



IOWA STATE CYCLONES

2024 Record: 11-3 (7-2 B12)

Big 12 Conference

Ames, IA



ROCCO BECHT – QB

Photo via Sports Illustrated

Back-to-Back Title Appearances for Cyclones?

Both Iowa and Iowa State have had perennially great defenses year after year but, of the two rivals, the Cyclones have been the team that has been able to pair a great offense with that stellar defense. That's exactly what they did last season and the Cyclones reached the Big 12 title game for the second time in just five seasons. While that game did not go particularly well, there were still several highlights throughout the season including reaching a Top 10 ranking in late October, the first double-digit win season in program history, and a Pop-Tarts Bowl victory that helped wash away the Arizona State sting at least a bit.

The expectation in Ames is that Iowa State will simply reload for another run to the postseason in 2025 and perhaps even the school's first College Football Playoff. Are those expectations realistic considering some of the departures and a challenging schedule? Time will tell (and you won't need to wait long to find out), but Campbell has elevated this Iowa State program to new heights so if there's anyone who can achieve high expectations, it's Campbell.

OFFENSE

The bad news is that Iowa State must replace not one but two 1,000-yard receivers in Jaylen Noel and Jayden Higgins who were both selected within the first three rounds of the NFL Draft. The good news is that the quarterback who helped each receiver reach that milestone returns in **Rocco Becht**. Brock Purdy owns the all-time passing record for Iowa State but you could argue Becht's 2024 campaign was the best in school history. 3,505 yards through the air along with 318 yards on the ground and 33 total touchdowns rank behind only Purdy's 2019 season, although the team went just 7-6 that year. Becht's squad was much better in close games and went 4-1 in games decided by a touchdown or less.

The question of who will emerge as the new WR1 and WR2 might be answered through the portal. **Chase Sowell** produced two notable seasons at East Carolina and he's capable of taking the top off the defense. **Xavier Townsend** was limited to just four games last season with UCF but he's at least been in the conference the past two seasons. Tight ends are a staple of the offense even with a scheme change last year under new OC Taylor Mouser and both **Gabe Burkle** and **Benjamin Brahmer** return as viable options.

Last year's running back room was primarily a two-headed monster with **Carson Hansen** and **Abu Sama** who combined for 1,339 yards. Hansen had 15 of the duo's 17 touchdowns including two receiving scores. The offensive line has protected Becht well, allowing just 30 sacks the past two seasons combined and his elusiveness certainly helps. The 2025 edition should be strong once again with multiple starters returning. **Tyler Miller** is a savvy veteran who enters his fourth year as a starter, **James Neal** and **Brendan Black** are also multi-year starters.

DEFENSE

Jim Heacock's defense has allowed 23 points or less each season for the past five years although last year was the closest the Cyclones have been to breaking that streak. Kansas tore through the defense through the air in a shootout loss and the Sun Devils also scored 45 points in the Big 12 Championship game, although turnovers played more of a role than anything. The Kansas game was a distinct anomaly, the Cyclones were actually the best of all 134 FBS teams at preventing passing yards. The secondary may not be quite as elite as it was last season considering cornerback Darien Porter is off to the NFL, but corner **Jontez Williams** returns and **Jeremiah Cooper** is All-American caliber at safety.

Injuries, especially at the linebacker position, led to some vulnerabilities in run defense last season. The silver lining of all of the injuries is that the linebacker corps is very deep now since so many players saw game action. **Caleb Bacon** had 6.5 tackles for loss in 2023 before missing all but one game in 2024. **Will McLaughlin**'s fate was similar.

It's even more remarkable what Iowa State was able to do on pass defense since there wasn't a reliable pass rush from the front three. The Cyclones will be relying on a pair of FCS transfers to hopefully elevate the position with **Cannon Butler** from Northern Iowa and **Tamatoa McDonough** from Yale.

Preseason Ranking

14

HC: **Matt Campbell**
(10th Year, 64-51)

OC: **Taylor Mouser**
(2nd Year)

DC: **Jon Heacock**
(10th Year)

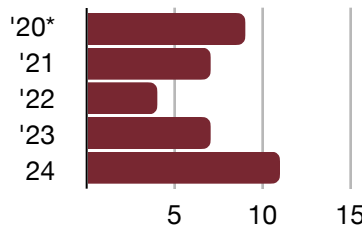
2025 Class Rankings

Recruiting
54

Transfer Portal
61

Via 24/7 Sports

IOWA STATE WIN TREND



2024 Results (11-3)

North Dakota (W 21-3)
@ Iowa (W 20-19)
Arkansas State (W 52-7)
@ Houston (W 20-0)
Baylor (W 43-21)
@ West Virginia (W 28-16)
UCF (W 38-35)
Texas Tech (L 22-23)
@ Kansas (L 36-45)
Cincinnati (W 34-17)
@ Utah (W 31-28)
Kansas State (W 29-21)
vs. Arizona State* (L 19-45)
Big 12 Championship
vs. Miami (FL)* (W 42-41)
Pop-Tarts Bowl

2025 Iowa State Schedule

Wk		
0	Sat, Aug 23	vs. Kansas State*
1	Sat, Aug 30	vs. South Dakota
2	Sat, Sept 6	vs. Iowa
3	Sat, Sept 13	@ Arkansas
5	Sat, Sept 27	vs. Arizona
6	Sat, Oct 4	@ Cincinnati
7	Sat, Oct 11	@ Colorado
9	Sat, Oct 25	vs. BYU
10	Sat, Nov 1	vs. Arizona State
11	Sat, Nov 8	@ TCU
13	Sat, Nov 22	vs. Kansas
14	Sat, Nov 29	@ Oklahoma State

Home Away Neutral

Key Games

Aug 23 vs. Kansas State: A trip to Ireland to play a football game on Week 0 would be notable enough, but since the opponent is "Farmageddon" rival Kansas State, the game itself has massive implications in the Big 12 championship race.

Sept 6 vs. Iowa: Strangely, the road team has managed to win the CyHawk trophy in each of the last five meetings. Iowa State has a chance to win this game in Ames for the first time since 2021.

Nov 1 vs. Arizona State: Iowa State met one-man-wrecking-crew Cam Skattebo in the Big 12 title game last year and the rest was history. Can they enact revenge on the Sun Devils at home?

Player Spotlight

Photo via The Gazette



CARSON HANSEN – RB

There is a rich history of running backs at Iowa State (David Montgomery and Breece Hall in recent memory). If healthy, and if the Cyclones can achieve some of their lofty team goals this season, he'll put his name up there with some of those greats. Even though he was banged up last year he still recorded a team-high 15 touchdowns. There's depth at the RB position, so expect Hansen to maximize his opportunities.

2024 Stats: 151 RUSH, 752 YDS, 13 TD

Photo via Wikipedia



JEREMIAH COOPER – S

Cooper could very well be the best safety in the Big 12, but he won't tell you that. His 2024 campaign that landed him first-team All-Big 12 was "not the best" according to Cooper himself. He's not necessarily incorrect, his PFF grade did suffer and his productivity dipped slightly from 2023. If Cooper can sure up his tackling, his fourth year in the program will be his best and he could join past teammates in the NFL.

2024 Stats: 48 TKL, 1 TFL, 2 INT

Photo via Substance Architecture



Jack Trice Stadium (61,500)

Photo via @jont3z_ on Instagram



Jontez WILLIAMS

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kyle Konrardy was the hero of the CyHawk game with a 54-yard game winning field goal. That kick ended up being his longest of the season and while his range is notable, consistency of the procedure needs to improve after seven missed field goals and two missed extra points. **Tyler Perkins** is a veteran punter who could be one of the Big 12's best.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The fact that many media pundits have been discussing Iowa State as a potential option for a Big 12 championship for multiple season shows just how much Matt Campbell has elevated this program. The same suggestion two decades ago probably would have got you laughed out of the room. Iowa State isn't the kind of team constantly pulling 5-star talent onto the roster, but they took care of the important details very well last season including being one of the least penalized teams in the FBS. The Cyclones have also been +17 in turnover margin over the last two seasons.

A difficult schedule will test the Cyclones in 2025. All eyes will be watching when Iowa State and Kansas State kick off the college football season in Ireland in a game with massive consequences. The annual CyHawk rivalry occurs just two weeks prior to a road date at Arkansas. A veteran quarterback and a strong defense are two great pillars to begin a season, but the Cyclones will need to take it week by week to make it back to Dallas.

Appointment Television



vs.



Sat, Sept 6 - 12:00 PM ET (FOX)

There's something oddly beautiful about watching Iowa and Iowa State battle each season to claim state bragging rights. In a game where grit, determination, and field position is king, it seems fitting that the last three meetings have been decided by a combined 11 points. A last second field goal gave the Cyclones a big win over Iowa last season and kickstarted seven straight victories to start the campaign.

2024 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	31.1	T-41	Points	22.9	41
Rushing	160.5	70	Rushing	188.4	109
Passing	255.7	39	Passing	165.6	1
Total	416.2	39	Total	353.9	51
Sacks	16	16	Sacks	16	129

2025 Projection
10-2
2nd in Big 12

Trophy Case



XO

National
Champions



XO

Big 12
Champions



6-13

Bowl
Record



1

Playoff
Appearances