

University of Iowa Football

Media Conference

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Coach Kirk Ferentz

Press Conference



Our captains this week are Joe Evans, Jay Higgins, Luke Lachey and Cade McNamara.

Utah State is coming off a 6-6 season, Coach Anderson's second year at Utah State, and prior to that he had a really good strong run at Arkansas State, did an outstanding job.

If you look at what he did going to Utah State, they were coming off a 1-5 season in the pandemic year, and he and his staff led the team to 11 wins two years ago and then came back 6-6. He's had success everywhere he's gone.

It's always unique the first games because of the new players. You're not quite sure about the roster and all that type of thing. But especially with the portal and this new era, I think those numbers are probably higher than ever. That part is a little bit of a wildcard.

But the bottom line is if you look at their staff, there's a lot of DNA there that's pretty consistent -- I know they lost their offensive coordinator, but that is what Coach Anderson specializes in. He's going to take that over. I think we have a decent feel at least what that looks like.

Same thing with the defensive coordinator. You go back through his career, a lot of consistency there, and same thing with the special teams coordinator.

I feel like we have an idea of what to expect schematically, but you just never know, and that's true in any first game, no matter if the whole staff had returned. You never know who people get in the off-season.

Their quarterback is a veteran player, did a nice job last year. They're an up-tempo and spread team, they are balanced run and pass. They have a good returning receiver, so he's back. Heart and soul of their defense appear to be up the middle. They have a defensive tackle and linebacker returning.

They have a good punter, and they have one guy on that blocked three punts last year, which you don't hear of that too often. We're going to give him a lot of attention and be mindful of where he is.

Then again, first games are always a little bit unique in that regard, so the big thing is for us to be on alert. We have to be ready. We have to be sound and fundamentally sound

KIRK FERENTZ: Good Afternoon. I'll say a couple words about camp, and certainly look forward to this week's game against Utah State. I think we had a productive camp, which I kind of indicated last week. The first week of school is always a challenge. A little bit different environment certainly, and different feel.

But I thought the guys did a good job, focusing basically throughout the entire camp. They showed up ready to go pretty much every day, good work ethic, good attitude, and that included last week right through the end, as well. Happy about that.

Everybody is eager to move on to the next phase right now and everybody is looking forward to being back on Duke Slater Field and having a chance to perform.

It never really gets old and it is invigorating to get into a game week and start facing the weekly challenges.

Just a couple words about our team. I think we're in a little better situation health-wise than we've been the last couple years coming out of camp. I'm happy about that.

The challenge right now is to transition into game week. It's a whole different mode of operation than what we've been doing, and trying to work through that a little bit.

Depth chart is a fluid process right now, and we have a lot of good competition going on with our guys, so we'll see what it looks like as the week goes on and check out some medical situations on top of it. We're hopefully in a good position there.

Regarding the sports wagering. Noah's appeal process is in process actually, and as I've said all along, we support him right now. Nobody is claiming that he's not guilty of certain things, but I think really what the bottom line is, we're just hoping for a reconciliation on this whole thing or reconsideration, and I'm hoping when the committee looks at it, reasonable people will reconsider the punishment. I'm anxious to hear how that turns out.



and also do a good job with our communication and try to play it out as it goes.

That's kind of the challenge right there.

I'm thrilled that the Kid Captain program continues. It's been a great partnership between the hospital and our program, so really thrilled about that. Gracelyn Springer is going to be our Kid Captain this week from Alburnett, a young lady who's been fighting cancer over the last two years, gone through extensive treatments and has been under great care there. The good news is that her cancer is now in remission, so that's great news, and we'll be glad to have her with us.

Just finish up by saying thanks in advance to our fans. Their response has been great. Sounds like ticket sales have gone well, and I know they're anxious, we're eager to see them in Kinnick. Will be great to be back in Kinnick.

I've done this for a whole now, and one thing, it never gets old. It's always exciting to have that opportunity to take the field in Kinnick and perform in front of the greatest fans in the world, so we appreciate that.

Q. How do you describe the current status for Cade McNamara and how you've seen him recover?

KIRK FERENTZ: He got hurt obviously a couple weeks ago -- everybody saw that.

It's a soft tissue issue, and he started working at the end of last week. He's been practicing. I can't put a percentage on where he's at right now.

He's been cleared medically. That's the good news. Then the thing we have to judge as we go along is how effective can he be and can he go out and perform in a way that's representative of the kind of player he is.

Looked good in practice today. It's kind of day by day. We'll see how sore he is tomorrow and see how he's feeling. Obviously we'd love to have him out there, but we also want to make sure he can perform at a high level.

Q. Would you say "questionable" is sort of the right way to describe his availability?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah. I think right now he is. I know what he wants to do. I know how he's wired, and that's part of our job, to be smart about it.

It's always tricky. We'll kind of take it day by day, see what it looks like. Again, first and foremost is what the medical people say. If he can't play, he can't play, but that hasn't

been the case.

We're going to make sure he can play effectively and make sure he can play in a way that's representative of the type of player he is.

Q. Is it the type of injury which if you play on it, it could get worse, or does he need a little bit more time to heal it?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, not do damage, otherwise they wouldn't clear him medically, significant damage. But soreness and things like that, that's probably going to be part of the equation.

There's no right answers on these, and in all due respect, just about every guy on the team that's been practicing is a little bit sore and has issues. Nobody is at full strength.

But what it boils down to is can he play effectively, and then second thing is, to your point, is that going to knock him out for three weeks if he does play. We have to be smart about that.

Q. If Deacon Hill were to start, how would you feel about that and has Joe Labas returned to practice?

KIRK FERENTZ: Regarding Deacon, a lot better than three weeks ago, two weeks ago or one week ago, and that's what camp is for to watch guys improve. If there is a blessing, when Cade was out, gave him every opportunity to work a lot.

Then Joe just returned last week, at the end of last week, so it's good to get him back out there. He looks good, and he seems like he's fully healthy now.

It would have been nice to have him the whole period, but we didn't, so he's playing catch up, but that month of December advanced him, as well, and obviously spring ball.

It's not perfect, but it's a healthy situation right now and I am impressed with Deacon and his tempo. But you have to go out there and operate to do that, and he's taken advantage of that, and he's doing a nice job so far.

Q. With Joe missing as much time as he's missed, does that mean Deacon is the guy if Cade isn't available?

KIRK FERENTZ: I'd say that's fair right now, but we'll see how the week plays out. Joe started out probably further than maybe I would have expected, and that's good news, but I'd attribute that to the work that he got last year,

especially in December.

Q. Is part of Cade playing a matter of pain tolerance?

KIRK FERENTZ: It's part of any injury, that part, but that part I'm not worried about with him because he's a pretty tough-minded guy. Just what you don't want to do is just, first of all, again, have a guy out performing where he can't perform and doesn't look about or just isn't able to get the job done, quite frankly, and that's not fair to him. It's not fair to anybody.

Then you have to consider what's it going to be like the day after, two days after, all those kinds of things.

We'll see how it goes.

Q. Did you file an appeal for the other two players who have suspensions?

KIRK FERENTZ: It hasn't been done yet. Talked to both guys. If they want to do that and go down that road, they can. I'm not sure either will. I don't want to speak for either guy, but I'm not sure they will.

In Noah's case, it's pretty obvious; they're talking about a full season. Again, nobody is in denial of what the facts are. It's just I the issue in my mind is just does the punishment fit what the violation was. Nobody is denying there was a violation. That's not the issue. But the issue is what's a just punishment, and I think that's a valid thing to think about and just give consideration. It seems like there's a common sense element that's missing right here.

Q. For those players, the Big Ten just instituted a rule where you have to release who's playing, who's not playing two hours before kickoff, will those players that are suspended be on that two-hour list that won't play?

KIRK FERENTZ: That's a good question. It's not an injury, so I don't know. That's a good question. I don't know that. I guess I have three days to find out.

Q. What are your thoughts on releasing availability?

KIRK FERENTZ: I have no problem with it at all. It's probably a good initiative. Basically that's really where players are. They're either able to go, still some question, or they're not able to go. One thing we've done the last couple years at least is I'll typically let our SID know that a guy couldn't go so there's not the rumor mill going in the social media world, like did this guy do whatever or has he got malaria or whatever it may be.

Just to put all that stuff to rest.

I'm good with it.

Q. On Saturday if you guys decide Cade won't play, would he be on the inactive list, so to speak?

KIRK FERENTZ: If two hours before we know he's not going to play, we'll put it on there. We'll follow the rules.

Q. Could he be like in an emergency situation --

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, that's a possibility, too. Probably rather not go down that road, but it's possible. I guess then he'd be in the possible category.

Q. If Cade can't go for week one, are you thinking more along the lines of having Deacon go the whole way, or as long as it's competitive, or would there be some rotation plays for some of the backups, too?

KIRK FERENTZ: First of all, we're trying to win the game, and that's paramount. That's point number one to our team is understanding no matter who you're playing -- first game you really don't know your opponent top to bottom. All I know is these guys won 11 games two years ago and they had some good games last year, too, beat Air Force who's a tough out. We have total respect for our opponent and we need that each and every year.

We had a pretty good football team in '09, and took a miracle to win that game against an FCS team. If we didn't learn that lesson as a program, I know other people maybe are a little slow on that, but it's just the nature of the game that we play. It's every week is tough.

But we're playing to win, and we're going to get the best guys out there. If Cade can play the best, he'll be out there. If he's not capable, then we'll go to the next guy, who would be Deacon right now, but we're playing everybody, and we're playing to win certainly.

Q. What led you to want and pursue Deacon Hill?

KIRK FERENTZ: It kind of happened by connection with Jon Budmayr. Jon was involved in his recruiting. We were looking to upgrade the room like we are every room that we have in the building, every position. Felt like he was a guy who could make our team better.

Obviously Spencer was out. Not going to play this year. Then we had a guy transfer out, so we had spots to fill. Good to get somebody who had some experience and somebody we had some firsthand knowledge with. So felt like that was a win-win situation.

You never know until he gets here and gets in the program, but we've been really happy with everything we've seen.

Q. What qualities struck you when you were looking into that?

KIRK FERENTZ: Size wasn't one of them. It kind of was throwing. He's the biggest quarterback I've been around, at least pound per inch. Chandler might have given him a run for the height.

But he's just a very impressive young guy. He's got a different personality, night and day between Cade, very different personality. Throws the ball extremely well.

I think with each practice, we've seen him gain confidence. There's a big difference there. Cade played a lot. Deacon didn't. But felt like we knew enough about him, and it's always nice to have some inside information if people have worked with somebody, and we benefitted from that, I believe.

Q. When you say night-and-day personality, what does that mean?

KIRK FERENTZ: They're just different guys. Cade is a pretty aggressive, more outspoken, and Deacon is a little bit more reserved, and a little quieter in terms of his personality, demeanor.

But it's like everything in life. All kinds of people have different personalities, but can you be good at what you're doing, and thus far we've been really pleased with what we've seen with Deacon.

Q. How long was Joe Labas out for and what has been the process of him getting back?

KIRK FERENTZ: It was soft tissue. It started mid-July, I think, so it was a significant issue. But Mother Nature takes its course. That's how it goes.

Q. How have you seen him get back into the flow of things?

KIRK FERENTZ: It's been great. He couldn't really throw the ball because of what he had. It was kind of painful for him. But he's been throwing for a couple weeks now and now he's able to move around a little bit, so he's done good, and that's just maturity and being around.

Actually last December was a total initiation for him and our offense other than spring ball, preseason. He had gone through the whole entire season without practicing in our

system, and now he's had the benefit of playing a game and doing that, both in December and the spring. He's a much better player than he was say last Dec. 1.

Q. As far as the quarterback room, have you seen the offense take the steps you have envisioned, like you needed to see them?

KIRK FERENTZ: I think probably the one or two words I'd use would be maturity or experience, and they usually go hand in hand. That's a big difference. You don't have to be a math major. We had one scholarship receiver at this time last year out there on the field.

You pull Linderbaum out of the equation the last two years, we haven't had a lot of experience up there, where you think about a guys like Colby had 11 starts going into last year, but there were a true freshman where he was just trying to survive, in all fairness to him.

It's a night-and-day situation right now. We have a lot more experience and a little bit more maturity in both those groups.

It's a big part of putting a successful team together. We're not as experienced in all positions as we'd like right now, but it's something you're working on, just like talking about Joe Labas. That's what practice and reps are for.

Deacon the same thing; the guys are out there, if they're doing a good job and practicing the way they need to, and I think a lot of guys have done that this summer, this August, so I think we've probably moved along a little bit. That's the biggest difference right now, maturity and experience.

Q. When you look at the offensive line, according to your chart, you had Colby moved to right guard where he started 11 games two years ago, but DeJong has been all over the place, started at four different spots, at left guard. Is there a reason why one might fit a little bit better on one side of the ball?

KIRK FERENTZ: Connor could go left or right but we're going to keep him at guard. We're not going back to that experiment. I took ownership for that. We'll keep him at guard, and he can go left or right. That's not a big deal.

Nick is probably the unique one in the group right now where I think he can go in or out and probably play all four positions. We even put him at center. That's kind of the deal.

Elsbury can probably play both guards and center.

We're not messing with Mason. We're not messing with

Gennings; he's staying there. Sink or swim, he's staying there, won't go to guard. He has played guard.

I think we've kind of got a rotation. Nick is kind of the swing guy, if you will, and then Rusty Feth can play both guards and probably could play center in a pinch, too.

I feel good.

I mentioned Chaplin last week -- but it's an illustration of this maturity part. He came here as a guy nobody thought much of, and last year wasn't bad, but this camp he looks like a legitimate Division I football player out there.

He may be our second center. I don't know, we're keeping an open mind just letting guys practice and seeing how they do.

Q. We've seen a month of Nick Jackson now. What are your observations on him?

KIRK FERENTZ: Pretty much like what we had hoped for. He's just a really mature guy, operates at a high level. He's playing catch-up, and there's a lot of communication that goes on. Looks like we don't do a lot on defense, but there's a lot of communication, a lot of intricate little things, and the linebackers are the switchboards for that, so he's really been playing catch-up on that since he wasn't here last spring.

But he works at it. He's got a lot of pride, and he's an intelligence guy, so he really works at it.

I think he's getting it down, and he's versatile, too. He can play both positions, inside, middle linebacker and Will.

I think he's everything we hoped for and he's also assumed a leadership role on top of that.

Q. Speaking of the offensive line, what have you seen from Mason Richman the last three years?

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, seeing a guy on a journey and it was a battle of survival year one. Last year better than, but also he was playing with an injury last year which required surgery in January, so now he missed the whole spring, but was back at it in June.

Now he's fully healthy, got two years of experience, and he's practiced at a really high level. Just mentioned about Nick taking a leadership role, and Mason has done the same thing.

Appreciate that, but he's also earned the right to do it, too, because he's been out there and competed hard and done

a lot of good things.

Just really happy with his progression so far.

Q. You mentioned going out and playing or going out and competing doesn't get old. What do you remember from the week leading up to your first season as Iowa's head coach?

KIRK FERENTZ: Not much. I'm reminded of a Bruce Nelson line because I asked him, who was our left tackle in that game. He got a walk-on award at one of the I-Clubs and was playing against Vanden Bosch from Nebraska, and he was at 250.

I remember we were driving in the car, and I asked him, must have been a tough night Friday night going to bed that night think about Vanden Bosch and first starting college football. He was a walk-on redshirt freshman who we had moved from tight end the spring before. He said, I slept like a baby. I was like, really? He goes, yeah. I didn't sleep the week before that but slept like a baby the night before.

That's probably the boat I was in, too, but yeah, a little bit better now.

Q. You were referencing the '09 game. It's easy on the outside after one game to have some bold conclusions, but how much do you take away from a week 1 game considering the larger body of work ahead?

KIRK FERENTZ: You have to keep things in perspective. Anything can happen in any game, first of all. Certainly first games that's the case. Whether we win or lose, it's one game, and it's a long season. A lot of things can happen the next three plus months.

Whether you win a squeaker, lose a squeaker, get blown out or blow somebody out, it's one game and you have to move on, and you move on fast, and hopefully learn from it.

But obviously it's more fun to win, and we were very fortunate that day.

But I don't think anybody that day would have predicted we were going to win the Orange Bowl that year.

That's a good lesson for everybody. It's a long season, and a lot of things can happen. There's a lot of twists and turns, and the more you realize that and just appreciate that, the better off you'll be.

Q. You mentioned receivers, and last year you had one scholarship guy the first game. Is that maybe your most improved position group going into this season just in terms of bodies and numbers?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, it's like a neck-and-neck race with the offensive line and the receiver position. The problem last year is our lack of experience up front and maturity, physical maturity, and you can't microwave that. I've said that many times.

Then the receiver position, we were out of guys for injuries and transferring, all that. There's not much you can do. You play with what you have and that's how it goes. Sometimes the cards you get dealt are a little bit challenging.

But the guys worked hard. I'm not knocking anybody's effort last year, but that was the reality of it all.

I think we're in a little better situation right now. You have a healthy Nico Ragaini. You have a healthy Diante Vines. Start with those two guys. Two pleasant surprises from the month of August are Seth Anderson, who we thought we liked when he got here, and we've liked him as a person. No knock, but we couldn't evaluate him as a player because he wasn't out there in the spring.

So now he's had a good August, and boy, he's a very impressive young guy.

Then Kaleb the same way. He wasn't here last spring, so not much to say on that one. But I'm excited about him and the fact, too, that he's only played receiver one year, so the growth potential is really -- and Seth is a young guy. He's not like a fifth-year or sixth-year guy.

Both those guys have the potential to really improve and climb if they keep practicing like they have. Alec Wick got back. He's back practicing, so that's a positive. I'm leaving somebody else out. Anyway, we're a lot further down the road than we were a year ago.

Q. What are your thoughts on the new clock?

KIRK FERENTZ: Not many. I'm eager to see how much it affects us. But the idea is to shave a couple plays off and make the TV time shorter, I think. The easiest part to start with is just cut four minutes off halftime. Nobody would feel it except I've got a feeling the events people wouldn't be happy. Probably not going to win that battle because that never comes up in meetings. It's always about can we do this, can we do that. Whatever.

Q. Is the question with Cade how effective he can be?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah.

Q. Do you have a threshold on effectiveness? Does he have to be 100 percent Cade McNamara, or can he be 95 percent Cade McNamara or 90 percent?

KIRK FERENTZ: I've never been with him during a game, so it's hard to quantify that a little bit as a coach.

I guess what I mean by that, play in a representative way -- if guy can't throw the ball the way he's supposed to or needs to, that's not helpful. Always worried, too, about can a guy escape a little bit or -- and I don't know how good he'll be if the pocket is closing in just throwing it out of bounds and we'll either punt it or take our chances on the next play. Those are the things that we've got to figure out.

He's got to be able to move and be effective that way because it's hard to be perfect offensively. It's impossible.

Q. Is Gennings Dunker your starting right tackle at this point?

KIRK FERENTZ: Right now he is, yeah.

Q. What did you like from him? I know that was a little bit of an experiment.

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, he got thrown out there. I think he had maybe five, six days in the spring where he practiced. Even when he was doing things wrong, he was actually being pretty effective, so that kind of intrigued us, and hopefully he's doing more things right now than he was back then, just little technique things and things that make you be a bit more proficient.

He's starting to really learn a little -- I'm sure you've seen he's -- he's still a young guy. If you think about how much he's been on the field during his three years on campus, it's a pretty small window. He's had a lot of injuries, and I can't remember if he got COVID or not, but he hasn't been out there enough to -- so that's the race he's running right now is just getting used to -- he's certainly strong enough and all that stuff. He's aggressive. But just learning how to play, that's a big challenge for him right now, but he's doing a good job.

Q. With Noah's situation, it seems like Aaron might be somebody you need to step up --

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, he's done that. He's started that. He's the one guy last spring, I made the comment -- I don't remember many guys in their first year that have been -- he just practices at a really high tempo for a guy his size.

It's an unusual trait.

Last spring I was just impressed with the velocity he comes off with. He's still got to learn how to play. I'm not minimizing that. So it's not like he's out of place, I guess, with big guys, with the varsity.

He's done a good job in August, so obviously these last three plus weeks, four plus weeks have really helped move him forward as a football player, and Yahya Black has done a good job, and the other guys, Jeremiah Pittman, has really improved. A year ago, not even -- he was a scout team guy, but right now he's a legitimate player.

That's what you're hoping for. You're hoping to see young guys develop, and all those guys I just mentioned have done that.

Q. With Aaron, what have you seen when you recruited him?

KIRK FERENTZ: I'd almost use the "freak" word. I don't want to do that. But he came in here with like 60 credits. He's graduating next spring as a second-year guy. He'll be teaching when some other guys are coming to school. Probably be teaching here.

He's a focused, driven guy, wrestled, played basketball, four or five sports in high school. He's just a guy who achieves. He really has a great attitude and works hard. My sister could have figured that one out. My sister Jewel. I'll mention her. She could have figured that one out.

Q. In the spring the talking point was about Brian's contract, 25 points per game. Has that come up at all among the players? Did you address it with them, or did it just never come up?

KIRK FERENTZ: Non-discussion point. They may talk about it. You'd have to ask them. We're worried about winning. That's what we're worried about, just like we always have been.

Q. In talking to Brian this summer, as well, you think of the Purdue game, 24-3, or the Wisconsin game where you could have kicked a field goal if you had wanted to, I suppose. Is that kind of the bounce back to what's 25 points versus 24, winning --

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I just mentioned my sister Julia. I'll mention my wife, Mary, who's a pretty wise person, and she said this about 40 years ago. I don't know. She goes, seems like if you win, everything works out pretty well. That's kind of been a guiding principle. It's not all about winning, but it is a barometer.

Just seems like if you're successful enough over the long haul, good things happen, and if you're not, it's not so good.

That's kind of where our focus has always been is just trying to win games, and it's as simple as that. I think part of our problem, probably just one person's opinion, sometimes people don't like how we win, but to me the objective is to win.

I do know this, although it may not be true with the committees they've got now, but at the end of the year, they really don't care who you beat or how you beat them, when they start thinking about what bowl game you're going to or if you're going to be in the playoffs or the Big Ten Championship, all those kinds of things.

Every game is different. Every situation is different and unique, and the objective is to find a way to the winner's line. Bowl game, both teams playing without a quarterback that ever played, so what's the best way to get there.

In essence we protected the ball, they didn't, and we walked off with a victory.

You just try to map out the best plan to win, and that's really what -- that's my job as a head coach is to make sure everybody in this program, they need to benefit from that kind of thinking, and that's -- otherwise I'm not being fair to our players or our coaches or our fans for that matter.

Q. When it comes to style of play, it's almost an outlier in this day and age to just win this way versus some people that may give up 35 points a game but scores 60 and they're hailed as a great team --

KIRK FERENTZ: I've got two thoughts on that. One of my favorite all-time wins here was 6-4 at Penn State.

That was the best way to win that day and taking the safety. I had a feeling like they weren't going to move the ball on us, and they threw it right back to us after the punt there coming off the 20.

You try to figure out what's going on that day, and you play to that end.

Then I think probably the most important step, if you want to rank coordinators, would be wins per coordinator, like how many wins does this guy average when he's the coordinator.

I'm trying to think, I've been around five coordinators here, if you include assistant, and three defensive coordinators

during my 34 years. Those guys all had pretty good numbers in terms of the amount of wins they were involved in as coordinators.

That should be a coordinator's job, too, what's best for winning, whether it's blitz or don't blitz or all that stuff. It's got to be in the back of everyone's mind, how can we win this game collectively.

Q. Your offense typically leans a lot on the tight end position. They're more of a known quantity than wide receiver, offensive line. What have you seen out of them and what's impressed you the most with that group?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I like the group. Lachey really started to do that last year, really took off and ascended, especially when Sam was out, and he just really took off. We kind of hoped that was going to be the case when we recruited him. Thought he had a lot of upside.

Erick All has demonstrated success on the field in Big Ten play. Addison has really come on as a young guy. Good job last year. He continues to climb.

Then Steven Stilianos, he's not the same as VanValkenberg, but was kind of quiet last year, and this year he's done a nice job spring and all August.

Feel like we have four pretty good guys there, and that's a good healthy number. We'll keep utilizing those guys, but we have a little bit more help on the outside than we've had.

Q. It's going to be another sort of heavy dose of multi-tight end --

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, talk about evaluating coaches, like if our two tight ends aren't on the field a fair amount of time, that would be maybe cause to start wondering about what's going on here. I'm not comparing them to Fant and Hockenson, but if you got two high caliber guys, you want to use them. We want to use our best guys at every position.

Q. Did you get a look at the intro video yesterday with Ricky Stanzi?

KIRK FERENTZ: I have not seen it, but I saw Ricky when he was here cutting it. I can imagine pretty animated and pretty good.

Q. What do you remember when you hear that name, his impact? It's been 15 years since he graduated.

KIRK FERENTZ: Talking about personalities of players and all that, and Ricky had a knack of big personality. The most important thing is players are going to follow him, and Ricky had a personality very different than Brad Banks, who I understand is going to be here this weekend.

Brad was one of the quietest guys I've ever been around, and yet people just gravitated toward him. They really followed him. The same thing with Stanzi, Tate. The guys that have won here, they've had that attribute, that quality. Guys are drawn toward them, and they follow them, and they believe in them, and however you get that across, whatever your personality is, that's what's important.

Ricky was a really unique guy. Interesting fact, it was like he had to throw a pick six to get warmed up, and fortunately we're good enough to overcome it usually, but yeah, just a great performer, great guy.

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