

**October 7, 2014**



An interview with:

## **COACH FERENTZ**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Captains are the same four guys, Louis Trinca-Pasat and Quinton Alston on defensive side of the ball and Brandon Scherff and Mark Weisman on offense. We're relatively healthy going into today, so we'll see how that looks once we get out on the field and start getting ready for a very good Indiana football team. We haven't played them for a couple of years here. They're playing very well right now, and had a real big win on the road a couple weeks ago over in Columbia.

So they moved the football well, playing standard on defense, good on special teams, and we'll turn our attention to them this afternoon.

**Q. Damon Bullock and Matt VandeBerg, those were the two guys that missed Purdue. Where are they at?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Matt practiced on Sunday, seemed pretty good. Damon is supposed to practice today, so we'll see how it looks this week.

**Q. Is Jake Rudock ready to go?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Yeah, I think so. He looked good.

**Q. Where do you see concerns with the offense? Not running the ball as well as you like?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Not as well as we like. We're not scoring as many points as we like, so that's a work in progress. We'll just keep banging away here.

**Q. What is the biggest challenge to trying to incorporate two quarterbacks in an already struggling offense?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** We'll find out, I guess. We're not even sure what the plan is right now totally. Bottom line we've got two guys that we feel good about. Sound like a broken record on this one. Both guys have played well. Jake's done a great job for us, and C.J., when called upon, has really played well too. We'll just try to figure out the best way to work it.

**Q. Will you have a strict plan or do you just go by feel?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** We'll have something by Saturday, for sure. But they're both going to play. We have total confidence in both guys.

**Q. How long do you think you can do this legitimately?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** Time will tell.

**Q. One game, two games?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** I don't know. Time will tell. We'll play it by ear.

**Q. The rotation on the defensive line, seems like you have some depth there?**

**COACH FERENTZ:** It's coming. We're developing it and we feel like we have three starters legitimately. Mike Hardy has played very well for us going back to last year when we got called upon. So those three guys are certainly playing well. The inside guys were a little deeper there. We have Jaleel and Faith, and all of a sudden, Bazata, has done a great job. So we're going to need it this week because these guys run an awful lot of plays and a high-tempo offense. We need to keep guys as fresh as we possibly can.

**Q. How do you make your way or**

**measure or even care about how a quarterback feels looking over his shoulder?**

COACH FERENTZ: It's really hard to regulate anybody's feelings or monitor it. I'm not that smart. What we're worried about is moving the football and scoring points. I think both players are worried about that too. We have a pretty unselfish group of guys. We haven't played the best, but this is a fun group to work with. They've got a great attitude and they work extremely hard and care a lot about each other, so that is the least of my concern. The biggest thing is us moving the football and scoring points.

**Q. Could it boil down to just results?**

COACH FERENTZ: Both guys to me have given good results when they've played. Both guys have played well. If they weren't, we wouldn't put them out in the field. We have confidence in both guys. If I had the answer, I'd tell you. We don't have it yet. We haven't gone down this road, but we're about to.

**Q. Is there a reason teams don't do this very often and try to incorporate two quarterbacks? What concerns do you have in the design?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm guessing it's because most teams don't have two quarterbacks. Most teams I've been around haven't had them, at least at a given time. So we have a little bit of a unique situation and that's just where we're at today.

**Q. Looking at the accolades of Jake Rudock. He played well last year and did a lot of good things. How much does that work to his advantage in his moving forward?**

COACH FERENTZ: Every player to me has a resume, whether it be what they're doing on the field, their academic work, their citizenship, and we keep close track of that from start to finish, yet this is a results-driven activity. So it's about what you're doing and what you're projected to do. But based on what you've done in the past helps predict those kinds of things.

To me, Jake entered this season as a guy who played well a year ago. I think a lot of that has been diminished by people, at least if you hear the chatter. But he's done a lot of good things for us. The biggest thing is change. C.J.'s played well too. So we certainly have two guys who to me demonstrated some good things on the field. They have things to improve upon like all of us do. So,

yeah, we're going to keep pushing forward. I've said many times I have total faith in Jake, and he's going to start the game unless something happens between now and Saturday.

**Q. It seems like one of the perceptions is when C.J.'s in the offense is more exciting. Is that fair?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not a good judge on what's fair or not. We try to look at it from our perspective and what we think it does for our football team moving forward. I think both guys have done a lot of good things, so I'm really pleased. If you want to talk about perception, just go back to the Pitt game, I've already made a point of that. But if you take those two long passes and flip them around, which basically they're the same play, they just had two different results, maybe that would change perception. That's where people, if you're not paying really close attention, maybe you would come to that conclusion.

We look at those things. I could say we dropped five balls in the first half in our last ballgame. So C.J.'s numbers would have been spiked up there a little bit in the first half had we done a better job catching the football. But that's football. That's a team thing. Perception, catching the ball, running good routes, guys being on the same page, that's a pretty complex equation. Good news is I'm happy about both those guys.

**Q. I know in practice you have two guys that want to play quarterback and enough reps where you feel like they're ready. Where's that at?**

COACH FERENTZ: I feel fine about that too. Basically we have two groups that work during the course of the practice, and they just mix the reps up. It's really not a big deal. Our guys have been doing that for quite some time.

**Q. What tells you these two guys can make this work?**

COACH FERENTZ: We don't know if it will. We haven't gone down that road, so we're about to find out.

**Q. Does Jake see more at the line because of his experience?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, you have to factor that into the equation also if you're going to be fair about things. There are things -- anybody

that's played longer than another guy, a three-year player versus a one-year player, you'd like to think there are certain things they're going to do better. For a guy that hasn't played as much he's got to do some other things to give you a reason to give them a shot, and I'm talking about just in general terms of any player. Like Jonathan Parker. Jonathan Parker did some things in real life the other day that made me think we're on the right path with him, and I said that. But we also went through some real lows with him too and almost didn't survive a couple really critical plays that he was involved in.

But we didn't put dirt on him. We just kept working with him and kept believing in him, and he's rewarded us a little bit, but we're not out of the woods there yet. He's still a young guy, just as an example. There are going to be some ups and downs with players.

**Q. C.J. looks like he's progressed from last year?**

COACH FERENTZ: I said in August I thought before camp and after camp that C.J. was a lot better player than he was a year ago. He's had more chances to play since then, not only practice, but play, so he is a better player than he was certainly last November.

**Q. You've said before that the quarterback is a touchier position, how does that change things?**

COACH FERENTZ: We'll see. I acknowledge that statement. Yeah, offensive coordinators, quarterbacks, head coaches, I'm not sure what the order is. I'm second or third, somewhere in there. Coordinator is the worst job, there is no doubt about that, for drawing opinions.

**Q. Coach, how do you avoid a barn burner, if you will, with Indiana?**

COACH FERENTZ: I'm hoping we can score too. And I appreciate the question about Indiana, too. They're a pretty good football team. If you're a fan, I don't mean you, but anybody paying attention last year, they were very close. They beat us two years ago. Really since Kevin has gotten there you can just see the improvement they've made. It started as a tough game for us in 2011 too. So they started playing hard back then. They weren't as talented in 2011, but they've been moving the ball and scoring points basically against anybody since that time, and last year they were that close to being a Bowl team.



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They're certainly on that path right now. And talking about signature wins and all that kind of thing. You have to get some traction from going down to Missouri a couple weeks ago and beating Missouri, and that wasn't a fluke win. That was two good teams playing really well.

We're up against a very tough opponent. They're eighth in the country rushing the ball and have 300 yards a game rushing it. That's maybe a misconception about them is that they're a throwing team. They throw the ball really well, they run it well. They're tempo offense. They really make it tough and they're playing better on defense than they did a year ago, and that is the biggest difference right now with this football team.

**Q. Just like you said, you think of them as a passing team, and they have a good running back now, are you seeing a different kind of personnel from them?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, the running back is excellent. You think beyond all three backs. They're all really good. Obviously, the running backs are second or third in the league right now. You look at their top guys and they're all pretty good players in the league. But whoever they put in when they rest them, the guys really run the same way. They're really tough. Their lines are veterans. They've got seven or eight guys that have started and played really well. They're strong, cohesive, very well coached. The quarterback does a great job, they have good receivers. They make you defend everything plus they have tempo on top of it.

**Q. What do you know about their defense?**

COACH FERENTZ: The coach that they brought in, the coordinator they brought in Wake Forest, he was at Wake Forest for quite some time and through the Air Force family. So to me everything I'm seeing is they make you work for it, and they're playing really hard right now, the whole group. They play a lot of guys. Doesn't matter who is in there, they're playing hard and making you really work.

**Q. The running back had 13 carries of 40-yards plus. How do you do that? How do they do that?**

COACH FERENTZ: They're an offensive scheme. They've done a great job. They've done

that for quite some time. They've run the ball well and moved the ball well. He's tough to bring down.

**Q. How do you keep a guy like that in between the hashes?**

COACH FERENTZ: We'll find out. That's easier said than done. They do a lot of different things too. They'll run the inside stuff. They run outside option, pitch, they do all kinds of things. So it's a very diverse attack.

**Q. How do you simulate that in practice?**

COACH FERENTZ: That's always a challenge when you face the tempo of a team, number one. If you face an option team, we played Georgia Tech years ago, that was a challenge. At least we had a month there, but we don't have that kind of luxury this time. So it's very difficult. Certainly we don't have those kinds of players. If we did, they'd be with our ones or twos, so it's a real challenge.

**Q. Can you take guys you've recruited for defense and move them to scout team?**

COACH FERENTZ: No, I mean, not really. We have what we have out there. Our guys do a good job. But it's still not the same tempo. It's kind of like we played Pitt. It took a while for us in the game to get caught up to the way it was on the field, the game field.

**Q. Did you try to recruit Coleman?**

COACH FERENTZ: I can't remember. I don't know. I don't think so. I'm not aware of that. I think I'd remember that one.

**Q. Can you describe his style?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, really tough and hard-nosed. He's fast. He's quick. If you look at the top four guys in the Big Ten right now, they're all clipping along pretty well and they're all pretty good backs. I think they have one we recruited too, which is kind of interesting.

**Q. Outside of Quinton you have some youth at linebacker, how do you see their progress?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, I think we're making progress. Josey was late to the game, late to the party a little bit. But he's been playing well on special teams. Two games in his first football experience, so it was really Reggie's first experience, and certainly Bo's, so I think all those

guys are improving. I'm pleased right now. I think we have a lot of younger players moving along pretty quickly, Mabin, Jordan Lomax. So that's been positive. We'll keep those guys growing. If they do that, we'll get better as a football team.

**Q. There are so many different types of fronts that your defense has shown which is different than it was a couple years before. What is the progression?**

COACH FERENTZ: I don't know if it's that much different other than the Raider package. We used to call it Raider. I guess we still call it Raider. We do. It got created in the mid-2000s. So some things go away for a while and come back, and the blitz percentage goes up-and-down too. But it's a feel thing. You know, we hired Phil to be the coordinator. We've got total trust and faith in him, great input from the staff. Not everything we do works, but the things that do work are pretty calculated, well thought out and practiced. So far, so good. We've had our highs and lows. But I think we're improving right now.

**Q. Is Canzeri close to being 100%?**

COACH FERENTZ: I hope he is. And I agree with you, I just don't think he's been a 100% there all season, starting with camp. So for him to get back full speed would really help us. And hopefully he's feeling a little better now, but time will tell.

**Q. How has the defense been? You could argue that they've kind of arrived quote-unquote?**

COACH FERENTZ: If you were standing next to me at Pitt with ten minutes left in the first half, I don't know if you'd make that observation or comment. That's what we're going to go through. There are going to be some highs and lows. We're playing a totally different style of attack right now. You know, Pittsburgh is one kind of run team. We're playing a running team that's very different.

So every week is going to be a different adventure, and we have a lot of football games ahead of us. A wise man once said, once you arrive, there is only one direction and that's down. When you're coasting, you're not getting better, so we better not -- we have a lot of work to do. All you have to do is look at the films and we have a lot of work to do.

**Q. How important was the bye week for everyone?**

COACH FERENTZ: I've become a huge fan of bye weeks. I just think it gives you an opportunity to really step back and look at things a little bit and dissect a few things and try to just pinpoint a couple things that you want to focus on. The other part is it gives everybody a chance to adjust a little bit, especially the guys that have been playing a lot.

That was a tough five-week stretch post camp. Had some heat there the last couple games, so there was a good chance for guys to get back and get recharged hopefully a little bit. We'll see how we come out of it, but it's a good thing. I think it's a good thing. Watching everybody else sweat last Saturday was fun.

**Q. Have you been noticing that while watching games around the league?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, the experts aren't as smart as they thought they were, I don't know. Good luck. For anybody that does Gamble, I advise them not to at any level, at least on sports. But there are a lot of good teams out there. I think the bottom line that's what makes college football so good. Anybody can beat anybody. Not anybody can beat anybody, but pretty much anybody can beat anybody. It's going to be interesting, like every year, to watch how things unfold.

**Q. You started spring and summer with the idea of playing CJ in games, but he saw limited action, what kept him out of the plans before Jake got hurt?**

COACH FERENTZ: Just a decision you make as you're going along. Then he kind of got thrust on the scene there. Had an injury, and that's how he got in last year as well. Basically we have a game and a half of evidence now as opposed to practice. He made a couple deposits at the bank, and that's a good thing.

**Q. Are you where you need to be right now with field goals and punting?**

COACH FERENTZ: No. At times, we're just not consistent. We're capable, I think, more capable. I wasn't sure where we were in field goal kicking early in the season, but I think we're making progress there. It's a matter of consistency I think, same thing with the punting game. I think our core guys are doing better. I'm happy with our

core guys overall, but the specialist part, we've just got to level the playing field a little bit.

**Q. You addressed this in the Big Ten teleconference, but I didn't hear. Regarding cameras in the locker room, you see it so much on NFL telecasts too now. You're not for it?**

COACH FERENTZ: No.

**Q. Why, and what do you think of it?**

COACH FERENTZ: First thing I'll say is it's strictly a personal decision in my opinion. If it gets mandated, we'll do it. I think it is mandated in the NFL. I think it is. At least I always see cameras in people's locker rooms, the little bit I do see. If it's mandated, we'll do it. Otherwise, to me, not everything in life has to be public. That is probably one of the reasons I don't tweet or whatever else they do. But I don't think everything has to be public. Football is a pretty intimate deal, activity. So that's what makes it fun.

**Q. I don't know if fight is the right word, but it seems there are a lot of forces pushing these days.**

COACH FERENTZ: It's a whirlwind. We've put more stuff online than I would -- not online, but you know, the stuff we blast out, social media. But I get it. I understand why you have to do it. If somebody convinces me we have to do it to recruit, I'll probably retire.

**Q. Fifteen years ago coaches were not interviewed at halftime, your thoughts on that?**

COACH FERENTZ: I think it's really silly, typically. Really. I did have a chance to see a few of those this weekend. I can think of a game where I was asked what I thought of about the play or first touchdown, the 80-yarder went down their sideline and got their stadium to go totally crazy. What do you think I thought? That's just one that stands out. But I know everybody's got to get close and intimate. I get that.

**Q. Do most head coaches prefer not to do that?**

COACH FERENTZ: To do what?

**Q. The halftime interview.**

COACH FERENTZ: I would imagine that's probably unanimous. It's probably people agreeing about grandkids being great. Everyone votes for

that one too. I would imagine it's probably about the same, neck and neck.

**Q. Riley McCarron fair caught everything against Purdue, was that an instruction from you?**

COACH FERENTZ: Hopefully we'll get that train moving a little bit. I think that's his first game out there, so we'll get that going a little bit.

**Q. Do you want to do more in the punting game?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we're not against that. We're not against returns. I am for fielding it, but returns after that.

**Q. You were saying last year your main concern was protecting against the punt, you didn't want to get burned in other ways?**

COACH FERENTZ: We were still safeguarding, but we could have gotten both done the other day. That's kind of the next step there in the progression. That was his first game out there. If I had the choice, field the ball. Don't let it roll, field the ball.

**Q. Have you done any personnel changes or any movement on the depth chart in the bye week?**

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we spent a lot of time talking about that Monday, talking about what we want to try to do to move forward and be a little more intelligent about how we're using guys. Hopefully in the next couple weeks we'll make some progress.

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