

University of Iowa Football

Media Conference

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Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Coach Kirk Ferentz

Postgame Press Conference

Indiana 20, Iowa 15

KIRK FERENTZ: Today was a really tough competitive game between two very good and very determined teams. Hats off to them. They did a great job finishing out.

I thought our week of preparation was as good as we have had. Saw growth during the week, so pleased to see that. Thought we fought extremely hard and I thought our guys really competed hard.

Same thing about our opponent.

It was one of those types of games in conference play that you're going to get. I think there were a lot of good responses out there. Certainly, some miscues that hurt us and put us in a tough position. The start of the game wasn't exactly how we scripted it out.

But the guys responded. They came back and responded. We saw that as the whole game went on.

There were some things, believe it or not, that I thought we did better. That's encouraging. Then, we left the door open with some mistakes. The turnover -- we're minus one on the season right now turnover-wise, five games into it. Hoping we would be a little higher than that right now.

That was a factor today. Missed a couple opportunities. Overall, everybody understands winning is really hard in college football. It's hard in this conference. Always has been.

It's a week-to-week thing. You can't compare weeks. Everybody likes to do that. But you can't do that. It's week to week each and every time.

Big thing right now, sitting here with 3-2 record, we have two one-score losses, and we have seven games to go. The thing I shared with the players in the locker room that there is a lot of football ahead. Not as much as we had a couple weeks ago, obviously, but a lot of football left.



Big thing I'm sure is we have really good people here, good staff, and quality players. These guys are great to work with. They have improved. One thing I'm encouraged about is we will improve as long as we keep our attitude where it needs to be.

We've shown some growth. I really believe we have a lot of room for more improvement, and that's the work we need to do forward. When you win, everybody is happy and when you lose things get a little bit negative. The bottom line is we'll determine what the season will be. That is our job to do that and our players, it starts with them.

Based on what I've seen, I'm not worried about that. But we'll feel bad tomorrow; get back on our feet Monday; and hopefully use this week really wisely. Then we'll turn our attention to the next three-game block and go in there.

Q. Defensive line obviously got a lot of pressure on Mendoza. Got an interception, so some strides defensively. Tackling seemed like -- was it bad angles, just not gang tackling? What's the analysis with just the tackling in general today?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, if there is one thing defensively to me, after this block of games, yeah, we have to get better at tackling. I got to see the tape from today, but it seems to me like a lot of it is more the inexperienced guys, guys who haven't had as much game competition, and typically bad angles or where your eyes are. Those are the two things that really -- thinking about one play here in the second half where we were outside in on a guy instead of being inside out.

You just open the door for some bad things. That's one thing we knew coming in this game. Indiana had a lot of yards after catch last week against their opponent -- it's one thing to give up a completion. That will happen. You can't make the bleeding worse. Got to get it stopped.

We had a couple of those today, too. They have some good players and those guys did a good job. Yeah, tackling is definitely on the list.

Q. First thing, any update on Mark?

KIRK FERENTZ: Other than he came out of the tent and you guys all saw that. Didn't feel like he could decelerate.



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That was the issue. Some positive feedback, but we'll get testing tomorrow and see where it's at and we'll know more.

Q. Second thing: Did you see maybe what went ary on that last field goal attempt?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I don't know. It's a play hopefully we can make. I don't want to say routinely. I hate that word in football.

It's a play we can make. He made some great field goals also. So, just one of those things. We have to work through it. I'm sure he will.

Q. What did you see from Koen Entringer today? Couple big stops on fourth downs. Overall analysis of him today?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, one thing we just talked about missed tackles, he had a few missed tackles this season. He's exactly what I'm describing. He is a guy who plays with such high effort. He is such a high caliber guy. Personally just an unbelievable human being. Really good leader.

But that is where the game experience -- because he does go full speed. That's not an issue. He located a few of his tackles, which was good to see, especially on fourth down stuff.

He's going to be a heck of a football player for us and just has to have a little bit more control there. But that's experience, and no question in my mind he'll be just fine. Yeah, really good fourth down stops by our defense. Really impressive.

Q. Wanted to ask about Hank. Tough spot for him to go in there. How do you think he handled that situation?

KIRK FERENTZ: He seemed poised and alert and aware and all that type of deal. I'm sure he wishes he could have done a little bit better and maybe we need to help him a little bit more. Have to see the tape.

But he's a high caliber guy and he's been practicing really well. You know, feel really good about that group. This is the experience that will help him as we move forward, too.

Q. Third and five, if you -- I know you know if you get a first down there, you basically clinch the game.

KIRK FERENTZ: Yep.

Q. Did you like the play call there was that something you guys executed well in practice and just didn't go well this time?

KIRK FERENTZ: Tim called a good game; they made it hard. Bigger picture, they made it hard for us to run today. Credit to them. It was a good strategy on their part, and really wasn't until in the first half where Kamari popped that one in front of our bench there where we finally got a little traction. They did a good job clogging run lanes and all that stuff.

Tim called a really good game. No fault with our strategy; just execution has to be a little bit better. Yeah, sure, you would like to get the first down. If you do, hopefully the game is over, but you still got to convert the rest of the play. Score a touchdown or get a field goal.

Obviously in that situation if we can get a touchdown and burn the clock that would've been perfect. Didn't work out.

Q. The end of the first half when they got the ball back, went really quickly down the field and got the field goal.

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah.

Q. What did you see go wrong in that sequence?

KIRK FERENTZ: Two things: Gave up a big completion there and then tacked on a personal foul. Yeah, one in itself would've been bad enough, but then to double dip it really hurt.

I still have not seen that play. Didn't see it on the replay board because things were happening fast and I just asked our staff about it. They had it on the iPads there.

They thought it was ticky-tack, but you just can't take that chance. College football is like the NFL where they're trying to protect quarterbacks, so you have to be smarter than that.

I think that was a younger player, too, who is not really game-experienced. Live and learn from that. Hate to give up an easy three points. Thought we had a chance to shut the door at the start of that whole possession.

Q. At the end of the fourth quarter when it was clear Indiana was going to play the kneel-down straight, what did you tell the defense and have you been a part of a finish like that before?

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I mean, two things: You almost hate to do that because to just prolongs their chance to feel

good, which is kind of crappy. But I'm old enough to remember Joe Pisarcik, too. Maybe there is a tooth fairy out there somewhere. You just hope maybe something would happen. To their credit they handled it well and that's it.

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