

# University of Iowa Football Media Conference

Saturday, September 17, 2016

## Kirk Ferentz

### Postgame Press Conference



KIRK FERENTZ: Just start out by giving credit to North Dakota State. They came in here to win the game. They've got an excellent football team, and it came as no surprise to us they're a tremendous team. Very well-coached, play hard, and certainly they did it today.

It's painful anytime you lose, and there's really not a lot of value that takes place when you do lose a game other than if you learn from it, and probably the only good news for us, we've got another nine football games in front of us, and that's where our focus has to go here at some given point.

Coming into the game, we've really played clean football, sharp football in our first two games. That was not the case today. Those costly errors, those little detail things that we didn't do well today ended up catching us at the end and made a big difference.

The lesson there is if you do that against a good football team, you're typically going to pay for it, and that was what happened today.

As I said, the only value for us is if we learn, and we've got to grow, and we've been in this situation before in other years, and it's September right now; the big thing is how we respond, what kind of improvement we can make on a daily basis and weekly basis.

This will hurt for a while, and we'll get back to work tomorrow and see what we can do about moving forward.

**Q. A lot of players mentioned that it just felt off kilter all day. Was there a moment in the game that you sensed that the team was just not at 100 percent?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I think there were a lot of little things in the first half on both sides of the ball. The first drive they had, they moved the ball pretty easily. We ended up getting it back, but they moved the ball easier than we would have liked certainly, and just some little things offensively that we didn't do, protecting the football, making the catches that you've got to make, just executing basic football. When you don't do that, you're going to pay for it.

We've got nine more games like this that are on our

schedule right now, so hopefully we'll learn from that.

The only thing I would say, the punting game and kicking game, Ron Coluzzi is really doing a good job. I don't know if we can cover a punt right now; he's not giving us a chance. He's really doing a great job there, so that's certainly a positive.

**Q. It seemed like your offensive line, was there something going on there? They brought a lot of pressure.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, you know, they're a good football team. They get after the quarterback. They can do it with four guys and then they'll bring extra pressure. But they're a very aggressive, tough football team, and we didn't measure up, run or pass, quite frankly. They did a better job.

**Q. James and Sean were available but didn't --**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, they really didn't practice much this week. James is working back from an injury. I think he should be able to go on Monday. Sean the same way. He came out of the game with an injury, worked a little bit yesterday. They could have played, but when a guy doesn't practice, that's a little bit tough to throw them in there.

**Q. I think people everywhere were saying no matter what North Dakota State's pedigree, you have no business losing this game. What would you say?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I'd say we lost to a really good football team today. It's as simple as that. I think anybody that was in the stadium today realized that's a good football team. They play hard. They're tough. They're physical. They believe in themselves. They've been doing it for quite a while, but we played the 2016 team, and they were the better team than us today.

The challenge for us now is to -- we got a feel for what it's like, and we're going to have to push forward here because we're going to play more good teams this year.

**Q. Of all the stats, they held you to 34 net yards for rushing. Would you imagine even as good as they are that they could do something like that?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, yeah, you certainly hope not. You can imagine anything with these guys, but you certainly hope that isn't the case. But I'll go back to the

mistakes. We came out in the second half, hit a big run on them and got that called back. It's kind of like baseball, when you walk a guy in the 9th inning, it invariably comes back and gets you, and those little things make a big difference in momentum, just how your team plays. Now you're sitting there 1st and 20 instead of 1st and goal down inside the 5. Little things like that factor into statistics, and that's just how it went today.

**Q. Their offensive line really dominated the fourth quarter. What happened there?**

KIRK FERENTZ: They did. They just played well. Again, we're not surprised. They're a big, tough, physical group, and their backs run hard. Perimeter guys block really well, so they put a lot of pressure on you. Our fits weren't great; I think we missed a few tackles from the sideline. But credit goes to them. They're a good football team.

**Q. On a positive note for you, Stanley comes in and made a couple really big plays. Did that give you a little comfort?**

KIRK FERENTZ: That did. That was a really nice response by him. We've had a couple of those this season, and that was a really nice job by Nate. Looked calm out there, confident, got the snap to start with. That's always big. But put the ball right in there for a big play and did a good job for the team.

**Q. When you got the ball, two runs and the sack, is your thinking that we're okay, three-and-out, we can put this on the defense?**

KIRK FERENTZ: No, our goal was to get two first downs. If we had done that, they would have had two time-outs left. But if you run the ball twice and get a yard or whatever it was -- I don't even know if we got that, it puts a little pressure on you. But no, our goal was to make first two downs and then bleed the clock.

**Q. You guys on offense all day, a lot of 3rd and longs, a lot of inhibition plays?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We didn't run the ball efficiently and then had some drops, so when you combine those two things -- any team is better if they can get you in predictable situations, and they did that way too often for us today. We've been playing cleaner football. That wasn't the case today, and those little things make a difference in the game.

**Q. When you look at your defensive tackles, (indiscernible) waiting, whether it was because it was a hole action or misdirection or whatever. Was that something you wanted to do?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I'm not sure I know exactly what you're describing, but clearly we didn't play well enough and they played better. What they did, I don't think

there was a lot of deception in that. It was things that we've seen, things they've been doing pretty consistently, and we're going to see them again later this year, not every week. So how you match up against an opponent -- it wasn't trickery by any circumstance with them. They just did a good job executing and we weren't up for the challenge today.

**Q. Did you think Derrick Mitchell would be available today?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I thought he had a chance. I think he'll be back next week. But he had an injury on Tuesday or Wednesday. I think it was Wednesday morning. It looked like he was going up on Thursday, but he didn't feel good yesterday, so hopefully he'll be back with us.

**Q. You've done this before against a confident team. Is it the style they play, because it was physical football?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Our folks have heard me say, I'm not necessarily a great believer of styles. I mean, anything other than you are what you are. You have an identity. Good teams have identities and they believe in what they do. Most importantly the players believe in what they do. Clearly their players believe in them, and for good reason. You win five straight championships, that's pretty impressive, so they're very well-coached, they've got good players and they play hard and they play good football. I didn't see a weak spot out there. They're really a good football team.

**Q. A little bit of a jumble on the offensive line; you had Keegan go in and Lucas go in. How much did that affect what you guys were able to do?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We played fine last week with those guys in there. You know, injuries are part of football, and we're going to have more of those this year, so it's just all about how the guys in there play.

**Q. What kind of job did Lucas do?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I'll have to watch the film. Like every player, there's some things that have to be cleaned up. But we didn't play good enough up front today. We just didn't play well enough to win, and that's the bottom line. Everybody has got ownership in that, coaching, playing, but we'll keep working at it. We've got a good group of guys up there.

**Q. You beat Miami of Ohio, but now is it kind of heightened concern after what happened today?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I haven't seen a stat sheet, but I think they were plus 200 at least running the football, so yeah, that's something we can't -- we're not going to be successful doing that. I know that.