

November 12, 2011



Michigan State – 37
Iowa – 21

An interview with:

COACH KIRK FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: Obviously we're disappointed to lose the ballgame today. But our congratulations go to Michigan State. They were a lot more ready to play than we were. They certainly did a great job in that first half; made it a real challenge for us.

They're a very good football team. They were playing well. They certainly deserved to win. It's disappointing on our end of the thing. But we'll go back to work tomorrow and see what we can do and get ready for the next ballgame.

Q. You said 'ready to play.' Is that the key?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I don't know. I guess you'd have to say we weren't ready. We didn't look ready. We left the door open way too many times in all three phases. It wasn't just any one segment. Little details. Just little things, all the basics that either help you win or make it tougher to win.

If you play a good team like Michigan State, it's going to be tough to win if you're not playing well.

Q. You were hard on that official on that play, the late hit.

COACH FERENTZ: I'm trying to think what play it was. The hit on our quarterback?

Q. Yes.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, there were just some things going on that we thought maybe were

getting missed. I'll tell you officiating didn't lose this game.

Q. The fourth and one, sneak play....

COACH FERENTZ: We got called I guess for not being set, illegal formation. Never got clarification on that either.

Again, the call was made. It's another example of not being detailed enough. Looked like we had it converted. You got to be on task.

Q. How much of a momentum shift was that?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, that was a big play. Again, kind of a carryover from the first half. If you're not detailed enough, you can't expect to get the conversion. But it wasn't the critical play in the game. There were a lot of things in the game. I just have to go back to the first 30 minutes. Outside of our touchdown drive, there wasn't much we did in the first 30 minutes that was encouraging.

Again, you're playing a good team like Michigan State, it's not realistic to think you're going to have a chance to compete against them if you're not playing well.

Q. The number of players that went down on Michigan State, does that disrupt the rhythm of your offense?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know. I mean, it was a high number. Seemed like a high number, but I wasn't counting. Don't know if it disrupts us or not. No way to measure that one.

Q. After a lot of your games this year you lamented that special teams, kick coverage struggled. Seems like special teams had some problems. Come to a bit of a head today?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know if they came to a head. We had a good return, called back with a penalty, then a turnover on the returns.

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At the end of the day, again, this was just all three phases in that first half. Outside of that one drive, I can't remember anything in the first half that was encouraging or gave you much to be encouraged about.

So you do that against a really good team, it makes it tough. Happy with the way the guys fought back in that second half, gave us a shot, not a good shot, but they gave us a shot. Again, it's going to be very difficult against a good team like that.

Q. McNutt was trying to turn this game around.

COACH FERENTZ: Marvin, I guess he set another record or moved past another category today. He's playing well. I just said on the radio the most pleasing thing about him is he's improving each week. He's practicing each week and making strides. That's what good players do, they work to get better. It showed up again on the field today.

Q. Running the football was difficult.

COACH FERENTZ: They did a good job of taking our run away from us. We never got any rhythm going at all. Marcus, I don't think he had a chance to get started. Credit goes to them. They really did a great job.

Q. The field position battle seemed to have an impact. You touched on how it was all three phases. When you're giving them short fields as often as you did, how easy does it make it for them?

COACH FERENTZ: By my count, our best field position was the minus 29. Usually we're on the 20 or inside of that. You just go up and down the ladder. Seemed like every turn we couldn't get it done. Critical situation, we got the ball inside the five. You have to get a first down. We didn't do it. They get the ball in great field position and took advantage of that.

That's what good football teams do. We knew they were a good football team. If we're going to be successful against a team like that, we're going to have to play a lot better in all three areas.

Q. Last week you said guys were looking at the possibility of winning a division title. Now that that's gone, do you have any worry that will affect them at all?

COACH FERENTZ: No. To answer the question, no, I'm not worried about that. I'm

worried about us playing well next Saturday, period. That's what we were worried about this week, too.

Q. Would you share some of your thoughts about what happened to Joe Paterno this week.

COACH FERENTZ: You know, I really don't think there's a lot anybody can say. It's a heart-wrenching situation. I really don't know what other words I could use.

Q. How tough was this week for you?

COACH FERENTZ: This week for us, my most immediate concern was getting our team ready, which we clearly didn't do a good enough job in that category.

I think probably all of the sports world was watching, beyond the sports world on top of it.

We had a job to do. We had the same amount of time to get ready for this game as our opponents did and they did a better job.

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