



Boomerang



Tampa Bay Bowl Association Official Newsletter

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OutbackBowl.com

Florida and Iowa to Battle in Outback Bowl

By Joey Johnston

If you like defense, then you're going to love the Outback Bowl matchup between the No. 20 Florida Gators (8-4) and No. 21 Iowa Hawkeyes (8-4).

Defense has largely carried the Gators and Hawkeyes to this point, where they are each positioned to earn a ninth victory and fuel their ambitions for conference championships in 2017.

The expectations have been clear for the Gators and Hawkeyes. They are tough outs, competitive units that rose up to deliver two of the most memorable results in college football this season.

With their backs against the wall, the Gators traveled to LSU on Nov. 19, needing a victory to assure its second consecutive SEC East Division title. The outlook did not seem promising. The Gators were without seven injured starters as they headed to the bayou to face the red-hot Tigers in a game that was rescheduled from Gainesville due to the early October threat of Hurricane Matthew.

The Gators produced one of the most memorable performances in recent program history, upsetting LSU 16-10 and ending the game with what many believe was the best goal-line stand in Florida history.

Florida's defensive heartbeat is middle linebacker Jarrad Davis, an aggressive sideline-to-sideline performer whose presence was still evident when he missed three games with a high ankle sprain.

"I can't say enough good things about this guy, how he's built, how he's wired," said Gators coach Jim McElwain.

Florida's tradition of excellent defensive-back play continued with first-team All-SEC performer Jalen Tabor and Quincy Wilson, his cornerback partner.

Up front, the Gators utilized a fleet of players due to their depth and injuries, relying on the formidable presence of defensive tackle Caleb Brantley.

The Gators are sixth nationally in total defense (allowing just

298.6 yards per game), while ranking third against the pass (156.3) and 36th against the run (142.3).

Offensively, the Gators will look for opportunities with senior quarterback Austin Appleby, running back Jordan Scarlett (795 yards) and wide receiver Antonio Callaway (47 receptions for 666 yards).

It will be a challenge against a Hawkeye defense (24th nationally at 352.8 yards per game) that features a pair of All-Big Ten first-team senior performers, 6-foot-4, 310-pound defensive tackle Jaleel Johnson and lockdown cornerback Desmond King.

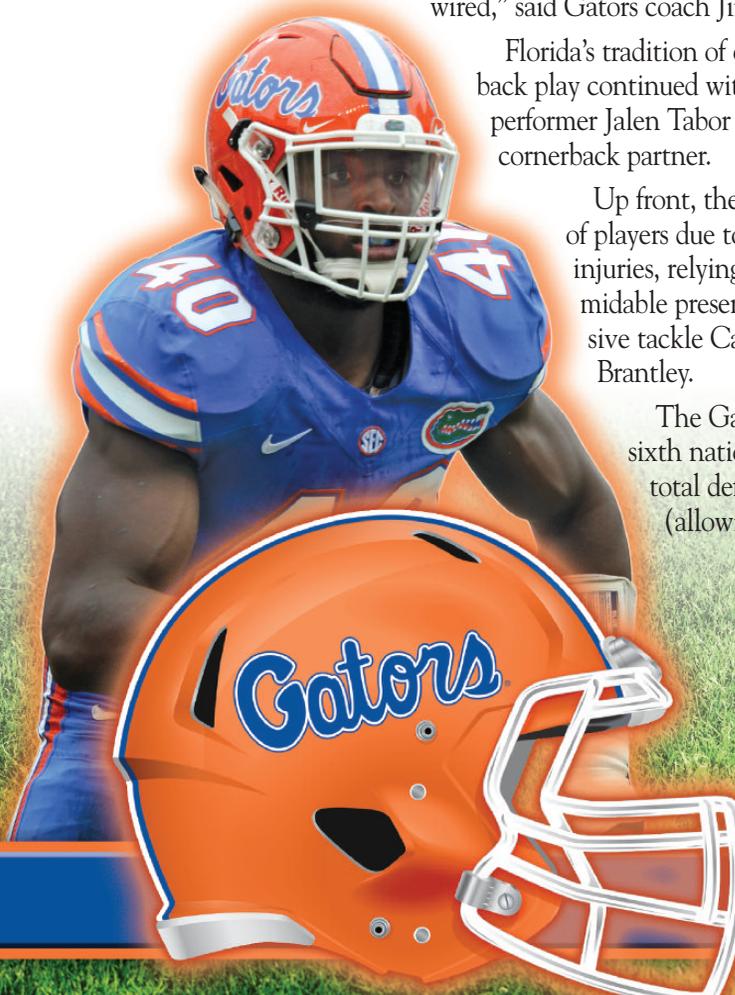
Following a magical year in which the Hawkeyes went 12-0 before reaching the Big Ten Championship Game and earning a spot in the Rose Bowl, this season provided more challenges. But when things were sliding with a two-game losing streak, Iowa rose up to stun Michigan 14-13 in one of the season's most spirited upsets. The high-flying Wolverines were limited to a season-low 201 yards.

"That was all about our players and the heart they showed that night," Ferentz said. "They got it done."

Iowa's offense, on an upswing in the late season with victories against Illinois (28-0) and Nebraska (40-10), has been getting it done, too. With quarterback C.J. Beathard and running back LeShun Daniels leading the way, the Hawkeyes became the Big Ten leader (and ninth-best team nationally) in red-zone offense, scoring during 35 of 38 trips inside the opponent's 20-yard line.

Ferentz said he's delighted to be back in Tampa for Iowa's fifth Outback Bowl and what he describes as "one of the great bowl experiences this program has ever had."

Meanwhile, McElwain said he's hopeful of finishing on a high note, calling Tampa a "great Gator city" and stating the team's excitement over the Outback Bowl trip would be best punctuated with a victory. "We need to finish the job with a victory."



Coaches Shine At Debartolo Contract Signing Party

More than 800 Outback Bowl supporters got to meet the coaches from the University of Florida and the University of Iowa at the **DeBartolo Contract Signing Party** December 8th.

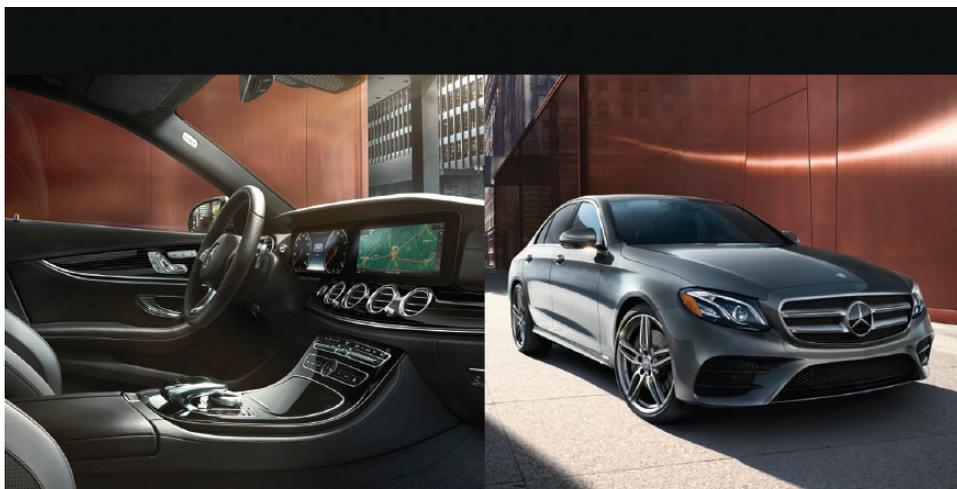
After spending two hours doing interviews with local media outlets, Gator's Head Coach Jim McElwain and Hawkeye's Head Coach Kirk Ferentz mingled with Outback Bowl Sponsors, Club Members and their guests in the

East Club of Raymond James Stadium.

Supporters also got to hear the coaches speak while feasting on food from Outback Steakhouse.

Guests even got a chance to meet the now famous "Bloom Man" and "Shrimp Girl" featured in the Outback Steakhouse videos on social media.

The event was capped-off with the coaches signing a ceremonial contract agreeing to play in the bowl game on January 2nd.



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Fans Enjoy Fun In The Sun At Clearwater Beach Day



One of the most popular annual traditions of Outback Bowl Week for thousands of visiting fans is when they join the teams, college bands, cheerleaders and local residents for **Clearwater Beach Day**. This year's event will be held Friday, December 30th and feature performances by the University of Florida and the University of Iowa marching bands and cheerleader squads. The day also includes live music on stage, the Budweiser skydiving team, a tug-of-war contest between the cheerleading squads, and even a pie eating contest among fans. Fans will also be able to take their picture in front of a huge custom designed Outback Bowl sand sculpture, as well as dolphin statues designed with the team uniforms. They can also meet Outback Steakhouse mascots "Bloom Man" and "Shrimp Girl."

Dozens of visiting and local media typically cover the event as well with TV footage of fans enjoying the beautiful beaches of Pinellas County beamed throughout the country.

All the festivities take place behind the **Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa** (just north of Pier 60) and run from 11:30 AM to about 4:00 PM. Fans are encouraged to arrive early for the best parking. Food and drinks along with bowl merchandise will be available for purchase. The event is cosponsored by **Visit St Pete-Clearwater**, the **Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce**, the **City of Clearwater**, the **Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa**, **Clearwater Gas System**, **Allegiant**, **St Pete-Clearwater International Airport**, **Mix 100.7FM** and **95.7 The Beat FM** radio.

For more information on the Outback Bowl and Clearwater Beach Day go to www.OutbackBowl.com or call the Bowl office at 813-874-BOWL.

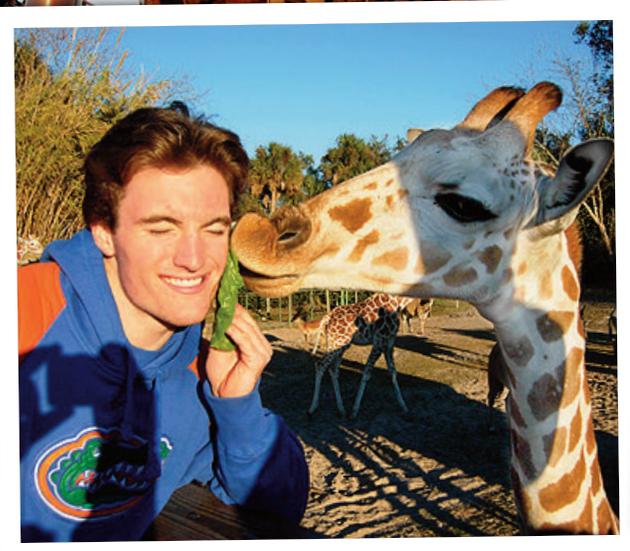


Teams Expect Wild Time At Busch Gardens

Outback Bowl teams and fans will be able to experience the wild rides and shows at Busch Gardens when they head to the park on Wednesday, December 28th. Each year the world famous theme park hosts the participating teams for a special day during "Bowl Week."

The park features many exciting coasters such as Falcon Fury, North Americas tallest freestanding drop tower, Cheetah Chase, Montu and more.. Players will mix with fans to enjoy these rides along with shows and animal experiences. So don't be surprised if that big guy sitting next to you on Sheikra with a death grip on the handles is a famous All American football player for one of the teams!

In addition, the college bands are expected to make an appearance at the park on January 1st. Normal park admission prices apply and tickets are available at the gate or online at www.BuschGardens.com Teams typically arrive in mid-afternoon.



Celebrate The New Year With The Outback Bowl

Tens-of-thousands of Outback Bowl fans will once again ring in the New Year in Tampa's Ybor City historic district and at Channelside Bay Plaza on December 31st. The **Outback Bowl New Year's Eve Parade** will kick off the evening festivities at 5:30 PM. as about sixteen high school marching bands from around the country will join the University of Florida and the University of Iowa bands, as well as, numerous floats and other units as they travel along historic 7th avenue.



Immediately following the Parade both college marching bands and their cheerleading squads will then participate in a pep rally at the stage on the corner of 14th St. and 7th avenue where the groups will take turns firing up their fans.

At the conclusion of the pep rally bowl fans who want to continue the party have plenty of restaurants and other nightlife options to choose from right there in Ybor, or they can take a trolley ride or short drive to the downtown waterfront for the **"Light Up Tampa Bay"** celebration at **Channelside Bay Plaza**. This dynamic entertainment complex on the downtown waterfront is home to restaurants and night clubs such as Splitsville. The event will also feature live entertainment throughout the night followed by a spectacular midnight fireworks show over the waterfront.



Fans can also make it a special evening at the **Florida Aquarium New Year's Aqua Eve Party** from 9:00 PM – 1:00 AM featuring food buffets, complimentary beer & wine, live entertainment and a great view of the fireworks show, all for one inclusive price.

The Parade & Pep Rally is sponsored by **Bud Light, 970 WFLA, MIX 100.7, 98 ROCK FM** and the **City of Tampa**. For more information on "Light Up Tampa Bay" at Channelside Bay Plaza call (813) 223-4250, and to purchase tickets to the Florida Aquarium New Year's Aqua Eve Party call (813) 273-4030 or go online to www.FLAquarium.org.

Lots To Do On New Year's Day In Tampa Bay

With this year's Outback Bowl being played on Monday, January 2nd fans will have a unique opportunity to do some different things on New Year's Day throughout the Tampa Bay area.

After ringing in the new year Saturday night, fans can head back to Channelside Bay Plaza for **Outback Bowl Fan Rally** on New Year's day from 12:00P.M.-6:00P.M. Enjoy entertainment and challenge yourself to a variety of spirited on-site activities. After mastering the fun, take a well-deserved break with food and beverage from any of Channelside Bay Plaza's unique restaurants or bars.

Fans can also celebrate their tails off at **Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo "Tailgate Days"** from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The zoo will feature interactive games, special Tailgate food & drinks, animal mingles

and sponsor activities. Purchase tickets in advance online or wear Outback Bowl team colors for a discount on tickets at the front gate.

Sunday evening catch the many high school marching bands from around the country in town to perform in the Outback Bowl Coca-Cola Halftime Show during their **High School Band Field Show Festival** competition at Jefferson High School. The competition kicks off at 6:00 PM.

Of course you can also head to one of our many attractions or our outstanding beaches of Clearwater and St Petersburg for a little fun in the sun. Go to our web site www.outbackbowl.com for a calendar of events and information on things to do. After all, there is a lot to do when you are playing Football in Paradise!



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Boomerang 2016-2017 Calendar of Events



Note: All events, locations, dates and times are subject to change. ** (indicates event open to general public all others are invitation-only)

DECEMBER 27 LADIES LUNCHEON

Spouses of both teams' coaches will enjoy a special luncheon hosted by Bonefish Grill. (Private event)

PLAYERS NIGHT AT SPLITSVILLE**

Join the teams as they enjoy the fun at Splitsville at Channelside. Watch the teams compete off the field in a bowling challenge. Teams only from 6:00-7:15 PM. Doors open to public at 7:15 P.M.



DECEMBER 28 BUSCH GARDENS TEAM OUTING**

Both teams and their fans will enjoy the unique blend of thrilling rides, live shows and a premier zoo. Admission tickets are available at buschgardens.com or at the front gate.

DECEMBER 29 PLAYERS HOSPITAL VISITS

Players and coaches from both teams will brighten the day for children at Tampa General Hospital (no fans please).



TEAM NIGHT AT TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING**

Both teams will attend the Tampa Bay Lightning NHL hockey game against the Toronto Maple Leafs at the Amalie Arena in downtown Tampa. The puck drops at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster or the Arena box office.



DECEMBER 30 CLEARWATER BEACH DAY**

Join the school marching bands and cheerleaders as they enjoy the sun and beaches at the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa. Enjoy this fun day which will also features live music, skydivers, a tug-of-war and other contests from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Visit St Pete-Clearwater, The Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Hilton, Clearwater Gas System, Allegiant, St Pete Clearwater International Airport, 95.7 the Beat and Mix 100.7 FM Radio.

METLIFE/MERCEDES-BENZ GRIDIRON GALA

MetLife & Mercedes-Benz host this prestigious evening for bowl VIP's and the college administrators at the Marriott Waterside (by invitation only).



DECEMBER 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE PARADE & PEP RALLY**

Eclectic Ybor City is the site of this festive celebration featuring the Outback Bowl New Year's Eve Parade and a pep rally by the college marching bands & cheerleaders. The parade will feature floats and about fifteen marching bands from around the country! This free family event is sponsored by Bud Light, Mix 100.7FM Radio, 970 WFLA and 98 Rock Radio and the City of Tampa. Be there early. The Parade starts at 5:30 p.m. and runs along 7th Avenue.

LIGHT UP TAMPA BAY AT CHANNELSIDE**

Channelside will "Light Up Tampa Bay" on New Year's Eve with live entertainment and a midnight Fireworks Show and Ball Drop along the downtown Tampa waterfront. Enjoy the numerous restaurants and night spots at Channelside. For more information call Channelside at (813) 223-4250.

DECEMBER 31

FLORIDA AQUARIUM AQUA EVE PARTY**

You can also choose to celebrate the night at the Florida Aquarium New Year's "Aqua Eve" party featuring food buffet, beer, wine and live entertainment for one price. Purchase tickets at www.FLAquarium.org

JANUARY 1

BATTLE OF THE BANDS AT BUSCH GARDENS**

Join the two college marching bands at Busch Gardens as they square-off for a special "Battle of the Bands" performance. Admission to park required. Time TBD.

CHANNELSIDE FAN RALLY

Featuring a variety of spirited on-site entertainment. Challenge yourself in an array of games and activities then enjoy Channelside Bay Plaza's unique restaurants and bars! Rally from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

TAILGATE DAY AT THE LOWRY PARK ZOO

Visit the Zoo from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the wildest tailgate in Tampa Bay! Enjoy interactive games, animal mingles, tailgate food & drinks, and sponsor activities. Wear team colors to get discount on tickets.

JANUARY 2

PREGAME BOWL BASH**

Bowl fans can warm-up for the big game with live music and a pep rally, sponsored by Spectrum Communications, Coca-Cola, Newsradio 970AM and 620 WDAE Radio. Food & refreshments will be available for purchase. The fun begins at 10:00 a.m. on the south plaza outside the stadium between gates C & D, so come out early.

TAMPA GENERAL HOSPITAL PREGAME SHOW**

Enjoy a colorful pregame show featuring the pageantry of high school and college bands along with numerous special activities including skydivers. A popular Outback Bowl tradition you won't want to miss. Show time begins at 12:15 p.m.

OUTBACK BOWL 2017**

The Outback Bowl matching two of college football's best teams from the SEC and Big Ten Conference. Kickoff is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. (Gates open 11:30 a.m.).

COCA-COLA HALFTIME SHOW

Wait until you see this colorful show featuring more than 3,000 performers!



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