

**November 7, 2009**



Northwestern - 17  
Iowa - 10

An interview with:

## **COACH KIRK FERENTZ**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Very disappointing day certainly for our football team, everybody involved. Our fans were tremendous. We appreciate that. Their support has been great. Credit to Northwestern, they played an excellent football game and earned the win today.

I think the course of the game was pretty obvious to all. The bottom line is we weren't good enough to overcome the problems that we caused ourself in the first half, the problems that they forced. That was pretty much the story of the game.

We couldn't rally in the second half. We all feel badly right now. We'll regroup and get back to work.

### **Q. What's the update on Ricky?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Only good thing I can tell you right now, the preliminary x-ray, the x-ray was negative. That's good news, obviously. The bad news is it's a severe sprain. My guess is he'll be out of action here the next couple weeks.

### **Q. Ankle or knee?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Ankle, yeah.

### **Q. Vandenberg, how do you get a guy ready? Take me through his day.**

**COACH FERENTZ:** His day is like everybody else's. He comes to breakfast in the morning, goes to the meeting, gets on the bus and comes over. The next guy in, goes in.

The only probably unfortunate part of the whole thing, he hasn't had a chance to get in and play much. Only comment I can make there. Played a little bit of our second game. Since that time, been doing good in practice, doing a nice job there.

I thought, given the circumstances, he did a real fine job today. I'm confident he'll get better every time he's out there.

### **Q. You talked earlier about this team surviving in the margin all year. Is this an example where the margin came back and got you?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Yes and no. For the most part, we've done the things necessary to win. I think last week we tested fate a little bit certainly with the turnovers. It really took a very unusual circumstance in that fourth quarter for us to win the football game.

We pushed the envelope last week too far. Clearly today, it's hard to win football games against good, competitive teams, and that's basically everybody in our conference, if you're going to turn the ball over. They turned it over once today, to my knowledge. We turned it over four times. One of them literally gives them a score. Then, you know, the only really long run we had of the day gets called back on a penalty.

If you do that week in, week out, you're not going to win many football games. That's what has allowed us to be successful. We have to get back to that formula.

### **Q. Is your message to the guys: Big Ten title is out there still?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Everything is out there. We're not going to go undefeated. That's the only thing that's obvious at this point. We haven't talked a lot about the title. We haven't talked a lot about the rankings. I know everybody else has. We've just been trying to focus on the

team that's in front of us. We'll do the same thing next week. If it's appropriate, we'll do that later on.

Our guys know what's going on. They can look at the scoreboard. They figure all that stuff out. If it's meant to be, it's meant to be. We're going to try to get back on our feet and see if we can't win next weekend. That's going to be a tough task. We know that already.

**Q. (Indiscernible.)**

COACH FERENTZ: Obviously, we didn't get a good enough block, delay on their defensive end. He made the play down there. It's a good play on their part, bad play on ours. Cost us a touchdown and a quarterback, unfortunately.

**Q. I know any kid wants to step in at quarterback in a situation like James did today. Knowing the youth, knowing he hasn't gotten any opportunity to play, the enormity of the pressure he might have faced going into that situation.**

COACH FERENTZ: It's tough for any young player. James is a redshirt freshman. Tough for any young player to step in. Certainly at quarterback it's a lot more difficult. There's a lot more going on there. Experience is a great thing.

But, I thought their guy did a good job. Persa stepped in, did a nice job. I don't know how much he played prior to last week. He got thrown in a similar circumstance last week. Came in and grew.

I think James will do the same thing this week. He's a quality football player. We've felt good about him all along. Just unfortunate he hasn't had a chance to play more this year. But we haven't been involved in those kinds of games. But he'll be a better player next week and he'll be better the week after.

**Q. Almost like a relief pitcher coming in in a perfect game, trying to close it out.**

COACH FERENTZ: Relief pitcher that hasn't been in the Majors long enough. That's the only problem. That's his first time out there basically. It's a tough circumstance.

But, I thought he did a lot of good things out there, made a lot of smart decisions. He's going to be a fine football player.

**Q. They were shutting down your running game, too. Obviously with a backup quarterback...**

COACH FERENTZ: They did a good job. We weren't running the ball that great prior to that. Made it a little bit tougher.

I made that comment I think during the week that I thought they really played good defense last year. I mean, they won nine ballgames last year, had a heck of a chance to beat a very good Missouri team. That wasn't a fluke. I thought they played good defense. They played the same kind of defense today.

They made it tough on us. They made it hard for us to make plays. They forced turnovers; didn't give us anything easy for the most part. That's good defense.

**Q. Talk about your defense, the job they did, giving you guys a chance to get in it again.**

COACH FERENTZ: That's one thing we've been pretty consistent, we've played good defense. We haven't had quite the injury challenges to overcome there. But the guys played well. They've done a good job. They've given us a chance.

You take seven points off the board, if you're looking at the defensive side today, they held the Wildcats to 10. Most circumstances, 10 points is going to get you a win. I'm not surprised by that.

They've been playing well. I thought they played well today, again.

**Q. Losing Ricky sort of is a double blow in the sense he seems to be the emotional leader of the team, too.**

COACH FERENTZ: We have a lot of leaders. Anytime you lose your quarterback, that's not good. It's not a good thing. But that's part of football. You know, we're not the only team to experience that.

Like I said, I think James will be a better player next week. I'm not going to say he'll be comfortable. Very tough environment we're going to walk into. I forgot about that. But he'll meet the challenge. He's a quality football player. He's mentally tough.

We don't have any choices. We just have to go out and keep playing.

**Q. Don't expect to see Ricky till a Bowl game, is that kind of what you are saying?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm just giving you a

prelim. If they've x-rayed it, I've got to think it's fairly serious. We've gone through these things with Adam Robinson, Tony Moeaki, to name two guys right off the bat. It takes time for those things to get right.

Quarterback may be a little bit different. That's what they did with Kafka today, kept him in the gun, didn't run him much. So that might be a possibility. I think right now we just have to take the approach that he won't go, and if he does, that's a bonus.

**Q. Did your approach change at all with James, playbook?**

COACH FERENTZ: It changes anytime you have a younger player in there. Again, quarterback, it's a little bit more magnified than other positions. But at the same time, I mean, we have to play. We're going to have to go over there and try to be aggressive and see if we can't score points because it's going to be tough. It's going to be tough with just 10.

**Q. You talked about the fans, how supportive they've been. Did you know the crowd, maybe about 40, 50 thousand people, were out there 10 minutes after the game ended?**

COACH FERENTZ: I didn't know that. I heard them clapping, cheering when we were coming off the field. I appreciate that. They've been great. I mean, I appreciate them recognizing the efforts of our players.

These guys have done a great job. It's disappointing today. Nobody wants to lose. We don't want to lose any week. It's also a reality every time you hit the field, somebody's going to go down, somebody's going to win. You know, so if you can't handle that part of it, you need to get out of the game.

But we're very appreciative. They've been fantastic. I'm not surprised at all. They'll be good next week, the ones that can get in there. I'm sure they'll be good, too.

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