

University of Iowa Football Media Conference
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Iowa City, Iowa, USA
Head Coach Kirk Ferentz
Press Conference



COACH FERENTZ: To start out, we're excited about the opportunity to go down to Orlando and have a chance to compete in the Citrus Bowl against Kentucky.

I wanted to recognize we had 10 seniors graduate this past Saturday. A significant accomplishment, certainly. For us that's been our top program goal from day one. I would assume every college football team probably has that as a team goal. It's a most significant lasting achievement any player has an opportunity to earn. And certainly every player on the football team has that opportunity. So it's something to be celebrated for sure.

Coincidentally, we had six former players back here two weeks ago -- age range from oldest guy being a guy like Chuck Hartlieb. And then maybe on the more recent side, guys like James Morris, Calvin Davis, Miguel Merrick, Champ Davis were here. So, a great

group of guys. They came back to visit with the older players about the value of their education, what it means in terms of opening up doors. To earn a degree from the University of Iowa opens doors for them, gives them opportunity.

And they gave them a lot of good life advice about what they should be thinking about at the end of their careers, academically, and how to transition out and hopefully not -- most of those guys wasted some opportunity, wasted some time. They gave them tips on how to move forward. It was a great evening and very appreciative of that.

That circles back to the guys getting their degrees and just understanding there's a lot of value in that and the opportunity it's going to create for them potentially down the road.

I would like to cite those guys. We have Luke Empen, Matt Fagan, Ryan Gersonde, Jack Koerner, Tom Kujawa, Tyler Linderbaum, Riley Moss, Spencer Petras and Bryce Schulte. Congratulations to those guys and really happy for their success that way.

Citrus Bowl, moving on to that, first and foremost, another opportunity to play together and hopefully win together. So excited about that opportunity. And kind of interesting, I know it's a hot topic coming into work this morning, that was being discussed on the college station, just about the importance and relevance of bowl games and a lot of debate about that certainly.

A lot of things out there right now competing for college football players' interest, whether it be the NIL, transfer portal, early entries, opting out of bowl games, all that type of thing. A lot of conversation about that stuff.

And the bottom line is we still think it's a relevant thing, first and foremost. To earn a bowl bid is significant. It's important to us in our program. It's important to our players and I think it's really important to our fans also. So the way we look at it, it's still a pretty big deal.

And first and foremost, again, it's one more chance to be together as a football team. Opportunity to play another game. That's always a good thing for our seniors. It is their last game. It's a real opportunity to close out their careers. And I talked to football players, each and every one of us remembers our last game as seniors in high school and last game in college. It's an opportunity that way. Certainly for them it's special.

And for the younger guys it's a chance to develop, continue to improve, develop their potentials a little further. And help them prepare for the future. It's also, program-wise, it's certainly a significant opportunity for us to grow. And what we do is extremely competitive. So it's a great, great opportunity.

I think in a nutshell the most important thing is the 2021 team has an opportunity to be together for one more time, whether it's practicing, enjoying free time. They have plenty of free time right now, classes being over, finals being completed. And then certainly as we transition into the last week, a chance to really be in a different environment, really enjoy that as a team.

I think those things are all significant and really proud of our players and very pleased for them. Hopefully we'll do a great job here the next nine days.

In terms of our preparation, as I mentioned earlier, we wanted to cut back after the championship game and, with our older guys, we were just working them very lightly the weekend after. Gave them a couple of opportunities to go out and sweat a little bit. Worked the younger guys a little bit further.

But really our thinking has been to give the guys a chance to get regrouped a little bit emotionally, physically. Also get ready for the finals. Take those. So our real heavy work, if you would, really began last Friday after the last finals were taken. We had a workout late Friday afternoon and circled back a couple of early, Sunday and Monday. Then gave the guys a little bit of a break.

And now we're back with our eyes solely on Kentucky and that is where we're at now. Our focus is strictly on the Kentucky Wildcats knowing that we've got a big challenge. They're a good football team in a tough conference, 9-3 record. Certainly that speaks well. And tremendous amount of respect for Mark Stoops and his entire staff. I think what they've done at Kentucky speaks volumes. They've done a great, great job there. Mark's done a great job providing leadership. This was another good football team that they produced. So we know we've got our hands full from that standpoint.

So that's our goal right now is to finish up our preparation, this portion of it. And then we'll take a little break here and travel down to Orlando on Sunday and then as we foresee it, it will be a normal game week next week. Hopefully everything goes smoothly that way.

I think the biggest thing, just like always, our philosophy try to get as much work done as we can here. Having this facility has been really helpful to us. It gives us an opportunity to let our guys sleep in their beds, get some work done here and quality conditions. And then spend what would be a normal game week down at the bowl site. We hope we'll be in good shape when we get on the plane so our players can enjoy what's available.

It's been a long time since we've been in Orlando but my recollection a lot of great things to do for the players. A lot for the their families, fans. I've have had a great time down there. We're excited about that part.

But first and foremost we want to be ready to play our best on New Year's Day knowing we'll have to pay a team like Kentucky.

Before I turn it over to questions, I want to take an opportunity to thank you all for your involvement. It was great to have Scott and Chad here last night to present the Duke Slater Award. A nice gesture on your part, certainly in recognition of one of our all-time great players and great human beings.

And for Kaevon Merriweather to earn it, that first time around, that was fitting, too. It was a nice event for us and we appreciate that. So tip of the hat to all of you on that one.

Q. In the sports world, COVID has been wreaking havoc. How do you make sure you don't have a situation like Texas A&M has?

COACH FERENTZ: It's really interesting right now. It's a little bit scary, because, again, my exposure to the world is driving to work and back. And I look at different websites, there was a lot of activity especially in all sports. It's been affecting a lot of people.

The disconnect for me is our world, knock on wood, we've had very little activity. So I don't know if we have to be fearful going to Florida or not. Certainly, everybody has to be smart and use as good of judgment as possible. We've been in that mode for 20 months now.

So I don't know how to answer it, actually. It's a crazy world out there right now. Hopefully we can stay above the fray. Our issues have been more flu. If you compare the two, with our population, flu has been a lot more impactful to our population than COVID.

We'll keep our fingers crossed. But it's a tough one, because what do you allow guys to do, and what don't you allow them to do? I can't see us going down there and sitting in our hotel rooms all the time. I think we'd have to ask our guys to continue to be vigilant and try to use good hygiene and be smart, stay out of crowds, all those types of things. I don't know if I have the answers there.

Q. How do you see running back usage for this game? Is Ivory your starter as indicated on your depth chart?

COACH FERENTZ: We'll see. It's kind of like that with every position depth wise. Good news, we're relatively healthy relative to where we were during the course of the year. So that's good news. Matt (Hankins) did have surgery. He's clearly out. But otherwise I think everybody has a chance to play.

And we're thin at a couple of positions right now. Today we did a little developmental work after practice. And the running backs were in because we only had three on the field anyway.

So they have their development during practice. But Ivory looks to be healthy. It's the best he's been in quite some time. That's good news. I'm eager to see Gavin and Leshon both play. They've both been doing a really good job. You've seen Gavin a little bit, not as much as Leshon. He caught my eye back in the spring. I think he's ready to play football.

I feel good with the three guys we have. Safe to say we'll play all three of them. And just hope we have all three of them by then. Hopefully nothing else happens.

Q. Is Spencer the quarterback?

COACH FERENTZ: He's back practicing now. We'll see. We'll decide that next week. But happy with both he and Alex.

Q. Spencer's full-go then?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, he looks good out there. He's come back. It's interesting, if we had to play in Week 14, it would have been a little dicy at a couple of spots. We were thin. So that's one of those things. I don't know if that's a carry-over. It's been a tough year injury wise, health wise, part of that is a spillover part of what we went through in 2020 with all the de-training, just inconsistencies of everything. I don't know if everybody has, gone through the same experience but it's been a tough year that way. Challenging year.

Playing 14, 15 games, it's a challenge with a college football team. We may be headed that way soon. But we'll see.

Q. Some head coaches in college are really critical of player leaving early, you have not been, what is your thought on that that?

COACH FERENTZ: I think some players have been critical of coaches leaving too. It's a two-way street. I kind of see this whole thing -- my first year in the NFL was 1993. And Russ Grimm, who was a player for us at Pitt, came up to me and said, this whole landscape is going to change in pro football.

What he talked about, I didn't know where he was going, but he said what I enjoyed as a player with the Hogs, being one of the Hogs in Washington, he says it's probably not going to happen much any more where you have the same group of guys together eight, nine years. My first six years or my six years in the NFL were first six years of free agency. And it really impacted that league, in my opinion. Not that I was an NFL expert, certainly walking into it.

But real quickly you learn to protect your own turf. That was the lesson that was taught not only to players but also coaches. It was really, if you could produce and have production available at the right price, you were going to be a marketable commodity. And the minute they thought they could replace you for somebody cheaper, chances are you're going to be a casualty, unless you're just one of those players, Tom Brady, Peyton Manning.

So that was 15, 20 -- that was 20-plus years ago. Now we're moving into that, I think, area, that neighborhood a little bit in college football. So I'm not casting stones against anybody. I'm not in their shoes.

But I think it goes back to what I'm saying. There's so many things with all the things going on in college football right now. There's a lot of mixed messaging. A lot of things for players to ponder and coaches to ponder probably, too. I think ultimately everybody's got to decide what's best for them.

Doesn't do anybody any good for a player to be on the team that doesn't want to be on the team and doesn't want to be involved in whatever it is you're doing 100 percent. It isn't healthy for anybody. I applaud guys for making the decisions they make. But it's a scary trend right now.

And that was on the conversation I heard coming in. You think about a New Year's Six day bowl, and we played in the Orange Bowl, not being that big a deal. It was a big deal for us. We were there twice and it's a pretty big deal.

But I heard a fan call in and talk about these "meaningless" bowl games. That's one thing this four-team playoff has created, there's no question about it. It gets stronger with each year. There's such a thirst for the playoff system expansion.

And that's the reality of college football right now that we're living in. It's 2021. We're real different than 10 years ago. And so this is going to be one of the byproducts of that, no question.

And then you've got a lot of agents out there selling young prospects that, hey, this is your time to go. And be smart about it. It's a business decision. So if it is, it is. That's what it is. But these are really interesting times in college football right now.

Q. Do you think there's any comparison to 2014 when you win a bowl game like trying to figure out your future at quarterback at the same time? We've seen Spencer, seen Alex. We're all wondering who is going to be the quarterback next year. How do you look at that?

COACH FERENTZ: You say 2-14, that caused us to really look at the world a little differently, not because of that situation, necessarily, but because there were so many games that year. I think I've told you before I evaluate teams and seasons just about how we maxed out opportunities. And we didn't do a good job that year.

I mean, there were way too many games. I'm thinking about that last game in Kinnick, it's still the poster child for all the things you can't do if you expect to win a football game and we did them all out there in that one game. Still almost had a chance to win, which was hard to believe.

But so I don't see it that way. Although, it's competition, that's how I look at it. The good news for us is we've won with both quarterbacks, feel good about those. So keep watching it, see where it goes. But I'm not too worried about it right now.

Q. Before you get too far away from the opt-out discussion, that's obviously something you haven't had to deal with a lot here. What are the conversations like with the players that are left and everything, as far as how you handle it? And again it's an uncommon thing for you guys to display.

COACH FERENTZ: Yes, the next phase might be guys who have decisions in or out. I think a lot of those guys are probably well on that path to making up their mind. All we've tried to do, and I've said it in the past, we'll try to get them good, accurate information from people that actually draft, not -- and with all due respect to the experts that prognosticate. If you go back and track those things they change a lot from January to whenever draft day is -- April, May. They're not usually accurate. In fact they're usually not accurate at all. We try to get information from people who do it for a living.

And we'll share that information with our players. It's just a matter of them weighing and measuring and figuring out what they want to do. It's like a bowl game only longer. You don't want a guy coming back for another year if his heart and mind is not totally into what we're doing here. It's not good for him. It's not good for the team.

Our guys have a real team-first mentality, the guys that are here. That's something I appreciate. For us to be successful, we really need that.

Some teams may not as much, but for us it's a key ingredient to be successful. So you try to equip people with good information. Parents as well. But also know there's another side out there that's fighting against you and they're selling things that maybe are a little more appealing, not always as truthful but they're appealing. And perception, reality, all that stuff.

So it gets pretty tough. But, again, it's the world we're living in. And if a guy's really thinking about it even semi-seriously, you have to expect the worse and be pleased if it goes the other way.

Q. Do people hear much about Riley? Riley Moss from NFL people?

COACH FERENTZ: We've pulled all that information together now. We'll supply him with that in the near future, and his parents. When we get back we'll have plenty of time for that conversation. There's no urgency. I think a player like Riley has it until February 3rd and 4th. And other guys have til mid- to late-January, so there's plenty of time. I think right now everybody is just invested in this game, and we'll go from there.

Q. When you look at quarterback, it's such a high-profile position, but you've also got to project next year, and you've been transparent with these quarterbacks because the decision you make usually impacts one staying and one going in a situation like this. How much of that is part of your consideration, not only for this bowl game but beyond as to whether they'll be here next spring, next fall?

COACH FERENTZ: We always try to be as transparent as possible with all of our players. Before I started coaching, when I was still playing, if you're going to be into coaching, eighth-graders know if they're being conned. Eighth graders aren't dumb. So, certainly college football players it's good to be obvious or direct as you possibly can in such things as the way you see them to each player.

The only thing I would add to the equation, you've got to keep in mind that players change. It's a really dynamic process in college football. The same way at any level. But I know in college football, players change a lot. A player may be improving, may be climbing the ladder, he may not be. That type of thing.

In my mind, Alex has gotten some opportunities and has done something with them. Had Spencer stayed healthy, he wouldn't have had that opportunity. But he stepped in and did a good job. We know a little bit more about him now than we did two months ago.

But Spencer has done good things too. It's a situation where two good guys -- I'm hoping that both players will grow and improve as we move forward. I'm hoping they both stay here and let the best man win, one of those types of deals. But we'll let them keep competing.

Q. Some of the players talked about atoning what happened in Indy a few weeks ago. What are your feelings on that?

COACH FERENTZ: I'd encourage our guys to move on. Win, lose or draw you've got to move on. That's life unfortunately -- and life in sports for sure. The game didn't go the way we wanted. The thing I wanted to make sure they understood, I was proud of their effort, proud of the way they competed.

I always talk to our players about, there's certain people in our lives we all want to make sure that they have respect for the way we do things. Those are the people I

encourage our players to listen to, whether it's a former coach, certainly a parent I think is typically involved.

But nobody has anything to be ashamed of. It didn't go the way we wanted, but it wasn't for a lack of effort, commitment, trying, mental toughness, all those things.

I just remind our guys, we've won 10 games. We've got a good football team. When we play our best, we have a chance to beat anybody. And I believe that. We've got to move on.

What's important is whatever we didn't do well, we have to get that cleaned up. And let's also make sure our focus is squarely on this opponent coming up, because that's really all that matters at this juncture.

And we still have a chance to win 11 games. Winning 10 is a big deal. It's a big deal at any school. Winning 11 is even more special. We have that opportunity. Let's shoot for that and not leave it out there. Do our best to be ready. If we're looking backwards, that's not going to help us move forward, that's for sure.

Q. You talked about your respect for Mark Stoops, and this is the third time you've faced a Stoops brothers in a bowl game. When you think of that family's impact on this program and college football, what are some thoughts that come to mind?

COACH FERENTZ: First of all, I really don't like competing against people who I know. So whether it be the Stoops family, Bill Snyder, Barry Alvarez. Bret was a coach and player here. But ultimately it isn't about us, me versus another guy. It's about our guy against their team.

But I've got great respect for Mark and followed his career just like Mike and Bob's. I got a chance to see all those guys together, kind of neat, two and a half weeks ago in Las Vegas, when Bob Stoops and Andre Tippett went into the College Football Hall of Fame. What a great evening that was.

I saw Mark there, I saw Mike and Mrs. Stoops, which was great, probably hadn't seen her in 30-plus years. They're a special family. And dad was the patriarch. He was the coach, life-long coach. Ron, who looks younger than the three brothers, I was teasing him because he didn't get into college football, at least not until the end, he did a little bit at Youngstown. He looks 20 years younger than all three of those guys.

And Bob looks pretty good too. Now that he's a TV star. But they're a great family. And what Mark has done at Kentucky, A, is very impressive because if you look historically at that program, you'd have to go back a ways to find someone that's had that level of consistency with the level of performance they've been at -- in a tough conference. And that speaks a lot about him.

But knowing him as a player, just like Mike and Bob, you could tell if this guy chose to coach he could be really good at it. And that's certainly proven out.

Q. A lot of times in your bowl prep you'll have a young player or two who will flash -- either they're on the scout team, they can run your offense and defense. And someone who is a second- or third-teamer, kind of rotates. Have you seen any of those players? And also Terry Roberts, how has he positioned?

COACH FERENTZ: I'll start with Terry. He's finally getting there. It's been a long road, like a really long road. This seems to be the year of the bone bruise. And what I've learned this year about bone bruises, you're better off breaking a bone maybe than having a bone bruise. There's no way to project and there's no set timetable.

Today is probably the best day that he's had at work. And that's good news. Hopefully he'll be available to us at full speed.

Jermari has really done a great job. And this is a great opportunity for him. And that's the "next man in" concept.

And I anticipated that question from someone about the younger guys. I decided I'm going to keep a lid on that because it will become the Internet marvels of the offseason and all that. Then it will be, how come so and so is not playing.

Yeah, we've seen some guys growing. That's good to see. That's one of the neat things about bowl preparation; you get a chance to watch guys and coach guys who have usually been holding scout team plays up. Labas has been taking snaps with the twos -- I better quit talking about quarterbacks in the press.

But I was thinking this morning if we hold cards up if he is going in a game, I guess you just hold a card up and then throw it down; there's no penalty for leaving a card out there. But if he's going off cards, he's great. If he's running our offense, jeez, it might be a small playbook. I'm joking, but he's doing a good job.

Q. Some of the defenders said he does a good job going off script, throwing side arm passes . . .

COACH FERENTZ: Now we've got to get him on script. No, it's just been fun, fun to watch him. He's one of those guys. Not quite ready to start, that's for sure.

Q. On the Kaevon topic, just between him, Tyler Linderbaum raising \$30,000 for Children's Hospital; Tory Taylor, what he did for Count the Kicks; and Ivory, we just talked to him. They're just great human beings, I guess. Is that the joy of this bowl trip as well for you?

COACH FERENTZ: It is. And during the year I've gotten choked up a couple times. Those guys right there, that's a good snapshot of our football team. There's a lot of other guys that are really exceptional guys, but you just listed a handful there. Are you kidding me? These guys are -- I was teasing Tyler's dad, I ran into him yesterday. I said he probably rescued somebody out of like a burning house or something like that on the way over to the Children's Hospital. That's the kind of guy he is.

These guys are just top quality guys. It's been the fun of this team. They just work hard. They've had a good attitude. If they get knocked down, they get back up. But they're quality people. They're really quality people. And Kaevon to me is a perfect first selection.

It's like it was a pretty good vote for him, too. Not surprised. He's kind of the embodiment of the kind of players we've had success with because he's probably a little more accomplished in basketball, maybe, coming out of high school. His recruitment was not heavy.

But I'm glad he's on our team. He's a heck of a football player. Tremendous young guy. Ivory's had ups and downs. Injuries even this year. Toes. Just you name it he's gone through it. He stays positive. He's a really good football player. Quality guy, Tyler. Tory is like from a different planet.

Such a fresh approach to everything. We talk about all those issues in college football for all these things that are going on. And he's like this is a pretty good deal. He thinks this is pretty neat.

And then the donations those guys have made, and we've had several guys not just those two, doing things to help other people. Just kind of, it's really good to see. Just again they're good quality people and I think they understand it's good to give of yourself, too, not just take.

Q. It's been 20 years now since that '01 Alamo Bowl team, first bowl, first winning season. How important was that group in setting the culture?

COACH FERENTZ: Huge. Huge. And I was in conversation with Aaron Kampman recently. So do the math. Aaron's in his 40s now, has to be. Raising a beautiful family. And Aaron's just an unbelievable professional in his chosen field of work now.

Forget about what he did as a pro football player. But we were together this past week and just, he still remembers it, just the highlight of his career. And he had a pretty accomplished pro career. But that's one of the great memories he had.

Goes back to the last game as a senior, your last game in college, everybody remembers. And I think it also speaks to, again, the importance, I think, of the bowl system, what I think, unfortunately, that we'll miss out on or move away from because of the trends.

I'll go back to that NFF dinner. I ran into a gentleman who was on the Tennessee staff in '82 when we played them. They had Reggie White and Mike Cofer, two first-round draft picks. Thank God those guys weren't allowed -- they just ran into our guys. That's how we blocked them. If they allowed them, we get killed.

I ran into one of the coaches from that game. It triggered a thought to me, we were probably the worst 0-2 team at the start of that season in 1982 and ended up, I think we were 8-4 overall. So we won eight out of the next 10 games. Catching up on my math here. But my point is that that was huge -- I remember celebrating

that game, it was like we won the Super Bowl, like we won the Alamo Bowl in 2001. That's the beauty of the bowl system.

It may not go away totally, but I think that's what we're missing out on. It's a sign of the times. I don't want to sound like that old guy, I remember back 20 years now. It's just different now. It's just different now. Unfortunate because some guys will miss out on that. That was a great experience, unbelievable experiences, one of the best nights of my life, I've got to tell you, start to finish, finished about five in the morning. We were talking, that's all. But it was a fun night. I was with my high school coach. And unbelievable, it was a great, great night.

Q. What were the emotions like when you got your first bowl win as a head coach?

COACH FERENTZ: It was tremendous, except my head coach -- went back to my room and changed, called my parents. I came back out and he ripped me on four things I had blown during the game. I was like what the hell? Hold it. Timeout. I thought we won this game. That was it. He just wanted to get that out of the way and then that was it and we had a fun night.

Q. Kentucky comparable to any team you've played throughout the season?

COACH FERENTZ: Right up front, I would say their offensive line reminds me of Michigan. Really good up front. Very veteran, physical, strong, execute really well. Good skill guys. This might be history, when we face the same quarterback year after year, but two different schools. And we ironically are the first one to offer him, I think first major school to offer him. Good trivia there.

But I mean, they're a good team and defensively they're an odd front a little bit. Not exactly like Nebraska, but like some teams we've played this year. They're playing really well. They're just a really well-coached outfit in all three phases, like you'd expect. They've got good players, good skill guys, good line, big bodies up front on defense. It's going to be a tough challenge.

Q. Is their offense as balanced as you've seen from anybody this year?

COACH FERENTZ: I would throw Michigan in there, too. Michigan does what they have to do. So that's probably fair. They're going to run the football, and they do it well. Quarterback is part of their run attack more so than Michigan, probably.

Q. Does it help when you have a quarterback that used to be at Penn State and a wide receiver used to be at Nebraska as you're game planning?

COACH FERENTZ: No, really I wish they were still at Penn State and Nebraska, quite frankly, because they're both good players. We played against them, but that's not going to help us stop them. He's a good player and Moore is a really good player as well, dangerous player.

Q. In what ways do they use Wan'Dale Robinson maybe differently than the ways Nebraska used him?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know if it's any different, but the guy's a good football player. And I'm not sure how he ended up there. They've done a good job in the transfer market, obviously. It's paid off for them. But they've had some good additions. It's going to be interesting. But like I said, they've got a good line. They have skilled position players at every stop.

Q. Do you get to do a lot of fun things during bowl week, going to Universal?

COACH FERENTZ: Talking about me personally? You probably won't see me, yeah, I don't think. Is it mandatory? Then probably not. But my wife said it best, probably 15 years ago, -- it might have been the last time we were there.

She went to one of the parks and she basically said that's the mom's job. That was her last trip to any of the parks. I would have liked to have gone to the zoo, I gotta tell you, in San Diego. I wish I could've done it. But it just didn't fit the schedule. I'll probably be running behind, so I don't know if I'll be doing that.

Q. Have a little bit of fun down there?

COACH FERENTZ: I'll have a great time. I really will. Typically, as coaches we're done -- we meet with our players, watch the film and all that, we're done by dinnertime. We don't work nights. We're not doing that.

But it's busy. And our off day is still Thursday like it is in season. So hopefully -- I know we have an event that morning. Hopefully everybody has a chance to spend some time with their kids. And I hope coaches that have kids can be with them. But I'm happy if I just off at dinnertime, maybe one of our kids will want to eat with us, we'll see. I don't know. Depends on their mood.

Q. What are your thoughts on the transfer portal being so deep this year?

COACH FERENTZ: It's concerning. It's like all this stuff, all this stuff that's new, it's going to be interesting to see over a couple of three years what the data looks like, what have you.

But it just sounds -- my sense -- I'm hardly an expert -- my sense is there's probably a lot of people that have high expectations that maybe didn't come to reality. That's unfortunate.

As long as a player ends up where he was hoping, in the same neighborhood he hoped to be in, that's great. But I know like last spring people didn't have a seat. When the music stopped, they didn't have a seat. It's probably going to be the same way. It's unfortunate. It's too bad.

The hard part about this is, again, what the game is supposed to teach you is persistence, perseverance. You get knocked down. You get back up. Things don't work so well. Push through it. Going back to the point about the quarterbacks.

Players are always developing and they develop at different times. I've said it before, I've coached three guys here in the '80s, didn't start until their senior year

that played in the NFL. You never know. If you have a good attitude and work ethic you give yourself a chance.

But it's so easy to run or so easy sometimes to blame somebody or try this route instead of that route. And sometimes that's the only route there is that really makes sense. And you've just got to push through it.

But there's a little competition in terms of thinking that way. And again I'm not judging anybody. But that's -- it's a hard lesson to -- sometimes you learn the hard way. And it's unfortunate, I think. Hopefully it all works out for everybody who gets involved.

Q. How do you explain somebody like Ivory Kelly-Martin, who is the opposite of all that stuff you just said?

COACH FERENTZ: You've got to give him a lot of credit. He's had disappointment. He's had competition, but he's never changed all the way through this. He has been steady, works hard and takes care of business. Had to deal with injuries throughout his career.

But his attitude never wavered, at least from me watching him. And like a lot of stuff, I think it starts at home. Has great family. They reinforce, probably, the right messages, I'm guessing. I know he's hearing them here.

So it's a team effort by everybody. But it's what differentiates people sometimes. I'll go back a step on that, too. Depends on what you're looking for, as being part of the team and doing what you can to help the team first and foremost, or is it just about your stats and what have you?

And that's sometimes that's a rub, too. But I'm not judging. Anybody it's just the nature of the world, and that's what gets me...

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