

**Iowa Hawkeyes arrival press conference  
Head coach Kirk Ferentz**

**Sky Harbor Airport, Monday, December 20, 2010**

Opening remarks:

“First of all, we’re just thrilled to be here on a couple of fronts. When we left Iowa City today, I don’t know what the temperature was, but the wind was kicking, a little snow was blowing. I think we had snow coming in tonight, so we are well into our Midwestern winter for sure. So it’s great to be here, and we’re very, very excited about being selected to the Insight Bowl.”

“We feel like we have a good football team. It was an interesting year this year for us, a lot of disappointments, certainly, losing some close ballgames... We think we have a team that’s capable of playing very well and our goal for the month is to get ready for a real challenge on the 28<sup>th</sup>. ...It’s certainly going to be nice to be back outdoors practicing.”

Q: Given your struggles down the stretch, how important is it to win the game and go into the offseason with a little momentum?

A: “A couple of years ago, we didn’t make it to a bowl game. We had an opportunity to come here, actually, and didn’t play well in our last game at the end of the ’07 season. It was one of our first misses, and only misses we’ve had, I guess, in this decade. We’ve been going since 2001, and that was a great lesson just in appreciation. I think all of us greatly missed the opportunity to be practicing and playing and being together for another month. So we’re excited about that. As far as the disappointment, I think last year the season was almost the opposite. We won a lot of close games at the end, did very well in the fourth quarter and ended up having an excellent football team and an excellent season. There’s really kind of a fine line. I think the challenge for us right now is to put all that behind us. It really isn’t relevant to this game, and try to do our best to prepare for Missouri. We know we have our hands full.”

Q: Since you’ve last played, you’ve had some distractions to deal with. Going forward, how do you deal with that and not let it become bigger than it already is?

A: “I think it is behind us. What happened is unfortunate. Unfortunately, it happens in college athletics. It happens all segments of life. We’ve moved on, certainly. The team’s attitude has been great. We’ve had a great weekend of practice. It’s no different than having a guy injured; we play with the guys that are healthy and able to go, and I think our guys are ready to pull together and do the best they can on the 28<sup>th</sup>.”

Q: What impresses you about Missouri?

A: “Pretty much everything. I’ll start with special teams. I don’t think you win 10 ballgames any season if you don’t have a good special teams outfits, and I think Missouri certainly has done a great job in that regard. Offensively, they’re an extremely tough preparation – very unique, very wide-open as you know. Just pose an awful lot of problems. It doesn’t just start and end with the quarterback, but he’s certainly a prominent part of what they do. You can’t operate an offense like that without a tremendous quarterback, and they’ve certainly got one. We tried to recruit Blaine (Gabbert). He’s a tremendous football player and he’s had a great career. He’s got a lot of good players around him. They’re very well-coached. Defensively, this might be the most athletic group that we’ve seen. I’ve always felt the most important statistic defensively is how many points you give up a game. They’re just doing very, very well. Extremely difficult to score touchdowns once you get the ball down there. They just do a great job. They’re good in all three phases. Extremely well coached. Gary (Pinkel) has had a great run at Missouri – 40 wins in the last four years. I’ve always had a lot of respect for him. Phil Parker on our staff worked with him at Toledo. They’ve got a great program.”

Q: What is the team’s mindset?

A: “We’re all excited. We’re extremely appreciative of this opportunity. We know that the Insight Bowl did not have to select us. We’re thrilled about that, thrilled about the opportunity in front of us. Bowl games are interesting. You have all these different stages. It’s a very unique challenge the whole month of December. We actually practiced twice before we knew where we were going or who we were playing. Look at last week, our guys had finals all week long. So we had practice Friday night, I think we were still short about six or eight guys Friday evening. They were taking finals at 7 o’clock. So you have all these different things going on in the month of December. But our practices have been good, our guys have been focused. I think they’re eager to play on the 28<sup>th</sup>, realizing that we still have a lot of work to do. We’ve got a lot of hard work in front of us yet.”