

**November 11, 2008**



## COACH FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: Welcome. I apologize for being late today. Just a couple quick things to start out injury-wise, two players that are doubtful for this game would be Tony Moeaki and Andy Kuempel. Just see how they do this week. If I had to say two people were doubtful, it would be those two.

Our captains remain the same. Matt Kroul, Mitch King, Shonn Greene and Rob Bruggeman will be the captains and all of the seniors will be out during the week for stretching and all that type of stuff. Great to be recognized before the game, and during the week here at the I-Club breakfast on Friday.

We are playing a team, Purdue, that comes in with a record that's probably less than what they would have hoped for at this point; but a team that we have got great respect for, and it starts with their coaching staff. We have been competing against them for the past nine years, and I don't know if anybody has done a better job in the Big Ten than Joe Tiller, an outstanding football coach, and has just really impacted that program in a very dramatic, positive fashion. And a big part of that is the staff that he's got. He's got a tremendous coaching staff and they have done a great job year-in and year-out.

So this is a team that's had great success. They have had some disappointment this year, but just look back two weeks ago, they had 48 points against Michigan, and were very explosive that way. You go back defensively looking at the Ohio State/Penn State games, how they played against two of the better teams in the conference and then you go back to last week, as well. They gave up two touchdowns against Michigan State. If you want to talk about the top three teams. They are a team that competes extremely hard. They have great talent and great system, and it will be a great challenge for our team on Saturday.

**Q. Talk about Ricky Stanzi. His numbers in the fourth quarter have been pretty good the last couple of games.**

COACH FERENTZ: I had not thought much about it. You just gave me an idea. Maybe we should just play him in the fourth quarter and go check the first three.

The one thing I'll say, he's got a very good ability to move on, kind of like a relief pitcher or a corner; if something bad happens, he moves on and we talked a little bit about that last week. Unfortunately we are sitting here talking about it again today.

But at least we had a happier outcome this time, and if we can get that other part cleaned up a little bit, I think he's got a good future.

**Q. With Purdue coming to town, you can't think of an interesting juxtaposition, the huge win a few days ago and then what happened last year at Purdue, is that kind of almost both ends of the spectrum, Coach?**

COACH FERENTZ: Well, what happened last year, we just got beat thoroughly in all phases. Really from the start, they just came out and we didn't match up very well in any particular part of the ballgame.

So that's how that one went. You know, it's just we've had tough games with them year-in and year-out. I can't really -- I guess the year that, maybe before we pulled away a little bit there. But for the most part it's been a pretty competitive series, just like the last couple of teams we've played. We've been in a lot of tough ballgames. Conference play you expect that, and that's what we expect this Saturday.

**Q. You seem to be vastly improved over last year. What's the reason?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think we'll find out at the end of the year, but I think we are moving in the right direction, at least right now.

**Q. Do you think the guys will look at**

**the film and be motivated to kind of exercise that game?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think our whole team has been motivated. Last year we didn't go to a Bowl game and ended up with a .500 record. We made improvement during the course of the year. That wasn't part of it, certainly, that performance.

But we did some good things last year and I think all of us are anxious to try to build on that. Right now, we are just hopeful we can take another step here this Saturday, a positive step. Won't come easy, though, nothing does in our conference.

**Q. You have a big win on your resumé. Is the pressure off this team over the next couple of weeks?**

COACH FERENTZ: To me, I don't know what pressure is on us, but we have six wins. We had six wins last year and we were all silting around the fireplace for Christmas and chest nuts and all that stuff roasting, music playing.

So I'm not a big fan of eggnog. I'm hoping that maybe we can do a little better. We are going to have to earn it. It's going to be tough.

**Q. Shone Green is okay?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think we are in good shape there. He should be ready to go. You know, as you might imagine, a couple of guys got dinged up Saturday. It was a tough physical game both sides. Yeah, it's November and we have some guys that are sore. But I know that it's kind of like the weather, it's not quite as cold when you lose or win, and the bumps are not quite as bad when you win, too, so that's a good thing.

**Q. How long do you allow your players to enjoy the win?**

COACH FERENTZ: All day Sunday. I guess I told them that in the locker room Saturday night, and a couple younger guys didn't quite get it and thought Sunday was off; that wasn't the message. But they all showed up Saturday. I guess some other guys straightened them out.

We want them to enjoy it Saturday night, certainly. It was a short night. Every now and then, we'll let them have all day Sunday. I think they certainly earned it. The only request was we come in or wake up Monday and get our mind on Purdue and start going there. If we do our job, we'll have ample time to get ready, but we need to do our jobs, too.

**Q. Ricky Stanzi's poise on that last drive?**

COACH FERENTZ: Really good to see, especially in light of our first three possessions and the second half.

So that's encouraging, certainly. He made some big, big plays for us in that last drive. Did a nice job keeping his composure and doing a lot of these things out there. He's a young player, so hopefully that's something good in the bank. We've gone through some tough times, too, with him and some tough situations in that ballgame and a couple the week before.

He's growing and if he's learning from those things, it gives himself a chance to go on and do some good things during his career and that's what we are hoping to see.

**Q. Any thoughts of a change?**

COACH FERENTZ: Not on my part and nobody mentioned it to me. We were kind of locked in, and you know, straight ahead.

**Q. With senior day on Saturday, can you just touch on King and Kroul, particularly, since they played four years. What have they meant to this program?**

COACH FERENTZ: Sure. First of all, the whole senior class, and as you know it's not a big class, A, and then B, I think I'm correct in saying seven seniors started the ballgame the other night. So it's not a huge number.

But the entire class has just done a great job. You start at the top with King and Kroul, those guys are four-year players. That's really rare, and especially being linemen, that makes it even more exceptional.

The highest compliment I could give both those guys would be their performance last spring. Three-year starters, clearly established, and it was a competitive spring but they practiced like they were on second team trying to earn a job, both of them did.

And it provided great leadership for our defensive football team, but it set a great example for the whole football team and when you have two guys like that that are playing at a high level practicing like they did and doing the things they do away from the field, really it makes it easier for everybody else to follow suit. Those are the things, you miss a lot of good production on the

field when they graduate, but those other things that they bring to the table, those are the things that you really appreciate as a coach.

I appreciate their production on the field, too, but those other things -- they are both great guys, great people, excellent students. Mitch has a nice hairdo. I mean, what else can you say?

**Q. How do they balance each other out?**

COACH FERENTZ: They are different in personality, different -- from an emotional standpoint and all that, but at the end of the day -- and that's what's neat about sports and what's neat about life. Good things come in all kinds of packages, but the bottom line is, you're looking for guys that bring good things to the table and they both do, in all regards. They are total service, academically, socially, football-wise, they are the total package.

We have got a lot of great people come through this program, and you know, they have had great, great careers, so we are really, really happy for them.

**Q. Talk about how far Tyler Sash has come since he's joined the program.**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, a couple flashbacks, and that one, you flash back to the Illinois game, kind of the same spot on the field, different safety getting the ball this time. It was a big, big play. The play before it, it's funny when you lose close games, it's easy to pick out things when you win close games. It's easy to pick out things. And Mitch drawing a holding penalty the play before it forced him to throw the ball down the field a little bit and gave us the opportunity to come up with a turnover. That's how football works, some good things go unnoticed and it was a huge play.

Tyler is progressing well. He's not ready to be all-Big Ten yet, but he's on a great track right now. He works hard and has a great attitude and has played a nice role for us on our defense.

**Q. How much of a challenge is it to get the team as focused as they need to be coming off such a huge win, and then facing a team that maybe their record is not what most people thought it would have been?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think the first part of that is it starts with knowing who we are. I don't think anybody has talked about us in the National Championship picture recently.

So, we are just a team that has to play hard and work hard, and prepare hard and if we stay true to what -- who we are and what we are, and realize that maybe that's giving us a chance to compete a little bit, I think we'll be fine.

Every game, I said this however many weeks ago, six, eight weeks ago, I anticipate every game on our schedule to be tough, I thought every team or game would be winnable. Also, thought every game was an opportunity to lose a game, too.

That's a pretty good position to be in and now it's in our hands to see what we can bring to the table on Saturday, and that's our job between now and then. And I hope our team realizes that. We have good leadership and I think they understand that concept.

**Q. One guy who won't be running out and individually recognized on Senior Day is Shonn Greene. Is there a possibility this could be the fan's last chance to get a glimpses of him?**

COACH FERENTZ: Anything's possible. Anybody could get hurt, too. I knock-on-wood so that that doesn't happen.

That's football, and we'll deal with that when it's appropriate and what-have-you, but it's certainly -- anything is possible. Hopefully it won't be. But you know, at the end of the day, whatever is best for the individuals. It's like everybody else on the team and that's what we'll support.

**Q. Ryan Donahue is almost the unsung hero in that last field goal. Talk about him a little bit, and also punting, he's a semifinalist for the Ray Guy Award.**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I think he's like a lot of our guys. He's a young player still, and he had his up and downs last year and fortunately the ups came a little more frequent went than the downs as the season went on, and that's what you look for with young guys, like Rick Stanzi a little while ago. I think he's been performing at a high rate this year.

No punter is perfect, as you know, but I'll tell you, he's really been doing a good job with placement, hang time and giving us a chance to cover. And we've played some really dangerous receivers, returners the last couple of weeks. Those things again are kind of hidden and go unnoticed sometimes, but the punter is a big part

of that, giving you a chance to cover.

And then the other role as you look is huge, and we don't take anything for granted. Every special team's play involves a specialist, and it all starts with that. And then the field goal, the snapper, the holder, the kicker, they are all critical. And believe me, I've seen more than my share of bad execution in the last couple of months in that department.

So just, you know, we appreciate a good execution Saturday. It was really critical and a great time to do it right.

**Q. Do you like seeing a punter in that role?**

COACH FERENTZ: It has the benefit from the practice standpoint where those guys are together all the time. It's like they are married and they are off in a different stratosphere most of the time.

Typically quarterbacks can do it or receivers, guys that have good hands. Ryan is an excellent athlete, so it makes perfect sense. He really does a nice job with that. There is an art to it. There is an art to it.

**Q. Can you talk about the play you got in the red zone from your offense and self-defense Saturday, being able to actually get touchdowns on the board and the final kick and also the defense?**

COACH FERENTZ: A week ago we were talking about our disappointments in the red zone, and we were talking about our poor job on third down, our lack of conversion on third down; and you know, flipped it around this time, so we were able to score more touchdowns and get field goals.

Our third-down conversion, I think was 70 percent; I know is was 70 percent, and that gives you a chance to win games, sustain drives, those types of things. Winning teams typically do that a little bit better than losing teams, and we have been all over the place now.

So the challenge for us is -- I don't expect us to being at 70 percent on third down this week or any week but I wouldn't mind it. And if we can keep leaning in that direction, that would help us a great deal.

**Q. What do you see from Purdue, offensively?**

COACH FERENTZ: Well, a couple of things. Obviously, the big question mark is the quarterback situation. You're preparing for two

totally different types of players, but two very talented players.

You know, so that's item No. 1. They've got a big line. They have got a lot of guys in and out, and the have had some injuries with the lines, but they are big guys and physical guys. Kory Sheets has done a great job running the football all season long, and Orton is a good receiver out there, Tardy is a good receiver. So they have always had good receivers as a group, and this is no different.

You know, so it's going to be a challenge for us. I mean, regardless of who plays at quarterback, it's just a matter of which way they lean with the attack, but it will be a challenge for us no matter who is out there playing.

**Q. Can you talk about their defense, seems to be one that really has not given -- 3-7; I don't think they are a 3-7 unit.**

COACH FERENTZ: No, they are not. You just look at what they did last weekend against Michigan State, who is an excellent offensive team, two touchdowns; and 16 points, I guess it was against Ohio State; 20 against Penn State. That speaks to the way they are playing. They are a feisty group, they are tough, veteran up front, and they have got a lot of veterans up front in that line and they are playing well. It starts up front. Anthony Heygood is an excellent linebacker, 42, he's a really good player and they have some guys on the secondary. They have around a long time and playing well. Brock Spack's been there, I remember he was a player and seems like he got done playing and just started coaching; he's been there a long, long time. You've heard me say before, you look at Purdue's overall success, everybody thinks about the offense, rightly so, it's been excellent, but their defense has been very consistent and very good all the way through.

**Q. Can you talk about what Coach Tiller brought to the conference?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I wasn't here when he got here, but I look at that stuff, and the thing that impacted me or impressed me so much was the fact that they won from day one. He walked in, and boom, they are in a Bowl game right away and playing at a really high level.

They really have done it for the most part of his career, and my span on the Big Ten really is from '81 on, although I researched is back prior to

'81, whatever year that would have been. It's been pretty consistent. There have been a couple of teams that have won year-in and year-out, and after that it's interesting to watch what happens.

No expert on Purdue football, but I think it's fair to say, during his tenure, at least since eight one on, it's unparalleled the success they have had. It's not easy to come by. It's not easy to come by and we have tremendous respect for coach tiller and his staff.

College football is going to lose an excellent coach and a great guy, but I wish him the best. After Saturday, I wish him the best.

**Q. What did Tony do?**

COACH FERENTZ: Leg again. It was pretty undramatic on film, but that's the way those things go sometimes. So I'm hoping he's building up some good luck here. If anybody deserves it, he does.

**Q. Does Wesley Aeschliman have any shot at Bowl game, or is that just too severe do you think?**

COACH FERENTZ: I haven't asked that question. I really doubt it. The good news is he's on one crutch right now, and shooting for none on Saturday, come out -- I don't know how fast he'll be moving, but hopefully he'll be doing it without crutches.

He's in great spirits, other than he's not playing.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about Derrell; for a couple of games, he had kind of fallen back a little bit, but this game seemed to be different, especially that last drive?**

COACH FERENTZ: The question was asked last week about our other receivers outside of Andy Brodell. The way it went last night, it's funny to predict where the ball is going to end up. And Saturday, it went his direction more than once, and frequently, and he made some real nice plays and played a real good game.

He's another young player that we think is making progress on a consistent basis, and you know, these experiences are all valuable and hopefully we are building towards something really good.

**Q. Has Vandenberg been imitating most of the quarterbacks?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, it's a pretty small group right now, the quarterback group.

We've got Jake and Rick at our end, and then John Wienke and James Vandenberg are the low-team quarterbacks down there, both they have both done a real good job and have great attitudes and really do a good job. We are thrilled with the group. It's a good group, good future.