



Hawkeyes' bowl game prompts question: What's in a name?

By Mike Owen, executive director of the Iowa Policy Project

Of course we're all excited that the Iowa Hawkeyes will be playing Jan. 2 against Tennessee in the — uh, what's the name of that bowl again?

It has something to do with tax preparation. (No royalties are being paid for publication of this message, so no need to repeat it.) So for now, let's just call it the Pay Your Taxes Bowl.

Or, to recognize what we do by preparing and paying our taxes, we could make it the Feed the Hungry Bowl, the Educate the Children Bowl, the Fix the Highways Bowl, or the Clean the Air and Water Bowl.

In years past, most bowl games promoted a tradition, or an image, related to their locale. This game in Jacksonville, Florida, used to be called the Gator Bowl, and that was the name of the stadium. Now it's played in a rebuilt stadium named for a bank.

The Gator Bowl has a storied past, including a good game in 1983 between the Iowa Hawkeyes and the Florida Gators, who won 14-6.

Even the Beatles played there once — though it was for a concert, not a gridiron battle with the Beach Boys — and that seems more

interesting than the heavy-handed advertising that dominates these games now. Maybe the Fab Four Bowl? Strawberry Fields Bowl? Hold Your Hand Bowl?

There was a time when the Orange Bowl wasn't connected to the name of a delivery service or a credit card company. There was a Citrus Bowl in Florida and a Peach Bowl in Georgia. I remember going to the Alamo Bowl once, happy to see the name bound to the enduring history of San Antonio, with no connection to rental cars.

Almost all bowls now feature a corporate sponsor's name, so it may be in the nature of things that when many Iowa fans remember "The Catch" by Warren Holloway to beat LSU as the clock expired, they involuntarily associate it with the name of a credit card.

Still, we should acknowledge the irony that with the corporatization of all that is good, like football bowl games, at least one bowl game is associated with paying taxes instead of avoiding them.

Just understand: Some of us will still think of it as the Gator Bowl.

Go Hawks!

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