

# University of Iowa Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 26, 2015

## Kirk Ferentz

COACH FERENTZ: Certainly we're very pleased for our football team. It was another very positive step forward for our team and to finish September 4-0. We're really pleased about that. So I think the guys have worked hard, certainly week-in and week-out. They showed up today ready to play. And, again, we are really pleased about finishing this game or this month in a strong fashion, and we'll turn our sights toward Big Ten play as we get going tomorrow.

One thing we tried to share with our football team is the value of every step along the way and how important each step is. Every game you play presents its own set of unique challenges, so thought the guys did a good job of this week of preparing. I thought our practices overall went pretty well. They showed up today with good tempo on the game field. We had some plays that weren't so clean, but overall the effort and the attitude of our players really helped us move forward.

We are to happy to get the victory. Plenty of things we'll work on and look at tomorrow and work on as we move forward.

### **Q. How about C.J.'s performance in the first half, 15-15.**

COACH FERENTZ: I didn't know it was that clean until a few minutes ago. Can't do any better than that, certainly. He had good help along the way. The receivers did a great job. I thought Tevaun made a beautiful catch on that one sideline. So some really good plays. Good to see that, good to see other guys getting involved, George Kittle did a really nice job, and got Jake Duzey back out there. So good to get other guys involved.

### **Q. Where you concerned about the team focus?**

COACH FERENTZ: It is. Anytime you get that opportunity. I don't mind telling you I was a little nervous going into the game. You're nervous about every opportunity, certainly. But looked at the paper this morning, and basically a lot of the write-ups were the game was in the bag. References to our '09 season, and those kinds of things can get people to lose their focus a little bit. Along that line I was playing



younger players too.

But if you get that chance, it's something we love to do anytime we can, but it requires our team showing up, playing hard and taking care of business and giving those guys that opportunity. So it was really good to get some guys in the game.

### **Q. How about the play of Jordan Canzeri?**

COACH FERENTZ: Jordan's really been playing well. You talked about Jordan and Tevaun, I mentioned him a minute ago, both guys being seniors, I think our whole senior class is doing a nice job. They're playing their best football and leading our football team, which is a good start.

When I think about Jordan, the first thing I go back to is last week and his blitz pick-up. Those guys were coming hard from Pittsburgh. He did a lot of good things touching the ball last week, but I think his pass protection enabled us to really -- it was a key part of our victory. So the point I'm making there is he's really playing a well-rounded game, which is great to see.

### **Q. Your offense looks like they feel they can score on every drive. Is that just your quarterback or all the way across?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think C.J.'s certainly a part of that. But right now the attitude of the football team has been good. Our work ethic has been good. I get to see every practice, you don't. The practice hasn't always been so good, or at least the production part of it, but it's not because of a lack of trying.

But as I mentioned just a minute ago, the way the seniors are doing a good job, and we have a lot of guys trying to make contributions and good efforts. That's where it all starts. So if you get the guys that have played some stepping up, you get guys like George Kittle who played a little bit last year, but prior to his injury, I thought he was really doing a good job, August on through. A lot of guys that are emerging along the way too, and obviously. CJ is one of those guys.

### **Q. What do you know about this team that you might not have known or weren't sure of a month ago?**

COACH FERENTZ: Well, you're never sure how you're going to run the whole race. When we looked at our

schedule, that's how we broke it out. The first seven-week block, we had four weeks in September, and obviously shift over to conference play.

So today, for me, it was a really positive thing to see. Not that we were perfect today, but we showed up ready to go. I thought we had a good week of practice. So they've been focused on the right things. So week-in and week-out, that's where it all starts.

The other part right now we saw a real opportunity to improve. I think we have improved in four weeks time. No question about that. But ultimately we can keep going here as we push forward.

**Q. What were your conversations like with Coach McCarney after the game and what was that like to go up against them?**

COACH FERENTZ: They're probably more fun before the game just because we got to talk about a lot of good times. We had a lot of great memories and lot of great times together on the staff as did the entire staff.

So that part is fun. I can't believe Dan's been out of the state nine years. That's amazing to me as well. But after the game, that's always hard, win or lose. It's just hard to have good visits after the game, but it's great to see Dan again. Really happy for him.

**Q. Along those lines, Coach, what did you say to McNulty?**

COACH FERENTZ: Normally I just get off the field, but I got to know Andrew a little bit for his time at City High. He was a teammate of our youngest son. Just I think he's doing a great job. He really competed hard today. He's been doing that ever since he took over last year. He's a really good football player, a class young man.

**Q. How is Boone Myers health?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I think the guys that are out of the game are going to be fine. You know, we've had some nagging injuries with a lot of players. Boone's one of those guys. So, the big thing we want to do is make sure we weren't going backwards and Cole Croston jumped in and did a great job. We've had confidence in him all along.

**Q. Miles Taylor too?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, just a lot of soft tissue stuff that popped up late in the week actually. So we worked several guys up before the game today and Miles, just we were worried about it, so we hauled him out. Though he did sneak in for two plays, which I don't mind telling you it worried me a little bit.

**Q. Are you surprised how returning punts changed in any way this season?**

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know that it's changed. But I think Desmond's doing a great job with it. We're mixing it up a little bit. We went for a block or two today. Their punter did a really good job of getting the ball down there. Made it tough on their coverage actually. I thought our guys did a good job on their flanks. All you have to do is get him started and you've got a chance.

You talk about what we've seen from our team this past month. We've certainly seen growth from that, one memorable kickoff return a couple weeks ago. I think we've seen a lot of growth from Desmond in the return area. He's playing really well on defense, but doing a great job return-wise as well.

**Q. What did you think of Derrick Mitchell's play?**

COACH FERENTZ: It was good start for him. It was good to get him in in live contact. He's had nagging injuries too which is frustrating for him and frustrating for all of us. Good to see him playing live action. That's a start certainly.

**Q. Anything to report on Jake Duzey?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he got in there and looked like he did okay. I wasn't watching him specifically, but I thought he did a good job. The last two weeks he's making progress. I wouldn't call him a hundred percent yet, but at least he's making progress. To get him in the game and have him play a little bit should be good for his confidence.

**Q. Why do you think there is a lot of trust between Tevaun and C.J.? To see the quarterback throws and then Tevaun just keeps running the routes. Is that something that's developed over time?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, well, I think Tevaun, we talked about Jordan playing better and better, and I think Tevaun I could say the same about him. He's been really practicing well. There's nothing better than experience. He's a fourth-year guy, a true fourth-year senior player. He works hard, has a great attitude.

I think there is a chemistry that develops. That's true of all of our players. But it comes from good practice, good habits. Yeah, he ran a really nice route on the deep ball. They were sneaking that safety up, so we thought might have a crack at that. And some of the third-down catches, certainly that's good to see because we're going to need those all year long. That's big stuff.

**Q. What is your message to your team now? Obviously things have changed. How do you expect them to react?**

COACH FERENTZ: Nothing changes for us. Just what we told them this week, every step is really important.

It's cliché, but clichés in sports are typically true. The real trick is to keep our focus where it needs to be in that regard. So we'll enjoy this game tomorrow. We'll also look at the tape and learn from it. When Monday morning comes around, we've got to get our sights on the next opponent.

It's always exciting to play in conference play. I'm not going to lie about that. There is just something about that that's special, and I think it's probably true of anybody that belongs to any conference, which just about everybody does now. So, yeah, that part will be good. I don't think we'll have any problem motivating our team, because we know it's going to be a big, big challenge going up there.

**Q. The good attitude and good effort you talked about throughout the season is that something teachable? How does that come about?**

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know. We try to teach the same things pretty much every year. Just how it gets received a little bit. The other part of the equation which I've alluded to as leadership. That's got to grow. I think that's something we've really seen dramatically since August. Going through tough times, camp's not an easy time for the players certainly, going through the ups and downs of the season, preparation during the week and the games.

Yeah, we've been in a couple of really interesting situations already in four games into it. So to see the guys do some of the things they've done and just it's something that can really grow if you have the right guys.

**Q. Is that reverse something that's going to be taken out of the playbook?**

COACH FERENTZ: You know, it's looked good for about 25 times we've run in practice. It couldn't have looked any worse. I still don't know what happened. It was just ugly, flat out ugly. So in our response, that wasn't really good either. That was really a low point of the game from where I'm standing. We gave up a touchdown I think it was the next play. So that wasn't very good.

**Q. Do you think your offense has been good when it has something like that this year?**

COACH FERENTZ: The offense for sure has done that, and I think our team overall has bounced back from bad moments. That's a good thing because you're going to have bad moments, that's just the nature of it. But that was self-inflicted, that and the penalties put a damper on things and the turnovers. Well, that was one of our two turnovers.

So those self-inflicted wounds, you don't want to mess

around with those too much. But the guys have responded. That's going back to the first game.

**Q. Jordan had four touchdowns. I think he held up four fingers after that game, I think that meant 4-0.**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I would bet on that. He's not a look at me type guy. He's doing a great job. We talked about it earlier. He's been a really good team player. First thing I could think of right now is I think it was his pick-ups last week, the blitz pick-ups. That's what you -- a good back has to do that, and he's certainly doing that. So he's doing what we ask him to do and doing it well. Talk about guys giving us leadership, he's doing that for sure.

**Q. Do you like the way the defense responded today to North Texas?**

COACH FERENTZ: We have to get better at that. I thought the tempo affected us a little bit. Particularly in the second half. It just didn't seem like we were crisp taking on the run the way we need to. We've done a really good job of that for three weeks, but today it looked like we were off our game a little bit.

**Q. Marshall Koehn finally missed a PAT?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, my thought there would be much rather have it happen whenever it happened, third quarter or fourth quarter, I can't remember, as opposed to the end of the game last week. So we'll make a trade on that one. That's a good trade.