

October 3, 2009



An Interview With:

COACH KIRK FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: First off, just we're very pleased to get the win. I want to thank the fans. It was a great crowd, another great crowd out there. It was great to be back in Kinnick. Certainly we feel good to get the win.

Obviously have a few things that we need to get cleaned up still, but I thought both teams played hard, and I thought Arkansas State, first of all, had a great plan. Their coaching staff to me is very impressive. I'm impressed with everything I've learned about them during the course of the week and even more so after today.

They had a good scheme. Their players more importantly played their scheme well, and I just thought they played a real good game. And a tip of the hat to Leonard, the quarterback; he's quite a performer. Excellent football player. He really made it tough on us today.

Bottom line is we did some good things. I thought we came out with good energy and got off to a good start, then we kind of leveled off and came back in the second half and did what we had to do to win the football game. There was nothing easy about it. We're just thrilled to get the win, and we'll move on and back into Big Ten play here.

Q. What about the stopping the run? Arkansas State wanted to do that right out of the gate.

COACH FERENTZ: They really did a good job. They've got a good front, and I think that was clear that was part of their plan. And more importantly, they played it well. They really did a good job of executing what they set out to do. They caused us some problems, and it's just -- that's football a little bit. One week, last week, the

run worked well for us and really helped us come out with a victory, and today the running yards came tough. We opened the one nice run out there in the third quarter I think it was and ended up picking up a penalty off that one. That's kind of how the day went. But maybe that opened up the pass a little bit for us.

Q. Ricky had some real tough, good, accurate throws.

COACH FERENTZ: He did. I really thought he came out sharp, so we've reversed that a little bit. It's been a concern. I thought he came out sharp, and certainly our receivers did a nice job, Marv McNutt especially, and Keenan Davis made a nice grab right there right in front of our bench.

Some good things, and now we have to pull things together here.

Q. Talk about Marvin a little bit, what it means for him. He's a guy that started the season, transitioned, and last couple weeks he's been a backup. Today he was the go-to guy.

COACH FERENTZ: He really was, and it's not as if we just came in saying we're going to feature him, but that's where the ball ended up going. He made some very difficult, tough catches, and that's something you hope a big receiver can do. Marvin has got good physical size and he's got good hands, and I think he used both of those to his advantage today. That was great to see.

I think, you know, based on five games, we're the kind of offense where we're going to have to rely on everybody hopefully. Good to see everybody get involved.

Q. After the first two series it looked like it might be an easy day, but did they make adjustments?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not so sure they

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

visit our archives at asapsports.com

**Coach Ferentz postgame - 10 03
09**

made adjustments; they settled down and played a little bit better. We made some plays early. We drove the ball nice. I thought we were really sharp early, and they just kept playing and they did a good job. I thought their defensive group did a real good job.

I'll say the same thing about their offensive football team. They're a very resilient group. That last touchdown drive they had was a beautiful thing. They did a heck of a job. That quarterback is their catalyst. Leonard is a heck of a football player.

Q. You kept your rushing streak alive today. You didn't allow another rushing touchdown.

COACH FERENTZ: I wasn't aware of that. I wasn't thinking about it when they had that last touchdown. I guess that is a positive, and we'll take positives any time we can get them.

Q. How are you going to prepare for Michigan? They're coming off a loss. How are you going to prepare for them?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not sure that really matters. I know this, they just said on the radio, I'm trying to remember the last time -- in my 20 years I can't remember the last time I saw a Michigan team that didn't have good players. It sure looks -- I haven't scouted these guys at all, but it sure looks from what I'm seeing now, scores, statistics, that they've gotten through the transition. They went through a transition last year I don't think it's any big secret.

They've clearly moved beyond that. They're playing good football. We caught part of the Notre Dame game coming back on the bus from Iowa State, and the quarterback sure got all of our attention just sitting there watching casually. They've got a good football team.

Q. If it were a day game, does that matter to you?

COACH FERENTZ: It doesn't really matter. It's scheduled for night, so we'll be fine with that.

Q. How does it sound to hear Iowa Hawkeyes 5 and 0?

COACH FERENTZ: That was the goal for today. That's about as good as you can do. We're just happy with that.

There's no style points in football, so we don't have to worry about rankings and all that

other stuff. We can just try to get to six now. It's a good feeling.

Q. Did you get to tell Bulaga he would play?

COACH FERENTZ: Actually, no, the doctors got to tell him. That was what it was all hinging on. He took a stress test on Monday and he passed it, so he had the green light at that point.

On one hand, this isn't totally surprising because I think he missed three or four weeks as a true freshman, with a shoulder injury, came right back and really played well for missing a lot of time, and that's unusual for a player to do that. I know he's into it mentally. If he was like that as a freshman, you can imagine what he's like now.

Probably the only surprise, I thought he'd jump offsides at least three times in the first drive just because he's so anxious to get going. So it's good to get him back. We're anxious to get everybody back. I think we have a chance to get Tony back next week.

Q. What is the extent of Prater's injury?

COACH FERENTZ: He had a little hyperextension, a little bit of a mild sprain midweek, I think it was Wednesday, and didn't practice Thursday, did a little workout yesterday. We thought he might have a shot today. So I think he should be full speed by Tuesday.

Q. Are you happy with the way the team played today, or are you just glad to take a win even if it wasn't --

COACH FERENTZ: Yes and yes. We did some things that weren't so good. We had opportunities to make it more comfortable. I won't say easy, but we had a chance there, particularly at the end of the third quarter, start of the fourth, we're up by whatever it was, 14 I guess at that point, and we're down in there, and you'd like to think you're going to get points. So any time you give up one the other way for whatever it was, 80, 75 yards, that certainly makes it a bigger challenge.

But you know, I'll tell you what, I've been around this thing long enough where I don't worry too much about how you get there. It's just a matter of getting there.

And the other thing I know, too, is I know where we're at right now. This is maiden territory, I

guess, for us in the last 11 years. But it really doesn't assure us of anything other than the worst we can do now is 5 and 7. I know that. That much I do know. But after that every week is going to be a challenge, every week is going to be different, and we'll just take them as they come.

Q. Do you think everyone overlooked Arkansas State?

COACH FERENTZ: No, I thought we had a good week of practice and I thought our guys had the right focus. If we did, I didn't detect it at all during the week, and normally you can get a little bit of a pulse for what's going on, and I don't think that was the case at all.

We had no reason not to respect them. Just looking at the research and what they've done since Coach Roberts has been there, I've got a lot of respect for that program and a lot more even after today, just watching their team.

They had the one uncharacteristic penalty, and he commented on that. That's not the way they do things. They've done a great job down there.

Q. Was this kind of like a trap game in a sense, coming off a high-profile prime-time --

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, somebody threw that out there. I think anytime you come off a win like we came off last week you're always concerned, and we've had a history of that. Most teams have. I go back to beating Penn State in 2002, and we came back here and we beat Purdue by a wing and a prayer, literally a wing and a prayer. It's a tough thing in sports.

But we managed to get through it, and we did what we had to do to win, and I'm just really proud of our guys. I think they did a lot of good things. We'll go back to work tomorrow like we do every day and see if we can't correct some things and play cleaner next week.

Q. For the first couple games Adam came to be in space, he was looking to make a juke or a spin. The last couple weeks he looks like he's just lowering the shoulder and trying to get extra yardage. Is that something the coaching staff has talked about or is that an adjustment he's made?

COACH FERENTZ: I think that's experience. He missed a couple holds the first game, too. I'm going right back to that first one. And patience and then knowing when to do what, that's part of experience. You can't hand players

experience; they have to work their way through that. But I think that's it.

And a lot of times guys just out of high school think they can outrun everybody to the outside. That doesn't happen very often, and the other thing, they might want to try to cut it back and keep going back, and that's usually a train wreck waiting to happen.

I'm really pleased with both those guys. They're young players, yet they're really running the ball pretty hard. Today production-wise wasn't a great day for us running the football, but we'll be okay there. We'll be okay.

Q. What's more of a trophy, beating Michigan at home, homecoming, or going to Columbus and beating Ohio State?

COACH FERENTZ: Right now, Michigan, because that's the only one that counts. That's all that we're worried about. They all count equally. This one counted just like the one last week; that's all I know. At the end of the year, no style points.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports



visit our archives at asapsports.com

**Coach Ferentz postgame - 10 03
09**