

# University of Iowa Football

## Media Conference

Saturday, November 2, 2024

Iowa City, Iowa, USA

## Kirk Ferentz

### Postgame Press Conference



Iowa 42, Wisconsin 10

KIRK FERENTZ: I thought the staff did a really nice job during the week. Certainly our players really did a great job with this game. I'm really proud. I'm happy to get the win.

It was a complete team win for us. Special teams didn't factor in quite to the degree maybe as last week. The offense, defense, really a lot of good things out there, a lot of good highlights. Just a lot of good things.

Opportunistic. Got turnovers two times, turned those into touchdowns. Always good to see. The guys played hard, they played tough. They played for the full 60. Not much else you can ask.

Again, the defense really played well. Outside of that first series, they drove it for a field goal. Came back with the touchdown the second half. The offense did a nice job running the football. That was a real team effort there, too, including the receivers. Obviously the running backs, tight ends, line did a good job. So good to see there. Another positive.

After seven penalties in the first half, we did not have any in the second half. That was a positive. Came back and had a clean slate. The first half was a little bit uncharacteristic.

On the humorous side, Nick Jackson, I didn't quite see the footwork that he used. I just saw that on a highlight. It was a good play. I didn't know it was that good of a play. A little different and unique.

Trophy game, rivalry game. Certainly nice to come out on the right end of that.

The manager toolbox game, I guess our guys won that last night. They're on a little bit of a roll. Happy for them. They do a great job working during the year.

Lastly, our fans were great tonight. Great crowd. The

blackout, the whole nine yards. Really good deal. Great night for us. Just really happy for our guys.

We'll have a big challenge getting ready for next week, but we'll enjoy this one tonight.

#### **Q. Can you talk about your offensive line.**

KIRK FERENTZ: I think they're gaining confidence. They're growing. Certainly we came into the season feeling like we were a little bit closer to where we want to be. They're making good progress. Good to get Beau back in there, too. Not taking away from anyone else. There's a reason he's a starter.

The tight ends were a little nicked up there, but the guys jumped in. John Pascuzzi, Zach Ortwerth, Hayden Large. Perimeter blocking, too, to get the run game going. Makes a big difference.

#### **Q. What makes Kaleb such a great back? What puts him in that class of elite ones?**

KIRK FERENTZ: He's got good ability obviously. He's got size, strength, speed, all those things you love to have.

The thing I'm most impressed with is the approach, the maturity he's playing with right now, practicing with. He's like that all week long. He's hard to bring down. He doesn't go down with an arm tackle. A credit to him. He's really figured out to use what he has. I think he's enjoying that.

The thing I'm most impressed with is he's staying so focused right now. That's a real tribute to him.

#### **Q. It seemed like on both sides there was a dominance for you guys at the line of scrimmage. Have you seen that from your teams against Wisconsin before? How important is it to have that advantage?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I mean, every year is a different story. Matchup, that type of thing. But they're a good football team. We have a lot of respect for them coming in. Still do. It's an interesting year this year really in our conference.

Yeah, I didn't see this thing coming tonight. Sometimes



that just happens where things start clicking a little bit. Just got to give our guys credit because they really came ready to go.

**Q. You follow the NFL enough to know that running backs are not like super valued, at least in the Draft. You seem to value the running back position. What does a good running back do for a team, like the one that you have?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I have talked about Shonn, the impact he had. Go back to Fred Russell. He was in the locker room a couple weeks ago. Different sizes, shapes, styles.

A guy that can really take the load and go, that's a big thing. Just kind of creates an energy internally, too, with the linemen. Linemen get excited, just like the return guys. They know there's a chance. Good things happen when those guys have the ball.

Tonight it played in our favor. I don't know what the time of possession was. Just a chance to keep the clock going a little bit. Takes the pressure off the defense. A lot of good things about it if you can get it going.

I can't say enough about Kaleb. All three guys ran well tonight. Good combination. Jaziun was hitting it hard. Kamari has the quick burst in there. They're playing off each other pretty well.

**Q. Kaleb, the last couple years he'd have moments, flash, then there would be a dip, the consistency wasn't there. He seems to be finishing runs more now. Can you spot when that took place from being 80 percent of a great back to a 100 percent great back?**

KIRK FERENTZ: His approach this year entirely, going back to August, start of camp. He's been different. That's what you hope with older guys as they've been in the program for a while. I saw him. If you want to know how to act, look at the front of the room typically. A guy like Jay Higgins. Campbell before him. I think that's true at every position.

Yeah, he's working at a different rate. I still think to me his 'aha' moment in my mind was at the end of the Iowa State game where we were trying to run the clock. He got a couple plays that were blocked. He got about six or eight. That's something he hadn't done in the past.

I think he's learning maybe what he's capable of doing. He's starting to get it down pretty good luckily, yeah (smiling).

**Q. I think it was the first drive of the second half, you**

**took 10 plays, 86 yards, all runs. Was that all Tim's play calling? Did you see that coming? Was that something that was a thought going into the start of the second half?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I mean, we talk at every half. Offensive, defensive staff make adjustments, those types of things. What do we like, what don't we like. What might be good. The whole staff talked about that. But Tim calls the game.

As far as staying with it, if it's working, you stay with things. If it's not, you try to find something else.

Yeah, we got into a pretty good rhythm. Tim called a great game. Everything was really complementing each other.

**Q. A full week of practice for Brendan Sullivan at QB one, a performance like this. What did you see from him during the week? How would you evaluate how he played tonight?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I thought he played really well. Some things he'd like to take back, I'm sure. The grounding, start with that one. Stupid in college. That's negative rushing yardage, right? That's a bad rule, too. Got a couple of them.

I thought he played well. Was in a hurry a couple times. Maybe if he slowed down some things would have been a little better for him. That's lack of playing time, lack of being out there.

He practiced well all week long. I thought he did a really nice job. I am pleased for him.

**Q. I think a couple weeks ago you said short medical meeting, now there's a longer list. Cade's status moving forward next week? Luke Lachey?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I can talk about two guys. Ostrenga and Reece will not be out there. Hopefully bye week. We'll see. The rest of them we'll kind of wait and see what happens.

I think those guys have a chance, but we'll know more here next week. When I see you guys on Tuesday, we'll probably have a little better idea.

**Q. With Brendan, how well do you feel like he fits into Tim's offense, the way that he schemes things up? How does that marriage work?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I think there's enough flexibility probably in any system. You kind of lean toward what a guy can do. I'm going back. Brad Banks had some things that we

would do with him we may not have done with Nathan Chandler the next year. Just kind of lean toward whatever.

The obvious dimension right now is his running ability. That came in handy tonight. I don't know how many rush yards he had. It affects the defense a little bit and it helps the running game, certainly if they have to respect a little bit more.

He made a great throw on that ball down there. It was a huge play for us. That was a good play. I thought he did a really nice job.

**Q. You've been around a couple of Heisman campaigns. With Kaleb, does he deserve to get into that conversation? How would you promote him if you wanted to get him into it?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I have to tell you, I haven't given it much thought. All I really know about all that stuff is what I hear on the radio when I drive in or drive out. I know the guy at Boise has a million yards, too. Somebody is really raving about him. In fact, they were doing a little Heisman rundown. Sounds like there's nobody else left from whoever this guy that was talking.

Yeah, we haven't been too worried about that. This is a time of year where all that stuff does become... like rankings and everything else. I tell all of our guys none of that stuff is relevant until now. Yet none of us really know what the end of the story is till about a month from now.

I imagine he'll be in the conversation at some point if he keeps doing what he's doing. We'll promote him as best we can, just like we would anybody who is doing a great job. It's a team thing, if it does happen. Kaleb would be the first guy to say it.

**Q. Injury with Marco, when did that happen?**

KIRK FERENTZ: What a week, huh (smiling)? You want to ask who is number three and four, or did you see him out there warming up?

You can't make it up. You really can't make it up (laughter).

Yeah, he got hurt during the week. I'm not going to tell you how it happened. It was in practice.

Anyway, unfortunately he had to get surgery on it. It's going to take a little while. It's unfortunate. He was so looking forward. You don't want anybody to get hurt, anybody to get out. Number two quarterback is the only guy that gets reps besides the one. Finally going to get

some work, down that goes.

A great young guy. I feel badly for him having to go through that.

Thank you.

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