

Wisconsin vs. Iowa

Nov. 12, 2022

Kinnick Stadium

Iowa Player Quotes

DB Kaevon Merriweather

On changes made...

“We didn’t put our heads down and consider the season as a failure. We kept working each and every day. We knew who we were as a team and as a defense and offense, and our units just came together. We refuse to put our heads down. We want to keep pushing.”

On improvements...

“I feel like we are a lot better from a DB standpoint. We’re thinking the same thing. We’re on the same page, other than the one play at the end of the half. I think the coaches do a great job preparing us as DBs, but also as a whole defense. We’re still pushing to see how good this defense is.”

On tip to Moss...

“It was just game plan, I think. We understand what Wisconsin wanted to do from a passing standpoint. I felt bad for Riley, he hadn’t had a pick yet, so I thought I’d tip it up to him. Just being prepared.”

LB Jack Campbell

On B1G/Wisconsin physicality...

“We were playing physical up front, trying to make it easy on the backs. It’s the will versus the run, so if you’re willing to go out there and stop the run then good things can happen. You can’t really teach people that, and I think that is a sign of a Phil Parker defense. He brings in guys that are willing to get after it.”

On Cooper DeJean...

“He’s a special kid and special player, too. You obviously see it out there, he is going to continue to do great things.”

On physicality...

“When you sign your National Letter of Intent to play at a Big Ten university, these are the kinds of games you fantasize about. It’s such a blessing to be able to compete with some of the best in the nation. All of us are really blessed with the opportunity. Again, we were able to control the line of scrimmage tonight.”

On recovering Logan’s ball for him...

“I was trying to aim for his family. It’s special when you get the ball. They thought I was trying to steal it. I got the ball and was just trying to do something special for Logan. I grabbed it and sprinted toward the sideline. I know where the parents sit, and I saw his wife up there. I hummed it, but it was a trash throw. It’s a good thing I don’t play quarterback. I think I hit someone in the head. We have to figure out if they got it.”

TE Sam LaPorta

On what has changed for Iowa in the second half of the season...

“It’s the collective efforts every week. Putting everything together to come away and get the win. Like I mentioned last week, I feel like we still have our best football to play and I still believe that. A few weeks ago, it just wasn’t showing yet for us and I think it is starting to turn around a little bit, but we have to keep progressing.”

On how Iowa bounced back the past few weeks...

"A lot of people nowadays have a glass jaw and if they get knocked on your butt, they don't want to get back up. That three-game losing streak, that was really tough for us. There's a lot of senior leadership that pulled together and brought everybody closer to one another without wedging us apart. We only care about the people's opinions inside the locker room and inside our building. I don't know if you could have told me a couple of weeks ago that this is what it would look like, but we still have two games ahead of us and we're happy that we kind of have our fate in our own hands. Let's see what we can do with it, a game at a time."

DB Cooper DeJean

On his impact on defense (pick 6) and special teams...

"It's a lot of fun. I love playing the game of football so anytime I get to be out on the field I just enjoy the moment."

(On the pick 6)

"It was man coverage, I probably got beat a little bit. Then I came back out of it and I just saw the ball coming and had to make a play. Make a play there and then it was all green ahead."

(On downing the punt at the 1)

"That's just going back to practice. We do that a few times a week in practice, tracking balls throughout the air and then other guys hustling down, too. Special teams is something everybody prides themselves in."

On secondary elevating each other and competing...

"I think it just goes back to our preparation throughout the week. We're always in the film room watching film together. Our coaches just wanted perfection out of us throughout the week each and every day we're on the practice field. We stress that we play at a championship level and give championship level effort every time we are on the field, whether that's practice or in the games. When it comes to down to Saturday, we always strive to be perfect, and I think that goes back to coach Parker."

QB Spencer Petras

On how the game went today...

"It was great. It's funny, because the game in 2020 was really sweet. A lot of guys that played in that one have a lot of fond memories. There were no fans, and that's the one downside. So, it felt good to win this one at home and to get that trophy that seemingly was always over there at the beginning of my career and over the last 10 years, it seems. It is great to get the win."

On how the game went today...

"Schematically they present some issues. You know what they're going to do, it's just challenging to beat it. I thought that we settled down in the second half with some good throws. I had pretty poor rhythm, I felt like, third quarter especially, but we were able to get back on track and obviously some big plays on defense allowed us to get into some more easy stuff in the pass game. Especially on third down, they can present challenging looks. That's where they get all these quarterbacks that they play. They mess with the quarterback's eyes. In their nickel packages, they move guys around quite a bit post-snap. We did a nice job, from a game-planning perspective, of trying to limit that and keep them as vanilla as we could. That helped. Good to get a win."

On Iowa's regular success in the month November...

"It's all our head coach. Our head coach does a great job throughout the year putting a ton of emphasis, maybe more than other teams, into (the idea that) it's a long race and you have to keep getting better week to week. Really, a good team should be peaking in November, and you do that by compound interest of months and months of work... It's been something our teams have done recently, and we have to continue to do it, because it pays off. This is when the games really count. Chips are on the line."

On the Big Ten West division race...

“I found out after the game that Purdue beat Illinois today. I don’t know, I think it’s a total waste of time for us to think about that because we have to beat a good Minnesota team and a good Nebraska team coming up. Obviously, we play Big Ten football to win the division. Having that, considering where things were a couple weeks ago, it is great. The second we set our sights on that, we are doing ourselves a disservice. You can’t do it. You have to focus on beating Minnesota because the second you start looking at the standings and all that, you lose to Minnesota and it’s over. We still have to keep our focus on what is important.”

DE Deontae Craig

On how the game went today...

“We knew coming into the game the question would be who is going to win upfront. It was a physical week. The guys were locked in. The coaches had us prepared. Wisconsin, you have to tip your hat to them. They’ve always got a good program -- great, big, physical offensive linemen, great backs -- so it was definitely a battle. We were lucky enough to come out on top.”

On what he saw before the blocked punt...

“All week (special teams coach) LeVar Woods has been playing older clips of pro-style protection. The first couple times on the rushes, I saw him duck his head a little bit. The third time, coach gave me the freedom all week to take it up the field or duck it off inside, and I saw an opening, took it inside and was able to punch the ball.”

On the block...

“I am feeling it right here in my forearm right now, but the “W” takes all the pain away. It was base-double, pro-style protection. I knew our ends were going to have an advantage over some of their protectors. Not just me, but everybody upfront did a great job of rushing all game. That’s how things opened up like that.”

On his growth as a player this season...

“It’s not just me, it’s everybody. If it wasn’t for my teammates pushing me like they do, holding me accountable every day in practice, we wouldn’t be here today. It goes back to trusting the work. The coaches do a great job all week putting together a great scheme so we can go out there and execute.”