

# University of Iowa Football

## Media Conference

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Iowa City, Iowa, USA

## Coach Kirk Ferentz

### Press Conference



Iowa State 10, Iowa 7

KIRK FERENTZ: Obviously, all of us are disappointed with the loss. Congratulations to our opponent. I thought our guys played with good effort and were ready to go. We got off to a really good start, positive start, and then from there things didn't work out so well, obviously.

I thought our guys really worked hard, missed some opportunities. Not that there were a lot of them, but the ones that were there, couldn't cash in. Did a lot of good things on defense certainly and a lot of big special teams plays, and then stating the obvious, we have work to do, obviously, to move the football, and we're going to have to score points to be successful. That's where our focus goes.

Just got a locker room full of guys that are really invested, that play hard, that care about each other. Don't have many answers right now other than we go back to work tomorrow and see what we can figure out and try to move forward.

**Q. When you look at quarterback, that's what everybody is going to point to. You decided to stick with Spencer after last game, through this game. Why stick with him at this point?**

KIRK FERENTZ: To me, both these games he's still not getting enough help to really do a fair assessment. He hasn't been perfect. Nobody has. We have a lot of moving parts right now on offense, and then we're shorthanded a little bit at a couple positions. We'll keep working through it and we'll talk about it tomorrow and see what happens moving forward.

**Q. One touchdown scored in two games; is there anything that can jump start your offense right now?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Hopefully getting some players back would help us. But we can't count on that. We have to play with the guys we have and see if we can do a better job.

**Q. Is Spencer for sure your week three starter?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I didn't say that. I said today he played the whole game. In my judgment it was the best way to continue through this game, and gave it some thought, but I felt like it was our best opportunity. We'll reassess everything tomorrow.

**Q. How did your offense get to this point? It has to be more than just missing players, doesn't it?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I don't know about that. It's certainly a factor. It's not an excuse, but it is a factor if you do the math on it.

We have, I think, by my count, three guys that were out pretty much from the start of camp that play outside on the perimeter. Not so much Nico was during camp, and then Diante Vines got hurt during camp, too, so you take those two guys, Brecht was out, Keagan Johnson has been out. That's four players that last December I would have told you we were counting on.

**Q. What about the offensive line?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Have to do better.

**Q. On Wednesday your offensive coordinator said if the guy can't do the job, we'll find someone else who can do the job. Do you feel like Spencer is doing the job right now at quarterback?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We'll assess all that tomorrow. Obviously the statement made about points scored, we're not going to win moving forward if we can't score more points than that, and we have a really good defense. But you're not going to win a game, 7 points, 10 points a game, as a rule.

**Q. How much does that bug you as someone that preaches complementary football? Two units clearly playing really well right now and one not.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Part of complementary football is the other people helping out when one unit is not going well. But we're going to have to move the ball offensively. We're not going to sit around waiting on special teams and



defense to win every game for us. We can't do that. That's not realistic.

**Q. I don't think you've had 11 personnel in a game the last two games because you've had one scholarship receiver available. How much has that really prevented you from running your full arsenal?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, it limits what you can do, realistically. It is what it is. We've got to try to coach around that, and that's our jobs, to try to figure out a better way to move the ball and be successful there.

Right now there's really nothing that's looking great, and we have to try to figure that out here in short time.

**Q. I can't imagine there will be many more 90- to 99-yard drives against your defense this year. What did you see on that drive that Iowa State was able to chip away at it?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Credit to our opponent, and maybe we were deflated by the turn of events prior to that, but still, you've got to keep playing. We had them on the 1. If we could make them punt again and get the ball back, who knows.

But credit to them. They responded when they had to, and that's what it takes to win football games.

**Q. There was a play on the sidelines, it was kind of a contested catch that they made, a 3rd down catch, and then they went hurry-up and there wasn't a snap. Did you try to get a replay or call a time-out at that point?**

KIRK FERENTZ: In retrospect, I wish I had called a time-out. In our conference -- that's one major difference apparently between conferences. I learned something today. That play would have gotten stopped in the Big Ten. That's just the way it goes. Any bang-bang play, they stop it. They don't let the opponent quick-snap it. And credit to them, that was a smart move on their part. I still don't know if it was a good catch or not, but I just know it would have been nice to have a review on that.

**Q. The fumble, did you think he crossed the goal line?**

KIRK FERENTZ: From where I'm standing, you can't tell. The people upstairs thought it was a touchdown. They thought he broke the plane, and if you break the plane it's a touchdown.

**Q. How big a swing is that when you go from almost getting a touchdown and then they go 99 yards --**

KIRK FERENTZ: Oh, it's huge. It's just huge. A touchdown there changes the complexion of the game, a touchdown for us. But you know, you have to live with what gets officiated, and that's what we did, and still came up short.

**Q. To clarify, the people upstairs, the replay official thought that he scored?**

KIRK FERENTZ: No, our people, the people I talked to on our phones. They thought it was. I talked to a couple people, but they thought he broke the plane, Monte broke the plane, which would make it a touchdown, at least in the Big Ten.

**Q. I'm sure people are wondering about why Alex Padilla and even Joey Labas for that matter, what is it that they're not doing to put themselves in position to get in the game?**

KIRK FERENTZ: It's really not that. The best way I can phrase it is we have a lot more exposure to what's going on with our players on a daily basis. You get to see them on Saturdays, obviously you get to interview them, talk to them and all that, but we see them on a daily basis, and this goes back to the spring and last fall, as well.

It has been our estimation that the Spencer is the starter, and wanted to give him that chance again today. We're sitting here right now, clearly we have to do better, and we'll reassess everything this week.

**Q. In terms of the whole offense, what are the disconnects between what happens in practice where you feel like you're getting momentum and then it not carrying over?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, hopefully practice goes fairly smooth week-in and week-out. You're not going against your first -- at least now we're not going against our first defense. You hope you can go out and execute. We've seen some good things. I thought we got better this week, I really did. It didn't show today necessarily. But you know, that is the deal, and then the challenge. Everything gets judged by what happens on a game field against good competition, and Iowa State played a really good game defensively.

Right now, because of our personnel, people can cheat a little bit, and it's making it a little bit tougher for us to climb that hill.

**Q. I think I asked Brian this, too, but wouldn't it make more sense to have a more mobile option at quarterback if people are cheating in as it is?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I don't think it's necessarily quarterback runs that are going to do it, although we had a good one today, and that's a good thing. But I don't see us making a wholesale change in what we do, but we've got to do things better.

We'll reassess it over the course of the next couple days.

**Q. When you double down in the off-season when you had Brian stay as offensive coordinator, move over to quarterbacks coach, are you thinking differently at all about maybe something to do different schematically with the offense to try to get it jump started, whether it's more wildcat which you used a few years ago or just something different?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I'm not sure that's going to help us right now. Really we just need to find some ways to move the football and score. I'm not sure that's going to be -- going to a gimmick or wholesale change. As I said earlier, we're two weeks into it now, we should have a better idea of what we can do and what we can't do and where the hotspots are and try to compensate for that, and then hopefully we'll get some personnel back, too. I think Nico has a chance this week, hopefully Brody Breck this week 3, so maybe we can get him involved. Hopefully that'll be part of the solution here, but we don't have a quick fix right now.

**Q. Why is it difficult to make wholesale changes once the season starts?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, because your team is your team, your roster is your roster. As I mentioned a minute ago you've got four guys that look pretty good at receiver that aren't playing right now, so I think that would impact any team in the country, even if you had 10. It's just a pretty good percentage.

**Q. You historically have not changed quarterbacks. You're not a yank-a-quarterback coach. Why has that been, and I know you've already answered that today, but why is it in general?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I would agree with that comment or that statement if, in fact, that quarterback has built up some credit. He's got an account going. We've been around Spencer three years now. This is his third year playing as a starter, so we've been around him, seen him do a lot of really good things, as a person, as a young man, he's stellar.

He's got all the attributes you're looking for, but it's not going well for him right now. It's not going well for anybody in the offense quite frankly. If making a change is the best

thing, then we'll consider it. If not, then we'll just keep pushing forward, seeing what we can do.

**Q. Last week you talked about Logan Jones and Connor Colby doing things in the first game like snap cadence and Colby doing guard things at tackle that you didn't expect this week. In terms of those changes, did you see that out of the line? And then what would be the next step for the offensive line?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, it's really tough to evaluate the line in total without seeing tape, but procedurally, with Logan last week, he was having a hard time getting the ball snapped. His mind is going a million miles an hour. It was all new to him. I don't think we had that issue today. How he blocked, I'll have to wait and see, but the thing I'd say about him in particular, like I said, I think last week -- just everything about him, everything he does is high quality.

So you know, I'm not saying he's going to be a great player here, but I'm pretty confident he'll be really good here in time. He's practiced as well as anybody we've got on our football team, so that's that.

Connor seemed a little more comfortable today, but I'll have to check that on the film.

**Q. Is there a possibility Keagan Johnson returns next week?**

KIRK FERENTZ: It's a possibility. He improved for the first time this week; I can say that. He's improved this past week and gave us maybe a little room for optimism.

I think Nico is getting close. I don't know if he is there. We'll know more as the week goes on.

Those two guys are definitely possibilities. Vines is going to be a while.

**Q. Cooper DeJean had a high-quality game, 11 tackles, interception in the end zone, moving back and forth. He's just a true sophomore. Is that representative of what you see of him and what kind of is his trajectory?**

KIRK FERENTZ: He impressed us last year. It's, again, one thing in recruiting; it's always a projection, then you get a guy on campus and really start to watch him operate, and even back last year in August he was really impressive.

He's certainly a more confident guy now, and he's very versatile, as you see. He's a really good special teams player on top of it. There's probably not much he couldn't do. Just glad we have him.