

# Hilton 'world's largest swimming pool'

**Water is standing 13 feet deep in Iowa State's Hilton Coliseum as the result of flooding. The basketball floor is destroyed.**

By JOHN NIYO  
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**Ames, Ia. —** After tiptoeing through a controversial selection process two months ago, new Iowa State athletic director Gene Smith

is knee deep in a watery problem.

This is what he faced Saturday as a result of flooding in Ames:

- Hilton Coliseum, home to several Iowa State athletic teams, is filled with 13 feet of water, up to the first row of parquet-level seats.

- The Hilton basketball floor, stored on a lower level, was destroyed.

- The Iowa State volleyball team, which plays in the fall in the coliseum, might not have a place to play.

- Although Cyclone Stadium was apparently unharmed, the

football practice field is under water. If it is extensively damaged, the football team could be forced to begin fall practice in August on the stadium turf, where there is a greater risk of injury.

"I remember dealing with a big snowstorm in South Bend when I was (at Notre Dame)," Smith said from the University Inn, where he is staying until he finds a home in Ames. "But never, never anything like this. It's just unbelievable."

Water several feet deep stretches from Iowa State's Recreation Building through the Iowa

State Center complex to Cyclone Stadium.

Hilton Coliseum is trapped in the middle.

Andy Long, director of marketing for the Iowa State Center, said initial sand-bagging efforts were futile.

"We had about 8 feet of water that filled up Hilton in about 45 minutes," Long said. "Nobody expected anything like this."

"When Squaw Creek flooded in 1990, water neared the Hilton entrances, but didn't advance any farther.

"Now we have the world's largest indoor swimming pool."

Smith said it's too early to make damage estimates.

"Some programs may be delayed or displaced," he said. "The most damaging thing, of course, is Hilton. If we can get the water down, then we'll be able to assess the situation."

School officials agree that damages will exceed \$1 million, but it could be months before anyone can

ISU Please turn to Page 9D

## Hilton becomes swimming pool

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*Continued from Page 1D*

be sure.

Volunteers — from Iowa State President Martin Jischke to students who responded to university pleas — worked non-stop Saturday, sand-bagging both the east and west entrances to keep more water from rushing into Hilton.

The National Guard teamed with Iowa State Center technical crews, pumping water out of the arena. Long said 2,850 gallons of water per minute were being pumped out of Hilton and into Squaw Creek beyond a natural levee. The water level in Hilton late Saturday afternoon had dropped so that the scoreboards just above the player tunnels were finally visible.

Inside, it appears the damage will be extensive. Long said a new basketball floor alone could cost as much as \$100,000. The basketball locker rooms, a weight room and the Hilton mechanical room were also submerged.

Smith said the volleyball team could be most affected since its season begins in the fall.

Assistant athletic director Bill Goldring said Iowa State officials and volunteers saved what would have resulted in tens of thousands of dollars damage to the football offices in the Olsen Building next to the stadium.

"We had about 25 to 30 people out there from 1 to 3:30 (a.m.) sand-bagging the Rec Center and then the Olsen Building," Goldring said. "So everything in there stayed dry."

Goldring said water had seeped into the Rec Center, however, and the indoor track and basketball courts there could be damaged, along with several handball courts and the physical therapy center.

Pumps under the artificial turf helped Cyclone Stadium and Jack Trice Field.

"The stadium is probably all right," Goldring said. "There were four concession stands that were

### Midnight Madness canceled by flood

Ames city officials canceled the Midnight Madness road race scheduled for Saturday night.

Race director Roman Lynch said city officials informed him at 3:30 p.m. that due to the threat of more flooding, the race would have to be canceled.

"I think we could have done it," Lynch said. "But it was their decision. I think it probably was a very tough decision."

Lynch said officials expected more flooding after heavy rains north of Ames hit in mid-afternoon. With much of the city resources directed toward preventing further flooding, Lynch said officials concluded that holding the annual road race would not be feasible. They also cited the possibility of stranding runners in Ames.

Barring further rain, Lynch also said he plans to hold a fun-run next weekend, but the 5- and 10-kilometer races will not be rescheduled.

— John Niyo

completely destroyed, but as far as the field, I think the pumps worked fine."

The practice field, however, remains under water, and might not be saved. If rain continues and the standing water stays, the football team could be forced to practice on the stadium turf.

It is an unwelcome option because of the additional pounding the artificial turf creates and the risk of injury for the players.

"Of course, you don't want to have to do that," Smith said. "If the rain would just stop so everything can dry off, I would think the practice field would be all right. But we're looking at worst-case scenarios here."