

## Hayden & Kirk trump the Cyclone 7

Written by Jim Ecker

Sunday, 11 September 2016 11:59 - Last Updated Sunday, 11 September 2016 12:03

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IOWA CITY - I was sitting in the fancy press box at Kinnick Stadium Saturday night, watching the Iowa Hawkeyes dismantle Iowa State 42-3, and got to wondering why the Hawkeyes have been a national power for much of the last four decades and why the Cyclones have not been able to sustain any great success during all that time.

Why have two state-supported schools that play in Power 5 conferences have such vastly different track records in football?

The obvious answers, of course, are Hayden Fry and Kirk Ferentz, Iowa's two highly successful head coaches over the past 38 years who have won 60.7 percent of their games and taken the Hawkeyes to 27 bowl games, but are there additional reasons besides the obvious?

Fry went 143-89-6 in 20 years from 1979 to 1998, led the Hawks to 14 bowl games and used the force of his unique personality to lift Iowa football from the doldrums to great heights in a short period of time.

Ferentz, one of Fry's former assistants, assumed the mantle in 1999 and has led Iowa to a 129-87 mark and 13 bowl trips. Combined, they have a won-loss record of 272-176-6. And that's pretty darn good.

Iowa State, on the other hand, has gone through seven head coaches since 1979 and none of them can boast a winning record. In fact, none of them came even close.

Donnie Duncan went 18-24-2 from 1979 to 82, Jim Criner was 16-24-2 from 1983 to 1986, Jim Walden was 28-57-3 from 1987 through 1994, Dan McCarney was 56-85 from 1995 to 2006, Gene Chizik was 5-19 from 2007 to 2008, Paul Rhoads finished 32-55 from 2009 to 2015, and Matt Campbell is off to an 0-2 start in 2016.

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That adds up to a woeful won-loss record of 156-267-7 for 36.9 percent. McCarney had things rolling for awhile and was a thorn in Iowa's side for many years, but the program slipped again in his final years and he got a pink slip.

Fry was a miracle worker, which is one of the reasons there's a handsome new bronze statue of the venerable Texan on display in front of the Coralville Visitors & Convention Center for all to see on their way to Kinnick. And although Ferentz is certainly not flamboyant like John Hayden Fry, he's a Rock of Gibraltar and worth every cent of his new \$4.5 million annual deal.

But what else? What else has led to Iowa's success and Iowa State's struggles?

Why was Fry able to break the old "Big 2 and Little 8" mold in the Big Ten and join Ohio State and Michigan as league heavyweights, whereas Iowa State has never been able to crack the upper echelon in the Big 12?

Bump Elliott had a lot to do with all that during his successful spin as the athletic director at Iowa. Elliott coached football at Michigan and worked as an administrator for the Wolverines before moving to Iowa City, so he knew exactly what it took to compete at the highest level and did his best to give Fry as many tools as he could.

That's not to say the athletic directors at Iowa State didn't try their best, but for whatever reason their best efforts in Ames were not good enough.

Bob Bowlsby and now Gary Barta have kept things rolling as the A.D. at Iowa, feeding the football program every step of the way with new facilities and resources in an effort to match the richer schools in the

Big Ten. Bowlsby, now the commissioner of the Big 12, once famously declared that the only thing worse than being in the football arms race was NOT being in the football arms race.

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Iowa State has built impressive new facilities as well, which hopefully will pay off for the Cyclones in the long run.

The Hawkeyes also have profited handsomely by belonging to the Big Ten, especially under the direction of Commissioner Jim Delany, who has the midas touch when it comes to raising money for the league and all its schools. Delany has overseen the league's growth from 10 schools to 14 with the additions of Penn State, Nebraska, Maryland and Rutgers, and whether you like the Big Ten extending all the way to the East Coast or not, the rich kids at ESPN and the other networks certainly do and they keep throwing more money into the pot.

Delany also ushered in the Big Ten Network, another cash cow.

Meanwhile, the Big 12 has lost heavyweights like Nebraska, Missouri and Texas A&M to other leagues while adding less-attractive schools in their place. And unlike the Big Ten, the Big 12 has let some of its most powerful schools receive a larger share of the TV revenues than other members, leaving Iowa State and others scrambling for bucks of their own.

The Texas Longhorns have their own TV network, but overall the Big 12 cannot match the Big Ten in television dollars.

There's another factor that helped fuel Iowa's rise to football prominence, especially compared to Iowa State, and that's the role that WHO Radio of Des Moines has played in promoting the Hawkeyes, especially when the late Jim Zabel was calling the games. Iowa had a statewide megaphone and cheerleader with Zabel and WHO, which helped steer legions of fans towards the Hawks and away from the Cyclones. Iowa State has a good radio network, but it's not nearly as powerful as Iowa's.

They say things go in cycles, but you have to admit, this has been an awfully long cycle in favor of the Hawks and against the Cyclones. Ferentz lifted his record against Iowa State to 9-9 with Saturday night's victory, but that's practically the only area where the two schools have been dead-even on the football field.

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Iowa State has great fans and ISU insiders think Campbell is the right guy for the job, but based on Saturday night's contest, Campbell and the Cyclones have a long way to go. Meanwhile, Ferentz and the Hawkeyes appear headed for another successful season and lots of exciting games.