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Iowa - 28
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An Interview With:

COACH KIRK FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: A lot of things we need to clean up right now. There were a lot of good things out there, too, but mistakes we made helped hide that. Part of that was them playing really hard or whether it was us not playing well enough. But all that being said, there are some good things out there, and that's what we're going to have to build off of and try to clean up the mistakes. We were just happy to get the win.

Q. What did Jake show you there in the 4th quarter when he was able to bounce back after that interception?

COACH FERENTZ: That was a real tough sequence for us. We give up a touchdown and then right on the next possession give up the touchdown the other way on the pick six. That was a really tough play. But one thing about him, he's a resilient guy. He went right back to work and did a good job finishing game for us.

Q. How does it feel to snap that losing streak?

COACH FERENTZ: Well, we lost one last week and that's how I'm looking at it, so we're 1-1 right now, and I'm just happy -- so the best we could do today was win and get to 1-1 and now we'll try to build from that. We're excited about this season, but today is evidence that we still have a lot to of work to do and hopefully that work will begin tomorrow.

Q. Are you overly concerned (inaudible)?

COACH FERENTZ: That's just kind of college football. I said that on Tuesday, and I told our team the same thing. If you watch college football, that's the nature of the game. And you know, we're -- we've got a lot of work to do on our end. We've got a lot of new players playing, so for us the biggest thing is to push forward and improve, and I thought we improved during the week but there's some things today that didn't necessarily in my opinion reflect improvement, and those are the things we have to do a better job on.

Q. You're using a lot of young players or several anyway. What's your level of confidence with them?

COACH FERENTZ: Well, it's growing. I think what you see them do in practice certainly impacts that, and then some things today, you look at Daniels coming in, he looked like he belonged out there, Vandenberg as a receiver did some good things. He's been doing that in practice. He looked like he belonged. Desmond got educated a little bit, but as long as he'll learn, that'll be a good thing.

So some of those first-year guys, that's kind of where they're at, and then we've got some other guys that haven't played a lot, redshirt freshmen and sophomores that -- Kittle made a big play today in the passing game, but also had a holding penalty, so those are the things -- we've got to get that to balance.

Q. Will you get Jordan back next week?

COACH FERENTZ: I think he has a good chance. He kind of leveled off mid-week, Wednesday kind of stalled out, Thursday and then Friday was doing a lot better. I haven't asked. I assume he warmed up today. But they're optimistic he'll be back Tuesday.

Q. (Inaudible.)

COACH FERENTZ: Mark really got it going in that second half especially. Part of the running game is typically better in the second half. But for whatever reason things looked kind of clogged up there in that first half, but he got it going certainly and gave us a spark. And some of our veteran guys did, just like Tanner did on the pick down there. But Mark looked like he was getting stronger as the game went on, and having LeShun, Damon did some good things in the run game, too. We're going to need all those guys to work together. That'll help us.

Q. How did the defense play overall? And Hitchens seemed to have another outstanding game.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he did. He had the one bad foul, and that was an aggressive play. It was bang-bang, but I think the lesson there is that unless the quarterback is making a move, and it's hard to read that when you're on the run, but when a quarterback is heading for the sideline you've got to pull back, and he knew it afterwards.

But I was really pleased the way he played last week, and I think he continues to go forward here.

Q. Did everyone come out of this game healthy for you guys?

COACH FERENTZ: As far as I know, yeah. Somebody got kicked in the lower leg first half, but he's fine. He finished the game, and knock on wood hopefully everybody is going to be ready.

Q. The maximum improvement for football teams usually happens between weeks 1 and 2. Does that not apply here? Does it apply in different places?

COACH FERENTZ: Well, I hope it's not true today. I think there were some things we did better, but we certainly played cleaner last week, just little mistakes, penalties, those types of things. It's kind of like our statistics first half, our statistics offensively were okay, but really the one that counts is points, and we didn't -- couldn't show anything for what the yardage that we had, and I think penalties were involved in that.

I thought we had a good week of preparation, but it didn't show up today, and we're going to just keep pushing.

Q. Do you sense that your team is getting in its own way in certain situations?

COACH FERENTZ: Oh, yeah, absolutely, absolutely. Even one of the late conversions there, Kevonte started dancing a little bit, and I was worried we weren't going to get it there. So that's just being smarter, knowing the situation and taking it over.

But false starts, too, in the first half, we false started a couple times. Unless you're really a gifted team, it's hard to overcome those kind of miscues, plus it's hard to have tempo when your false starts or holding penalties really take away from an offensive team's tempo.

Q. What's it like seeing a quarterback be successful at scrambling, making plays with his legs?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm all in favor of it. I'm a former line coach, and any time a quarterback can pull the ball down and make yardage, positive yardage, and be aware, I think for the most part he was pretty aware of what he was doing in that aspect. That's a good thing, because otherwise people are just teeing off and not worried so much about containing those types of things.

So I'm all for that, and the big thing, it looked like he might have got hit once. It was going to our left. Looked like he got could have got down a little bit earlier, so that might be a lesson he has to learn.

Q. Did you know that he could do that in high school or in his two plus years here?

COACH FERENTZ: We felt he was a pretty good athlete, but you never know until a guy is in a live situation. In high school he did a good job pretty much in everything he did, but as far as improvising with your feet, that's something you find out when the real rush starts coming because we don't let our guys get him in practice. Maybe we should. But so far, so good. He's been pretty slippery back there.

Q. Does it make a difference for players to know that their quarterback can extend a play with his feet?

COACH FERENTZ: It helps. The pass rush has to respect that a little bit, and any time you can convert, no matter how you're doing, that's a good thing. But yeah, if he can pull it down, I'm

all in favor of that. And again, he seems to know where he's going when he does it.

Q. Was the offensive line having some trouble knowing where the blitz was coming inside the 3-4?

COACH FERENTZ: It's a different set of rules, number one. In some instances, not everything, but there was some nuances, which I thought we did a pretty good job during the week on that. Then to their credit, they did some things in the blitz that were good, and part of that, their outside guys, at least from the sideline, run and pass, it looked like they were maybe giving those guys a two-way go, which is not always -- sometimes you figure a guy is going to be containing and he'd slip underneath the run or a pass block, and that caused some negative yardage plays for us or flushes.

So when you have that going on, it kind of puts guys on edge a little bit and freezes them, and to their credit, they were aggressive players, those outside guys.

Q. Are the penalties something you're seeing in practice?

COACH FERENTZ: No, no. They had one bad last week. I'll go back and check, but I don't remember it being a factor. The first half, again, the false starts, we had a couple of them there. I think all but one, we intentionally took a delay, but outside of that it was a mixed bag. But they all come at bad times, right down to the last one, a holding penalty after it looked like we had converted the 1st down, reached our objective there, and then end up back in a 3rd and 5 again, which is -- you're not going to win consistently doing that. We have to get that -- that's concentration and just knowing the situation.

Q. About that situation, what strides have to be made to be competitive and victorious at Iowa State?

COACH FERENTZ: I think we have to improve on everything, but finishing drives offensively, we've got to -- moving the ball is one thing, but you've got to finish drives. And then defensively just playing every series like it's our last.

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