

Iowa vs. ISU: A history lesson

Written by Bob Brooks

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The year was 1934 as Iowa and Iowa State were to play their last football game of the series with the Cyclones winning, 31-6. And in the minds of many people at that time, the series was too hot to handle.

Consequently it was determined that for the next 43 years there would be no Iowa-Iowa State football game. Apparently, the thought was that in 43 years the Cyclones and the Hawks would become much more blasé about the games and would exhibit better sportsmanship.

I don't know if that was the case, but there was a groundswell within the state to have the series resumed. Much talk went on and the state legislature threatened to pass a law demanding that the game be played.

Iowa's Forest Evashevski had been involved in the Michigan-Michigan State once-in-a-while game, and he was for the resumption although publicly not campaigning for it. Evy at that time was having his own problems with the Iowa administration, so it was not a hot button for him.

He knew he would be a trend-setter, however, and when the time came he put his considerable power behind it.

So as time went on the first game was rescheduled for 1977, but before that, since freshmen were not eligible, there was a frosh game played between Iowa State and Iowa at Clyde Williams Field in Ames. And the press jumped all over that.

All of the Iowa broadcasters showed up to do a freshman football game that went on without a hitch, except for some bad language that was emanating from the Iowa coaching booth. All of a sudden, the door opened and there was Evy with his command-post look and the assistant coaches were quickly silenced. And that seemed to be the only noticeable problem that day at old Clyde Williams Field.

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With that as a dress rehearsal, the 1977 game was set with Bump Elliott's hire of Bob Cummings as head coach. He was set to coach against Earle Bruce of Iowa State.

As I remember it, there was a great deal of tension in the air that day at Kinnick Stadium. Every move by coaches and players became some kind of story. I remember as a broadcaster I was on edge, too, a little bit more than normal for this renewal.

But it quickly developed into a seesaw football game, and much of the tension evaporated as Iowa went on to win 12-10. A missed Cyclone scoring opportunity late in the game really cost the Cyclones an opportunity for victory.

The game has continued since that year and recent history will say there is an Iowa-Iowa State rivalry on the field, since the two teams have played the last dozen games with the two sides winning six times apiece.

I liken it now to a September state fair or an Iowa family reunion. It has also come to pass that both teams do not put their entire season into the bag of winning this game at all costs.

Yes it's important, but it's also refreshing that the 59th meeting will be played at Jack Trice Field and if history of 43 years is correct, good relations should still exist between the two fine institutions.