

## A Pretty Good Month for Iowa Football

Speaking of Hawkeye football (and who isn't?), LuAnn, a niece and I went to Indianapolis last weekend. We drove for six hours through a freezing fog in the wee hours of Friday/Saturday to a \$500 per night hotel (!) so we could attend a long-awaited Big 10 Championship football game.

After 5 hours of sleep (plenty!) we walked over to the SportsCenter set on Pan Am Plaza very early in the morning to see if we could get on TV. Even with my niece on my shoulders (a 35-year-old who weighs 105 pounds soaking wet) we just blended into the rest of the predominantly Hawkeye crazy people there. Eventually a security guard told me to put her down, to which I replied, "Thanks, I'm not sure how much longer I could have held her up."

Following the telecast we walked past Cadillac Ranch, the official Indianapolis bar of the Hawkeyes. There was a long line to get in – almost an hour before it was to open. They evidently ran completely out of beer the previous evening which was no small feat; they were rumored to have placed the largest alcohol order in Indiana that week in preparation for the game, and supposedly had the largest inventory in the city.

Fortunately, we had the foresight to bring our own supply of adult beverages and after self-medicating with Jameson's back at the hotel we set off to find lunch. Unfortunately, about 39,997 other Hawkeye fans and a smattering of good-natured Michigan State Spartans had the same idea. Several jam-packed bars had simply stopped serving food so they could keep up with the alcohol demand, so we ended up sullenly eating at a Subway in a random downtown mall food court.

Next, we stopped in at the official Hawkeye Huddle at the Indianapolis Convention Center, a cavernous structure jammed with Hawkeye faithful and more beer vendors. There was a monstrous public address system that I speculated had been salvaged from the Kinnick Stadium refurbish, which – as you can guess - meant everything emanating from it was garbled and unintelligible.

On our way out I accidentally ran across some members of the Hawkeye Alumni Band, who had brought their instruments (including two sousaphones), on their way to play outside the stadium. I never travel to Hawkeye events without my

slide trumpet, so we stopped by the hotel to grab it and we held a quick rehearsal in the lobby.

After we played a rousing rendition of “In Indianapolis There Is Sometimes No Beer” to an appreciative crowd, the hotel manager made her way over to us to say, “That was great, please stop.” So, we crossed the street and played to the continuous Hawkeye crowd flowing out of the Hawkeye Huddle towards Lucas Oil Stadium. Every tipsy Hawk fan loves to sing the fight song and we had a completely new audience every 30 seconds, so we partied like rock stars until game time.

Sometime earlier in the day we heard the alarming news that no beer would be served during the game that evening; we had assumed a pro stadium (Indianapolis Colts) wouldn’t be able to resist selling \$7.50 beers to thirsty Hawkeye fans with seemingly unlimited capacity.

Fortunately, I had a metal flask in my car that we figured we could sneak in; our niece said if you put it in your underwear, it won’t accidentally slide down your leg. But when we approached the entry gate there was momentary panic when we saw that everyone was being wanded with metal detectors. We had to stash the flask in the bushes, where it only took about 10 minutes of searching in the dark after the game to find it again.

In the stadium, our niece’s ticket turned out to be in the nosebleed section – she said the stairs were so steep, people were descending backwards to avoid falling. The game itself was great, although a lady two rows ahead of us covered her eyes for most of the fourth quarter, unable to watch during Michigan State’s final game-winning drive. The standing ovation our team received after the game was the most memorable thing I’ve ever experienced at an athletic event.

On the drive home Sunday (amidst a long line of Iowa vehicles) we learned of the Rose Bowl bid. I’ve wanted to go there for a generation, although I never dreamed I’d be slightly disappointed when it happened. Cars were literally pulling off I-80 and driving directly to Winebrenner Travel to book the tour.

If you’re one of the estimated 59,998 other Iowa fans expected in Pasadena, I’m sure we’ll see you there!