

# TransPerfect Music City Bowl: Missouri vs Iowa

Monday, December 30, 2024

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Nissan Stadium

## Iowa Hawkeyes

## Head Coach Kirk Ferentz

### Postgame Press Conference



Missouri 27, Iowa 24

THE MODERATOR: Coach Ferentz will make a couple of remarks and then we'll open it up for questions.

KIRK FERENTZ: Obviously disappointed with the outcome. That was not our intention obviously coming here.

We're competing tonight. I think our guys played with good effort. I thought they prepared and practiced well getting ready for the bowl game. Bottom line, it's what I told them in the locker room, we didn't play well enough to expect to win against a good team, a ranked team. So it's kind of the bottom line.

I think three keys to me that made a difference... penalties, probably had a few more than we're used to. One costly one there certainly in the second half. That was a judgment penalty, and that's disappointing.

Turnover take-away margin, we came up short in that, and that's not good for any football team. Certainly not us. Same thing with third down conversions. I think probably the biggest differentiating thing there I would point out, we were clean in the first half turnover-wise, and then had the one pick. It came at a bad time. There's never a good time, but we had the ball at midfield.

Then the penalties... or the third down situation. We were 5 out of 6 first half, and that was a point of emphasis. Sorry, 4 out of 5 first half. Then we were up 6 of 13 overall, which you can do the math on that. That's 1 and 8 in the second half. That's pertinent.

These guys are a highly-ranked team penalty-wise and a highly-ranked team turnover and take-away margin. They've done a good job on third down conversions and third down defense. I think in the first half we did a good job of minimizing those yardages, if you will, and were able

to stay on the field a little better. Obviously it didn't happen the second half. It became a big deal as well.

It's disappointing. In the final minutes we just didn't have what it took to get it done, so that's disappointing. Give credit to Missouri. They played a really good football game. They're a good team, and we give them credit.

Two things in the locker room basically is just told the team, I appreciate their effort, and we just didn't play well enough to win. Then, most importantly, probably is just thanking our seniors. We had a great group of 20-plus seniors that did a great job for us during their entire careers. Some have been five or six years. Others one or two. You know, guys that transferred in. So each and every one of them did a great job exemplifying what it is to be a good student-athlete, good college football player.

So I really appreciate their efforts. Obviously I wish them the best, and we'll do all we can to help them as they move forward.

A lot of good things this season. A lot of really positives, and this one is going to sting for a little bit.

I'll throw it out for questions.

**Q. Looking at the last drive it started with a sack. Obviously you don't want that to happen. Can you walk through why you guys -- I mean, they went interception, three and out, three and out, four and out to finish the game. How did the offense sort of fall apart a little bit, so to speak, and also it seemed like you were really mad at the officials towards the very, very end. Can you...**

KIRK FERENTZ: Look, on the board it looked like one of their guys had his hand in the neutral zone, but you know, that wasn't the deciding factor in the game certainly.

So there really are two halves. I think the third down conversions are probably part of that turnover. We missed an opportunity there on the turnover. We got the ball midfield and gave it back to them in good position.

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One thing I left out, their field goal kicker has been really consistent 25 and in. He hasn't been so consistent ball outside the 30, and he nailed two of them. Today, so we give him credit as well.

Yeah, kind of a tale of two halves. We had some rhythm and did some good things in the first half, and second half we had a hard time getting that done especially in the critical downs.

**Q. You had a fourth and two at the plus-40 in the first half. I'm assuming you probably would say Drew Stevens is one of your better players. I know it's a long field goal, but with a three-point difference, do you regret not sending him out there or keeping the offense on the field in fourth and two?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I don't play that game. I mean, we at that time thought it was the best thing to do. Any time we do that, we're playing for field position. We have a pretty good punter, and we do a pretty good job of covering.

So we are trying to get that field position, and that only works if you get a stop down at that end. Hopefully you get the ball back in good field position. So, yeah, we thought about it a little bit, but that was that was a better play at that time in the game.

**Q. Coach, Brendan Sullivan started the game 6 of 6 and had that touchdown, and then obviously things went sideways in the second half. How would you evaluate his performance overall?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You probably said it right there in a nutshell. I thought he played really well in the first half. We had a rhythm; he had a rhythm.

I don't mean this in a critical way. One of Brendan's strengths is his competitiveness. He really cares. Not suggesting other quarterbacks don't or our other ones that we've had don't, but he's really wound tight.

So part of the challenge for you him playing -- this is not just quarterbacks, but anybody. You know, you have to be able to bottle that enthusiasm and the energy sometimes and make it work for you and not against you. I think when he gets running hot a little bit sometimes, it kind of gets out of whack there a little bit.

Saw some improvements certainly, some progress. You know, he went out there and just played as hard as he possibly could. He'll keep improving. We're optimistic about that, and he's a tremendous young person.

**Q. The late hit penalty there on Schulte, kind of what**

**were your thoughts on that one?**

KIRK FERENTZ: On the sideline you're talking about? Yeah. Yeah, I mean, it's probably going to get a call. That guy wasn't standing there. You have to use good judgment. You just try to use good judgment and don't want to give the officials a chance to make a call like that.

Any time you're on the boundary, you have to be really careful I think. It is what it is, and that's uncharacteristic certainly of Quinn. He's been an outstanding player for us.

**Q. Thoughts on Kamari and Jaz and the way they stepped in in the run game?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I apologize too. I forgot TJ yesterday. Yeah, the three of those guys have all been really good. Obviously TJ has been working at receiver, but he's a guy we think can do both.

So I thought all three of them really did a nice job. It doesn't seem like it's too big for them at all, and I think they're going to have get a chance to go out there and play. All three of them are different type players, but they're all really good football players. They're really outstanding young guys. They're fun to be around and fun to see at practice and all that type of thing.

So, yeah, just happy with the way they stepped in there, and Tyler Elsbury wasn't perfect, but yeah, he stepped in with Logan being out and did a lot of good things too. So that's part of football. Yeah, really proud of those guys especially.

**Q. It seemed like a tough day in the secondary from our perspective. Kind of reminiscent of the Michigan State game maybe a little bit?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah. Not the same, but similar, yeah.

**Q. What would you say the issue was today? Xavier got benched at one point.**

KIRK FERENTZ: I'm not sure the irony of it is like our first possession, the quarterback had nowhere to go with the ball. It took us a while to get there, but we were wired in.

Credit to them. They did a great job with their schemes and made it tough on us. Their quarterback -- I mentioned the field goal kicker, he hasn't been consistent from distance. Their quarterback has played really well for two years now. It's no accident they've won whatever they've won. Now I think 21 games in two years.

A lot of that starts with quarterback play. He played really



well, and their receivers did a good job too. Maybe a drop or two in there, but they were tough to cover.

**Q. Uncharacteristic for you talking about the ten-point lead blown here or ten-point lead blown -- I think it's 10 against UCLA and 13 against Iowa State. What was it about this year where that seemed to be a shortcoming for you guys?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I think each of them are different discussion probably. Maybe the most similar would be the last two. Just some of the things we talked about offensively first half versus the second half I think popped up in both of those. At least from my vantage point. Sometimes that's going to happen.

If you get in a game like that, then you're going to have to come up with some stops too. If the offense isn't doing it and, conversely, if we're struggling defensively, it sure helps if you move the ball and get some points. We didn't do either of those well enough today.

Every day is a different discussion, but you know, certainly if we want to be a 10-win team or 11-win team like our opponent, you have to do a better job in those. Certainly when you have a lead -- I think there was a stat I read earlier in the year that was kind of unbelievable when we had even a seven-point lead, I think it was, our record is pretty damn good. We kind of squelched that one unfortunately.

We'll go back to work, but just, again, really proud of our guys.

Thank you.

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