

**August 31, 2013**



Northern Illinois – 30  
Iowa – 27

An Interview With:

## **COACH KIRK FERENTZ**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** It was a tough football game to lose. Give Northern credit; they did a great job. I thought our guys played really hard. There were a lot of positive things that we saw out there on the field by a lot of different guys, but the bottom line is we just didn't make enough plays to be successful. To their credit, they capitalized, and we didn't do that.

**Q. What were some of the positives?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** I just thought overall the effort was good. I thought our guys responded really well at times on offense and defense, and especially the defense. They got thrown into some really tough situations, but made a good situation out of a tough situation.

I thought Jake Rudock did a lot of really good things. There were a lot of individuals that did a lot of good things, but they also had some bad plays, and those are some of the things we're going to have to get smoothed out.

**Q. Take me through the last play, the interception. What was the target?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** What did it look like? It was a ball to the sideline that got intercepted. Pretty obvious I thought.

**Q. Was it more the play by the quarterback or --**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** Probably one we'd like to have back, but that's football. It was just a good play on their part and a bad play on ours.

**Q. You were going for the win with that pass?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** Absolutely, we were trying to complete a pass, move the ball down the field and I thought we had a good situation there, really did, but turnovers are tough to overcome, and we had three of them today. At the end of the day that makes it hard.

**Q. What was the target range for Meyer as far as where you would want to have --**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** Ideally inside the 10 would be great, but 30, 35, I'm sure we would have taken a shot if the clock was down.

**Q. How was the conditioning of your team with the heat?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** It was a tough day. I thought our guys did a good job all week with the heat. It was a factor for both teams. It's just like rain or anything else. I thought our guys did a good job. A lot of plays being played out there, I think over 160 offensive and defensive plays. So it took its toll, especially on the guys that run a lot. But that's part of hot-weather football.

**Q. It looked like things were kind of rolling downhill in the second quarter. What did NIU do in the second half?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** I don't think it was so much what they did, though obviously they got off the field in that third quarter, but if you look at our third-quarter plays we had a shot at a slant ball, a good shot at it. We didn't convert. We took a shot down the field on a 3rd-and-short, long foul ball, one of those deals and went for the sneak on the one and we weren't set, so that's another error there. One of the third downs was when Rudock got hurt, and maybe it wasn't a third down, but the drive ended. Rudock got hit and the ball came up in the air for a pick, too.

Give them credit, they played well and we

didn't play well enough in those situations. We never got anything sustained clearly. We didn't have much yardage in that third quarter.

**Q. Did Jake Rudock do anything to consider the No. 2 guys, whoever that is?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Today? No, I don't think so, I thought Jake did a lot of positive things out there, made good decisions, made a good run on that touchdown play. I thought he did a lot of really good things. I thought his composure was good out there, his presence, so I'm really encouraged. I'm expecting nothing but improvement from him just like I would like to see from our whole team.

**Q. Talk about the running game.**

KIRK FERENTZ: There's some positives there, certainly. We rushed for over 200, I think it was, but again if you turn it over three times some of those stats get negated. We were 200 both ways but when the ball gets turned over, it's tough to overcome it sometimes, and it makes it hard.

**Q. How do you make sure that that interception becomes a learning lesson for Jake and not something that he dwells on?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, how do you? Jake is a quality guy, he's a high-character guy, he's mentally tough. I think right back, I think I read this recently, I was on the sidelines when Chuck Hartlieb in his first game had one go the other way for a touchdown out in New Jersey. It didn't stop his career and didn't stop Chuck from being a really successful player. I think they're built alike. I don't want to give Jake too much credit yet, but they're high-caliber guys, and he'll bounce back. He's a tough-minded individual.

But it's a team thing.

**Q. Is that a good thing to have that kind of test right out of the gate?**

KIRK FERENTZ: If we would have won the game it would have been great. We lost so it's not so good. But our guys competed, we just didn't compete well enough and they did. To their credit, they competed better than we did, or at least made the plays that they had to make.

**Q. Jordan Lynch looks like he's kind of growing his game. Last year I think he had six completions against you guys, today he had maybe 30.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah. The obvious difference, it was his first ballgame last year.

**ASAP**sports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at [asapsports.com](http://asapsports.com)

Yeah, they got beat by us. He didn't throw for a lot, but I think he ended up throwing for over 3,000, rushed for 1,800. It didn't stop his season, didn't stop their team's season. That's exactly the same approach that we have to take. They're a good football team. We knew that. We had a lot of respect for them a year ago, maybe even more so this year with Lynch being a veteran player. He's a tough, competitive quarterback. We knew that coming in and have nothing but respect for them and their entire program.

**Q. Do you tell your team the season doesn't stop?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, and that's been our message for a long time. You play 12 games and we've got 13 weeks in front of us right now, two bye weeks. What we choose to do with every day and every opportunity will determine the season, and again, we'll watch the tapes, but from where I was standing I thought our guys played hard, competed hard. It wasn't a matter of effort, not a matter of them not being invested.

But we just made some mistakes that were tough to overcome, and we're going to have to do better than that.

**Q. You've alluded to the turnovers a couple times. Where else was this game lost?**

KIRK FERENTZ: A lot of things. Inopportune penalties, fake punt, go right down the list, opportunities to change field position, we didn't do those well enough. When you get field position change, then taking advantage of it, just all those things that collectively add up to being a successful team or not successful team. The good thing is a lot of those I think are addressable, correctable. What is tough is if you don't have the effort or guys that you think have the potential to play better. That's not the case.

I saw a lot of good things, too. You think about a kid like King jumping in there when Lomax came out, Gavin Smith jumping in on the punt team and making a heck of a play when we were down a couple guys at that counter position. That's just citing two things, but I think there were a lot of positives out there. We're just going to keep pushing.

**Q. You mentioned how big turnovers can be. How big was Christian's fumble return for a touchdown?**

**Coach Ferentz - 8 31 13**

KIRK FERENTZ: It was a great play. First of all, great play to knock it out and then to have the presence of mind to grab it and put it in the end zone. That first half, you look at it, he made that play, Fiedorowicz had a heck of a play down there in the end zone to get a touchdown. I thought Meyer played a really good game when he was called upon, did a nice job. So there were a lot of positives, too, some of our older guys doing things. If we're going to be a winning football team, we'll need that to continue, as well.

**Q. You had a lot of momentum the first half. Did you feel like something was missing the second half?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, we were grinding coffee prior to that play. We were struggling. Just couldn't get our footing or whatever. Plays like that spark you, though. That's part of football. During the course of a season that's going to happen. We got it going pretty good offensively, and then that third quarter, again, you just go back and look at some of the -- I think it was like a 3rd-and-8, but we had a shot on a quick slant and didn't make that one; the sneak where we were in motion; took a shot on a 3rd and short for a long one; didn't make that one but I liked the call. And then the interception. There's four right there I think in that third quarter that really just kind of took the air out of our balloon, I guess.

**Q. How do you think that your team handled the quick plays?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, I thought they did okay. I thought they did okay. Again, a real positive, I think the turnarounds, those bad situations defensively, our guys didn't pout, they got back on the field and fought and competed, and it was a good sign.

**Q. The last pass that Jake threw was defended pretty well. I think it was almost picked off three times, the out route that Northern Illinois picked off to win?**

KIRK FERENTZ: What about it?

**Q. I think it was almost picked off three times.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I mean, I don't know about that, but obviously if we knew it was going to get picked, I don't think Jake would have thrown it. That's football.

**Q. The fake punt, if you've addressed it I apologize --**

KIRK FERENTZ: I just mentioned it a minute ago. But I didn't give any commentary. Do you want some?

Was it a surprise? No. These guys fake punts, fake field goals, they've run plenty of them the last couple years, two years. We had our punt safe team out there and they made a play and we didn't.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**