

WEEK ONE  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS AT IOWA

IOWA CITY, Iowa -- Kirk Ferentz's record-setting 144th win at Iowa could not have been more emblematic of his tenure in Iowa City.

There were times when every play on offense looked like a struggle, especially early on. But they kept grinding, finally breaking through with a win powered by mental toughness, the running game and a punishing defense.

Nate Stanley threw for 108 yards and a touchdown, Ferentz passed mentor Hayden Fry as Iowa's all-time leader in wins, and the Hawkeyes rolled past Northern Illinois 33-7 in the season opener on Saturday.

Fry, who counted Ferentz among his assistants for nearly a decade, went 143-89-6 in 20 seasons before Ferentz took over in 1999.

The often stoic Ferentz couldn't hold back his emotions as the seconds ticked down, sharing a tearful embrace with his son, offensive coordinator Brian Ferentz.

"I've just enjoyed coaching ... there's a lot of luck involved, too. Because everything pretty much in my whole career has happened by chance. I swear to God, it has," Ferentz said. "I never had a master plan or a list of things I was trying to accomplish. But the commonality is that I've just been around really good people."

After a very sluggish start, Stanley found Noah Fant for a 1-yard TD reception midway through the third quarter to make it 10-0. Ivory Kelly-Martin's 2-yard run pushed Iowa's lead to 17, and Toren Young's 6-yard TD rush put the Hawkeyes ahead 24-0 early in the fourth quarter.

It was a signature Ferentz win, with the Hawkeyes running for 209 yards while holding the Huskies to just 211 yards overall.

"He's another father figure for us," Stanley said of Ferentz. "He means a lot to everybody."

Marcus Childers threw for 105 yards and a late TD for Northern Illinois, which had won four of its past five against Power Five opponents. The Huskies were without top receiver Spencer Tears (43 catches in 2017), who was suspended for undisclosed reasons.

"They're a really good football team, and in that second half, they proved it," Northern Illinois coach Rod Carey said. "I think the difference was that their [defensive] line got after our [offensive] line."

THE TAKEAWAY

Iowa: The Hawkeyes were missing their starting left and right tackles against one of the better Group of Five programs in America in their opener. The goal was survival, not style points, and in that regard, Iowa did what it had to do. But Iowa's defense was so dominant that its offense had time to find its footing. "Sometimes our job is to put the fire out," defensive end Parker Hesse said. "We knew the offense was going to heat up."

Northern Illinois: The Huskies discovered what a lot of others likely will this fall: Iowa's defensive line is not to be trifled with. The Hawkeyes' talented front was relentless in the trenches, disrupting NIU on play after play. The Huskies gained minus-2 yards in the third quarter.

YOUNG'S BIG DAY

Iowa was starving for a big play, especially after an impressive run deep into NIU territory by Kelly-Martin was called back because of a penalty in the third quarter. But Toren Young, who lost the starting running back job to Kelly-Martin in fall camp, broke off a 40-yarder in his first carry to set up the Hawkeyes' first TD. Young added a 24-yard run -- on what looked like the same play -- to set up Kelly-Martin's TD. It'll be interesting to see how Iowa approaches the running back spot next week against the Cyclones, given that Young (84 yards), Kelly-Martin (62 yards) and Mekhi Sargent (40 yards) all looked like Big Ten backs in the opener. "What really carried our football team is we played hard," Ferentz said.

STERLING STANLEY?

Stanley's final numbers, 11-of-23 passing with a TD and a pick, didn't look the least bit impressive. But the rising junior's improved footwork was evident in the pocket, and he was victimized by a number of bad drops. Iowa's receiving corps could see a shake-up in practice this week.

THE NUMBERS

Quarterback Peyton Mansell's first career TD, a 1-yard plunge with 6:52 left, made it 33-0. ... Tight end T.J. Hockenson had four catches for 64 yards for Iowa. ... Jordan Nettles had 74 yards rushing on 13 carries for the Huskies. ... The Hawkeyes improved to 17-1 in openers since 2001.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
NIU	0	0	0	7	7
IOWA	0	3	14	16	33

Scoring Summary -----

	NIU	IOWA
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
IOWA FG 12:20		
Miguel Recinos 33 Yd Field Goal		
7 plays, 40 yards, 3:19	0	3
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
IOWA TD 7:20		
Noah Fant 1 Yd pass from Nate Stanley (Miguel Recinos Kick)		
7 plays, 58 yards, 4:13	0	10
IOWA TD 2:41		
Ivory Kelly-Martin 2 Yd Run (Miguel Recinos Kick)		
5 plays, 46 yards, 2:21	0	17
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
IOWA TD 13:02		
Toren Young 6 Yd Run (Miguel Recinos Kick)		
6 plays, 26 yards, 2:45	0	24
IOWA SF 7:59		
Team Safety		
2 plays, -1 yard, 0:00	0	26
IOWA TD 6:52		
Peyton Mansell 1 Yd Run (Miguel Recinos Kick)		
3 plays, 35 yards, 1:07	0	33
<b>NIU TD 2:12</b>		
Jauan Wesley 10 Yd pass from Marcus Childers (Andrew Gantz Kick)		
11 plays, 75 yards, 4:40	7	33

Team Stats	NIU	IOWA
First Downs	15	18
Total Yards	211	352
Total Plays	62	73
Avg Gain Per Play	3.4	4.8
Net Yards Rushing	101	209
Rushes	36	48
Yards Per Rush	2.8	4.4
Net Yards Passing	110	143
Comp-Att	15-26	13-25
Yards Per Pass	4.2	5.7
Times Sacked	1	5
Yds Lost To Sacks	4	43
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	1	5
Punt Average	10.0	8.4
Penalties	7	8
Penalty Yards	65	66
Fumbles	2	1
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Possession	25:15	34:45

Individual Stats

RUSHING

NIU	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Jordan Nettles	13	74	5.7	0	15
Tre Harbison	6	41	6.8	0	19
Marcus Jones	5	23	4.6	0	7
D.J. Brown	2	-4	-2.0	0	2
Marcus Childers	10	-33	-3.3	0	7
IOWA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Toren Young	8	84	10.5	1	40
Ivory Kelly-Martin	16	62	3.9	1	10
Mekhi Sargent	12	40	3.3	0	7
Henry Geil	5	13	2.6	0	4
Ihmir Smith-Marsette	1	5	5.0	0	5
Brady Ross	1	4	4.0	0	4
Nate Stanley	3	3	1.0	0	5
Peyton Mansell	1	1	1.0	1	1
Team	1	-3	-3.0	0	0

PASSING

NIU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Marcus Childers	14	25	105	4.2	1	1	7.8
D.J. Brown	1	1	5	5.0	0	0	86.7
IOWA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Nate Stanley	11	23	108	4.7	1	1	48.8
Peyton Mansell	2	2	35	17.5	0	0	97.5

RECEIVING

NIU	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Jauan Wesley	4	43	10.8	1	12
D.J. Brown	5	38	7.6	0	21
Cole Tucker	1	13	13.0	0	13
Tre Harbison	1	6	6.0	0	6
Marcus Jones	1	5	5.0	0	5
Marcus Childers	1	5	5.0	0	5
Leon Payne	1	1	1.0	0	1
Rodney Hall	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
IOWA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
T.J. Hockenson	4	64	16.0	0	24
Nate Wieting	1	30	30.0	0	30
Ihmir Smith-Marsette	3	28	9.3	0	17
Noah Fant	3	10	3.3	1	5
Mekhi Sargent	1	6	6.0	0	6
Max Cooper	1	5	5.0	0	5