

2012

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Recommended Citation

Berhow-Goll, Dean (2012) "Cyclone state," *Sir Magazine*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sir/vol2/iss1/13>

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CYCLONE STATE

by DEAN BERHOW-GOLL



THIS IS LIKE IOWA
STATE'S SUPER BOWL.

Designed by NATALIE HEISTERKAMP // Photograph by YUE WU

How many times have Iowa State fans heard that in the last few years? Year after year, anyone who represents the cardinal and gold gets fed that line of BS leading up to the Cy-Hawk football game.

From a historical standpoint, it's understandable to favor the Hawkeyes. They lead the series 39-21 after Iowa State's win this year at Kinnick. But since 1998, the Cyclones lead the series 9-6 and have won the last two.

But Kirk Ferentz is so much better of a coach than Paul Rhoads.

Is he? I'm guessing you didn't know Ferentz's record against Iowa State is 6-8. Or you didn't if you were guessing according to Vegas' odds each year. They pegged Iowa the favorite 12 out of the 14 times. Rhoads is batting .500 in the series right now after winning the last two.

In the past two seasons, both coaches have nearly identical records, Ferentz: 11-14, and Rhoads: 12-13 (as of Nov. 23). According to a DesMoinesRegister.com article from Nov. 2, 2012, Ferentz receives an annual salary of \$3.7 million per year, while Rhoads makes \$1.4 million. That makes Ferentz the No. 5 highest-paid coach in the country.

How good are the four coaches in front of Ferentz? Well let's just say they've got seven BCS National Titles between them. And what about Les Miles, the coach one spot behind Ferentz? He's got a Championship ring, too.

Who cares if Ferentz is paid more than Rhoads. Iowa plays in the Big Ten, which is much better than the Big 12.

Maybe the Big Ten is the better conference, if by better, you meant incredibly cliché division names. Because the Legends and Leaders divisions have the upper hand in that department over the Big 12 North and South.

The Big 12 boasts some of the best teams in the country every year. Four teams are ranked in the BCS top-25 as of Nov. 23. The Big Ten's highest BCS-ranked team is Nebraska coming in at No. 14. In case you've

forgotten, Nebraska was in the Big 12 only two years ago.

This is the biggest game Iowa State plays all year.

Right, because Iowa State doesn't have the chance to play BCS title contenders every single year. And, of course, the Cyclones are never included on lists of the toughest schedules in the nation.

Did you forget about the Oklahoma State game last year? Iowa State upset the No. 2 team in the nation in overtime and spoiled what chance they had at a national title.

Leading up to this year's game it was well-known that every time an OSU player thought he was done lifting, a fellow player would say "Iowa State" and he would do 10 more reps.

The Cyclones get multiple chances to upset top-ranked teams every year. They almost did again at Jack Trice at the "Farmageddon" game against Kansas State, coming up one drive short of winning.

They get up for this game way more than Iowa does.

Wait, wait, wait. What? You're going to try and tell me that a collegiate athlete "tries harder" or "wants it more" than another team, let alone for an in-state rivalry game? That sounds like something Skip Bayless would say. Just stop.

I don't think a Cy-Hawk game was ever decided by one team "trying harder" or "wanting it more" than the other team. If you want to talk about another team scheming or executing better, then you have my attention. Until then, your words fall on deaf ears.

The bottom line is that Iowa State isn't Iowa's whipping boy anymore. Rhoads and co. have established an atmosphere that has these young men buying in and believing that not only can they win, but they should.

THE FACT IS: IOWA IS NO LONGER A HAWKEYE STATE.