

**September 24, 2011**



An Interview With:

## **COACH FERENTZ**

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So that's a real positive and that's certainly, to come back the last two weeks and play better, end up getting two wins and head into the bye week with the 3-1 record, we are pleased about that. So that's kind of where we are at right now, and you know, the next week we'll try to get some rest, also try to move some guys forward and see if we can't improve as a team.

Just point out, things that I think we did a little bit better right now. Certainly our receiving group has really improved these past two weeks. We were not quite sure where we were at coming out of camp and the last two weeks, clearly, they really performed well, and seeing that same thing going on in practice, and happy about that.

And on the defensive side, two individuals I think are really good stories helping our football team a great deal, Jordan Bernstine playing well, the second game, certainly bringing some energy out there and also doing a great job on special teams. And then Tom Nardo, a guy that was not even out there in the spring. He had a foot injury and couldn't practice, and you know, a guy that walked on here and has earned his scholarship and more importantly has earned a starting position, I think is really bringing a lot to the field for us, too. Really happy about those two guys as well.

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**Q. Can you talk about what's going on with the no-huddle?**

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So, that's good. And he survived getting hit a couple of times and that's a good thing, too. Hopefully, we are looking for help in a lot of areas and that's one. We'll see what it looks like. Right now Jason White is our No. 2 guy and we'll go from there.

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COACH FERENTZ: I think Marcus is gaining ground. Kind of like Kevonte. He had a tough camp, didn't look real good, and had some injuries that he was dealing with, but I think he's gaining ground, as well.

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**Q. Did your team come out pretty healthy from today's game?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we did. That's a positive as well. As far as I know, at least, so far.

**Q. Would be positive -- scoring 40 points or more?**

COACH FERENTZ: I wish we didn't have to score 40 a couple of weeks ago but that's the way it worked out. We are doing some things better offensively, so that is encouraging and certainly James is throwing the ball real well right now. And he's got a good presence out there and a good feel. So that's encouraging.

**Q. Your safeties --**

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**Q. Seems like you're hitting a stride; does the bye week come at a tough time?**

COACH FERENTZ: No, not at all. The way I'm looking at it, we know a lot more about the group than we did maybe three weeks ago or four weeks ago. This probably comes at a good time. We can regroup a little bit, think a little bit more about what we can do to best maximize how the guys are, what they are showing us, and see if we can't, you know, try to be a little bit more efficient as we go along.

**Q. The tribute to Brett Greenwood -- was more evident today -- what did you think about the reaction of the fans?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I thought it was a nice way to let Brett know we are thinking about him and his family, and they actually joined us in the locker room after the game. So you know that was a real good thing, and in some ways I guess it represents our team, he's making progress slowly right now. That's probably about all I can say about that, and I'll let the family handle the rest of it.

Going to be a long road. Certainly I think it's safe to say that but also for our team, displayed their determination, the hard mindedness Brett has, he'll be okay and I'm confident we'll be okay, but it's going to take some time.

**Q. Will you continue to use the no-huddle?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think it starts with the quarterback. You know, James, since he's gotten here, has always seemed pretty comfortable in that mode, if you will, and then he did that in high school. I think he's pretty comfortable for that part of it. But you know, you can talk about all of those things, and still it's down to execution and everybody else doing their jobs and doing a nice job that way.

So you know, it's a compliment to all of our guys at least. The past two weeks we have done a fairly decent job of being efficient in that mode of



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**Q. In the back pocket, do you go to that no-huddle or mix things up a little bit?**

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**Q. Now as opposed to two weeks ago --**

COACH FERENTZ: I mentioned that earlier. None of us were feeling too good a couple of weeks ago and to the players credit they have done a good job of working hard. They have improved, we have still got a long road in front of us, but we are improving, which is the critical thing. The attitude has been good. We have not seen anything that concerns me that way, and you know, pulling together, and getting good leadership. Just try to keep moving forward as a team.

**Q. The defensive effort today?**

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On a positive note, though, first half, we got good field position off punt return and put points on the board and then conversely, we turned it over in our own end. The defense went out there and got a stop. So those are good moments for us and those things are going to be really important.

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**Q. Are you feeling good about containing most of it?**

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during the week there and our offensive group did the same. Spent a little bit more time this week than we normally do trying to get our system in line with what they did, and it was a challenge. It's a little bit of a challenge. Those guys do a good job.

**Q. Do you think this keeps your team prepared adequately for Big Ten play?**

COACH FERENTZ: Time will tell. The good thing is we are better than we were a couple of weeks ago and if we can improve a lot next week, it's going to start -- continue to get tougher as we go along. It's a long season and a lot of things can happen. We'll see what happens. Right now we'll just try to rest here a little bit and see if we can't get better this week.

**Q. Do you think the momentum last week --**

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know necessarily if you can carry it over, but I think our execution was certainly a lot better early than it was a week ago. Not that that was a big challenge to improve on that. But at least it was. It was better. I think our guys seemed a little bit more in tune with things today.

**Q. Marcus Coker ran well today.**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he improved, and we have still got progress to make there. You know, hopefully we can keep pushing that thing forward.

**Q. Did James get a little bit of the Ricky -- mentality, playing smart football?**

COACH FERENTZ: Which James? We have a lot of James. They are all up the middle, too.

But no, he's getting more comfortable with each opportunity. It wasn't a perfect game today but he did a lot of good things again and was making some really good throws out there. We are pleased with the way he's coming along. And I'm not surprised. I don't think anybody's surprised.

**Q. Is he a more mature quarterback after last week's experience?**

COACH FERENTZ: I would hope so. The things we emphasized after last week was if we used that as a building block or something that's going to fuel us a little bit, that's a good thing, but just improvement from week one to week two, stuff



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**Q. Marvin is one touchdown pass away from an all-time record, when you saw the transformation from quarterback to receiver, did you expect to make him --**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not sure exactly what we expected but one thing about him when we recruited Marvin, he's a quality guy. You know, I mean, you don't just roll the dice on quarterbacks typically and we fell like we were not rolling the dice. We thought he was really a good projection.

So, you know and that didn't work out. But he moved out to receiver, we saw good things early and the big thing is he's really learning how to play that position and using what he has. He has great size and he's making plays, which is good. Too, I think he's pulling the other guys with him a little bit and that's nice to see.

It's a young group, outside of him and you hate to see a guy worry too much about that and not do his job. Because I think he's a combination of both which is great.

**Q. The guys making position changes --**

COACH FERENTZ: The common denominator with all of those guys is attitude. Guys that have switched positions and done well, they have a good attitude and winner's attitude, they are positive guys and work hard and take a lot of pride in what they do. If a guy has that and some ability, he has a chance to be successful.

Circle right back to Tom Nardo; back in the spring, Tom's really playing well. He's playing at a high level and a lot of it is just on determination and paying attention to things. Boy, he's doing a good job.

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COACH FERENTZ: I wish we didn't have to score 40 a couple of weeks ago but that's the way it worked out. We are doing some things better offensively, so that is encouraging and certainly James is throwing the ball real well right now. And he's got a good presence out there and a good feel. So that's encouraging.

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certainly the two drives we gave up, looked like they came out and played physically today and that was good. I mentioned Jordan earlier and he's playing well and I think we are trying to find a comfort zone and adjustments against the passing, but I think we have the potential to be good back there and that's a good thing.

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Going to be a long road. Certainly I think it's safe to say that but also for our team, displayed their determination, the hard mindedness Brett has, he'll be okay and I'm confident we'll be okay, but it's going to take some time.

**Q. Will you continue to use the no-huddle?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think it starts with the quarterback. You know, James, since he's gotten here, has always seemed pretty comfortable in that mode, if you will, and then he did that in high school. I think he's pretty comfortable for that part of it. But you know, you can talk about all of those things, and still it's down to execution and everybody else doing their jobs and doing a nice job that way.

So you know, it's a compliment to all of our guys at least. The past two weeks we have done a fairly decent job of being efficient in that mode of

operation.

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**Q. Now as opposed to two weeks ago --**

COACH FERENTZ: I mentioned that earlier. None of us were feeling too good a couple of weeks ago and to the players credit they have done a good job of working hard. They have improved, we have still got a long road in front of us, but we are improving, which is the critical thing. The attitude has been good. We have not seen anything that concerns me that way, and you know, pulling together, and getting good leadership. Just try to keep moving forward as a team.

**Q. The defensive effort today?**

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On a positive note, though, first half, we got good field position off punt return and put points on the board and then conversely, we turned it over in our own end. The defense went out there and got a stop. So those are good moments for us and those things are going to be really important.

Yeah, I think we are gaining ground but we are not there yet. We lost containment a couple more times today and we learned that a couple of weeks ago, you are not going to put in that, the defense moving that, and we are moving into conference play right now, so we have to get that cleaned up here in the next two weeks.

**Q. Are you feeling good about containing most of it?**

COACH FERENTZ: I was happy about both sides of the ball, it was a really unique preparation on both sides. The defensive guys had to be thinking and we are emphasizing moving forward fundamentally, too. They did a good job

during the week there and our offensive group did the same. Spent a little bit more time this week than we normally do trying to get our system in line with what they did, and it was a challenge. It's a little bit of a challenge. Those guys do a good job.

**Q. Do you think this keeps your team prepared adequately for Big Ten play?**

COACH FERENTZ: Time will tell. The good thing is we are better than we were a couple of weeks ago and if we can improve a lot next week, it's going to start -- continue to get tougher as we go along. It's a long season and a lot of things can happen. We'll see what happens. Right now we'll just try to rest here a little bit and see if we can't get better this week.

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COACH FERENTZ: I don't know necessarily if you can carry it over, but I think our execution was certainly a lot better early than it was a week ago. Not that that was a big challenge to improve on that. But at least it was. It was better. I think our guys seemed a little bit more in tune with things today.

**Q. Marcus Coker ran well today.**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he improved, and we have still got progress to make there. You know, hopefully we can keep pushing that thing forward.

**Q. Did James get a little bit of the Ricky -- mentality, playing smart football?**

COACH FERENTZ: Which James? We have a lot of James. They are all up the middle, too.

But no, he's getting more comfortable with each opportunity. It wasn't a perfect game today but he did a lot of good things again and was making some really good throws out there. We are pleased with the way he's coming along. And I'm not surprised. I don't think anybody's surprised.

**Q. Is he a more mature quarterback after last week's experience?**

COACH FERENTZ: I would hope so. The things we emphasized after last week was if we used that as a building block or something that's going to fuel us a little bit, that's a good thing, but just improvement from week one to week two, stuff



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**Q. Marvin is one touchdown pass away from an all-time record, when you saw the transformation from quarterback to receiver, did you expect to make him --**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not sure exactly what we expected but one thing about him when we recruited Marvin, he's a quality guy. You know, I mean, you don't just roll the dice on quarterbacks typically and we fell like we were not rolling the dice. We thought he was really a good projection.

So, you know and that didn't work out. But he moved out to receiver, we saw good things early and the big thing is he's really learning how to play that position and using what he has. He has great size and he's making plays, which is good. Too, I think he's pulling the other guys with him a little bit and that's nice to see.

It's a young group, outside of him and you hate to see a guy worry too much about that and not do his job. Because I think he's a combination of both which is great.

**Q. The guys making position changes --**

COACH FERENTZ: The common denominator with all of those guys is attitude. Guys that have switched positions and done well, they have a good attitude and winner's attitude, they are positive guys and work hard and take a lot of pride in what they do. If a guy has that and some ability, he has a chance to be successful.

Circle right back to Tom Nardo; back in the spring, Tom's really playing well. He's playing at a high level and a lot of it is just on determination and paying attention to things. Boy, he's doing a good job.

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FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...

**September 24, 2011**



An Interview With:

## **COACH FERENTZ**

COACH FERENTZ: Obviously we are thrilled to get the victory. Just happy the guys showed up today. I thought everybody did a good job. Had a couple of low points in the game that took place but not an awful lot. I think we made progress. Did a lot of good things out there.

So that's a real positive and that's certainly, to come back the last two weeks and play better, end up getting two wins and head into the bye week with the 3-1 record, we are pleased about that. So that's kind of where we are at right now, and you know, the next week we'll try to get some rest, also try to move some guys forward and see if we can't improve as a team.

Just point out, things that I think we did a little bit better right now. Certainly our receiving group has really improved these past two weeks. We were not quite sure where we were at coming out of camp and the last two weeks, clearly, they really performed well, and seeing that same thing going on in practice, and happy about that.

And on the defensive side, two individuals I think are really good stories helping our football team a great deal, Jordan Bernstine playing well, the second game, certainly bringing some energy out there and also doing a great job on special teams. And then Tom Nardo, a guy that was not even out there in the spring. He had a foot injury and couldn't practice, and you know, a guy that walked on here and has earned his scholarship and more importantly has earned a starting position, I think is really bringing a lot to the field for us, too. Really happy about those two guys as well.

**Q. You had Martin-Manley come forward, too, to add to that depth?**

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COACH FERENTZ: Coming out of depth, Marvin was really our only proven performer at that position and he's continuing to grow and do better. And then you've got a guy, Keenan, who has been here in his third year now who really has not done an awful lot or had a lot of production, but boy, really pleased with his growth, particularly the last couple of weeks. And then Kevonte is like that third level, redshirt freshman, who had a foot that was a little bit sore in camp. He's basically invisible; I don't know how many catches he had in camp, not many. And the last couple of weeks he's coming alive, too.

The rest of the guys in that group are working hard in practice and all of us feel more confident about them being in the game and that's certainly one of the biggest positives.

**Q. Can you talk about what's going on with the no-huddle?**

COACH FERENTZ: Just trying to please the fans and the media. That's simple, simple answer there.

Just something we talked about, good way to start. I think James is certainly pretty comfortable in that position. It's something that we'll fool around with, and as we go along, that's something we can kind of integrate into our thinking.

**Q. Playing the percentages -- in the first quarter that you went for?**

COACH FERENTZ: Situations I thought we had a chance to make them, so we are trying to do that and try to be aggressive and try to get some points and get things started a little quicker than last week.

**Q. How was Jordan's performance today?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, Jordan did a nice job in camp and we have been looking for a

*Coach Ferentz*

way to complement Marcus Coker for sure. I thought we had that with Miguel, but that kind of fell apart there that first week. So we just are pushing a lot of guys forward right now and you are never quite sure until a guy gets into a game what's going to happen. We thought he would do okay and I think he did more than okay. He really looked aggressive out there, looked decisive.

So, that's good. And he survived getting hit a couple of times and that's a good thing, too. Hopefully, we are looking for help in a lot of areas and that's one. We'll see what it looks like. Right now Jason White is our No. 2 guy and we'll go from there.

**Q. How about the play of Marcus Coker?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think Marcus is gaining ground. Kind of like Kevonte. He had a tough camp, didn't look real good, and had some injuries that he was dealing with, but I think he's gaining ground, as well.

So that's kind of the whole team right now -- but those guys are in prominent positions and our whole team has to keep moving forward and get a chance to pull something together.

**Q. Just one penalty today?**

COACH FERENTZ: That was certainly a guy that came in that last possession of the younger guys. So first-year player. But you know, that's -- any time we come out that way, that was one of the downsides of last week's game, an awful lot of calls that went against us and not good there.

**Q. Did your team come out pretty healthy from today's game?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we did. That's a positive as well. As far as I know, at least, so far.

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