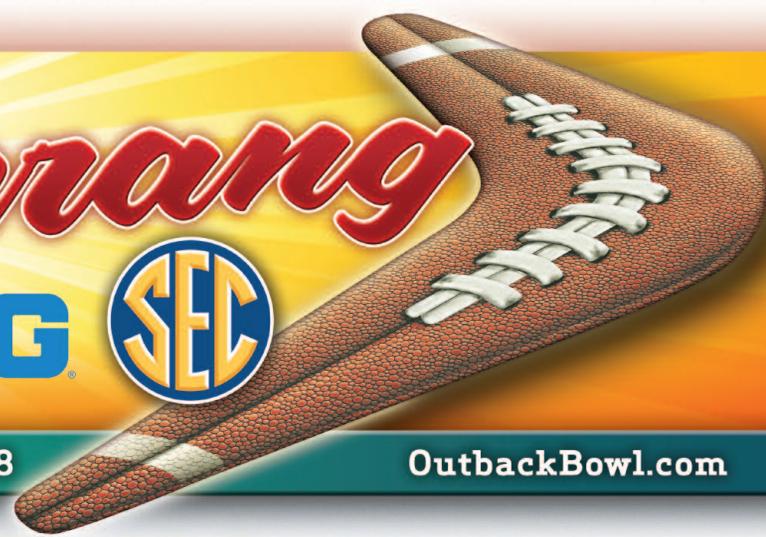




# Boomerang



## Hawkeyes To Meet Bulldogs For First Time In History

By Joey Johnston  
(An excerpt from Game Program Matchup story)

Somehow, despite more than a century of potential opportunities, the Iowa Hawkeyes and Mississippi State Bulldogs have avoided each other on the football field.

Because there's no history between the programs, it's easy to assume that the Big Ten Conference's Hawkeyes (8-4) and SEC's Bulldogs (8-4) have little in common heading into the Outback Bowl at Raymond James Stadium.

### But a quick glance indicates a mirror-image matchup.

- The Hawkeyes and Bulldogs are guided by respected head coaches, each hailing from the football-fanatic region of Western Pennsylvania. They speak the same gridiron language.
- The defenses, which grudgingly allow minimal yardage and points, are among the nation's best units.
- The offenses have matured into effective, quick-strike operations, paced by under-the-radar playmakers.
- Then there are the fan bases. Whether it's the cowbell-clanging supporters from Mississippi State or the black-and-gold diehards from Iowa, they are each as rabid, emotional and loyal as any group in America.

"Our fans come early and they stay late," first-year Mississippi State coach Joe Moorhead said. "The biggest thing is their passion and support of the players. And those cowbells are the most unique thing I've seen in 20 years as a coach."

Moorhead already has first-hand experience with Iowa's fan fervor. As Penn State's offensive coordinator in 2016-17, he had two meetings against the Hawkeyes, including a 21-19 victory for the Nittany Lions that was secured on the game's final play at Iowa's Kinnick Stadium.

"I've been in the biggest stadiums in the country," Moorhead said. "On that last drive, that's as loud as I've ever heard it at any stadium."

That isn't a surprising story for Iowa's Kirk Ferentz, who is completing his 20th season as Hawkeyes' head coach. "There are no (NFL) teams," notes Ferentz.

"It's the same thing in Mississippi. So all the focus is on the state universities.

"Iowa fans showed up in the same way when we weren't good, back in the 60s and 70s. They are really loyal and support you, no matter what."

The Hawkeyes have been an easy team to

support this season. Iowa was painstakingly close to competing for a Big Ten title. It endured a three-game losing streak — losing those contests by a combined 12 points — and dropped a 28-17 decision to Wisconsin after leading in the fourth quarter.

"We've had championship teams, but we've also had teams that weren't quite at the championship level that I consider championship caliber," Ferentz said. "It's how they do things on a day-to-day basis. This team has done a great job of preparing weekly, showing up and competing hard. They have found a way to succeed."

Much of that success has revolved around Iowa's defense.

The Hawkeyes rank seventh nationally in total defense (289.6 yards allowed per game) and first in the Big Ten in scoring defense (17.4 points). They have 18 interceptions (tied for the nation's best) and 34 sacks (the program's top mark since 2003).

Iowa will be tested by a Bulldog offense that's paced by senior quarterback Nick Fitzgerald, who is responsible for 99 career touchdowns, while accounting for a school-record 45 rushing scores and 3,504 rushing yards (the all-time mark for an SEC quarterback).

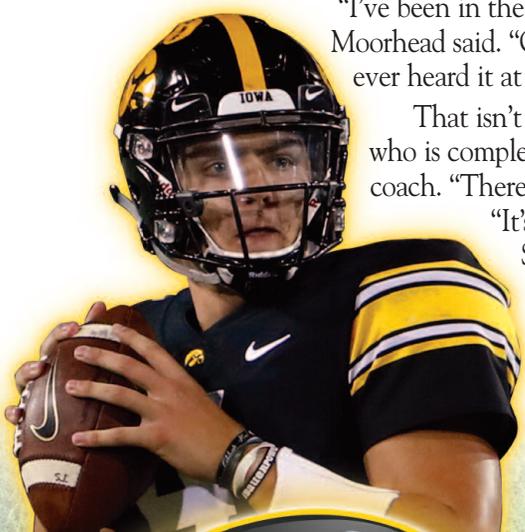
But any examination of Mississippi State must begin with its award-winning defense. Defensive coordinator Bob Shoop oversaw a unit that finished No. 1 in the Football Bowl Subdivision in scoring defense (12.0), fewest touchdowns allowed (12), yards per play allowed (4.14), pass efficiency defense (97.26), red-zone touchdown percentage (25.0) and fewest 50-plus yard plays allowed (0). Additionally, Mississippi State held nine opponents to fewer than 14 points, while finishing among three FBS teams to not allow a 30-point game.

Mississippi State's defense should face one of its most formidable tests of the season against an Iowa offense that averages 31.5 points per game.

"Sometimes, you expect a pitcher's duel and you get a shootout," Moorhead said. "I just know these are two evenly matched teams and it's going to be exciting."

That includes on the field (where the stars are poised to take over) and in the stands (where two of the nation's most passionate fan bases will provide the soundtrack).

**Let the show begin!**



# Supporters Meet The Coaches At Debartolo Contract Signing Party

More than 700 Outback Bowl supporters got to meet the coaches from the University of Iowa and Mississippi State University at the **DeBartolo Contract Signing Party** December 6th.

After doing interviews with local media outlets, Hawkeye Head Coach Kirk Ferentz and Bulldog Head Coach Joe Moorhead mingled with Outback Bowl Sponsors, Club Members and their guests in the West Club of Raymond James Stadium.

Supporters also got to hear from the coaches, as well as the athletic directors while feasting on delicious 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 New Year’s Day.



Check out our photo gallery from the event on the Outback Bowl web site at [www.outbackbowl.com](http://www.outbackbowl.com)

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# Clearwater Beach Day Always A Bowl Week Favorite

*Presented by Visit St Pete Clearwater*

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 Sunday, December 30th and feature performances by the University of Iowa and Mississippi State University 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.

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. There are a number of new parking options along the island and a park and ride ferry service from downtown Clearwater. Food and drinks along with bowl merchandise will be available for purchase.

*So come on out and enjoy our world famous beaches with your Hawkeye and Bulldog friends!*

**Visit St Pete-Clearwater** is the presenting sponsor of the event. Additional sponsors include 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**, **970WFLA**, **620 WDAE** and **93.3 FLZ FM** radio.

For more information on the Outback Bowl and Clearwater Beach Day go to [www.OutbackBowl.com](http://www.OutbackBowl.com) or call the Bowl office at 813-874-BOWL.



# Outback Bowl Parade Highlights New Year's Eve Celebration

The **Outback Bowl New Year's Eve Parade** will kick off the evening festivities as thousands of Outback Bowl fans will once again ring in the New Year in Tampa's Ybor City historic district on December 31st. The parade steps off at 5:30 PM, as thirteen high school marching bands from around the country will join the University of Iowa and Mississippi State University marching bands, as well as, numerous floats and other units. This family-friendly parade will travel along historic 7th avenue in this beautiful and unique Latin quarter of the city.



Immediately following the Parade both college marching bands and their cheerleading squads will then participate in a pep rally on stage in front of the Centro Ybor complex at 16th St. and 7th avenue where the groups will take turns firing up their fans.

The Parade & Pep Rally is sponsored by **Bud Light, 970 WFLA, MIX 100.7, 98 ROCK FM, 620 WDAE** and the **City of Tampa**.



## Players, Fans In For Wild Time At Busch Gardens



Outback Bowl fans will get to join Iowa Hawkeye and Mississippi State players for some wild rides, shows and even animal encounters at Busch Gardens when they head to the park on Saturday, December 29th. Each year the world famous theme park hosts the participating teams for a special day during "Bowl Week."

The park features many wonderful animal exhibits along with 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 the many shows and animal interactions. 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 football player for one of the teams!

Some of the players will get a special opportunity for a behind-the-scenes animal encounter as well.

In addition, the Iowa and MSU Marching bands are expected to make an appearance at the park later in the week on December 31st. Normal park admission prices apply for both days and tickets are available at the gate or online at [www.BuschGardens.com](http://www.BuschGardens.com) Teams typically arrive in mid-afternoon on the Team Day.





# Boomerang 2018-2019 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 26 TEAM WELCOMES

Bowl officials, city officials and media greet the participating teams as they arrive at the team hotels.

## DECEMBER 27 LADIES LUNCHEON

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

## TEAM NIGHT AT TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING\*\*

Both teams will attend the Tampa Bay Lightning NHL hockey game against the Philadelphia Flyers 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 28 PLAYERS HOSPITAL VISITS

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

## PLAYERS NIGHT AT SPLITSVILLE\*\*

Join the teams as they enjoy the fun at Splitsville at Sparkman Wharf. This unique venue offers bowling, billiards, bocce ball and more. Teams only from 6:00-7:00 PM. Doors open to public at 7:00 P.M.

## DECEMBER 29 BUSCH GARDENS TEAM OUTING\*\*

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



## DECEMBER 30 CLEARWATER BEACH DAY\*\* Presented by Visit St Pete - Clearwater

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 feature 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, 93.3FLZ, 970WFLA and 620 WDAE Radio.



## METLIFE/AUDI GRIDIRON GALA

MetLife & Audi Dealers of Tampa Bay host this prestigious evening for bowl VIP's and the college administrators at the Marriott Waterside (by invitation only).

## DECEMBER 31 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.



## 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 100.7, US 103.5, 98Rock, 970 WFLA and 620 WDAE Radio and the City of Tampa. Be there early. The Parade starts at 5:30 p.m. and runs along 7th Avenue.

## JANUARY 1 PREGAME BOWL BASH\*\*

Bowl fans can warm-up for the big game with live music and a pep rally, sponsored by Coca-Cola, Tampa Bay Times, Newsradio 970AM and 620 WDAE Radio. Food & refreshments will be available for purchase. The fun begins at 9:00 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 11:15 a.m.

## OUTBACK BOWL 2019\*\*

The Outback Bowl matching two of college football's best teams from the SEC and Big Ten Conference. Kickoff is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. (Gates open 10:30 a.m.).

## COCA-COLA HALFTIME SHOW

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

## Official Game Sponsors



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