

# University of Iowa Football

## Media Conference

Saturday, October 28, 2017

### Kirk Ferentz



Iowa - 17, Minnesota - 10

KIRK FERENTZ: First of all, I wanted to thank our fans. It was a great crowd. Playing night games in Kinnick, it's always special. Tonight was no exception. They were there start to finish. We certainly appreciate that.

Obviously we're thrilled to get the victory in a rivalry game. Any time you play in this series, it tends to be a tough, hard-fought, competitive game. This one was no different. Really outstanding for our guys to be able to bring the trophy back into the locker room, hoist it, for our seniors to enjoy that. Nice to know we'll have possession of it for another year.

Minnesota, hats off to them. They certainly played hard, played very competitively, made it very tough on us. Then right along with that, a lot of things we still need to clean up, we need to move past, if we're going to be able to have success down the road. I think we had too many plays that really made it a little bit tough for us during the course of the game. Certainly increased the degree of difficulty.

But all that said, I'm really proud the way our players hung in there. They fought right till the end. That's exactly what it took. Good drive at the end to get the field goal, third-down conversion, then the defense coming up big on that last series, last possession, pushing them out on downs. That was certainly good to see, as well.

It was great to have Gary Barta back on the sidelines. Gary has been out of work or away from work here now for a couple weeks. I know he came back last night, was at the basketball game. It was great to see him down there pregame, on the sideline, then in the locker room afterwards. We're really just thrilled for him. Great to have him back with us.

The last thing, I just learned about some inappropriate behavior up in the press box by one of our coaches. I don't know all the details at this given point. What I heard, it's not acceptable. We're just not going down that road.

There's a certain level of professionalism that you have to be operating with, and we'll plan on doing that in the future. In the meantime, we'll sit down, address this,

find out what the details are. I'm a little sketchy in terms of what all took place. The bottom line is there's no room for that. That will be addressed. We're going to move on.

**Q. What was your issue with that play in particular, the fumble? Was it an issue of whether or not it was reviewable or what?**

KIRK FERENTZ: It's a real gray area. I think the way the officials are coached on that is not to blow the whistle when they're in doubt. I don't know how the guy upstairs knows when the whistle blows.

I was told the ball came out. That's a tough break for James. Great to have James back, by the way, but it's a tough play.

**Q. Talk about your defense, the big plays you made in important times in the game.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Every play ends up being critical. Basically it's a one-score game. We've been involved in a few of those.

For the guys to gut it up the way they did, we gave up a few plays that I'd like to see us defend a little better. I mentioned some of the things offensively. Obviously a couple of penalties, turnovers. But some things on defense, too, we can shore up and get better at. For the most part the guys did a good job, kept them out of the end zone.

To come up big there at the end, a guy comes squirting out of there, you just never know what's going to happen in that situation. Good to see our guys digging up front. I think the rotation. It helps us a little bit, too, so the guys are fresh.

**Q. What was it like to have Butler back in the lineup?**

KIRK FERENTZ: James is just a first class guy. We've talked about injuries. That's a tough deal. We got a couple guys that probably aren't going to be playing the rest of the way. That's a hard thing. For James to make it back, he was determined. There was some skepticism on our part only because of the brace. But he was convinced he could do it.

He looked good in practice this week, got his legs back underneath him a little bit. He's a first class guy, high-

energy guy, mentally tough guy. Gives us a little bit more leadership, because we're lacking that up front.

I was remiss, too. Boone Myers did have surgery this week on his ankle. He's doubtful for the rest of the regular season, maybe a bowl game if we can earn one. That's kind of the report there.

Good to have James back, certainly.

**Q. James said the decision was yesterday that he was going to play. What kind of led to that?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, he had two choices on the thing. It was in his hands all the way. But I'm pretty sure this is a clear-cut he could take a medical redshirt and get a year back. You're looking at five games remaining in your career that are guaranteed, so you want to take that. Knowing that we're going to share the ball a little bit, have a chance to come back and be the featured guy, should he have earned that.

I think he wanted to get back and help our football team. He knew we needed some more help. He was really excited about that opportunity.

**Q. Was the first drive scripted?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Most of our first series' are scripted to a degree, depending on situations.

**Q. You scored on the opening possession for the first time this season --**

KIRK FERENTZ: I mean, we've had a couple go down there. At least this one didn't have a turnover at the end. First thing I think of are the two turnovers we had, two of those drives.

Yeah, it was clean. That's a good thing certainly. Same thing in the second half. That wasn't scripted. But we talk about it. We always gather thoughts at halftime, what do we think might be good, what do we need to toss out, that type of thing.

**Q. Big play from Noah Fant in the second half --**

KIRK FERENTZ: Not necessarily there, but, I mean, that's a play that we think has got a chance to be effective. Noah is a tough matchup.

I'm sorry, you're talking about the touchdown?

**Q. Yes.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Sorry, we talked about that. I was thinking about the third down. I'm more in recent history.

That was a huge play, just as huge as the touchdown. That's a play we pretty good about.

**Q. Jake Gervase had a tough start, lost his position. When you needed him, he was back out there. Do you think that says something about a guy's character?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Absolutely. I think one thing I've been pretty consistent about, we're not the greatest team right now, but we've got a team that has a good attitude. I think that's really representative of it. He never dropped his chin. I know it didn't sit well with him obviously. You wouldn't want it to. He kept working, kept pushing. He's back out there playing right now.

I'll say the same thing about Miles. Miles has taken on a little bit more special teams role now. But his attitude couldn't be better. If we're going to have a good football team, we need that from our seniors. Miles is doing a great job.

When you see that, I think that's kind of consistent with the kind of guys we get to work with every day.

**Q. How important is getting a win, no matter how you do it?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Real important. It's real important. Just number one how you feel. It's tough. Coming out of there last week, you got the bus ride. We've had good bus rides and bad bus rides out of there. It's really a tough thing. It stays with you on Sunday. We got the 24-hour rule. You blow right by that, probably until you get on the field Monday, it stays with you.

It's always the best part, getting back with the players, getting back to work. But it hurts. It hurts. You don't get them back. That's football. We're in a really competitive business. This is a competitive league. But it was really good to get a win. No matter how you get it, it's good to get a win. Rivalry game, that's even better.

**Q. Did you see progress tonight? Where did you see it the most?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I thought we made some really good plays on both sides of the ball, some good things in special teams, some things that weren't as good. That's certainly a concern. I thought we were moving forward in that direction, but we'll have to go back to the drawing board there.

Biggest thing is the guys fought, they fought through all 60 minutes. That's really Big Ten football week in, week out. We fought through it, came up with the plays we needed to be successful.

**Q. When you look at your defensive tackles, you put Matt in there last week as a starter, but Cedrick seemed to play well today. Fought through some double teams.**

KIRK FERENTZ: It's in the sheet. Thank you, though, for bringing that up.

**Q. He just seemed to be more of a force. How has he progressed fundamentally on the field?**

KIRK FERENTZ: He had a little bit of an injury going into the bye week. We had to rest him a little bit. I'm not sure he was 100% last week. While that took place, Matt has been coming on. He made the switch from outside to inside. We see him progressing each week. It's kind of like our end situation: if we can rotate guys, I think we're a better team.

Having Matt playing better and playing well, then if we can get Cedrick going, get him more confident, because he's a young guy, too, first-year player really, that will be better for us. Just like I got done talking about Anthony Nelson on that outside, not having him play 70 snaps helps him be more energetic in the fourth period. All of that stuff can help us, I think.

**Q. Nate Stanley connected on a big throw down the field. Can that get him going?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I think we got a call from the FAA on that one. We didn't have clearance.

He threw a nice ball on that one. Threw a nice one on the pick, too, ironically. That's kind of us. That's what I'm talking about, some of these plays... looks like it's a good play, boom, they got the ball. Those are the things we're going to have to get past if we're going to be able to keep climbing here.