

August 4, 2008



An interview with:

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA COACH KIRK FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: Welcome everybody. Good to see you. I would like to say I just walked in. I don't know if Phil touched on it, but my hope today is that we can hold a press conference, a football press conference right now and that any current events, any questions regarding current events I'll be happy to stay afterwards. So, if we can take care of football, you know, get that portion of the program completed, then the people that want to get on to the players, feel free to do so, and I'll stay around and answer any of the questions you may have.

Only thing I ask, I'd hope you be respectful of our players in that same manner. It's really my job to field questions about current events, discipline, things of that nature and hope you'd be respectful of our players. They're trying to focus on this coming season and I think that is a fair request. I hope you can accommodate us on that one.

Just want to start off first of all just congratulating Andre Tippett on his remarkable induction this past weekend. You know, I think a lot of times in sports -- I talk to our players about this the all the time. A lot of times in sports we throw terms around, all-conference, all-pro, things of that nature. But if you stop and think just what a remarkable feat it is to get selected into the Hall-of-Fame, any Hall-of-Fame, certainly the NFL Hall-of-Fame, all you have to do is look at the people in that group, that elite group, then maybe more telling look at the players that haven't been selected at this point. It's just a fantastic achievement. I think the best part about it is the kind of person Andre Tippett is. Obviously he is a great, great football player, but the kind of football

player he is and just a tremendous representative of our university, certainly the New England Patriots, certainly the sport of football. Just a fantastic event. We're thrilled for Andre. We're hoping he may be able to join us sometime during the season so we can honor him. The only complication right now, looks like he's got a potential of a Pop Warner commitment. He is coaching his son's Pop Warner team, so if he can't get out here we certainly understand that.

Couple updates on our roster. As I said a week ago, or week plus ago in Chicago, Dace Richardson underwent another surgery recently. Things went very, very well but it's obvious he will not play again this year and we're not sure if he'll have a chance to play again in his career. It's been a tough road for him. You hate to see anybody's career ended, and certainly you look at a guy like Dace who came here to play as a true freshman. Just a tremendous young man. So we're happy that things are going well and he's going to be able to function in a somewhat normal way. Certainly our thoughts are with him.

As far as the rest of the team. Rick Stanzi couldn't participate today. I think most of you knew before I knew that he had a shoulder injury a couple weeks back. We expect him to be out certainly this week. If there's any good news there, we're on one-a-days for the first five days so at least we're not missing a lot of practice time. Hopeful we'll get him back sometime next week if not the week after. It's unfortunate. He's worked extremely hard. I know he wants to be out there competing but hasn't had that opportunity yet.

The other two players that weren't on the field today, Nate Guillory, is not in town. He's tied up with a family funeral which is taking place today. Our condolences to his family, and we expect he will join us here in the next couple days. And then David Blackwell is the only freshman that has not cleared through the clearing house. So he's not able to join the team. We're hopeful he'll join us in

ASAP sports
...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

Ferentz080408

the next several days, but I can't predict that at this time.

Just a couple general thoughts here. Really we've had a lot of good moments over the years and we're really excited about this season. We've got a great feel about this team and think, obviously, our group is excited to get going. In general, we have a young football team right now, but it's team that has experience, so it's kind of a rare combination. A little bit unique to what we're accustomed to certainly. And I think really in a nutshell the key for this team is going to be making the kind of improvement you expect younger players to make, then also demonstrating consistency, which can be a problem, or a challenge with younger teams as well. So those are things we're focused on going into camp. And the good thing is I think we've got very healthy competition in a lot of spots. That's going to help make us better.

Defensively, as all of you know, we graduated six good players last year. Four guys are presently in the NFL camps, two are draft picks and the other two are free agents. Or, excuse me, three were draft picks. I'll take that back. One free agent. All those guys did a great job. You look at Adam Shada, Mike Klinkenborg, two academic all-Americans.

So we start out losing some real quality players. Our losses are a little symmetrical. Our two ends, two corners, two inside backers, but we feel good about the guys we have coming up. We're anxious to see how they react. A lot of them got to play last year and we'll see how they progress in the next 25 days or so, see what happens there. Nice to know that we've got a couple great not only defensive leaders on our team, but team leaders, in Matt Kroul and Mitch King. Then A.J. I'd lump in there, not as experienced on the field but doing a good job setting the tone.

Offensively, our loss is primarily in the back field. Losing Albert Young, Damian Sims, Tom Busch--three guys that had nice careers for us. That's certainly paramount for us, replacing those players. That being said, I think we have three outstanding newcomers.

Everybody wants to know who the hot recruits are. And to get Andy Brodell, Tony Moeaki and Shonn Greene back in the line-up, we're really excited about that. With all due respect to any of our first-year guys, but these are guys we've seen play for us and we think they have a great opportunity to impact our offensive football team.

On the line right now we've got a lot of competition going, probably eight or nine guys in the mix. We'll lean hard on our two seniors. Rob Bruggeman and Seth Olsen prepared well, and I think they'll help set the tempo there.

The tight end portion – I mentioned Tony already returning. Brandon Myers did a nice job last year and we're counting on him to play well as a senior, and Allen Reisner is one of the guys we felt good steps in the spring. He really played probably before he was ready, or before it was even fair for him to have to play in the Big Ten, but we didn't have a whole lot choices in that regard. Really pleased with the way he's come on.

I think Michael Sabers is one of our more improved players during the course of the spring, so we're thrilled about that. I think we got a good group. Mentioned Brodell, Johnson-Koulianos, those are the front runners at the receiver position. Curious to see how guys like Sandeman, Chaney, how they mature and come along. Anxious to get on the field with them.

Quarterback position. As you know, we've got quite a lot of experience and eager to get Rick Stanzi back out there. They competed well in the spring. Curious to see how Marvin McNutt progressed, as I said, since the spring. His first exposure to running our offense 15 days and now we get him out there and give him a chance to work.

Then running back position. Right now it's a jump ball in all regards. We've got Paki O'Meara and Jayme Murphy, both did a good job in the spring. Nate Guillory looked like a new player in the spring, was lost most of the time. The good news is I think his last week was his best week. Then certainly Shonn Greene, getting him back and running will be good. And we're anxious to look at our first-year players as well. I think there might be some opportunity there for those guys.

Fullback. Brett Morse is another guy I would say is one of our more improved players last spring. He looked good today. We only had one workout. And Jordan McLaughlin, good to get him back. He basically missed all of last year with injuries and what have you, so anxious to get him back in the fold too.

Special teams. Certainly Ryan Donahue, kind of symbolic of a lot of guys on the team. First-year player. Did good things particularly at the end of the year. Mentioned consistency. I think he's got outstanding potential.

Place kicking, I talked about that in the spring as being one of our disappointments. We didn't show any improvement. Might have been worse in the spring than we were in the fall. That's not a good thing. So we've got to make strides there. But I think both Daniel Murray and Trent Mossbrucker have an opportunity there. So we feel good about that. We'll see how things progress and kind of go from there.

So we've got work ahead. It's great to be back on the field. We've got one workout under their belts and about 23 to go before we break camp. So we're just excited to be back. It's great to have the guys in a football environment, and we'll be looking forward to the next three weeks trying to put this team together and see where we go.

I'll throw it out for questions.

Q. Kirk, is it Jake's job to lose at quarterback?

COACH FERENTZ: Yes and no. Right now it's everybody's job to lose or gain. We're going into camp, you know, depth charts are basically the starting point. You got to start somewhere. But that being said, I mean, you know, look at King and Kroul, if somebody beats them out, shame on them. Those guys have played well and done a nice job. Jake being the front-runner, but he's got to earn the job. He's got to play the position better than he did a year ago just like I'd expect anybody who is a first-year player to, and I'd expect the same from A.J., as we expect that with both guys. We'll let the guys compete and see what happens.

Q. You got three new freshman coming in at the quarterback spot. What are you expecting to see from those guys to help fill depth in the position?

COACH FERENTZ: First I mentioned David is not with us, Blackwell, I'll just say this too, had an ACL injury last year. And, again, I think most people in the media know that better than I do. You guys know more about our recruits than me. But he had an ACL repair. Big part of ACL recoveries or any surgery is the rehab work that you do. He's got work to do. Even if he was with us, we're looking at weeks, possibly months, before he is full speed.

So we're down to two newcomers. One is a left-hander. I noticed today we're 60 percent left-handed and the head coach is left-handed, so we might be on a train wreck path, but that's got to

be at least a record. That would be a good thing to write about.

We're anxious to see both these guys. They both did nice things in high school. More so the way they led their team and the production they had with their teams. That's always the first thing for me when you look at a quarterback. Just watch them. Today they threw the ball around pretty well. It's kind of fun. We're just at the start, but to think really that they would get into the fix, that's probably a big stretch. But we'll see what happens.

Q. Further question on running backs?

COACH FERENTZ: Right now we got three guys working equally. Certainly with Hampton, Brinson and Robinson. Those three guys -- we'll just watch and see what happens. But it's a position, if you look around the country, freshmen do play at the running back position and play well. First thing is don't hurt the team, don't screw the team up. And for a running back, that means hanging on to the football and knowing what the protections are and being able to protect.

So it's going to be the first challenge for them. But we're encouraged about all three of the guys. We'll see how things pan out over the next three weeks. It's true with every football player, you know, but certainly the younger guys, you know, to watch guys over a period of three weeks, it's pretty telling. You find out a lot about each other, and the process is a rigorous one, so things will come on -- become apparent. Good and bad. So we're hoping more good than bad. We'll keep an open mind with those guys. I think it's realistic to think at least one could get in the mix.

Another thing I could foresee us doing is having roles set out for our players in the back field, specifying roles for guys. Might be another way to get more mileage out of our group.

Q. Coach, how excited are you for the opener? Officially putting last season, the last game behind you and moving on towards --

COACH FERENTZ: That is the official start of the new season. But really it began for us back in the winter, as you might imagine. That was one of my messages to our team. The past is the past. Whether we did something good, did something bad. We faced a different dilemma maybe in 2002 or post 2002, post 2004, where we won championships.

You know, you move on. And I think that's what you do in life, that's what you do in sports. You don't ignore your past. Certainly we're proud of the good things we've done and we're hoping to learn and correct the things that we've done that haven't been so good. But you move on. This is a new season, a new year. For us the work really began when recruiting ended.

I think our roster, the current roster took shape at the end of February. So symbolically that's the line that we've drawn and I'm hopeful at the end of the day people judge this team on what it does this year. But we're a long way from being home right now. We all know that. But I think this group's really excited about what's in front of them right now. I'm really -- I like the feel of the team, like the way they're operating.

Q. Several of your players said this has been the most cohesiveness summer they can remember. Can you talk about the team building maybe exercises you have done different to try to build that chemistry or how the team responded?

COACH FERENTZ: It's like anybody. Our problems, to me, on the field, you know, certainly in 2006 at mid-point we just kind of, for whatever reason, you know, hit a wall and started going downward mid-season. So, you know, when that happens, you start thinking about, you know, what's going on, what have you.

It's no different with some of the challenges we've had away from the field. It's an ongoing process. So we try to find out different ways to approach, attack within our personality. What can we do better. What are the best answers to come up with, and, you know, kind of move from there.

And so it's been an ongoing process. We've thrown a lot of ideas together, throw them up on the board, discussed them. I've got a lot of good -- fortunately I've got a lot of good minds in our office. My mind's a little worn out. But we got guys that come up with good ideas. We beg, borrow, steal, and at the end of this day it's like anything else: You try to figure out what we can do to better communicate, better educate, better train, you know, what have you, anything new to your program.

I think we've taken steps and so far I think they've been fairly effective at least judging on the way the guys are working right now. Proof will be in the pudding. We'll find out this fall, A, when the

final week gets here; B, when school starts; C, when they have the team. That will be the test.

We've come up short in recent months and our goal is to get better. But it starts with the players being committed. And we're just trying to work at it as smartly as we can.

Q. Coach, at running back, overall thinking about what you have there?

COACH FERENTZ: At running back? Getting Shonn back is big for us, you know. He's a guy's that's played. He hasn't had a ton of carries, as you know. But when he did, he carried the ball -- you know, we've seen enough of him to know he knows what to do. I think he can be a guy that can really impact our football team and help our football team. Very pleased with the role that Paki and Jayme played last year. They did a nice job on special teams. I've got faith in those guys. They'll play well. We'll never know how well until they get out there. But got trust in them and that's where it all starts.

Then the door is open for some other guys, Guillory or the three freshman. We'll go through that process this month, make sure it starts with being dependable. You got a lot of guys counting on you when you are playing that position, not quite as much as quarterback.

But first thing, if we're going to win games, we can't lose them. So we got to have guys that know what to do. You look around the country, it's not unusual to see a freshman play and play well. It might not be until the second part of the season. Damian Sims had to go in there and help us in 2004. Didn't play a huge role but did okay. It's not unrealistic. I think that's one position there or the receiver position, a guy might have a chance as a young player. So we'll keep an open mind.

Q. You want a true number one there?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not concerned about it. I'm hoping they will all do well. That will work itself out. I'm not too concerned about it. I hope all the parties are healthy in practice and playing well.

Again, probably the biggest variable will be the guys we haven't seen much of. I feel pretty comfortable about knowing who Shonn Greene is, Paki O'Meara and Jayme Murphy. Other guys, we have ideas who they are, but don't know until we get through camp.

Q. How worried are you that all of the off-season, off-the-field problems are going to cause a hangover of a distraction this season?

COACH FERENTZ: It will be a distraction if we let it be one. About as simple as that. The best thing we can do right now is do what we're supposed to do. Pretty simple. On the field, off the field, in the classroom. If we do that, I think people are fair. For the most part, people are pretty fair. Those that aren't, you're not going to change their minds anyway. That being said, be it off-the-field problems, or disappointing losses, you know, I think if you look back, we've been pretty decisive, pretty firm. I'll put our track record up against anybody in the country's in that department.

And we've handled losses the same way. We've had some tough losses, as you know. I can't remember -- maybe I can. They pop up pretty quick. The Northwestern game 2005, Arizona State, 2004. Those were tough rides home. And, you know, we showed up the next week and played.

So if you dwell on things, if you let things become a factor, they will. And if you take the right attitude and put your energy where it should be, then you have a chance to respond and recover. So you got two choices, really, and that choice is ours. It's nobody else's. So I'm not really worried about it. Again, knowing our team right now.

Q. When you think of the running game, is it a thought that maybe it's as much about improved play from the offensive line that will be the key to success as much as whoever becomes the starter?

COACH FERENTZ: I really -- to me, offense -- you know, football is this way in general. But offense in particular, it's everybody. Our receivers have to come in and block for runners. If you want big plays. You know, it's one thing to average four plus, but if you want to break big runs, you got to get help from the outside, typically. Or your back has to run somebody over and make somebody miss. That's offensive football. Everybody's got involvement. Everybody's got a responsibility typically on every play. So, you know, everybody's got responsibility.

Our statistics last year were poor. I mean, that's probably a nice way to say it. They were poor. But I think if you examine the reasons why, it

doesn't take a, you know, Hall-of-Fame coach to figure out what the problems or concerns were.

So, you know, getting everybody healthy and getting guys out there executing, practicing the way they need to, I think we have enough experience right now. May have a different tune three weeks from now, but I think we do at every position. If we all do the things we're supposed to do and improve the way we're supposed to, we'll have a chance to have a good offensive football team.

You know, you have to play good defense to win a championship. There's no doubt about that. But you got to play good offense too. I still believe you got to be able to run and throw. So sure, it would be nice to do both. I think we have that potential. Now we got to go out and do the hard work to get it done. I'm not offering excuses up. I think we've got more than enough talent to get it done right now, and experience.

Q. Will off the field issues affect this team?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know if that's fair to this team. I really don't. This is 2008. This is a new season. You know, ever since we've been here, we've wanted to do well each and every year. That's been our goal going in. And some years are a little more realistic than others, certainly, you know, for a couple different reasons. But, you know, to me, it's just great to get started knowing that we can have success in all areas, all three areas.

And I think our players are committed to that. So that's how we're looking at it. I don't think it's fair to anybody -- you know, unless someone's done something wrong, it's not fair to put that pressure on anybody. I sure wouldn't do it to our team. I think all we're looking to do is have a great season this year.

Q. Do you have an impact on the issue?

COACH FERENTZ: I felt like I started teaching school at Lester Academy. I tried to give them their money's worth. Those kids paid to go to school. Their parents cared. Some of the kids didn't care, but the parents cared about that so I tried to do a good job teaching school. Tried to do a good job coaching. And the only time really felt pressure was when I interviewed in Cleveland for Maine. My wife said if I didn't get the job, she is

going with the guy that did. So I felt a little pressure there (laughter).

Outside of that, I thought for sure I was going to get fired my entire first year in Cleveland. I was waiting for the ax to drop, but I survived. I say it jokingly. But, seriously, everything I've done professionally, I've tried to be invested. I'm not one of those guys that's got to win everything. If I play checkers, I could really care less. I'm not built that way. But the things I care about and take a lot of pride in is we're going to try to do our best.

Q. After a couple non-winning seasons, having tasted a high level of success, based on previous experience the first couple years, how do you see that impacting the team?

COACH FERENTZ: We have enough guys that know what it is to experience success, and I think we have enough guys that know what it takes to have success and what causes you from having it. So that's a big part of the deal.

And there was a time several years ago where we didn't know either really, I don't think. That was a process. But, you know, we're aware enough right now mentally to have success. So, I mean, that's not going to be an issue. The issue is going to be what we do with our opportunity.

Q. Where did you see the breakdowns in the offensive line??

COACH FERENTZ: It was a piano drill. And when you don't have stability -- again, I'm not offering up excuses, but we go into the season with a guy like Dace Richardson, who this guy's a pretty good prospect. He really never got to turn the corner. Rob Bruggeman had had a great spring the year prior. So we lost two pretty good players, you know, before we really ever got started. I mean, Dace never got started, Rob came back at the end of the year. Our program, we can't lose veteran players, you know, and expect to have success.

We're not saying there's some places maybe where you can get by with that, but I've got 18 years now here and it just doesn't work that way. When you lose some key players, it's going to affect you. And we could have screamed and hollered all we wanted, and we did a little bit, but, I mean, you know, players know what's going on. It's just you got to be intelligent about what you are doing. You ask your players to do their best.

I think their effort was good last year. And they did some very good things and that's why I'm optimistic because we didn't graduate a guy in the

group. Dace isn't going to be with us, but we all kind of knew that was going to be the deal.

So, you know, they've been kicked around a little bit. And, believe me, they take great pride in their performance and I think we'll see a much more cohesive, you know, better-executing group up there. That's just common sense. And because they've worked hard. We're not there yet. We certainly didn't see it out there the last spring scrimmage. Think of a couple plays there that were kind of ugly. By the end of camp, I think we'll be ready to go.

Q. Is that group or maybe the team overall built to overcome injuries?

COACH FERENTZ: Certainly we have more depth and experience than we've probably had any of the nine years I've been here. At that position. I think that's fair to say. I don't know if we have a Gallery or a Steinbach, those guys are elite players. They turned out to be elite players. They weren't certainly as younger players, but I think we've got a group that can be pretty good. I really do. But now we've got to get that work done.

Q. At linebacker you lose two guys in Humpal and Klinkenborg. Is that a concern heading into fall camp?

COACH FERENTZ: A very experienced player, yet at the same time, missed a lot of time with injury. So a little bit like a corner situation where, you know, Fletcher got a lot of work because Adam was out. So Bradley really I think got good experience. Jacody got work in there at that position. Pat Angerer just had a year from -- you know, just a terrible year last year. I mean, everything that could have gone wrong, starting with mono in the summer right on through. We got him back. He is engaged and doing well. We got good competition there. Humpal played great for us outside backer, then last year inside backer. If he hadn't had that knee procedure he had to go through, would have been a first-day draft pick. I really believe that.

We're missing great leadership from him and Klink. So those intangibles, but I feel great about Tarpinian and Hunter and Johnson and Neilsen out there, Moses. So we got some guys competing and I think that will help bring the best out of our guys.

We're going to be young initially but once those guys get their feet on the ground, I think we

have the potential to be pretty good. All in all, when it's all said and done, we should be as good if we're playing the way we can.

Q. The conference has gone to almost a spread look on offense, which has exposed a few . . . ?

COACH FERENTZ: How many minutes is that? 29 minutes till you got the spread word out? (Laughter.) That would be Wisconsin, the cheese spread offense.

Q. Last year it exposed a few of your match-ups on defense when you had Klinkenborg out on a wide receiver. Moving Tarpinian to a linebacker, is that focused a little bit to the spread, or just you think that's his position?

COACH FERENTZ: We've -- you know, it's similar move as Greenway. Greenway is a quarterback safety in high school, so, you know, we're just trying to get guys in the best spots. But I think, you know, if you look around the country, just to answer that one part of the country, there aren't many people playing with 220-pound middle linebackers. We got caught on one play last year. That's the way it goes. It was painful.

But, you know, that's going to happen in football. And, you know, we've moved on. But I think if you look at nine years, people hit little dink passes under linebacker, that's part of offensive football. You know, you give up an eight-yard gain. Those things don't lose games for you.

I remember Purdue, whatever year it was, they had one long touchdown pass. You guys might remember what year. It was a nice sunny day. Should know. It wasn't 2004. It was a four-yard pass and we had eight guys miss tackles. That's what loses games. I know what you are thinking about. We'll have to find a better answer, you're always going to have a match-up, the thing that gets you when you start missing tackles.

We do want to be more athletic. We were saying that in the '80s. Always a goal to get more athletic at linebacker, but you still want to have good football players out there too. I think you look at us, we're pretty much like everybody else. Our middle linebacker is a guy that's got to (indiscernible), then the outside guys are a little more fluid and athletic because they can stretch so much. The only other answer is go nickel and dime, if you got enough DB's. That's a great thing.

Q. How much does it help on offense to have Moeaki back? He is considered one of the best.

COACH FERENTZ: He certainly has an opportunity to be. He is overshadowed a little bit by Scott Chandler who did a great job in 2005, 2006. Then, you know, thought last year it would be Tony's year to kind of step into that limelight, if you will. Then obviously was injured. He's a quality player. He's a very versatile player. He is an unusual tight end. Not many of them can threaten you in the run.

And pass game, that's kind of like finding a seven-foot center in basketball, a good one. There aren't many of them around. He's got that ability and that makes him I think a very unique player and he is a tremendous team guy. To have him back I think is going to be very, very helpful to us. Again, just having that whole picture back and getting him and Brodell back will be helpful, because we kind of got our legs whacked off a little bit at this skill position last year.

Q. Is Andy Brodell 100 percent?

COACH FERENTZ: He is. Yeah he is. He cramped up today but he is. A lot of guys cramped up today.

Q. Can Mitch King be an elite player?

COACH FERENTZ: I thought he was pretty good last year. It was reflective of the work he did. Can't say enough again. I'm just throwing this King-Kroul stuff around, but these guys have played well for us. They played really well in 2005 as first year guys. But I can't say enough about the way they've trained, the way they've been -- the ownership they've assumed with our team, you know. On both sides of the ball, not just the defensive line or defensive players. I mean, these guys have really -- and that's what you need from older guys. And they're totally committed. So both of them just through their work ethic, you know, it's not something you like, but it's not a totally uncommon phenomenon to watch a good player going into his senior year kind of cruise through spring practice.

I've seen that routine once or twice in my career. And these guys both practice so hard during the spring. So, you know, they both get it. That's the best way I can say it. They both clearly get it. My guess is, that's going to show up on the game field. It usually does. The way you live, the

way you practice, prepare, usually shows up out there. I would be surprised if they both don't have good years, and we're counting on that to happen.

Q. What do you want to see from Brodell this year?

COACH FERENTZ: Just the same thing we saw in Minnesota and San Antonio. Every game, that would be perfect. I say it jokingly, but I think that was kind of like a breakout for him. I don't mean this disrespectful to Andy, but the front end of his career, he is kind of feeling his way around. I don't want to call him a rec league player, but it was kind of like that. He was good at practice, but I'm not sure he understood all the things you have to do to really become a total football player.

And he was playing a position he didn't play in high school. We weren't sure if he would be a receiver or DB. He was a good running back and DB at high school. That year I think he figured out all the things you got to do, then it shows up on the field for him. He's another guy, talked about Mitch and Matt. He's been very invested too. He's been a good role model for that group. That's a young group, so that's really important. He's given us more than just production on the field.

Q. How does the injury keep Ricky Stanzi from competing for the starting spot?

COACH FERENTZ: It's setting him back. The good news, I guess, perhaps is it happened fairly late in the summer. And those guys have been training, throwing all summer long. So that's a plus.

The fact that he's been involved with the offense, he is not -- Marvin's got a lot less experience than Rick. So I'm not saying that missed time is not going to hurt him, but it's not going to be as damaging. If this was Marvin's case, it really set Marvin back.

As long as he gets back in a normal amount of time, I think he'll have a chance to get back out there. And, again, competition's good everywhere. He was doing a good job in the spring, and we're anxious to see where he is going to.

Players change all the time. That's a big part of camp. It's always fun to see where the guys are at, and I'll probably have more to talk about that on front in a couple weeks when we get together on the 16th.

Q. has he made enough progress to push Jake?

COACH FERENTZ: He's done better. I mean, right now he would be because he is the next guy in P. But I'd like to go through camp here before we name a starter and all that other stuff, proclaim anything. You got to see them on the field to see how they do.

Q. What does losing Austin Signor do for your kicking game?

COACH FERENTZ: You know, there's nothing we can do about that. We certainly wish Austin the best. I think he's found a home. And, you know, most importantly, our kicking off, which was a little bit inconsistent, we've got to divvy that duty out, and that could even be Donahue. We'll see how that goes.

But I look at our place kicking last year, you know, it was just -- you know, how did you phrase that, six and six? How I got to get these euphemisms down. Our place kicking last year was less than what we're going to need if we're going to be successful.

But I'll share this. I mean, Danny was really inconsistent as was Austin in the spring. You know, but it's a new year for these guys too. The we got Mossbrucker, who probably doesn't know enough to be nervous right now. He is young enough that way. I think with Daniel, the one thing that sticks in my mind is the way he performed up at Wisconsin. That was, you know, a stage. It was national TV, all that stuff, night game, tough environment. Just liked the way he looked, the way he carried himself during the game and the way he kicked also. But just his demeanor. I think it's in him, just a matter of getting it out and it being consistent.

It's the same thing with Trent. You know, I expect him to compete. We probably won't know a lot until we get time in games. We'll see what we know in practice, and the next step, we'll see what he does in games.

Q. Will there be two kickers, similar to last year?

COACH FERENTZ: We'll say more at the end of camp and certainly going into the first game. The perfect role, somebody will actually win the job.

Q. What was the specific things that maybe you yourself and the coaching staff stressed to Jake that he needs to improve on to keep the QB job?

COACH FERENTZ: Well, there's certain obvious things. Big thing as a quarterback, the making decisions quick and being decisive. That's a big thing. There are a couple other things on the list.

But, overall, again, I think what we expect from him is what we expect from everybody else that played their first year. Make another step, take another step, play with more confidence, be more decisive. It's one of the tougher positions to play.

But it's no different than the linemen. Those linemen have decisions to make, too, and they happen fast. If they make them well and make them quickly, they have a much better chance of looking good. If they're a little slow on the draw, they're going to be, you know, half a guy behind, and that usually isn't a good thing.

It's big part of offensive football. And, you know, we expect Jake to make that step. Rick's going to be better too. I think I've already indicated he is better and he should be. So, you know, it's his job to try to close the gap.

We have an open mind. We'll let it happen if it happens, but we're not going to force anything. We're going to let guys compete like we always do on the field. The only way to have good team morale, the guys that perform the best are the ones who get the chance to play, then you go from there.

Q. Talk about the defensive ends, how do they compare with last year and what's their potential?

COACH FERENTZ: Well, it's a little different than the Bradley scenario. Bradley got to start those games. Those two guys had never started, but as the season went on, we became more comfortable, worked them in. And I think all of us felt they brought some energy to the field. Gave us a little juice.

I remember Michigan State, and out there at Northwestern, they kind of changed the nature of the game a little bit. That's encouraging. Good football players do that. They're certainly big enough. They're certainly capable enough, athletic enough, based on comparisons to guys we've played with here. And now it's going to be interesting to see what they do. They both have three years ahead of them and they've got some

good experience. They've got confidence. They've played enough where they've got confidence. They know they're capable. They're going against good guys. We'll get a good measure on them.

I'll be really disappointed if our defensive line doesn't do well. I'll throw Chad Geary in that mix too. Chad's made incremental progress each and every year. He's got two more seasons in front of him. We expect him to play really well. We'll figure out the fourth guy. We're not there yet.

Inside we've got guys that I think are behind. Anton Narinskiy is a good fifth, Cody Hundertmark played last year. So I think we have the potential. Mike Daniels did some good things. It's going to be fun to watch those guys. We're counting on them to play well.

Q. How close is Jordan Bernstine to being number one at cornerback?

COACH FERENTZ: That's his job. He's got to go out and earn it right now. It's not his job right now, but he's healthy. Had surgery, missed all of spring, which is unfortunate. I think he was engaged mentally. Players can do one of two things when they're hurt, and I thought he was engaged. He's trained well. He is a good athlete. And we've been really pleased with what we've seen him of on special teams.

Now he's got to go out there and actually do it and demonstrate that he's learned. He's got 23 workouts now till we're out of camp, but there's some competition there. Certainly Drew Gardner has done a nice job. And we've got newcomers in the mix too. So we'll see how it goes.

Q. What was his surgery

COACH FERENTZ: He had a shoulder repair.

Q. Last year you played a lot of freshmen. Do you anticipate playing that many this year?

COACH FERENTZ: With all due respect, I hope not. But, you know, when the hand grenades start going off, you never know what's going to happen. I don't see those kind of opportunities this year at this given point.

But that being said, if somebody demonstrates they can help us, you know, we've got an open mind. We want to win this year too. So if guys can make a contribution, we're all for it.

I think there are a couple spots on our roster right now where they're going to have some opportunities. It's up to them to step in the door.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports