

TEMPE -- Former Arizona State head football coach John Cooper shared his thoughts on the hiring of Todd Graham. Both Cooper and Graham saw times as head coach at Tulsa (in different decades). Cooper led ASU to its first Rose Bowl appearance and victory in 1987 against Michigan. His thoughts are below.

On the hiring of Todd Graham

"I think it's a great hire for Arizona State and certainly for Todd. I told someone earlier that I think Lisa (Love) hit a home run with this hire. I've known Todd for four or five years now and we both were coaches at Tulsa. I've watched his teams these past couple years and I'm very impressed with the up-tempo pace and enthusiasm and the job he did building that program (in Tulsa). The facilities, the football team, the fan base – he did it all down there. I think he'll be a good fit (at ASU) and I look forward to following his team."

On connections to both Tulsa and now ASU

"I hope Todd has as much success there as I did. I had three great years at ASU. Certainly, the '87 Rose Bowl team is a team I'll never forget. They were probably as good as any team in the country that year. We had great players and a great team and I hope Todd can do the same. I know one thing for sure and that's that I was happy there and I think Todd will be, too."

On advice he gave Todd

"I told him that, 'You've got to recruit California - that's no secret - and get some of those players.' If you don't get them, they go to Oregon, Washington and Southern Cal and you have to play against them. He's certainly got to get the best players in Arizona, but he's also got to go nationwide. You've got to go where you have to go. Recruiting is the name of the game and you've got to get people. And I also told him that the next three months will be the best weather he's ever been in in his life and I'll be thinking of him as he gets going down there."