

Jerry Tann will be sorely missed

Written by Bob Brooks

Thursday, 13 October 2011 08:34 - Last Updated Thursday, 13 October 2011 18:55



It's been a good week, but a sad week with the passing of one of Cedar Rapids' best sports fans and officials in Jerry Tann.

Jerry's son Kevin, and Kevin's son David, I'm sure are going to carry on the legacy of a gentleman who, for yours truly, was always a delight to be with or to cover games that he worked.

His love of athletics was shown through a smile and a greeting that always made you feel better when you were in his presence. He will be missed and Metro athletics is poorer today with the loss.

ON THE BRIGHTER side, I had a nice visit before the Cedar Rapids Washington game last week with Mark Atwater, the quarterback of highly regarded Linn-Mar. I'm not a great fan of calling athletes "student-athletes," but in this case, based on a conversation with Mark, it is appropriate to call him that.

Atwater is a well-rounded individual with leadership skills. That's what I found out about him during our meeting in the Linn-Mar locker room at the new football stadium. That locker room, incidentally, is big enough for Coach Bob Forsyth to hold a squad session, either before, during or after the games.

Mark is appreciative of the backing the Lions have received with the new stadium, which is really a showcase for the entire Linn-Mar school district.

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Linn-Mar, of course, has a big showdown with Iowa City High on Friday night at the new stadium. Obviously, it's an important game and another reason to show off their new digs.

I also want to mention Mark Atwater's father and mother. Mark told me he's had many dinner-table conversations about football with his dad, longtime Coe assistant football coach Larry Atwater, and said his mother was a good listener. So we wish them well.

TALKING ABOUT big games, Iowa and Northwestern have a little scrimmage set for Saturday night at Kinnick Stadium. And yes, I was at Happy Valley last week when the Hawkeyes were keeping the people who live in that area very happy.

Penn State is always a great host. Kirk Ferentz even mentioned that to me before the game, with the way visiting teams are treated out there. It was obvious everything was first-class, including their wonderful pre-game pressbox banquet.

Then came the kickoff and the worm turned. Penn State became a top-notch competitor with its defense and gave Iowa's pass offense fits.

This week, Northwestern quarterback Dan Persa and the Wildcats will try to do the same thing to the Hawkeyes. Iowa will try and strike back by pulling out all the inspirational momentum it can, including striping the stadium in black-and-gold, a big-time card section and a salute to the America Needs Farmers program.

When it's all said and done, Iowa's defense will have to give chase to a wonderful athlete in Persa and a wide-open offense. And the way the 'Cats have performed in the second half of games, you don't want to leave early if they happen to get the lead, because they have given up big leads in the last two games.

Michigan outscored them 28-0 in the second half on the road after it looked as if the Wolverines would be the loser. But Persa, my friends, deserves your respect as a top athlete. It doesn't hurt

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to be a good Hawk and a good sportsman.

(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.)