

COMMENTARY: Comparisons from last year to this year need to stop (premium)

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EVANSTON, Ill. – When I was a student in the UI's Journalism program, one thing I was taught was that "There is no stupid question."

I'm going to call shenanigans on this. There is one brand of question asked almost on a weekly basis when it comes to Iowa football that could be viewed as dumb, at least now.

Any comparisons being configured between Iowa's Orange Bowl-winning season last year and this present season need to stop.

It's something we've all been guilty of, myself included. I don't write this with the intentions of slamming any of my colleagues in the media or any of the fans out there.

I say this because the Iowa Hawkeyes are now 10 games through 2010. They sit at 7-3 right now after losing to Northwestern on Saturday, 21-17.

This team is not winning the Big Ten. This team is not going to the Sugar Bowl or any other BCS bowl. Right now, any New Year's Day bowl in the state of Florida ought to be appreciated.

Comparisons from last year to this year just need to stop. Even if the Hawkeyes win their final two games and their bowl game – wherever it is and whoever it is against – they sit at 10-3. That's still a solid year and nothing for Iowa to be ashamed of.

Yet I can already envision people describing this season as a failure.

The only reason I think that's a huge mistake to be making now is because, to tell you the truth, I'm not sure this year's team has found its exact identity. It eventually will, but it shouldn't be based on what happened a year ago, and the positives ought to be appreciated.

Take a look at quarterback Ricky Stanzi. Yes, the one interception he threw on Saturday ended up proving costly, as it changed the entire complexion of the game. But through 10 games this year, he has four interceptions and 22 touchdown passes. Is that a failure? I don't think so.

Adam Robinson came back from a concussion and rushed for over 100 yards on Northwestern's defense. He has evolved into one of the most important components to Iowa's success. Is that a failure?

Derrell Johnson-Koulianos caught a 70-yard touchdown strike from Stanzi. The season he has had is unparallel to anything else he has done throughout his Hawkeye career. Is that a failure?

The way Iowa played today, it didn't deserve to win. But it's one game. If you are going to continue comparing this team to last year's, just remember that the 2009 squad wasn't infallible.

Maybe this year's version of the Iowa Hawkeyes isn't going to live up to the expectations many had. But it isn't like this team has completely quit on the coaching staff or anything like that. It's not like this program is in shambles like Minnesota is right now. There's still a bowl on the horizon for this team.

Once the frustration from this loss is set aside by everyone emotionally invested, I would offer up one suggestion (well,

two):

1. Enjoy the good things about this team while you can because time goes quicker than anyone can imagine.
2. Stop comparing this team to last year's, and maybe this all won't be as upsetting.