

Iowa Head Football Coach Kirk Ferentz + Selected Players
Iowa 13 - Nebraska 10 Post-Game Comments
November 24, 2023

Kirk Ferentz - Iowa Head Coach

Opening statement

“Very very proud of our football team, everybody involved, support staff, staff and most of all players. It’s just been a great group and kind of represented that last 46 seconds or 45 seconds. These guys just don’t give up. They have a lot of resiliency, they just keep fighting and I can’t say enough about them so it’s been a lot of fun to be with these guys on a daily basis. I got an email last week, it was a positive email from someone who likes us and he described last week’s win as an ugly win and I got a chuckle out of that because Big Ten football, November football, that’s kind of the way it works. The bottom line is football isn’t a beauty contest, it’s not like gymnastics where you get style points, it’s about finding a way to be successful and finding a way to win the football game. Our guys have really done a good job of that so extremely proud of them, happy for them to get 10 wins, especially in a season it’s hard to do and to walk out of here with our seventh win in the conference and to come back with a trophy. Those things are all really good and just extremely happy for everyone involved. That’s the best part of what we do. Just a really good locker room, just happy for the guys, like a lot of our games, just a lot of good stories today. You think about (Ethan) Hurkett and (Marshall) Meeder coming up big there in the last, whatever it was there, 30 seconds. It’s just kind of the way it’s gone this year. Somebody steps up and does a great thing and just really proud of the guys so happy for them, we’re all going to enjoy this one tonight, going to enjoy it tomorrow and then we’ll get back to work on Sunday, plenty of things to clean up, obviously a lot of work to do between now and next Saturday but it’s going to be nice to enjoy this thing a little bit. One nice thing about playing Friday is there’s a little buffer there where you can actually maybe enjoy things a little bit so I plan on doing that and then we’ll get back to work here Sunday so I’ll throw it out for questions.”

On Marshall Meeder being sent out and stepping up

“Not overly surprised, you never take anything for granted, first of all, but not overly surprised. Drew (Stevens) had a tough, tough day, he’s been a really good, good performer for us, and just so consistent. The fact that two kickoffs go out of bounds is uncharacteristic. It just felt like maybe it’s best to let him sit a little bit and then the other component there was Marshall (Meeder), since he’s shown up, he’s a delightful young guy, he’s just a really good, good young guy. He’s had a great attitude since he joined us and then he’s really performed really consistently, both of those guys. I felt like we had a pretty good backup plan there. He doesn’t quite have the range that Drew has, but what you see him do every day in practice makes you feel confident. And that’s how players earn confidence, not only from coaches, but from their teammates. So, I think

everybody felt good and it wasn't exactly the cleanest field goal I've ever seen. It looked like the snap might have been a little low, Tory (Taylor) does a great job getting it down, but it made it through the uprights and that's all that counts. When he came in the locker room you just kind of see how the players feel about him, it was a pretty good ovation, kind of like the way they respond to Deacon (Hill). You can just tell they like him. But I think the reason they like him is they watch him perform in practice. He's a serious guy that cares, so that's kind of how football works. If a guy's got the right attributes and demonstrates that then people tend to have confidence in him."

On finding a way to win

"We didn't have a lot going at all the second half. A lot of struggles, a couple three and outs or three of them I guess. I guess four in a row, had the ball on the one yard line the one time so it was kind of opposite in the first half that way and sometimes football swings that way but as long as you're still playing, you figure you have a chance and then we throw the pick, I think that was our first turnover so that was a little concerning but we come back and get the pick and take it from there. Maybe it's the prettiest play of the day in my mind was when we hit that last run, it was like 12, 14 yards but it looked like 70 to me. What was it? 22, so I mean that was a pivotal play just because of the range and a little bit windy and all those kinds of things so we knew the run game we'd be looking at today, these guys have done a great job so we knew there was going to be a lot of ugly runs and that is the proper term for that. But if you stay with it, hopefully you'll pop a couple too. Leshon (Williams), another guy that's kind of a representative of our team, he had one of the worst plays of the season against Michigan State and since that time, he's just played great so really proud of the way he's bounced back and just have a lot of confidence in him."

Ethan Hurkett - Iowa Defensive Lineman

On thoughts during 4th quarter interception

"I really couldn't believe it. At first I was like, is this really coming right to me? Fortunately, it did."

On hugs with teammates after game

"That's the best part, I'd say. That's the best part of football in general. Like these are my brothers, this is my family so to be able to make a big play and then come back and celebrate with these guys is the best part."

On overcoming adversity this season

"It means a lot to me. These guys, they've been here the whole time and these coaches have allowed me to be patient and trust the process knowing one day I'll be able to come back and hopefully help this team out. So I'm very grateful."

On offense and defense closing out the game

“Yeah, I think that goes back to what Coach (Kirk) Ferentz says a lot which is that it's about complimentary football. So just everybody doing their job. And if we can all do that, it's gonna end up in a good product.”

Jay Higgins - Iowa Linebacker**On emotions of win**

“I'm just really happy with how we fought. I feel like we displayed that all year. You know, the last regular season game, I think this one's really just a definition of the Iowa football way. I felt like our team, we were looking for solutions the whole game and it helped us in the end.”

On Sebastian Castro

“When you have somebody like (Sebastian) Castro who can change the game every time he touches somebody with the ball, we're going to try to get him to the ball any time we can. And a lot of times it wasn't pressure, but just Castro being really aggressive. So I mean, we know how Castro plays. We appreciate that, and when you have a guy like that who can make plays you kind of just let him do what he does.”

On reaching 10 wins

“I mean there's not a lot of Iowa teams that can say they had a 10 win regular season with seven wins in the Big Ten, so we understood what we had at stake in this game. Nebraska, they competed. We knew we were going to get their best game because of what was at stake for them with bowl eligibility. They always play us tough so we knew what we signed up for and I feel like we did a good job understanding the emotions. Everybody came out healthy and this just gives us momentum for next week.”

Leshon Williams - Iowa Running Back**On getting the team in field goal range**

“I was just being patient, they opened a hole for me and I saw it and I had to get us to field goal range to score.”

On if he thought the offense would make it back on the field

“We have one of the best defenses in the nation. I'm confident, there could have been 30 seconds on the clock and I knew I would get back out there. I know our defense is one of the top in the nation and I know they are going to get us back out there and they are going to give us a chance.”

On getting 10 wins

“It means a lot. Not a lot of teams in Iowa history have done it, it's a good way to send

off our seniors in the regular season. We have another game coming up. We're going to get ready for that one and try to get a win out there."

Marshall Meeder - Iowa Kicker

On being ready for the final kick

"It was kind of back and forth between both teams at the end and I didn't know if we were going to get a chance. My biggest thing is just staying ready and continually getting reps and getting ready for every opportunity."

On when he knew he would be kicking

"It was mentioned to me at halftime so I kind of knew throughout that I'd be the next guy in."

On if he would have kicked from any distance

"We set our lines pregame so I had a line and Drew (Stevens) had a line so it just kind of depends on who they're putting in."

On where his mind is before kicking

"I'm really trying not to think about anything. It's the same kick I've always made, just a little more pressure so I try not to let that get to me. I've done it a million times, there's no reason to mess something up now."