

November 23, 2013



An interview with:

COACH FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: I think the biggest thing, I think we grew up a little bit today. So some of the younger guys caught up to the seniors a little bit, and that was good to see.

Q. The deficit, Coach, at halftime, did you feel it was more correctible mistakes than being outplayed?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I don't want to say mistakes totally, but we made it hard on ourselves. Any time you turn it over a couple of times, which we did, give them the short field, which we did, that really made it tough. So we were doing some good things, but not enough.

Q. (No audio)?

COACH FERENTZ: I think during the course of the year they've really grown. I think our front guys have done a good job. They're working hard, they're digging hard, and for the most part did a pretty good job of containing today which we struggled with a year ago at this time. That was good to see, and our linebackers have been playing super all along. The secondary I thought played really aggressively too and that was outstanding.

Q. Coach, people are wondering why you couldn't sustain good first halves in the second half. This is two weeks in a row you've come out and played well in the second half. Is that a sign of maturity? What is that?

COACH FERENTZ: I hope it is. I think our whole team grew during the second half today for sure. I don't want to say we were embarrassed, but I think we knew we could play better offensively certainly in that second half. Knew we were going

to have to, you always want to, but the guys really put their foot on the gas. And probably the best thing about it is a lot of the guys made really good efforts to help us.

C.J. made some really good plays, gave us a heck of a spark after not only making the tough catch, but getting the run after the catch on that one. Rudock got us in a great play on that 3rd and 9, 3rd and 10 in front of our bench where he handed it off on the left boundary there, and that might have been as big a play as there was in the game. Just a lot of good things that happened.

Q. Talk about that third-down play at the end there, Jake to C.J. and also the decision to call that play?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we felt like it was pretty safe, first and foremost. I was going back and forth on the phones with the defense and offense. By the time I got to those guys, that was one of the things I asked them, 'what are we thinking on third down, if we get to it?' It was first down at that point. They had already talked about it, so that was their feeling.

I'm not sure which guy, but those guys all work great together, so does the offensive staff pulling that call out. It was a great execution, obviously. Boffeli got out there and escorted and made a great catch by C.J.

I don't want to say it's a riskless play. If it's not there, you throw it out of bounds, but really well-executed and big, big play. Nice way to end the game.

Q. Had to be a gutsy drive late in the game against this wind and cold to get in the field goal?

COACH FERENTZ: We thought we were going to have the wind with us in the third quarter. That's what they did last week. So that's a choice you make. So as a result we knew we were going to have to drive it one of the quarters and work into

the wind. So that was a great drive certainly, and that third down call of Jake's or the check was a big, big play there. Can't say enough about Mike Meyer. He was not having a great day, and we didn't get the one down on the second one.

We've missed a few field goals historically from where he kicked that last one, and we've had some bad moments on that right hash in there tight. He nailed it when we needed it. So really I never had any doubt. Mike's such a tremendous guy. So really happy for him as well.

Q. When you lost the turnover battle 4 to 1, where were you able to make up for that?

COACH FERENTZ: Started with the defense. The defense kept us alive. It's just not a good formula. I don't want to try that again because we probably dodged a bullet on that one. Typically you're not going to win when you lose that lopsidedly in the turnover battle.

Q. That one turnover you got there at the end, just being able to force a ball out, that came at a huge time for you?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we were hoping to go get a couple today, somehow, some way. It couldn't have come at a better time, obviously. Then the offense did something with it afterwards. But, again, our defense played aggressively all day. That was just the byproduct of a couple guys playing hard there.

Q. What is the situation in your back field right now?

COACH FERENTZ: Healthy other than Macon Plewa couldn't play today, and hope to get him back here mid-week. But, you know, I don't think James played either or LeShun Daniels. But the other three guys did, and they all contributed and did a good job.

We're totally comfortable with LeShun, as well. So it's compared to last year, it's a lot better, kind of like our containing the quarterback is a lot better too.

Q. (No microphone)?

COACH FERENTZ: No, no. It's just the guys are kind of playing it by ear. Mark there at the end was running hard. He looked like Mark Weisman of old a little bit. That's a pleasing sight for a head coach on a sideline, I can tell you that.

Q. Running back Cox made a couple of big plays. One reception, one great block on that last series. Can you talk about his play?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, today is the day for the seniors. But our two fullbacks, Cox and Plewa, a year ago they were on the scout team playing defense. Just good guys on the team. They have done such a good job. Fullback is one of those positions that nobody cares about too much, but we sure do. They just do a great job. We had that same play that Adam opened in the corner and made a good play, No. 6 tipped it or he might have gone on that one too.

I can't say enough about both those guys. Macon couldn't go today, but Adam, they're just great young guys.

Q. Great returns from Cotton today.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we've been struggling there too a little bit, and couple real nice ones, and it's a shame we couldn't get points out of the one right before the half. But it was a great effort on his part, and he's getting good support from the other guys.

Q. Talk about doubling your win total from a year ago. How did the program get here from there?

COACH FERENTZ: Well, we've been taking it a step at a time, a week at a time. It all started right after the season when we met. We figured we'd get plenty of suggestions, plenty of critiques from the outside, so we didn't spend too much time on that. But our attitude is we're going to go back to work and try to do what we do, do it better, do it with more quality, and just see if we couldn't improve.

Again, I've said it many times, I continue to give to credit to our senior class. They've done a wonderful job, and our juniors have been great too. We have a lot of guys that act like seniors in that junior class. They've set the tempo.

It's one thing to walk into a meeting and talk about what we're supposed to do, but to win and to be a good team, it's all about the players taking and going with it. And this team has had ownership. They've been really committed. They've worked hard. That's probably the reason I'm happiest that we won today. It was a nice payback for all the things that they've done where people don't see the things that they do and the hard work they put in and all of that. I know their

players do the same thing, but it's all about the players, I guess, is what I'm trying to say. It's all about the older players showing the younger guys the way. Can't say enough about these seniors and juniors, they've done a good job and stayed the course.

Q. C.J. was saying the linebackers kind of hold the team together. Talk about how they were all over the field today?

COACH FERENTZ: They do. I've made this comment before, so I'm repeating myself, but they really impressed me in the spring. In camp not as much, though they did the same thing in spring. But seniors can get distracted or get out there and punch the clock a little bit sometimes. Boy, those guys were going hard all the time on the practice field in spring practice.

That's what I'm talking about. That's how they practiced. So the guys that aren't as experienced, they have got to follow suit and try to keep pace with those guys. They've been a great example for the guys at other positions, and I'd say that about all of our seniors. They've really pushed hard and tried to get better.

Q. This is the first time that Iowa has defeated Michigan in Kinnick three straight times.

COACH FERENTZ: I wasn't aware of that, but I'll take it. I'm happy to hear that, thanks. Especially today, I'm glad we got the three. I was wondering about that at halftime.

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