

**November 17, 2007**



An Interview With:

## **COACH KIRK FERENTZ**

COACH FERENTZ: First of all, I just want to thank our fans for turning up the way they did today. To get another sellout was very much appreciated by everybody in our program and certainly great for the seniors. So we really appreciate that. Our fans have been great all season long.

There's really not a lot to say, other than it's a really disappointing game for everybody involved. Bottom line is they were more ready to go than we were in all phases, and they really outplayed us in all phases, particularly in that first half. We really dug quite a hole for ourselves.

Part of it was us and the other part was them. They really played extremely well. So we compliment them on a great effort. They certainly deserve the win, and you can go right down the list. Probably 20, 25 plays that we'll see that made a difference, but to me the bottom line is just how both teams started. One was ready and one wasn't, and that's what happens.

That part is disappointing. It's really hard to put a positive spin on anything at this point. The only thing I can come up with is certainly the last six weeks were better than the first six. Where we're at right now is probably where we were at coming out of Penn State or Purdue. We'll go back to work at whatever given time after the break is over and see what we can do to get better.

Just really disappointing for our seniors. To lose in Kinnick and lose our last game is a tough thing. They've been a great group and I've been saying good things about them all season long. Just a great group of young men, very, very proud of them, and just tough for everybody to come out a loser but certainly for the seniors.

**Q. Did you think at halftime that you could get it turned around?**

COACH FERENTZ: You know, I thought all the way through the game we had a chance to

win. But we would have had a better chance if we had come out ready to go, and we weren't.

We never lost hope. Even with that last field goal, you never know, maybe a quick score and an onside kick and something good can happen there. We were up against it pretty much pretty early in the ballgame.

**Q. Any theory or any explanation why you weren't ready to go?**

COACH FERENTZ: No, other than that's my job. My job is to get our team ready to go, and we weren't. I could probably come up with all kinds of theories or thoughts, and nothing really matters. The bottom line is they were ready to go and we weren't, and when that happens you put yourself in a real tough situation.

**Q. As you sit here right now do you think the season is over?**

COACH FERENTZ: That would be my guess. I've seen strange things happen before, and if it works out, great. If it doesn't work out, then I think we know where to look.

**Q. Do you get a feel or did you get a feel today that things didn't feel right before the game?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, sometimes you do. I thought our week was pretty solid. I thought we had a good week of preparation, thought we practiced pretty well for the most part with the exception of a couple individual concentration errors, which again, probably came in predictable areas for the most part. I thought we had a pretty good week, so I really am surprised.

You know, you would hope everybody involved knew what all was at stake today, seniors' last ballgame, a chance to win seven, a Bowl bid, those types of things. That was all pretty much spelled out.

The other thing I'll say, too, is I hope and I think everybody in our organization had great respect for Western Michigan, as I said Tuesday. I was very sincere in my comments; the team we saw on film, that was a misleading record that they had. They had lost a couple close games and that kind of tweaks it a little bit. I think they showed

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today that they're a good football team.

**Q. Did what happened this week off the field have any effect on how the team played today?**

COACH FERENTZ: That could be a theory, but I don't, to answer the question. No, I don't think it affected us at all.

**Q. With them 19-13 in the third quarter how big was that drive that they made?**

COACH FERENTZ: It was real big, and again, credit goes to them. They converted a couple 3rd down situations. One was a big play down in front of their bench. They just played well. It speaks well of their resiliency.

Both teams I thought kept competing. But they had a great plan and they executed very well, screens, some good throws from their quarterback. I thought he played an excellent game, and their receivers made big plays and their running back did a good job both running and on the screen.

At that point we had come back to within six, our fans were really into it, they responded -- and you're hoping at that point maybe we can push this thing through a little bit and get some momentum, but we weren't able to do that. We really weren't able to do it at any point in this game today.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about special teams? The return game they really struggled.**

COACH FERENTZ: I think the last few weeks we've tapered off, and then today -- last week I was disappointed with what we did on special teams. Today it was just really evident. I'm really not sure what we did well today. Yeah, we're having a hard time fielding the ball in kickoffs. We weren't even blocking the punt return game the way we're capable or the way we had schemed it. Yeah, it made it tough for us today. And then obviously we didn't kick the ball real well at times.

**Q. Did you consider going for a field goal early in that last drive?**

COACH FERENTZ: No, not really. We thought we had a shot at the touchdown when we got down in there, and we were thinking touchdown. But yeah, it was going to take two scores because they had nine points.

**Q. What's the state of the program?**

COACH FERENTZ: Well, I don't know. Again, I just -- it's hard to put a positive spin at this particular moment just because of the situation, but

I suppose, again, if you look back at the second half performance this season compared to last season, I think we made strides. We certainly had a better record in the Big Ten, which is encouraging.

You know, but it's always disappointing to end the season with a loss. There's no putting a spin on that. It's going to sting for a while.

**Q. Do you have any changes in mind, anything you want to do in this off-season?**

COACH FERENTZ: Well, play better. I think we've got to play better. That's what this is all about. We'll evaluate everything like we do after wins or losses, good seasons, bad seasons. We'll evaluate everything.

I guess the big thing, and I've said this after wins or losses, to me the big thing, we really lost our edge. I guess that's what I'm referring to with the record last year when you finish up 1 and 5 down the stretch in your regular season. But it was the way we were losing. That was really tough to live with.

I think we've made strides there. I think the attitude of this team has been good. Look at the big picture, they've been good all the way through. That's where it all starts. We're not executing well enough now. You look at tonight, we didn't perform well. The attitude is back in the direction that we need it to be.

But all that being said, we're clearly not as good as we'd like to be. So we've got work to do. We're aware of that. I'll tell you, when your attitude is not good, that's major work, and I think that's not our issue right now. I think we have some others we have to work through.

One great thing about college football, this year is a pretty good example, a lot of crazy things can happen, and there are a lot of teams that aren't doing well right now that a year ago at this time you said they're okay and they'll probably be okay next year. But it's not going to happen just by saying we hope it happens. We have to push it through and keep improving. That's where our focus will be.

**Q. Are you going to take any different approach to some of the off-the-field issues?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I'll probably address that. I haven't thought extensively about it, but that's not to say that I haven't given it thought. From that standpoint, you look back at 2001, we went through a year similar to that and had issues similar to this, and one of our best years came out of that.

You know, we'll evaluate. I've got a few thoughts. I'll probably be happy to discuss those next time we get together. We'll have a press conference here somewhere in the next ten days I'm sure, and I have a couple thoughts I'll share with you.

**Q. After this recent situation involving a couple of your players, nobody has been arrested or anything, but there's been discussion that you were aware of the situation before the -- that the female came to you initially.**

COACH FERENTZ: That's not accurate. Came to me? No, that's not accurate. Whose reports are those? I wasn't aware of the situation before this week if that's what you're suggesting. I think it's been handled very properly by everybody at the University, and we'll continue to be very supportive of going through the process.

**Q. So the student athletes' status then as it is right now, just with the --**

COACH FERENTZ: Really nothing has changed since we learned of the alleged incident.

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