

Iowa Head Coach Kirk Ferentz Postgame Quotes Sept. 25, 2022 at Rutgers

Opening Statement:

“This is certainly the best way to start Big Ten play. I’m really happy for our coaches and players, I thought they did a great job. It’s a hostile environment and coming in here we knew it would be. I thought our guys did a good job concentrating through that, they kept their composure. Bottom line is I think we really had good team play out there, so that’s always a good thing. I think we saw improvement on all three phases, at least that’s my vantage point. To talk about the defense, a lot of really good efforts out there, certainly some great playmaking by our guys. Clearly the guys are really playing at a high level right now and doing a good job. The two defensive touchdowns did feel a little bit like the Indiana game, that’s the last time we did that, so a lot to be pleased about there. Offensively, I think we made progress. There were some things that were better out there today. It’s kind of a weird game in some ways you lose a couple possessions, nobody’s going to complain about that, but I thought we did some things better. Most importantly, I think the lines were all a little bit better. We’re still not as cohesive as we need to be, there’s still some things going on. Rutgers did some things to make it rough on us, as well with some of their movement. It was good for our guys to weather that on a road trip, and make some progress off the back screen. Special teams continued to do a nice job. I think we played as well as we’ve played tonight in that regard. It was good to see the kickoff coverage, Jay Higgins, he was doing pretty well out there. I can’t say enough about Tory (Taylor), two good punters in the game. By my count one in the 10 and the other three were inside of the 10, so that’s a huge plus to have him do that. So, I’m just happy to get the win.”

On improvements in the rushing game:

“Every step of improvement is important for us right now; it’s one of our team goals. It’s pretty simple, during the week you want to win the game that’s in front of you, and hopefully improve. I think it’s always important for our program, especially in the month of September. We talk to our players about that all the time, September is a really critical month. It’s week by week, step by step. We have a lot of really good veteran players right now, and all the guys who didn’t play much need a reassessment of the game. I’m just really happy to see some growth.”

On Cooper DeJean and coming from a school high school:

“Small town doesn’t mean anything. Athletes are athletes, and good players are good players. We’ve had plenty of good players from small towns. The most surprising thing about Cooper is that he really wasn’t offered a scholarship by anybody. You watch what he does, he just plays good football. He’s flexible in terms of position, like fielding punts, he did a nice job there too. I’m not saying it’s easy, but he makes it look easy, and that’s what good players do. It’s really good to see.”

On Terry Roberts get hurt yesterday:

“Actually, it was pregame. We thought he had a chance to go, he’s been banged up a little, but we thought he had a chance to go until pregame today.”

On Cooper DeJean moving to different positions:

“That to me is probably the most impressive part. He’s pretty fluid with his form athletically, but the mental part to your point. There’s a lot that goes into playing any position, and he does a couple, and he does it well at a really young age as a player. It’s a real credit to him. Some guys are just more flexible that way than others, and I would attribute that to the fact that he’s a multi-sport athlete. I also want to mention Sebastian (Castro) jumping in there. When Terry couldn’t go, Sebastian’s the next guy up, and he certainly made a nice play. Certainly Kaevon (Merriweather) had a big night, too.

On Leshon Williams:

“I don't know what I can say about him. He's been really steady, and clearly, it's been a really tough couple weeks for him. You feel badly for anybody to go through that, especially someone at that age. It was great to get him back, he was back with us Monday, and his attitude really never changes. It was great to see him play like he did tonight, it's what you expect from him. Nonetheless, you can't overstate what he's been through.”

On Keagan Johnson and his injury:

“It's soft tissue, and there's just no way to predict how it's going to go. He was making progress, and then had a setback a week ago. We'll take it day by day, and I'll keep you posted, but there's no way to predict these based on my experience.”