

**September 14, 2010**



An Interview with:

## **COACH KIRK FERENTZ**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Start out on the medical front. Jason White was injured on Saturday. Looks like he'll be out for a couple of weeks. Fortunately no surgery involved. He's got a little bit of a knee sprain.

We've got a good chance of getting Adam Gettis and Dan Murray back. We expect them practicing today. A couple guys in the other direction.

Captains this week are the same four guys. Got Adrian Clayborn, Karl Klug on defense and Ricky Stanzi joins Julian Vandervelde on offense.

As I said the other day, we were pleased to get the win over the weekend. Now we move on to the next challenge. And it's a great challenge.

We're playing a team that a year ago we felt was an excellent football team coming into our game. We felt even stronger about that afterwards. They had a very good football team.

Certainly after our game, they went on and had an excellent season, made a change at quarterback, shifted their philosophy a little bit offensively. And he certainly responded and did very well last year. And they're off just to a tremendous start this year.

So they've got a team that's got good size, and very athletic players. They're very experienced, and they're off to a strong start. And, again, I think it's all good for them still. So I'm guessing they'll be a team that's going to contend for the championship in the Pac-10.

We've got to travel out there. A year ago we were hoping to play them at 11 in the morning, didn't work out that way. TV moved the game back, and this one's in the evening, which I'm sure suits them just fine.

So now it's going to be a good challenge on a couple of fronts. We need to handle the trip well, and more importantly, we're playing a tremendous opponent. So it's going to be a big step for us, and we're going to need a great week of preparation to get ready for it.

### **Q. How is Coach Norm Parker doing?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** He's still hospitalized and we don't anticipate him being with us this weekend. We'll just learn more here day by day. But that's the biggest concern. We're not so much worried about him being here this week as we are just getting him fully back on his feet and back with us whenever that time's possible. The biggest thing right now is to make sure he's fully healthy.

### **Q. Who fills in for maybe running the defense or calling plays at that point?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Without getting into great detail we've been down this road before. We've got a veteran staff. The guys work really well with each other.

And just like we did last week, everybody picks up the slack. We certainly miss him. We all feel better when he's with us on a daily basis. But if he can't be, you know, everybody works together and gets it done. The guys did a great job last week. I expect that in the future, too.

### **Q. Couple decisive wins you've had. How much do you welcome a big challenge like this for your guys?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** None of us really know how good we are at this point. It's going to be a heck of a test. Regardless of who we played the last two weeks or who they played, they're an excellent football team. We hope to be a good team.

And we certainly are going to learn a lot about our football team this week. It's a challenge in all areas, including special teams. They've got

some really good specialists as well.

So we're going to have to be at our absolute best to have a chance in this one. And that's a challenge at hand for us right now.

**Q. What do you like about their defense? They're really thriving, too?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, they graduated two very good defensive tackles last year. We thought they were excellent players. All three of their linebackers and a couple of DBs, you won't even know those guys are gone.

I think they're at the point -- Mike's been there for a long time. You can see this thing gradually being built. I said a year ago when we played them, looked like all their efforts had finally paid off. They were becoming a very good football team at the end of the '08 season. Excellent team last year. Now like most teams they graduate some good players but they've got a lot of good guys that have stepped in and done a great job.

So we're trying to find some weaknesses on that defense. I'm not sure -- their linebackers are new. They're inexperienced, but their older guys are JC guys, a couple of them at least. They're not like they're 18 years and just out of high school. It's going to be a real challenge. They do a nice job keeping them protected.

**Q. How about the receiver Juron Criner? They have a lot of guys that catch the ball, but looks like he's maybe the most dangerous?**

COACH FERENTZ: They do a nice job spreading him around. He's a big, physical guy. 6'4" guy. Strong. His size presents some problems. And Douglas is another guy that's really a good football player. They do a good job getting the ball to their backs. They've got three backs - the one guy is more of a runner. The other two guys are very good in the passing game.

We saw last year firsthand how explosive Grigsby is. You let him loose, it will be bad quick. Good player.

**Q. Was there a key to slowing Grigsby down last year?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's easier said than done. Everybody has to be in the right spot. Can't let him get started. I didn't say it publicly last year; wouldn't have been appropriate. But I'll say it now, I was hoping he would come out in the draft after our game. Kind of made a mental note of that one. Didn't happen. Now we get to see him again.

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And he's really, he's a good football player. Very diverse.

**Q. Have they changed their offense around, with the emergence of Foles?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah.

**Q. How do you prepare?**

COACH FERENTZ: Last year we were more concerned with the run from the quarterback position, the threat of the run. And Foles, not that he can't run. He's not looking to run; he's looking to throw the football. Does it very well. Does a good job getting the ball to different spots on the field and different players.

They've got guys that can really do something with it. They've got a very experienced offensive line. Big, strong group. And very productive.

**Q. How do you adjust or do you adjust practice this week to prepare for a night game?**

COACH FERENTZ: No. We'll treat this like the Penn State trip last year. I know we're going in a different direction, but I did take geography in the fifth grade and got an A in it. Proud of that.

But we practiced a couple of times in camp. A little bit later than normal, just, okay, this is what it's going to be like. And I think, again, college kids tend to thrive at that, at 9:00, whereas the older people, like me, we're probably going to be at our worst, but that's just how it goes.

So we'll treat it like a night game road trip, go down there. We won't meet with the guys on Friday night. We'll meet on Saturday and hang around and wait like you do any night game. Just be a little bit longer, that's all.

**Q. What do you do all day Saturday?**

COACH FERENTZ: We'll have our meetings late in the morning, midday. And then just give the guys time. They'll watch games. It's very similar to Penn State.

The whole trick is if the guys can sleep in a little bit Saturday, to me that's the trick. And my experience is college kids, teenagers and early 20s, they can do that a little better than adults. I think we'll all probably be up at four, five, which will be, make for a real long day.

**Q. Is there a conscious effort to have**

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**some free time, keep your mind fresh?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think that's about all you can do. We just talk to guys, anytime we play a night game we talk to them about not playing the game during the day. Just try to relax, do your mental preparation, but don't just sit there and think about it for nine hours, because you're going to be exhausted at game time.

But there will be games on TV. And I remember ten years ago people said don't watch TV, it's bad for you. Kind of like Rocky's manager, and Rocky won. Just encourage the guys to relax a little bit and do what they've got to do. Wasn't talking about TV, but anyway. You never saw that movie? Sheesh.

**Q. What do you do Friday night?**

COACH FERENTZ: The guys go to a movie. That's what we do on night games, typically, the night before. We'll get there, have a meal, go to a movie and get back. Just touch base with them when we go to bed.

**Q. How about the hydration and the weather, how do you deal?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think it will be more of a factor if we were playing in the daytime. And the good news is we'd be close -- our clocks would be closer to normal. The bad news is it will be extremely hot out there. I don't think weather will be a factor. I think last week it was 90 at kickoff. 90 there without sun is not that bad.

We had a tough camp here, as you know, back in August. And I really don't see that being a big factor in the game. We'll hydrate all week. We'll remind our guys. That's about it.

**Q. When you schedule a game like this, how much are you aware of just the fan bases and a lot of people out in Arizona from that?**

COACH FERENTZ: I don't want to speak -- I'm not sure if I was involved in scheduling this game. If I was, I don't remember it. Which is like a lot of things I do.

But if we're doing this -- the reason it makes sense is because we have so many lowans that live in Arizona. So I understand that totally. Never say never. I can't envision us going anywhere else in the western, western time zone and making sense. Couple of years ago, when someone rearranged the contract that we had, they suggested they were trying find a replacement game for us, they wanted us to go to Washington State or someplace like that.

Bob (Bowsby) was here at that time. I said, "I'm not sure that's a great idea." In a perfect world, I think I'd rather play a non-league game a place where we'd recruit a little bit. And being a more normal time zone. But the world's not perfect. And I think from the standpoint that we have a lot of lowans out there that might be interested, I think that's a positive.

We had a lot of lowans that were interested five years ago, six years ago, and soon there after they became disinterested. So I hope we don't have that same effect on our fans this week.

**Q. If it's up to you, no game west of Lincoln?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's really not on my agenda of things to do in the future. But we'll see how things play out. Scheduling can be tricky, you know. It really can be tricky.

**Q. The limitations of your travel roster, and knowing how Mike Meyer kicked off, six or seven yards better average on kickoffs than you were last year, what do you intend to do if Murray is healthy? Will all three of them go or just two of them go?**

COACH FERENTZ: We haven't crossed that bridge yet. Meyer will be our kickoff guy. I can answer that question. He won that job prior to Danny getting hurt. We'll see how everybody kicks this week and go from there. We'll have room for three if we need three. It may not be the most prudent or smartest thing. But I don't know how it is with other teams, but with 70, I don't know if that's a national rule or not. I know it's a Big Ten rule. But with 70, we can typically get everybody that we need to get on the plane. That shouldn't be an issue.

**Q. You feel like your team's been tested in all facets you want?**

COACH FERENTZ: Obviously, no. At this point -- again I said the other day, that (ISU) game just unfolded in a way I don't think any of us saw or predicted. Didn't see it coming that way. Some days just go like that, doesn't happen that often. I doubt it would happen again.

And so, yeah, I mean we haven't been behind yet, I don't think. So that's a good starting point right there. Nor have they. They really had it on cruise control more so than us. I think both

teams will learn a lot about each other this week.

**Q. You think last year with the close games, probably don't want it as close it was with Northern Iowa, but by the time you got to Penn State the guys had been tested, they've been through it a little bit?**

COACH FERENTZ: I haven't thought through it that far. The equation I would make, more so than that first one, although I guess that's legitimate evidence, but the Arizona game was a tough game last year. That was really a tough game.

Ended up being ten points in score but it might as well been a field goal game in my mind. That was a tough step. And I tell you, we weren't -- we weren't exactly world beaters going up to Iowa State a couple years ago. I think people were concerned the sky would be falling.

So every step's tough. That's just how it is. Some days it's a little bit easier, but expect all these games to be tough.

**Q. Adam Gettis, will he start or will he continue --**

COACH FERENTZ: We'll have to see what he looks like in practice. Hasn't been able to go full speed for a long time. But Nolan's done a good job.

Adam, I don't know if he's started, I think he did in the UNI game a year ago, but at the end of the day, as I said, he's really been practicing well. So I look at this as just a positive right now and that whenever we get him back full speed. Hopefully it's this week. I feel like we're adding a guy that we have total confidence in. And we'll figure out what to do with it from there. But it's not critical to me who starts. It would be if we were like Nolan is struggling, then I'd be a lot more concerned about it.

But, I think I just look at it like we might have three starting guards here. That's the good news out of this whole thing.

**Q. Are you surprised at how quickly the offensive line has come together and how well they've played?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's been a bright spot if there's been a bright spot this year in that we expected that. I think we expected the progress may be a little slower. It doesn't mean we're out of the woods. We're hardly out of the woods. This will be heck of a test this week. Starting with their

two ends, these guys are veteran players that are really good players.

And, they're both likely to be all Pac-10 guys. So it's going to be a real test for us. But, I like the way the guys have worked. I think their attitude's been good. And, when I referred to the other day about our execution in the game being better than in practice, quite frankly, we're playing better on Saturday than we're practicing during the week with the offensive line.

A lot of that is just timing. And it takes time. So the good news is that group will continue to get better. I think dramatically, as we go along. And, we'll know more in a couple of weeks where we're at. But, at least I think they're on the right path.

**Q. With that in mind, how much of a surprise has it been with Nolan?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's been a very pleasant surprise, only because we knew less about him, probably. Adam Gettis, we got to see him -- he had a good spring, all 15 days. I thought he looked pretty good.

And then he really had a good camp. So just seemed like he had turned the corner as a player. And it's been, much like Marcus, neither of those guys had played much, but they just steadily kept improving and practicing well. Whereas Nolan missed most of the fall and the spring, all of the spring with that sports hernia.

And his first week in camp, he was okay. And then the second week he took a step forward and was a little bit better. Third week a little bit better. And he just continued to improve. And you can't predict that. You have to see it.

So far, so good with him. I gotta think he's getting more confident now because he's had a chance to play a little bit. So all that being said, I'm not going to tell you the Riley Reiff story but it's like that as it unfolds although we had seen Riley more going into the season a year ago.

So, I think he's got a good future. And, that's really good to see that he's handled things, because we weren't sure how he'd play, quite frankly, in that first game. He's done a nice job for two weeks and we'll just hopefully see him keep climbing.

**Q. Have you guys been doing something a little bit -- seems like there's been more straight ahead drive blocking than more**

**zone blocking. Is that the strength of this group maybe?**

COACH FERENTZ: No, it may seem that way but we're pretty similar to what we've been, I think. So this group, their tempo has been pretty good. They're pretty aggressive up there so far. It's a good starting point.

**Q. Can you talk about the running backs a little bit; do you plan on alternating them on series?**

COACH FERENTZ: That is the plan going in. We'll see how it unfolds. We're pleased, obviously. No reason not to be pleased with what Adam has done. He got off to a really good start. We're happy to see that, and we have. And I think Jewel got a nice start the other day. First time he's been tackled since the Outback Bowl in 2009. That was his first experience of being tackled. And I thought he was hitting it hard and maybe a couple of reads he missed, that type of thing.

But just like Adam, he's gotten better. I think Jewel will get better, too. It's good to have both those guys running.

**Q. Ricky has been getting off to good starts. How much of it is work versus a senior having gone through this before?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's a combination of both probably. He's worked hard. Maturation. I thought he was sharp and ready to go in the bowl game, too. To me it started back in January, not just this season. I think it's a continuation of it. I thought he really prepared well for the bowl. And I thought he was ready to go at kickoff that game. And has had three pretty nice performances for him.

**Q. Calling shots on defense, do you feel that the team is responding to the situation in a positive way?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's a group effort. We've got a veteran staff and they're all working hard. We've got that worked out. And everybody's working together. There's a lot of input from everybody.

**Q. Your defensive tackle last week, Mike Daniels started again. Looks like you've got a nice rotation going. Is that part of your plan now? And the depth they have, the strength over last year this time.**

COACH FERENTZ: I feel we have five starters in the defensive line. And with Broderick

and Mike Daniels and four and five, wherever you want to go. It's a little bit like when we had Tony Moeaki and Alan Reisner last year and Brad Herman is making that same push now. And we're hoping to add Gettis to that mix like you mentioned a minute ago. Anytime you can get more guys, it's harder to rotate on the offensive line but on the defensive line it certainly does help to have five, six guys that can go and keep everybody fresh and LeBron's the sixth guy. He has improved a lot.

He's just playing with a lot more awareness now than he did in the past. That's good to see, too. I think we're at six and we'd love to get to seven and with the offensive line I think we're gaining a little ground, too, which is something we were concerned about a month ago, really concerned about it.

**Q. With what happened the last time you guys went west to Arizona to play in a night game, do your players know, kind of how they need to be prepared and be ready for the atmosphere and the night game and tell them that there was a good Iowa team that got beaten up pretty good?**

COACH FERENTZ: We talked about that back in camp. I think as much as anything -- that game just happens to be one of the -- it may be the showcase game, but we've had this in different spots. I think we were all full of ourselves going down there. We thought we were pretty good.

We had beaten Arizona State the year before at home. And, I think we probably underestimated what the game was going to be. Boy, that's a bad thing to do in sports.

And we got quite an education and lesson that night. And as I recall we didn't even swarm properly. There's a picture, you probably look it up on the Internet, where we were just all over the joint with our swarm. So it kind of -- I'm not saying it started there, it started before that, but it just is an indicator that we weren't thinking right and they were. And that's a bad combination. When you play a good team that's thinking right and you're not, that's not good.

If we do that this week we'll be beaten by 60. It will be ugly.

**Q. Ricky hasn't thrown an interception yet. Seems like he's really only thrown a couple bad balls through two games. Where do you see, I guess, the biggest improvement**



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**out of him?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I shouldn't reveal my ignorance. I hadn't realized that. As a head coach I should probably know stuff like that.

I just know he's been playing well. Again, he's practiced well. I think he's been focused. He's done a lot of good things for us. He's made a couple of reads you would hope he had done differently. That will be true in week 12 too. He's off to a good start. I know he's working as hard as anybody on our team. I know that, too.

**Q. Kickoff coverage, concerns and the efforts?**

COACH FERENTZ: Throw punt coverage in there, too. We opened the door on that one, too. But our kickoff coverage it was reminiscent of Minnesota two years ago, which was nonexistent up there. We got it straight for the bowl game but we had a month. And we don't have a month this time.

So it was pretty pathetic the other day. It was really bad. And I'm not discrediting -- they did a nice job. They did what they're supposed to do. And we certainly let them get some big plays and that's not good. We better be the monsters of the midway on defense. If we try that on Saturday, too, we'll be down by about 28 points in the first half.

**Q. How much of that was Jason White's injury?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's more than one guy. We had some guys just not doing what they were supposed to do. Whether it be the lanes or techniques and that type of thing. And when you -- usually you can cover for one guy, but when a couple of guys don't do things right, it's not a good thing.

**Q. Can you toy with putting some starters back out there?**

COACH FERENTZ: We'll look at that. We know this, we better do a lot better job this week. And we can't just, okay, Michael you've got to kick the ball in the end zone. That's an easy answer. And maybe we assumed he was going to. I don't know, I think we figured we could just jog down there. We probably ought to straighten that out.

**Q. You'll be facing more speed in the secondary this time, won't they?**

COACH FERENTZ: These guys are fast everywhere, fast up-front, linebackers and the back

end. The tempo of everything this Saturday is going to be pretty quick. These guys are very athletic. They're very athletic and got good size, too, but they're very athletic. They can all run and we're going to have to be really sharp and precise and really make sure we're smart about what we're doing.

**Q. You mentioned Foles, does he remind you of anybody else you faced?**

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know. I'm not good in the comparison game. But he's a very good thrower. He's not looking to run, I'm not saying he can't run. He doesn't look to run. Whereas last year, that was his game. Strongest part of his game. And he's not hanging with the ball back there either. He's getting rid of it. He gets it out and spreads it around nicely. They've got a lot of guys that can do something with the ball once they get it. They've got a good scheme. Looks like he's really comfortable and confident in the scheme. So that's the most important thing.

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