

← Back

Hawkeyes stain Alvarez sendoff: Calhoun stuffed - O-line gives up six sacks on Stocco

*By Jr Ross November 13, 2005 Publication: Chicago Sun-Times (IL) Page: A120 Word
Count: 682*

MADISON, Wis. -- It was slated to be a celebration of Barry Alvarez's 16 seasons as Wisconsin coach. Iowa refused to play along.

The Hawkeyes ruined Alvarez's going-away party Saturday, beating the 19th-ranked Badgers 20-10 and dashing the thin hopes Wisconsin had of sharing a piece of the Big Ten title.

Alvarez, who will step down after this season but remain Wisconsin's athletic director, built a program that has been known for a punishing running game and a solid defense. But Wisconsin had neither Saturday as Iowa (6-4, 4-3 Big Ten) dominated both sides of the ball in the final three quarters and became bowl eligible for the fifth straight season.

“It was most important that we felt good about our football team,” Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said of crashing Wisconsin's party. “I had to be a little selfish out there.”

Wisconsin (8-3, 5-3) seemed poised to send Alvarez out a winner early, taking a 10-0 lead in the first quarter and moving the ball largely through the air. But Iowa clamped down from there as the Wisconsin offense sputtered to just 72 more yards before its final drive of the game with the outcome well out of reach.

The Badgers' line had been a strength all season, but it gave up nine sacks in a loss to Penn State last week as running back Brian Calhoun was held to just 38 yards. Missing left guard Matt Lawrence, who was injured last week, the Badgers struggled offensively again. John Stocco was constantly under pressure and sacked six times, while Calhoun was held to a career-low 18 yards on 15 carries.

Iowa tied the game at 10 in the third quarter after an eight-play, 75-yard drive when Drew Tate hit Champ Davis on third-and-goal from the 6. Wisconsin lost defensive end Matthew Shaughnessy on the play, and Iowa seemed to exploit the hole he left behind.

Albert Young ran for 44 yards on the next Iowa drive before Tate hit Ryan Majerus with a 13-yard touchdown pass. The Hawkeyes took their first lead at 17-10, and Wisconsin didn't come close again.

Young finished with 127 yards on 26 carries, the sixth consecutive game he has gone over the 100-yard mark and the seventh time this season. He has 1,198 yards rushing.

Young's strong second half ensured the Hawkeyes wouldn't repeat last week's performance, when they blew a 27-14 lead in the final minutes and lost 28-27 to Northwestern. Iowa's only blemish in the fourth quarter was Young's fumble at the Wisconsin 2 with 1:21 left.

Despite his struggles Saturday, Calhoun now has 1,274 yards rushing and 556 yards receiving on the year, just the second player in Big Ten history to top 1,000 yards rushing and 500 yards receiving in the same season. The first to do it was Iowa's Ronnie Harmon in 1985 with 1,166 yards rushing and 699 yards receiving.

Alvarez's coaching career came full circle Saturday. A high school coach in small-town Iowa in the 1970s, he got his first college job at Iowa under former coach Hayden Fry. After a pit stop at Notre Dame, Alvarez came to Wisconsin for his first college head-coaching job, taking over a program that had been mired in mediocrity and turning it into a consistent winner.

In the last game before Alvarez came to Wisconsin, an announced crowd of 29,776 showed up at Camp Randall as the Badgers finished the 1989 season 2-9.

On Saturday, a Camp Randall record crowd of 83,184 was on hand to commemorate Alvarez's final home game. The school gave out thousands of white towels to fans that read, "Thanks, Coach. Job well done." Following the game, the school showed a montage of Alvarez's highlights that include three Rose Bowl championships, a 7-3 mark in bowl games and a 116-73-4 record.

The Badgers finish the regular season Nov. 25 at Hawaii.

"It's hard after a loss to sit there and reflect on the 16 years," Alvarez said.

Color Photo: Morry Gash/AP Photo / Wisconsin's Barry Alvarez walks off the sideline

Saturday after the Badgers lost in his final home game as head coach. Color Photo: Morry Gash/AP Photo / Iowa lineman Ryan Bain throws Wisconsin quarterback John Stocco to the ground.

Chicago Sun-Times (IL)

Date: November 13, 2005

Page: A120

Copyright (c) 2005 Chicago Sun-Times, Inc.