

University of Iowa Football

Media Conference

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Kirk Ferentz

Drew Ott

COACH FERENTZ: Sorry we're a little bit late here. I appreciate you kind of adjusting your schedules here. Had a conference call so we had to push this back a little bit. Just a couple words. The ruling came out on Drew, obviously, a couple thoughts on that.

First and foremost, really disappointed for Drew. Drew has just done such a great job, and it's a tough situation. Beyond that, I am disappointed with the decision and also disappointed at the process, and that being said, I'll just move on.

Going back to Drew, I can't say enough about him as a player, team member, and just how he's handled what I think is a very challenging circumstance and situation over the last couple months here. But if you look back last fall, how he handled going through some injuries and what happened after he was injured, taken out of the field of play, just how he upped his investment with our football team, upped his leadership and I didn't think that was possible but he did. He found a way to even add and contribute more, so he was a huge part of our success and really appreciative of that; all the coaches are, I know all of his teammates are, as well.

Again, I was a little bit hopeful and mildly optimistic this ruling would go the other way. It didn't. The good thing is, the comforting thing is, I know he's got a bright future and he's going to do well in whatever he chooses to do moving on.

A couple things about Drew: He's extremely smart, he's very, very talented athletically, outstanding football player. He's truly a team-first guy. And then his mental toughness is off the charts and quite frankly that probably might have been his undoing in this whole circumstance. That's probably what got him in trouble in the eyes of the NCAA.

Really when you look at it, whether it's the NFL or whatever he chooses to do beyond that, to me he's got a bright future. Kind of ironic, this morning I shared an article with our football team, just about Brandon Scherff and the reason the Redskins drafted him, that was kind of a mildly controversial pick, I guess, at No. 5.



But it really got down to the message in the article from their general manager; he was trying to establish a culture with that organization. He wanted a player that he knew was going to set a great example for everybody in the Redskins organization the next decade, and to me that's what Brandon Scherff is all about, and Drew Ott is that same type of individual. I don't care if it's football, family, business, whatever environment he ends up in, that's what he's going to bring. Just a tremendous young person.

So needless to say, we are sorry that he won't be with us for his full senior year next year but again very, very appreciative of all he's done and certainly very, very confident he'll do extremely well in the future.

So we certainly wish him all the best, and again thank him for everything he's done for our football team, our program, over the last several years.

DREW OTT: It's unfortunate I didn't get the ruling to go may and get another year, but very thankful for the coaches and everyone here who helped with my rehab and things like that. So I'm very thankful for Hawkeye Nation staying with me, and it's been a lot of fun.

Q. Were you given an explanation why it took so long?

DREW OTT: No.

Q. Is there a way to ask?

DREW OTT: I don't know. I don't know who to talk to or how to ask them, but no.

Q. Did they basically say, the 30 percent rule was just hard and fast?

DREW OTT: Yeah, I mean, that's what they said the first time is just I played too many games. I mean, it's understandable.

Q. You played hurt, the elbow; did you ever think about not playing?

DREW OTT: I never thought about not playing. I mean, it was something I could work with. I had it dislocated before so I knew how to work my way around it. Wasn't too concerned about it.

Q. The Big Ten had it for the first three months, and then they forwarded the petition to the NCAA if I'm

not mistaken. Do you know why that took so long for the Big Ten to forward it?

DREW OTT: I don't know. It's really confusing. There's just a lot of steps that they have to go through and things like that. So hopefully they can get that a little more streamlined for the next person.

Q. You seem to be handling it pretty well. Did you just prepare yourself for whatever happens, happens?

DREW OTT: Either way I'm excited to play football next year, whether it's here or with another team. I've just got to rehab and do things like that, so I'm pretty confident I'll succeed in whatever happens. Just waiting for the decision.

Q. Do you hit the ground running as far as the NFL?

DREW OTT: Yeah, I contacted people, got my agent lined up and things like that. Should be set.

Q. Will you visit any teams?

DREW OTT: I haven't talked to any teams yet about visits or anything like that, but will probably soon start talking to them.

COACH FERENTZ: That's one of the downsides I think of the process taking so long. The last couple weeks, the guys have been out traveling a little bit, and for somebody with health issues, that might have been helpful. Nice for it to have been expiated a little bit but that's not how it worked out.

Q. They said he played too much?

COACH FERENTZ: Basically, yeah, if you do the math on it. One of our arguments was he played around 200 snaps last year which in a normal game our guys play 70 to 80 snaps defensively. Depends how you look at it and how you cut it up. We don't sit on those meetings. I know there are hard-and-fast rules, but there are also interpretations. If you look at Case Keenum who played at Houston six years, one of the NFL people brought him to mind; the Temple basketball player; Ohio State just had a six-year receiver.

Again, I don't know all the details of the situations, but to make it all make sense is hard, but that's just kind of the way it is.

Q. It looks like the Big Ten sat on it for three months. Obviously it's more complicated than that.

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know if I'd use that terminology but it's been very cumbersome. The whole process has been cumbersome. It's not a cut-and-dry case, I guess, obviously, or else it would have been done months ago I would assume.

So I appreciate the fact that Drew got to run the race. It would have been preferable if it was expiated a little bit.

Q. Did it feel like you were getting heard?

COACH FERENTZ: It's really hard to answer that question because -- and I don't mean this in a disrespectful way. But 17 years being a head coach, I really don't understand how things happen, how things come about a lot of times and that's not my focus.

I'll qualify it by saying it's not my focus to really understand the process. Usually you just kind of deal with what comes your way. Really not unlike the satellite camps and all that other stuff. Things just happen and you roll with the flow on that stuff. But you know, I think the case was presented and heard. It just took a while.

Q. Is this something you're going to maybe bring up in a Big Ten meeting or something to maybe streamline this process, make it easier for the student athlete?

COACH FERENTZ: We went through one other appeal that comes to mind, would have been 2005 with Lee Gray. We thought he had grounds for a sixth year and the answer was negative on that, also.

It's kind of a -- it's a cloudy, cloudy topic I guess, and I'm not sure, you know, how much we're supposed to know or do know, that type of thing. You roll with the decisions that come your way. But the big thing is to get the information out there and let people that are knowledgeable make the decisions.

Q. How is your rehab going, and when do you feel you'll be able to get back to do what you do?

DREW OTT: Rehab's going great. Started running here and things like that, so things are going good for me. I should be ready to go by the season.

Q. Who called you and told you and when did it happen?

DREW OTT: Coach Ferentz told me last night. Talked to him about it.

Q. NCAA call you?

COACH FERENTZ: Actually yeah, Gary (Barta) found out prior to the event we were at and then didn't think it was appropriate really to let Drew know -- and I didn't know until actually I spoke with you last night. I wasn't aware about it at that point. I found out during the program and shared it with Drew when we got back to Iowa City.

Q. How much did you want to come back here for

one more year?

DREW OTT: It would have been great. I love playing for Coach Ferentz and his staff and things like that. I've got a lot of friends on the team and would have been just a great time. So I would have really enjoyed coming back for another year.