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◀ COACHES PROFILE ▶

Bruce leads CSU to Freedom
Coach renown for turning around struggling programs

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

Earle Bruce is at it again. It seems that everywhere this man goes, good things follow closely behind.

In just his second year as Colorado State's head coach, the 59-year-old Bruce has led the Rams to the school's second bowl appearance ever.

Colorado State's 8-4 record (6-1 in conference) was good enough to grab second place in the Western Athletic Conference and earn an invitation to play Oregon in the Freedom Bowl on Dec. 29.

Not bad for a school that finished 1-10 the year before Bruce came to town.

Bruce is no stranger to turning around programs. He has practically made a habit of it.

In his 18 previous seasons as a head coach, he compiled a 137-72-2 (.654) record, good enough for ninth place on the all-time list for winning percentage.

He is known throughout the coaching ranks as a hard-nosed type of coach that doesn't cut corners to gain a quick fix. He prefers to work hard and lay the foundation for something down the road.

The University of Tampa was his first stop as he led his team to a 10-2 record and a victory over Kent State in the 1972 Tangerine Bowl, the Spartans' first-ever bowl appearance. His performance there was good enough to earn him the task of rebuilding the program at Iowa



Earle Bruce

State. After three consecutive 4-7 campaigns at Iowa State, Bruce's magic began to pay off. From 1976-78 the Cyclones rolled. They won eight games in each of those years, which was good enough to earn invitations to the 1977 Peach Bowl and 1978 Hall of Fame Bowl.

The next stop on the Bruce express was Columbus, Ohio and the head spot at his alma mater, Ohio State. A 1953 graduate of the University, Bruce spent nine successful seasons in Columbus before being fired near the end of the 1987 season.

Bruce's 81-26 record, and eight bowl appearances in nine years at Ohio State left many people, including Bruce, wondering why he was let go.

After a highly-publicized settlement with Ohio State, Bruce looked for a new job without all

the limelight he had at Ohio State. He found it first at Northern Iowa and then at Colorado State.

His stop in Northern Iowa was brief but he was able to post a 5-6 season in 1988 before becoming Colorado State's 13th head coach in December of that year.

In his first year in Fort Collins Colo., Bruce led his team to a 5-5-1 record and earned himself Coach of the Year honors in the WAC. The team's turnaround was the second-best in the country and was accomplished against the nation's third most difficult schedule.

By leading the 1990 Rams into the Freedom Bowl, Bruce joins Notre Dame's Lou Holtz and Indiana's Bill Mallory as the only three college coaches to lead four different teams to bowl games.

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