

# TAILGATE GUIDE

## Coming off the bye week

### Purdue to face stout Iowa defense

BY ISRAEL SCHUMAN  
Staff Reporter

Purdue football, fresh off a bye week, will begin its November slate Saturday against Iowa in a sold-out Ross-Ade Stadium.

Fans have been coming out in droves lately to see the Boilermakers (5-3, 3-2 Big Ten), as this Saturday will mark the second consecutive home sellout for the team. Strong attendance may well continue as Purdue enters a pivotal

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- Head coach Jeff Brohm

stretch of the season in competition for the Big Ten West title.

If the Boilers win out, the conference championship is theirs. But head coach Jeff Brohm said he knows that in order for his team to accomplish that goal, it will need to topple the opponent directly in front of them.

"I think that we can't concern ourselves with anything at the end of the tunnel," he said Monday. "That's when you get caught looking down a road and don't prepare as hard as you can. ... The only thing on our mind is trying to win this game against Iowa."

#### Iowa's defense

The Hawkeyes (4-4, 2-3 Big Ten) will come into this game off of one of their best performances of the season last week against Northwestern. Iowa set its season high for total offensive yards in the contest, as well as lowest total yards against. Brohm took notice.

"When I watched them this past week, they were efficient," he said. "They didn't turn the ball over. They utilize their zone running scheme very well with the jet sweeps and mak-

ing some play-actions off of it. They were able to get easy completions and get the ball out on time."

Purdue will attempt to neutralize this scheme by getting an early lead, Brohm said. If the Hawkeyes are forced to play from behind, they will have to opt for more downfield chances rather than easy completions and rush attempts. They never trailed against Northwestern.

Getting a lead may be easier said than done on Saturday, however, as Iowa presents a stiff challenge on defense. The Hawkeyes rank first in the country in yards allowed per play at 3.9.

"They're very sound," Brohm said. "Up front they get off blocks. They're physical. They're not going to give you anything cheap."

Brohm noted the danger if sixth-year quarterback Aidan O'Connell has another game like his last against Wisconsin. He threw three interceptions in a contest Purdue lost, despite out-gaining the Badgers in yards.

"If you throw a ball near one of their guys, they catch it," he said. "It's noticeable. They don't drop interceptions."

To prepare O'Connell to face such a defense, Brohm said he might have to make his quarterback adjust more in practice so that he remains composed if the receivers struggle to get open.

Purdue's passing game has been productive this season, leading the Big Ten with 327 yards per game in conference play. A big part of that production has been receiver Charlie Jones, who transferred from Iowa along with fellow wideout Tyrone Tracy Jr. Tracy and Jones have combined for 1,075 total yards, 30% of the team's total yardage this season.

#### Overcoming injuries

Brohm said he's hoping that Jones, who has struggled with injuries throughout the season, will be in better shape after the week off.

"We'll see where he is at this week, but we'll use this time to hopefully get guys healed," he



DAVID HICKEY | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER/  
Sixth-year quarterback Aidan O'Connell receives a snap during Purdue's Sept. 11 season opener against Penn State.

said. "In the end, they know they have to get out there and practice some in order to play well."

The team's struggles with injuries aren't limited to Jones. Brohm called defensive end Kydran Jenkins a "game-time decision," but he's "hopeful he'll be able to play."

Additionally, starting cornerbacks Cory Trice and Jamari Brown did not practice during the bye week, Brohm said, and there is a possibility they'll miss the game. He said it depends on whether they return to practice and how healthy they look at that point. In the meantime, Brohm is shuffling his players around in preparation for game day.

Regardless of whether the secondary is at full strength for Saturday, Brohm stressed the need for them to improve.

"I know we can play better," he said. "There are times that the underneath coverage should be helping a little bit more than it has. There

are times that we have allowed people to run by us, which should not happen."

Given the struggles, Brohm said the coaching staff has been working to correct the secondary's issues.

"We have analyzed it all. (I'm) hopeful we can put a good plan together and go out there and execute. I think that trying to get these guys back healthy and playing efficient football is important."

A win would put Brohm at 5-1 in his career versus Iowa, and get the Boilers a quarter of the way to their first ever Big Ten West title.

**The game kicks off at noon Saturday and will be broadcast on Fox Sports 1.**



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### Jonesing for some offense



PAUL WARD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Sixth-year wide receiver Charlie Jones tries to get extra yardage after a catch in the September game against Florida Atlantic.

### Purdue football capitalizes on Iowa WR transfers

BY VAL ELLIS  
Asst. Sports Editor

The Hawkeye offense has struggled this season.

It ranks 125th nationally in scoring offense and 130th in yards per play. It's close to the bottom in nearly every offensive statistic.

Against Ohio State, Iowa would have been better off punting on first down than trying to play offense, ESPN college football writer Bill Connelly said.

Connelly found that the Hawkeyes would have gained an extra 14.3 yards of field position for the defense if they had gone with that strategy. That particular field position would have taken away a Buckeye field goal and an interception which Ohio State returned for a touchdown.

The man calling the plays happens to be the son of Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz. Brian Ferentz has been the offensive coordinator for the

Hawkeyes since 2017 and has beaten Purdue just once in their five meetings during his tenure.

One of those losses wasn't to head coach Jeff Brohm, but to his brother Brian Brohm, Purdue's co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. Brian Brohm coached the Boilermakers to a 24-20 victory while his brother was out with COVID-19 for the first game of the 2020 season.

Ferentz's problems aren't for a lack of talent on the team. The Hawkeyes had one of the top wide receivers in the country: sixth-year wide receiver Charlie Jones. Now, Jones is a Boilermaker and is both sixth nationally in receiving yards per game and second in receptions per game after tallying just 21 total receptions last season at Iowa.

This season, Jones has 72 receptions, 840 yards and nine touchdowns. Iowa's wide receivers have 49 receptions, 535 yards and one touchdown

combined.

The Hawkeyes also lost senior wide receiver Tyrone Tracy Jr. to the Boilermakers.

When asked whether the prospect of facing former teammates affected the players, Brohm said, "it's probably less of a big deal than you think."

"I just think every year you're going to see players move and try to get the best opportunity for them. That's the nature of college football now," he said. "You have to take care of your players as much as you can. At the same time, if there is a better opportunity somewhere else, they need to go."

Iowa defensive back Riley Moss joked about facing his former teammate.

"I'm going to make sure (Jones) doesn't catch the ball," he said Tuesday, laughing. "He's a fast kid, and he can run around. It sounds stupid: Just literally stay on him and don't let him catch the ball."