

University of Iowa Football

Media Conference

Saturday, September 3, 2016

Kirk Ferentz



KIRK FERENTZ: We are certainly pleased to get the win. Wins are hard to come by, so we are happy about that.

We appreciate the great crowd. The crowd was into it right from the get-go. It was a good crowd.

I think on the positive note, our players prepared well during the course of the week. It was our first game week and I thought they did a good job doing the things they had to do during the week. Carried it right through the weekend as well.

Going to the hotel on Friday, thought we had a good atmosphere up there. And I think we came out and we were ready to go.

There were some good things out there. The turnover-takeaway margin was good and I liked the way our offense capitalized on the takeaways that we did get.

Saw some good responses out there too, based on what was going on. So I think the team, at times, did a really good job there. All that factored, we had some new guys playing. So this is invaluable as far as them helping moving them forward.

Then, like any game too, you have things that you're not quite pleased with and there's going to be some things that we're going to have to work on.

Certainly our run defense was not what it needs to be today. And I want to give Miami credit too, not that I'm an expert, but I think that they're an improved football team based on film that we saw and what we saw today, they worked hard.

Early in the week, I said they had a good coaching staff and I think their team's really progressed. They tested us more than we wanted at times, but those are things we're going to have to work on.

Last thing, I want to thank Dan McCarney for being our honorary captain this week. It was fantastic of to have him here. He did a great job delivering an outstanding message to our team yesterday morning. And Dan's a true Hawkeye, born and raised here, went to school here, coached here for a long time, he and I. Sat next to each other for nine years. Worked with each other

alongside each other for nine years, too.

So I'm appreciative of his friendship and all he's done for this university. So it was great to have him back and get him recognized as well.

Q. Your thoughts on Daniels and Wadley?

KIRK FERENTZ: I think both guys have really practiced well. Our whole running back group has practiced well this pre-season and they seemed to compliment each other well today. If we can continue to keep some balance there I think that would be good for both guys. I thought that worked out well.

Q. Is that a sign of his strength?

KIRK FERENTZ: Strength and also maturity. One thing young runners tend to do is try to bounce everything or get outside. And a lot of times you can get away with that in high school, it's a little tougher here because guys close faster. But I really think he's learned how to play better and certainly did a good job with the ball security today too, which is good.

Q. The spin move is still there a few times. I know you're trying to get rid of it. He is too?

KIRK FERENTZ: A little less than it used to be so that's progress, yeah.

Q. I think this is the first game that an Iowa player was ejected for that targeting rule. Being that is new territory, how do you think the team responded?

KIRK FERENTZ: I think Jordan (Lomax) had one too a couple years ago.

But it's one of those things that's really tough to coach it and it's tough to officiate. I fully understand why the rule is in there. As a coach, I get concerned we over-officiate that and I'm not suggesting that happened today. But bottom line is it's part of football. We have to try to do a little better job coaching it.

And then when you get a guy like Josey, who is a really aggressive player and that was a great hustle play, too. He was trying to rush the punter and ended up right back where the return was.

So it's one of those things that nobody hurt more about not being out there than Josey. That's what he works

so hard for is to be out there playing.

Q. How do you feel like Hockaday played?

KIRK FERENTZ: It wasn't perfect, but it's a great experience for him. And that could happen at any time. It's just one of those deals.

So we have a lot of those today, where next man in. Parker had to come out of the ball game, so those things are going to happen during the course of the season. Guys have to respond. It was a great experience for Jack, I think he did a lot of really good things, had some good hits. Certainly caused a turnover. And he's a guy we've really liked since the day he got here. He's a really conscientious young guy and this experience will really help him, I think.

Q. Is there a reason Smith lost his spot on top of the depth chart?

KIRK FERENTZ: No, not at all. It's really more is about Jay Scheel had emerged, he really just kept improving, so it wasn't a knock on Jerminic, I think one of the better things I saw today was one ball he couldn't come up with, but then he came back and made a really tough catch and I complemented him on that after the game here. To me that's a really positive sign. He's done a lots of good things in practice and maybe with a little bit of luck, we can develop some luck there.

Q. Anthony Nelson, is this just the start for him?

KIRK FERENTZ: You like to think a guy's going to improve as he gets older and keeps going, but what he did today is really what he does in practice. He's a guy we have been excited about, going back to the spring. He really did some good things. And even in ball prep we saw him do some good things. He's not near at the physical maturity that he will be before he graduates, but he's a good football player and I thought he made a real nice account of himself today.

Q. The three long passes it looked like Miami was able to find some rhythm was that frustrating for the defense?

KIRK FERENTZ: That's frustrating for everybody. I don't think it's any more demoralizing than when you take the ball 75 yards. I think all three were. And to me the biggest ingredient there is we got to do a better job against the run. When people can move the ball on the ground, that's a little bit demoralizing I think. It's kind of ironic in a couple areas, first of all, we have a hard time returning the ball, us against our own defense, so I'm trying to equate that a little bit. But it looked a little bit like we were over thinking, maybe we were over thinking, we weren't as aggressive as a result of that, playing the run, but we're going to have to do a better job there.

Q. You made the decision to go with Nathan Stanley at No. 2 quarterback, what does that mean?

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, it means he's the number two guy right now. It's been nip and tuck with he and Tyler. He's done a good job, it Tyler has done a good job and we'll take it a week at a time let those guys keep competing. C.J. is our starter for sure, I will make that proclamation. He threw some good balls today.

Q. (No microphone.)

KIRK FERENTZ: We had a discussion about that before we did it, certainly as a staff, and at this juncture that's just kind of the decision we made.

Q. The large number of first year freshmen that played today, is that kind of a statement about where you are on this team?

KIRK FERENTZ: I think a couple things. Again, there's a little bit of the void because of the seniors that we graduated, the 21 guys that played really good football. Probably 11, 12 of them were starters. Starters with plug-in cogs sharing a position so, that's one thing. And any time you lose those kinds of players, guys off your football team, somebody's got to emerge. And I think the other combination is we felt really good about the class when we signed them a year ago. Once they got here in June and July we felt even stronger. And then, most importantly, we put the pads on in August and actually started practicing football. We just thought they had a chance. So, I'm hopeful and encouraged by it. We have seen a lot of improvement this past month, so now the objective is to keep pushing them forward and expedite the process and it's really no different than AJ back in 2006, we made that decision, we have done that along the way, but this is certainly the biggest number we have had.

Q. You look at what Jerminic was able to do, not just catch the ball in traffic, but he took a shot in the end zone. But he's so strong, Akrum's touch down runs and also Daniels.

KIRK FERENTZ: I mentioned some things I was really pleased with and again, just standing from the sideline, maybe at the top of the list would be our perimeter blocking which at times had not been great. But those why those little, whatever you want to call them, quick screen passes to the outside, those are good when you block and they're not so good when you don't block. So, as simple as that sounds. But I thought we really, all the guys did a nice job out there and that's really encouraging to all of us.

Q. HOW did your defense change without Jewell?

KIRK FERENTZ: Josey is one of our better players. The fact that he was elected captain last year tells you how everybody thinks about him. But all that being said, that's football. We're going to have guys come

out of the game and we can't, we don't look for excuses, it's not going to take us very far if we do. I think we'll be better with him in there, but what if he's not next week? We just got to keep pushing. So, that's a challenge. It's 11 guys, it's not just one guy, but certainly it's good to have your best guys out there.

Q. Jay Scheel didn't play, can you update his status?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, he's got some health issues, so we thought he might have a chance to go today and at the end of the week we just made that decision not to play him. So, there were two other guys in that boat that did play and we were watching them a little bit to make sure things were okay. Fortunately, they came out fine. Hopefully Jay will be ready here next Monday, but it's just kind of a touch and go thing until the end of the week.

Q. Parker Hesse? How is he?

KIRK FERENTZ: Hopefully good. He had a strain out there, that's why we took him out of the game. Hopefully it's nothing that's going to last too long.

Q. The tight ends were not a big part of the offense today. Is it something they were doing?

KIRK FERENTZ: It really gets down to how they play you. It's just simple as that. So, if there are opportunities there, they are, and if not, one of those deals. But tight ends will be a big part of our play.