

November 10, 2012



Final Score:

Iowa – 24
Purdue – 27

A Postgame Interview With:

COACH KIRK FERENTZ

KIRK FERENTZ: A couple things I'll just start real quickly before we get to football. I thought our fans were tremendous today, certainly appreciate that. And they've been great all year, so we're very appreciative of that. You know, we certainly couldn't honor the vets in a better fashion. I think that's two years in a row now we've lost when we celebrated Veterans Day. But just certainly appreciative of the athletic department's efforts to recognize that in a very, I think, appropriate way.

And the last thing, just I think everybody feels the same way in our community and the University of Iowa community, just our sympathy to the family of Sam Becker. I've had the pleasure of meeting some really great lowans during my time, and I met Professor Becker back in the '80s through recruiting, and I know he wasn't a native lowan but his story is absolutely fantastic. I believe I'm correct in saying he got in here in 1940 and has been here ever since, just what a gentleman, so humble and just a tremendous person. So that's certainly a big loss for our community, but what a life he had.

Regarding the game, obviously disappointing. Give Purdue credit; they came in and played to win and competed hard enough to win, and looked like the team that played against Ohio State, Notre Dame earlier in the year. So give them credit.

Clearly we were outcoached and outplayed, particularly in the first half. That's disappointing.

And really the only two positives I can share with you right now, I thought our guys fought in the second half and gave us a chance to win, but we came up short there. The effort and attitude was certainly there. And then the one positive from our team right now that we're watching is our special teams are -- they are playing at a level that can be successful in the Big Ten Conference, and that's kickoff, kickoff coverage, kick return. Connor did a nice job today punting the football. It was clearly a couple of his biggest moments, and Mike Meyer has been doing a good job.

That's the big positives I can share with you, and outside of that, there isn't a lot to bring up today.

Q. How were you outcoached and why?

KIRK FERENTZ: Real simply they clearly outplayed us in the first half. They were more ready to play emotionally, more ready to play cleaner, more fundamentally sound. You can say it's this, it's that, lunar moon, whatever, but that's coaching. And that's me. Coaching starts with me.

Q. You said special teams are playing at a level that you like. Why not go for the field goal instead of the 4th and 3?

KIRK FERENTZ: You're talking about at the end of the game? We were out there pretty good, so I felt like that was a better percentage. I guess we could have gone for the field goal. It really didn't occur to me at that point, but we could have taken a shot at it.

Q. You were into the wind?

KIRK FERENTZ: The wind was in our

face. Going into the game and through the game we were thinking 30-yard line, but on the last play of the game if you miss it they've still got the ball right there. So I guess if you make it, it changes the game. Really hadn't thought about it.

Q. That call on offense, is that something that you would allow to be changed?

KIRK FERENTZ: Typically Greg calls the offense, Phil calls the defense. We just didn't get it done.

Q. Talk about the running game the last couple weeks. It's really seemed to struggle.

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, you've probably noticed we're not looking quite as same as we were a couple weeks ago. But the guys are working on it, they're trying. I think the defense has something to do with that, our personnel has something to do with that, but we're just not moving the ball, period, well enough, and like you said, a lot of things, but I think the biggest thing is the negative yardage plays. When you go backwards that affects your third downs a lot. I think we were literally 4 for 16, they were 9 of 16, so that's a big factor, those negative yardage plays, and some of those were runs didn't help us.

To hang our hat on the run right now, it's probably not going to be what we're going to do. I don't know that we can do that with a heavy percentage, but we still have to run the ball effectively if we're going to win.

Q. You had a first and goal at the 6-yard line. How critical was it you couldn't get a touchdown in that situation?

KIRK FERENTZ: I think if you look at it, we had five drives today offensively where we moved the ball, and in a couple of instances we moved the ball the length of the field and did a good job. But I think if it comes down to anything, certainly it goes back to the first week of the season. We had our time down in the red zone.

So yeah, if you can't come up with a touchdown there that impacts the game, and then certainly at the end of the game we had a fourth and three I believe it was, a very makable situation and we couldn't make that, not that it's a routine play or easy. But this time we drove the ball, too, but those two drives, not finishing those in a three-point ballgame were going to come up big.

Q. Talk about when you're on a streak like this, how do you manage the psyche of the team, keep players thinking positively?

KIRK FERENTZ: I mean, it's really simple; if you want to compete and if you want to be part of this, then you come back tomorrow really concerned about and interested in what can we do to improve, and that's each and every one of us, coaches, players. And if not, then maybe you need to do something else. But it's not like there are any options here right now. Nobody is going to throw us a life raft or anything like that. We need to take care of ourselves and try to do what we can to do better in all areas.

Q. Purdue had three turnovers and 10 penalties and still wins, you only have two penalties and no turnovers. Does that say more about you guys or more about Purdue?

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, the only thing I'll say again, me personally, I thought we lost the game in the first half the way we played. I really didn't spend much time peeking at the stats over the first half. But I just know this: We didn't play well enough to expect to beat them, and they did; to their credit, they did.

Q. On that fourth and three, is that a play where you maybe more expect everybody to get past the sticks so at least the throw is going to get there and get the first down?

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, yeah, either that or you hope the receiver has leverage on the defender where he can get it turned up, and it didn't work out that was.

Q. How would rate your tackling today?

KIRK FERENTZ: Poor. You were at the game, right? That was a big part of our problem today, and you can't play good defense if you don't tackle well, and I that was thought pretty evident today.

Q. You had two defenders that were out, Morris and Hitchens. What was the cause of that?

KIRK FERENTZ: Illness and a little bit of an injury and that type of thing. That's football, and I'm sure they've got guys out, too.

Q. Your offense, do you think it's easy to prepare for?

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, if we don't block better, throw better, run better routes and run better, that's the name of the game. It's execution, it's about playing well fundamentally, and that's kind of what I was trying to hint at, particularly in the first -- talking about our first half, we just weren't playing well enough. They weren't coached well enough, and that's fundamentals and didn't play hard enough to expect to win.

Q. Are you weighing most of that or all of that on execution?

KIRK FERENTZ: I'm always a big believer in execution, and it's -- I guess my vantage point on that one is it's easy, however many yards we had today weren't enough. That really doesn't explain the series where we did drive the ball, and we have driven the ball over the last several weeks but we haven't done it consistently enough. Part of that is your opponent. I'm not just going to put them up and knock them down like bowling pins; part of that is your opponent.

But also it's operating at the highest proficiency. Play calling has got something to do with everything, but I think our execution, I'm going off 13 plus years here, that's typically what it usually comes down to after games, it's usually what it comes down to on Saturdays. When you start going back to early on in the season, that's what it down to usually is we didn't execute well, and that's kind of how I looked at this game.

Q. (Inaudible) couldn't stop the run but they stopped --

KIRK FERENTZ: They've got some big guys up there. They've got experienced guys. Both those guys inside, the state of Indiana is well represented. I don't know -- in fact I do know, Notre Dame has got good guys inside, too. We don't play them but I've seen them on film. But the two teams we've played have very stout and good football players in that defensive tackle slot. So I'd give them credit, I do give them credit, they played well.

We're not as stout right now as we've been in the past, so we'll just -- nobody is going to come in and -- we're not going to get any free agent players coming in this weekend. We're going to play with the guys that we have and try to get better, try to avoid some of those negative yardage plays and run routes better, catch better, throw it better and run the ball better, too.

Q. We knew this was a young team at the beginning of the year and some execution fundamental issues that you expected, but did you expect that that would still be a problem 10 weeks in?

KIRK FERENTZ: I would counter that and just tell you that I thought we played pretty good in our opening game of the Big Ten. I thought we played pretty well the next week, too, against a very good football team. It's not like this has just been a dog crap team. You don't want to paint that picture, I'm not buying that. We played good football against Minnesota, we played very good football at Michigan State in very tough circumstances.

And our guys competed in that second half. We were playing to win, and we gave ourselves a chance to win, but you've got to play both halves, and that's -- to me in a nutshell that's it.

Q. After those first two, Minnesota and Michigan State --

KIRK FERENTZ: You were paying attention, right? You're not serious, are you?

Q. Well, you're pointing back to the first two games, but you've lost four in a row. It seems like this team is going backwards.

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, it is, because we have not moved the ball the way we had, so I'll let you connect the dots on that one.

Q. Is the offense getting worse?

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, we've lost how many in a row, so what would that suggest? What I'm suggesting is we played pretty well against Minnesota and Michigan State, and we haven't played as well. We've had our chances to win the last couple weeks, but we weren't there. But today the first half we didn't give ourselves a chance. I'll sign on that one. I'll sign on that one.

Q. The fullback, on the 4th and 3, is that the primary read on that play?

KIRK FERENTZ: Most plays have a couple reads. There are plays where you just send two guys out or one guy out, like the one we threw it to the guy in the end zone, we had one eligible receiver on that play, but most plays that we run have at least three guys involved, and coverage dictates where the ball goes. That's usually how

the passing game works, whether it be one guy out, two guys out, three or five. That's just the way it goes.

Q. You haven't been the same really since losing Brandon Scherff.

KIRK FERENTZ: It's not quite as simple as that I don't think. Brandon is a good football player, so any time you lose a good football player it impacts you. But good teams have to find a way to overcome that. You guys want to connect the dots, we haven't been good enough to overcome some of the injuries or obstacles, and that's the way it goes.

But we're ready to go back to work tomorrow and see what we can do to overcome some of those things. What we could have controlled today, we didn't play good in the first half, and they did.

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