

Stoops stays classy; Hawks will be better

Written by Bob Brooks

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Here are some leftovers from sitting under too many saguaro cactus in the Arizona desert: Reflections on the Insight Bowl.

Number one, in my view, Oklahoma just had better athletes than Iowa. And OU Coach Bob Stoops, after looking at all the bowl games, had sharper tackling and defensive play than most teams exhibited on television.

Iowa made it competitive and certainly showed it could compete with the Sooners. And after the game, running into Iowa's James Ferentz in the hotel lobby, he was excited about the Hawks for 2012.

Seven-and-six was not what yours truly predicted, but 2012 will be better, I think, even with the player defections and staff adjustments than 2011 was.

I want to thank Coach Stoops for his visits with your humble servant during the bowl week. Even after the game, he came to the press conference and turned away from his entourage to say goodbye as we were leaving the room.

Stoops also was very sincere in his talk about the Hawks and his days as a player and coach at Iowa.

Also kudos to the Insight Bowl committee. They went above and beyond in their efforts to take care of the media's needs.

Unusual things did occur at the game. The dropping out of the sky of the overhead camera provided a serious moment if you were down on the playing field, as my wife Susie and I were

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at that time. It was no laughing matter from that angle.

The star of the week had to be the weather. Seven days without a cloud in the sky provided Iowa and Oklahoma with perfect practice conditions. And with that in mind, I'll tell you a little story about covering Iowa's football press conferences at the high school field.

I was sitting under a tree, doing some writing and reporting from a picnic bench, and I could look in and see Iowa working out some blocks away, but I also could be seen by managers, coaches and photographers. They could look and see that someone was in a position where they could spy on the Hawks.

Consequently, the "Sheriff" - Iowa security guard Ron Stewart - came over and asked that I move the picnic table away from the area where I could look into the playing field, which I did. It brought to mind the fact that coaches and personnel still go back to the idea that those spies are everywhere.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)