

September 9, 2014



An interview with:

COACH FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: Welcome, everybody. So our captains this week are the same four guys. Got Louis Trinca-Pasat, Quinton Alston, Brandon Scherff and Mark Weisman offensively. On the medical front, we have Josey Jewell. He's been cleared to start practice today, so hopefully he'll be able to help us out.

Then, probably everybody in the room knows this, but we've got a fairly big game on our hands here this week. It's Iowa State week, which is a big week for this entire state, and it's going to be a big, big challenge for us. So it really doesn't matter if it's here in Kinnick Stadium or over there. It doesn't matter. It's a big game for everybody involved and an exciting game for everybody involved.

I think probably fair to say it's that way for all the fans, either side, in state and beyond state. It's a big week, and we'll be here to get going here this afternoon.

Q. Talk about Brandon Scherff. Did he have a medical procedure this morning and will he compete on Saturday?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we've got a couple guys I mentioned. A couple guys have been cleared, and a couple guys, Riley McCarron won't play, Riley McMinn won't play, Cox, Cooper, Wisnieski, Scheel are still months away. And we have a lot of guys that are day-to-day right now, so we'll see how it all goes and take it day-by-day.

Q. I know the lack of experience on the offensive line has been a talking point in the off-season. Have those guys come along further? What is the status?

COACH FERENTZ: Which guys exactly? Back-up guys?

Q. Yeah.

COACH FERENTZ: I think they're improving. We're working hard in practice and they're improving. It's like anything else. Until a guy gets in a game you're never quite sure but it's an area that we're focused on.

Q. Coach, did Scherff have surgery and what is his status?

COACH FERENTZ: I think maybe if you check with KCRG -- they're the ones I read this morning that released something on that -- so they can probably fill you in on any details you might need.

Q. Will Scherff play on Saturday?

COACH FERENTZ: We don't know that. He's day-to-day right now. He was injured Saturday, and we have a couple guys that are stiff and sore right now. We'll see how it goes.

Q. Coach, was Ott in a moped accident? Is he going to be available on Saturday?

COACH FERENTZ: I read that this morning, too. That was in a police report, so I assume that is public knowledge. He was in a moped accident. Scary moment. We've had several players since I've been here involved in those. Fortunately, he's doing well. Saw him this morning, and he's sore. Mentioned we've got a couple of guys that are sore and stiff. We're two games into it so we're hoping he'll be able to play.

Q. Is Ott at home or is he in the hospital?

COACH FERENTZ: No, I saw him this morning in the building. Talked to him last night. I don't know where he is right now. Probably at

class or eating.

Q. Did he have any major injuries?

COACH FERENTZ: No, couple of stitches. He's very fortunate.

Q. Do you consider, now I know you've had a no helmet, but you don't make your guys wear helmets?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we don't, but we encourage it like any parent probably would. We were talking in the locker room, and I grew up in Pennsylvania. Back in the dark ages they used to have it as a state law that you had to wear a helmet. That would be a great help. I don't know if I'm a real political activist, but it may be something to consider. Though I'm sure we have reasons why we don't.

Q. Do you believe that the athletic department in general or football program have the ability to impose a helmet rule?

COACH FERENTZ: Maybe we should furnish them. That might be a point of discussion. There is probably a reason why it's not a law. It's probably an individual's choice, but I don't know why seat belts would be a law. It's kind of the same topic. But, yeah, I would support that. It's just really hard to mandate that, but I guess we could.

Q. For people who don't know the logistics of this campus, why are mopeds useful for your players?

COACH FERENTZ: I think anybody that's ever visited our campus and probably most any campus, parking is a nightmare situation. It's not unique to the University of Iowa, but I think parking ticket people are the most effective organization or efficient people I've ever been around, and I'm sure a few of you guys have been -- we've had our cars towed several times, family cars. So it's just the way it is.

Campus is typically land-locked and parking is a huge issue, and our campus is no different. So mopeds make a lot of sense. I always marvel at our guys riding around on them in January, February, December months. But parking is a real issue on this campus, so it's a good logistical answer to it.

Q. Brandon Scherff apparently spoke to that KCRG reporter. I don't know if you saw that quote?

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

visit our archives at asapsports.com

COACH FERENTZ: I did not, no.

Q. He told the reporter he'd be ready for the Pittsburgh game. How do you respond to him talking to a reporter and what he said?

COACH FERENTZ: We're going to take it day-by-day.

Q. Coach, last year you ran the ball 60 times and established the running game and it's part of what you want. What gives you confidence that you're going to get your running game back this week?

COACH FERENTZ: We're just going to keep working at it. It hasn't been to the point where we'd like it to be, and our opponents have had something to do with that too. So we're going to keep working on it, but the bottom line is we'll try to do whatever it takes to win. In last year's game that's just the way it worked out. It wasn't a grand scheme or master plan that we had. It just depends how games unfold.

Obviously, Saturday was a whole different set of circumstances for us. The good news is we did what we had to do to win in that fourth quarter, so we'll just kind of see how this one unfolds.

Q. Do you have confidence in the future if you have to pass in a game you'll have success at it and can win that way?

COACH FERENTZ: The good news is we probably moved better certainly in the last couple drives, maybe even the last three, than we had in the past, at least in recent history. So that was good to see. I think part of that is we have an experienced quarterback and feel a little better about our receivers, our receiver corps as opposed to the last couple of years. So we've made some progress there and hopefully that's something we can build on.

Q. How do you think Ike performed?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he jumped in and did a great job. That's football. Somebody's equipment fails or injuries, injuries are part of football, next guy has to go in and play. That's why we practice. Whoever is in there, we have confidence they're going to do a good job.

Q. Does it remind you at all of Riley Reiff coming in against Iowa State?

COACH FERENTZ: It entered my mind.

Coach Ferentz - 09 09 14

We threw him in at guard, I believe. I don't know. It's just part of football. We're not going to surrender if one guy goes down or if five go down. We'll keep playing. We dodged a few rain drops in '04, and that one comes to mind quickly. We got wiped out at the running back position. You find a way to win and to perform, and that is football. That's the challenge of it.

Q. Brandon Scherff got hurt on a hustle play. Is that a testament to the kind of football player he is?

COACH FERENTZ: It's kind of a Robert Gallery moment. That is part of the play scouts talked about more with Gallery than any of them, which is kind of ironic. But it's just how they're wired and built, and that's why both of them are excellent football players.

Q. You mentioned Josey Jewell maybe coming back. What kind of role do you envision for him this week?

COACH FERENTZ: We'll have to see. He was having a good camp. He had a good spring last year, but he's still a young guy. He hasn't played a snap in major college football, so we'll see what he looks like this week in practice. He's been cleared. That doesn't mean he'll be able to play effectively. We've got to see what he looks like out there. At the very least he can help us on special teams. We're not the deepest group right now at linebacker, so hopefully he'll get involved in that. It's been kind of an experimental thing for us all the way through, and we'll keep looking at guys, but we'll have to see how he looks in practice.

Q. What kind of role did Jake Rudock's demeanor play with six minutes left in the sense that we all know he's calm, but he had a lot of decision making he had to make on the fly?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't want to say it was flawless, but he did a great job of when to run, when not to, those types of things. I think it's just experience showing through, so it's really a positive for us. He did keep his calm all the way through it, and that's what you need out there. It was not a great situation to be in, but he just kept us moving forward.

Q. The number of passing attempts he had, are you comfortable with that?

COACH FERENTZ: Perfect. Usually when you throw that many, the reference went

...when all is said, we're done.®

ASAPsports

visit our archives at asapsports.com

back to 2000 over at Indiana is what I think I read in the game notes, that switch was a loss, and that's more typical when you throw the ball that often unless that's just how you're built, which we're not. The good news is it goes back to 2000. This time it was a victory. We'd prefer to be more balanced, but we're going to play the situation however we have to.

Q. Can you talk about the game plan for a guy like Jarvis West?

COACH FERENTZ: He's extremely explosive and talented. He's a very good football player and it's in a couple different areas. Although we saw another dimension Saturday that we hadn't seen, and that was a credit to them. That was a really well-conceived play called at a great time and paid big dividends. He's an excellent football player. He's not the biggest guy in the world, but he's an excellent return guy. Obviously, a good receiver and that other dimension too. So he's just a really good player.

Q. Talking about your offensive line used to run block and now they're pass blocking more. You obviously teach them both.

COACH FERENTZ: We practice 50-50. It's not like we tilt the field one way or the other. So it's not really a big deal. However the game goes, you have to be able to do both.

Q. You've got the pass attempts that are abnormally high. Is that where you guys are this year?

COACH FERENTZ: I hope not. Because if we're in the 50s, it probably means we're losing, so I hope we're not that way every week for obvious reasons. But we're not afraid to throw the ball. I don't think we've ever been afraid to throw it. It's part of it when you feel like throwing it. It's not just out of necessity. I thought Greg mixed the runs in all too even in the last couple drives there. Clock wasn't a huge factor, fortunately, in that last drive, so we were able to balance it up a little bit.

Q. Go back and look at your field goal kicking. Nate Kaeding his first year really struggled, especially inside the 40, believe it or not. Do you use that as solace or use that as a teaching point for these guys?

COACH FERENTZ: The kicking is not my

expertise, but I watch kickers and punters, and my experience is to your point, Nate's first year was up-and-down a little bit. Jason Baker was not a young guy when we got here in 99, but he rode the roller coaster and punted awesome in 2000 and ended up playing for a long, long time. So that's a really difficult position to play. I think kicking and punting, the psychology of it, and a lot of variables there. So my experience has been that guys tend to be up-and-down a little bit.

Donahue was rough early. Then it kicked in. The good thing, it was an obvious issue Saturday. As I said, I felt a lot worse in April because in April didn't see much in practice to make you feel better. But this past August both guys have kicked well and did kick well. So we've just got to stay the course and get better at it, and we'll go back to work today and hopefully see better results this weekend.

Q. Have you named your kicker?

COACH FERENTZ: We'll figure that out this week. Right now we'll see what practice looks like and make a decision sometime at the end of the week.

Q. The series has been very close the last two years, why do you think that is?

COACH FERENTZ: I think it's just the nature of the series. It's just been that way for a long time, at least since I've returned. It's just kind of the nature of the series. It's going to be, like I said, it doesn't seem to matter where you play the game, it doesn't seem to be a big factor. It really comes down to which team plays the best on Saturday, and that is the challenge that's in front of both of us.

Q. What part of your coaching career did you adopt the next-man-in philosophy?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not very creative. I stole that from Mike Shanahan in Denver. When I was in the NFL I read one of the quotes. I used to read those things every day, the news reports. That was back before the internet and all that stuff. It was just something that sounded good to us, so it's one of those things that sticks with you.

Q. Do you see similarities with Richardson and Jake at the quarterback spot?

COACH FERENTZ: Yes and no.

Q. Right now, how do you see similarities?

COACH FERENTZ: He's probably a little bit more of a running threat. They'll call design runs, which we'll do a little bit with Jake. But he'll pull the thing down and go. He's a really dangerous runner and he's throwing the ball well too. But I think their throwing percentages are about identical right now. But I think he's probably a little bit more of a run threat. It looks like it's part of their design.

Q. What do you think of Iowa State's defense? It looks like they've had two each week?

COACH FERENTZ: They're probably like us, trying to figure some things out and improve. Not to be oversimplistic, but I think if you look at their two games, they had a lot of transition, new coaches on staff, and a lot has been written about that. I mean, we all know firsthand it's a bigger mountain to climb than you let on to be sometimes. So I thought to me the first week it looked like the team in transition a little bit. I saw a team last week that played a nationally ranked team basically out of the park.

I'm not saying Kansas State was fortunate to win. I'm not saying that at all. They deserved to win. But if you compare the two games, it was night and day different. If you look back a year ago, they started out a little bumpy and week three they went down to Tulsa, played extremely well and came back and played Texas off their feet. So I think that's what we're looking at here.

Q. As far as you guys stopping the run, are you able to do more just because you have Louis and Carl right there in center? Does that free it up or make it easier for you guys to scheme?

COACH FERENTZ: It helps. A year ago we were really veteran at linebacker and really good at linebacker, and right now we're a little more veteran up front. So those things come and go, but hopefully you're good somewhere and have something to hang your hat on. But I think that's helped us a little bit, for sure.

Q. Do you think that was Drew's best game on Saturday? What has he improved on, and what is the best thing about his improvement?

COACH FERENTZ: The thing is just his attitude. We talked about Scherff earlier, and



visit our archives at asapsports.com

same thing with Drew. He works hard and plays hard, and it's as simple as that. He's not a slug. I'm not suggesting that. But he's just a guy that competes and works hard and goes hard. That's his game in a nutshell to me. He's a really determined player.

Q. In the running game, Iowa State bring diversity in speed in stopping the rush?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, both those guys are very quick, very dangerous and very explosive players. Then you factor in the quarterback runs and it's not an easy task, and they spread you out. It's a challenge. It's a real challenge.

Q. When you look at the struggles of Mark Weisman, is it the way you're running the football to him?

COACH FERENTZ: No, I think specifically Saturday that was their plan coming in. They were not going to let us run the football, and they did a good job of it in a multitude of ways. That was a tough preparation, quite frankly. So bottom line is we have to get better, and there are ways we can do that, I think. Hopefully those things will start to show up as we go along. But I'm hardly ready to hit the panic button. It's a matter of us. We have to work better and get through some things.

Q. Will C.J. play every game now or is it just the score dictates?

COACH FERENTZ: You know, we're not opposed to that. We haven't had any discussion with that. I don't think anybody's opposed to it. But I thought he played well when he was in there. He was that close to -- we had a play overturned that could have gone either way, I think. I haven't seen it on TV, but to me, it was a bang-bang play. Statistics would have been pretty good if that had gone through. He did a good job out there, so we have confidence in C.J.

Q. Will you keep using Parker, you have to keep his confidence up. He obviously struggled?

COACH FERENTZ: To me it was a young guy. Marshall's not a young guy, but he's young in terms of playing experience. Mick Ellis is certainly a young guy, and they've both practiced well, and Jonathan, really the reason we've had him in there is he's practiced extremely well. Did a nice job in the spring and then this August, so we have faith and trust in him.

You have to ride the elevator a little bit with young players at times. That's just the way it goes. It's not just because he's a fast guy. He's a fast guy. But he's really earned the right to be on the field.

Q. Has Dillon secured that position or are you open?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't think we have anybody that's secured anything right now. They'll continue to compete. I think he's doing okay. We've seen him do better, and I think that will come true on the same topic of guys that haven't played. But he's competing with a guy that has played and done well and practiced well too. Everybody's got to keep pushing and keep working here if we're going to improve.

Q. Will you continue to use Ryan Ward how you've used him?

COACH FERENTZ: It's a possibility.

Q. What is the thought process there on that?

COACH FERENTZ: It was out of necessity in practice. We had a couple guys miss a lot of time. So if we're going to keep practicing, we had to get somebody out there at that position to help us. He seemed pretty comfortable. So we kind of stumbled into it. It's not the Karl Klug story, but a little like that. It just seemed like it was something he could do to help us win games, so we'll let him keep working on that.

Q. Same way you used Danny Campo a few years ago?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, Woody Orne, guys that are available, and maybe could carve out a role. Woody actually had a catch, right? Almost a touchdown.

Q. In terms of him maybe playing?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, that's a positive, for sure. Gets him on the field.

Q. Have you noticed the players are a little more excited because it is Iowa State?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I haven't seen them since Sunday. If they're not, they're not human. I would have to think the only exception might be the first year guys. But with all due respect to them, not that they're bad guys, but they

really don't know much about what's going on any level right now - academically, football-wise, hopefully socially they have some clue what they're doing. But outside of that group, everybody that's been here for a while, they understand that.

Q. Do you want to get Derrick Willies more targets? It seems he's effective.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, got to take a good player out of there. But the good news is there is room for both guys. Derrick is young, he's learning, and does some really good things. Obviously, had his first touchdown reception, but did some other things too that were really encouraging. That's what we're looking at. He's growing and improving, and that's a good thing.

Q. What do you see from Al Lazard on tape? He seems like he might be a mismatch for you guys?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he's got great size, he can run, and when he gets an opportunity, he makes plays. He was highly recruited for good reasons. He's an excellent football player and he's off to a great start there. That's not a big surprise for sure.

Q. Is it more difficult recruiting in-state kids since Coach Rhoads took over there?

COACH FERENTZ: The answer is no. When I got here it was tougher. Dan McCarney did a wonderful job, and Paul was on that staff. Dan's a bulldog recruiter, always has been. Worked with him for nine years. So it's been difficult for a long time, quite frankly, 15 years, 15-plus years.

Q. Bullock has become a pass option, is that something you envisioned?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, it was. Damon also has practiced really well, especially well, last spring he practiced well, and he had a great camp. After camp was probably the best period of football we've seen him have. He really played well Saturday. He did a really nice job, not only things that you saw, but maybe if you watch some of his blocking and things like that, he really did a good job. He got nailed on that one play and the next play he came back and blocked the heck out of one of their guys. So I think he was mad getting knocked around.

Q. Two weeks now you have executed two-minute drills and did what you guys

needed them to do. I imagine that's encouraging. Do you think the team's finally there in that regard?

COACH FERENTZ: We'll see. If you saw us in practice you'd say how the heck did that happen? There were a lot of them in August that didn't look too good or too well, but it's two teams competing and that happens. But it is reassuring, again, that that's something we were hoping we might be able to see this year, and it's starting to surface a little bit.

Q. If you allow your mind to really wander, are you jealous of teams like Wisconsin, Nebraska, Missouri, because they have just one in-state school?

COACH FERENTZ: You know, I haven't given it too much thought because it's not the reality of our situation. There are some advantages to that. I can answer that. For sure there are some advantages to that, especially when it comes to recruiting. So, yeah, we're unique that way. I think we're unique, and I have said this publicly a lot, maybe not in the media, but I do think about it. Two major college programs, and UNI has done such a great job for so long, so there are three teams recruiting a state of three million plus people and sustain, it's pretty impressive.

Q. Coach, for a long time it was sort of big brother, little brother, is it still that way? If not, when did it grow out of that?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not sure I'd agree with that description, but I can tell you this, since 1998, maybe it was little brother, big brother, and the point spread was 20-plus points. It ended up pretty different. I got here a year later, and it's been a dog fight every year. That is the only way I know it. '80s are ancient history to me. I used to have black hair and all my kids were in elementary school then. So that's a long time ago.

Q. Jordan Canzeri, when he entered the game, he makes things happen. Is he making a name for himself to get more involved in the offense?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he has, and some of our guys, as you probably found out I don't give you every detail on injuries, we've had guys that have been in and out of camp and what have you. For a guy that misses time, sometimes



visit our archives at asapsports.com

Coach Ferentz - 09 09 14

that impedes their ability to get to the field, but I don't disagree. Jordan has given us a spark. He's done some really good things for us and we're hoping we can see that role continue and grow as we move forward.

Q. Iowa State has given up a lot of rushing yards, do you see this weekend as a chance for the running game to emerge?

COACH FERENTZ: I'll just kind of go back week one to me. Kind of take that one and throw it out because it looked like a transitional game. I don't know if that's a good description, but that's what it looked like to me. Then last week K-State ran the ball, but they run it kind of like playing Ohio State last year. They got 12 guys offensively because their running back -- their quarterback is an excellent runner. He was a good thrower too at K-State. So it gives you a dimension that we can't match yet. We're not designed that way. That's one of the reasons K-State is so good. They've got good receivers and a quarterback that can run it.

So when you defend it, the looks that they got, we can throw those out the window too. We're not going to get that same kind of picture. So we'll see. We'll work hard and see how it goes.

Q. Are you confident that your linebackers can kind of erase what they did and if they are spread out against a team like Iowa State?

COACH FERENTZ: Chances are we're going to get a chance to find that out every week until we do stop it effectively. Am I confident? Yeah, I'll be confident when I see us do it consistently, and then I'll feel more confident. I'm a coach. I never feel too confident.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports