeous, so nice change.

It was a good experience. It was good. We didn't get much rain in camp, so it was really good weather. Pardon that pun too, sorry.

**Q. You still enjoy this rivalry game on the coaching side?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, it's good for the state. It's good for football, I think. This is one week from border to border people are talking about the game. I think it's fantastic.

On that note with the league talking about expansion, I think in '17 it expanded into nine games. It looks like this series will be able to continue, which is great. It would be a real shame, I think, if it ever got discontinued.

So it's good. It's all good. We're going to play UNI in the future, and I think that's good too just like Iowa State's done it. We've got a great football state, if you will, from top to bottom. I think it's a good thing.

**Q. Do you expect anybody back that's been hurt?**

COACH FERENTZ: Carl Davis might, he's been cleared to go. Now it's a matter of what he can do, how much he can do. At least we're going to start working him this week in practice. We're getting close on some other guys.

Dakota Getz actually practiced last week. I think we can get him involved in special teams which every little bit really helps. Anybody we can get back that can contribute in some way.

I think we have a couple other guys starting to work in that direction. We'll see what the next couple weeks bring.

**Q. Are you happy with what you saw from A.J. Derby on Saturday?**

COACH FERENTZ: It was a start for him. Yeah, it was a start. That was the other good thing that happened Saturday. Besides winning, after the intermission we were able to play an awful lot of folks and that was good, because those guys haven't played at all. It's his first time ever, so it's important.

**Q. What are your recollections of the week of 9/11 ten years ago when you had to postpone this game? You're trying to get people ready, but in the back of your mind, it's a pretty serious situation going on.**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, two of the biggest things I remember first of all is just the day it happened. Just like I'm sure everybody in this country, where you're at, where you first heard it and all that type of thing. I think probably most of us logically felt like there would be a postponement. I think it was common sense.

I remember going home that weekend quite frankly. I got on a plane, went to Pittsburgh and watched the high school game Friday night. Scouted a game there, and, yeah, came back here. That's kind of what I remember.

Obviously, here we are, however many years later we're still at war, and that's a tough thing.

**Q. For a couple of days there, still undetermined whether you're going to play or not. How long -- what was your opinion at the time and has your opinion changed over time?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I don't really have any strong recollections other than I think all of us just experienced disbelief. I think probably every American did. Boy, it just drove home the seriousness of what's going on. Which football coaches are probably like way at the end of the spectrum of reality.

Just recently watching the footage, it probably impacts me more now, quite frankly, ten

years later watching the footage of President Bush in the classroom knowing what had happened. We worry about third down decisions. How would you like to be sitting in that chair? It just puts everything really in perspective, you know? Big difference between what we do, coaches do, and what people like that do.

**Q. You talk about -- I know left tackle is a big position in the NFL, blindside, big money, all that stuff. What does it do for your team? It seems like you put good athletes there every year and you're sending guys to the NFL from that spot. What do you look for? What does it do for your team?**

COACH FERENTZ: I know they got a good left tackle; is that what you're referring to? He's really a good player. He's big, he's athletic, and has a good temperament and knows how to play.

I told our team I'm so disinterested right now in NFL talk. I'm thrilled for Chad Greenway. That is great. We've had our share of guys do well, and I'm really happy for him.

This was the cut weekend, so a lot of guys really are either making the team or being on practice squads. I think with good futures of the really happy for them. But at the end of the day it's really a by product of them having good careers here and playing well at their given positions, and doing a good job off the field too. That really enhances everybody's chance to have a good career in the NFL.

Right now, we're trying to find a way to worry about winning against Iowa State. If they play well this week, that will help them move down the road, for sure.

**Q. You're picking a left tackle. What do you look for here and now?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'd like to take credit for Riley Reiff, knowing he was a defensive end when he came here. It's like a lot of our guys end up at spots maybe by -- not by accident, but it's usually a little bit of a journey.

Robert came as a tight end, skinny tight end -- or lean tight end, not skinny. So, you know, he played there, and he was right guard, right tackle. So we just try to get somebody who can play that position in the offense.

**Q. Have you ever been approached with an alternate uniform design, and would you ever consider it?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think that's no and no. I've got to think about the first one.

**Q. What do you think of the trending of that this weekend?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's great. But I really like our uniforms. I think they look outstanding. That's one thing I'll say, we have sharp uniforms. In my opinion. That's just my opinion. I grew up in Pittsburgh, so what do you expect?

**Q. You don't like the ones with the wings?**

COACH FERENTZ: I tell you, those would be very fashionable right now, would be my guess. I'm guessing. Somebody would think those would really look good. I'm just guessing.

But, yeah, I don't know. I live with young people and I know how important that is sitting in front of the computer screen with all these different -- my kids are good kids, but they spend a lot of time looking at that stuff, so that's important. But we're not changing our uniforms, so, never say never. Okay. Thank you.

#### **FastScripts by ASAP Sports**