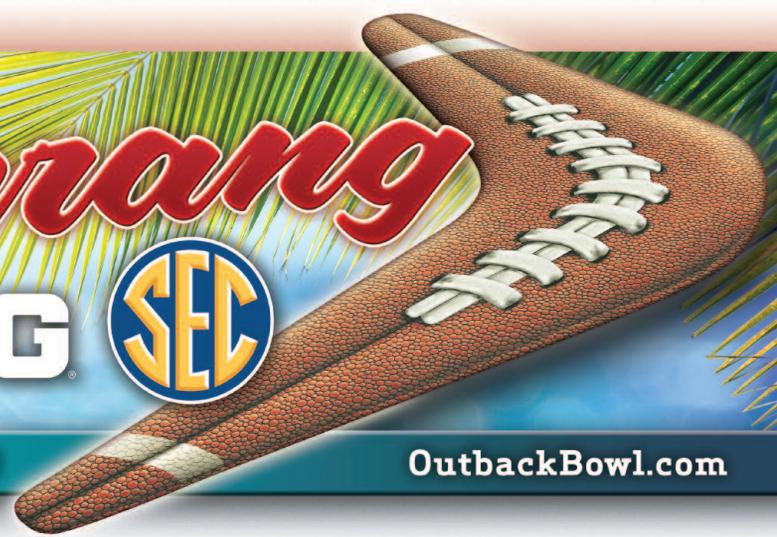




Boomerang



Auburn & Minnesota To Clash In Outback Bowl

By Joey Johnston

Two of the nation's most exciting, fan-pleasing programs — the Minnesota Golden Gophers and the Auburn Tigers — have much at stake in this year's Outback Bowl at Raymond James Stadium.

At varying junctures, there were question marks. Now the Gophers (10-2) and Tigers (9-3) are grappling for a season-punctuating exclamation point.

The Gophers already have achieved history. They won 10 games in the regular season for the first time since 1905 (when Theodore Roosevelt ruled in the White House).

The Tigers already have earned respect. Playing the nation's most difficult schedule, Auburn came painstakingly close to contending for an SEC championship, losing three games by a combined 21 points, all against top 10-ranked opponents.

Along the way, the Tigers had some impressive bookends, defeating Oregon (the eventual Pac-12 Conference champion) 27-21 in the opener and outlasting rival Alabama 48-45 in the regular-season finale.

"We had some tough losses, but we hung in there," said Auburn coach Gus Malzahn, whose team was defeated by LSU (No. 1 seeded in the College Football Playoff), plus New Year's Six bowl participants Georgia and Florida. "We played our best in the last game of the year (against Alabama), which is always good, and that gave us great momentum heading into the Outback Bowl."

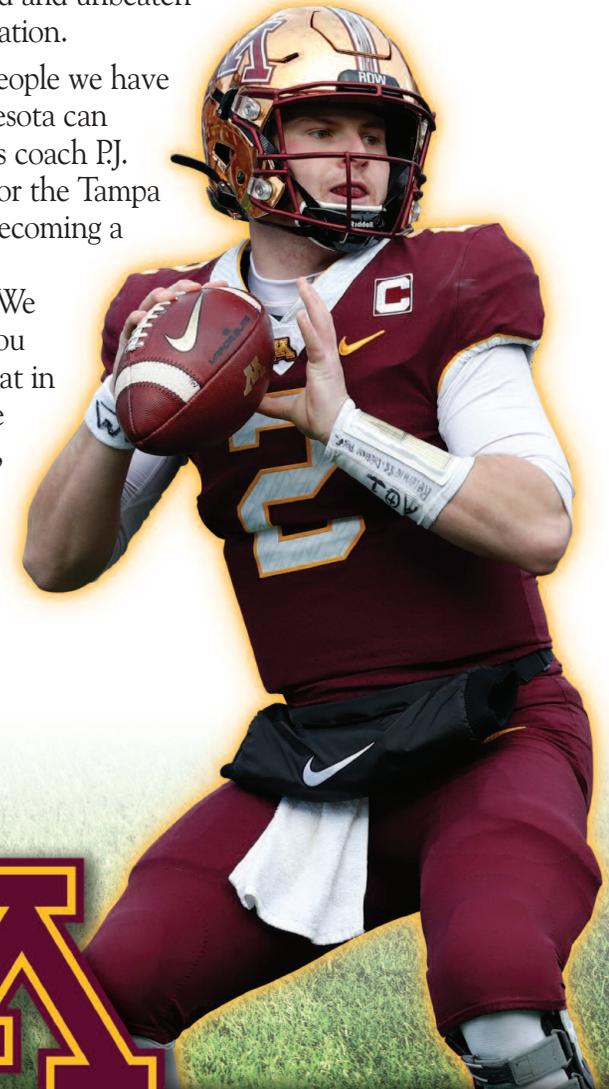
"This is a business trip for us. We have a chance to win 10 games and with the schedule we played, that would really be something. We want to have some fun in Tampa, but our objective is to win the game. And that will be quite a challenge because we're playing one of the best teams in college football."

Who thought anyone would ever say that again about Minnesota? Minnesota? One of the nation's best teams? It's true. When writing the story of this college football season, the Gophers deserve their own chapter.

Minnesota roared to a 9-0 start, including a riveting 31-26 home victory against then-No. 5-ranked and unbeaten Penn State that captivated the nation.

"It just shows what kind of people we have and what kind of program Minnesota can become," said third-year Gophers coach P.J. Fleck, who was receivers coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2012 before becoming a college head coach at Western Michigan and now Minnesota. "We knew we had a special team. If you get enough people rowing the boat in the same direction with the same speed and the same efficiency, you can accomplish extraordinary things. We have just an extraordinary group of young men who came together for a common cause."

continued on next page



The Outback Bowl - A Tampa Bay Treasure

\$1 BILLION
ECONOMIC IMPACT

*over history of the bowl

\$155 MILLION
TO UNIVERSITIES

PLUS \$39 MILLION TO UNIVERSITIES OVER NEXT 6 YEARS

\$1.5 MILLION
TO CHARITIES SINCE 2016

PLUS \$3 MILLION TO CHARITIES OVER NEXT 6 YEARS

AUBURN *Tigers*

MINNESOTA *Gophers*



And that cause is supported on offense and defense. “No doubt about it, Minnesota is a complete team,” Malzahn said.

The most formidable threat is sophomore Rashod Bateman, who was plucked out of Tifton, Ga., by Fleck. Bateman, the Big Ten’s Receiver of the Year, has 57 catches for a school-record 1,170 yards (20.5-yard per catch average) and 11 touchdowns. That included a 203-yard effort against Penn State. Senior Tyler Johnson has the team’s highest catch total with 74 for 1,114 yards and 11 scores. Bateman and Johnson occupied the first-team All-Big Ten positions on teams selected by the coaches and media, marking the first time that happened for one program in conference history.

Steady sophomore quarterback Tanner Morgan (66.1 percent completions, 28 touchdowns, six interceptions) has proven to be a capable leader and his efforts are aided by senior running back Rodney Smith (1,094 yards, eight touchdowns).

The Gophers also have a stingy defense, ranking 15th nationally in total defense (312.8 yards allowed per game), 11th in pass defense (184.8) and 28th in rushing defense (127.9). Sophomore safety Antoine Winfield, Jr. (seven interceptions) was named Big Ten Defensive Back of the Year, while senior linebacker Carter Coughlin earned a spot on the conference’s second team.

“We’re a good team with good players,” Fleck said. “We don’t want to sneak up on anybody. We want it well-known and well-established that we have a good program and I think we have gotten to the point where we are starting to get that kind of notice.

“I know when our players learned that we were going to the Outback Bowl to play Auburn, they were like, ‘Whoa!’ Because it’s Auburn. It’s instant credibility. You know Auburn and know what Auburn stands for.”

This season, Auburn has mostly stood for eye-popping defensive efforts.

The Tigers rank 19th nationally in total defense (323.9 yards allowed per game), 13th in scoring defense (18.6 points per game) and third in fumble recoveries (13).

Auburn’s defense has compiled 90 tackles for a loss this season. The clear leader was senior defensive lineman Derrick Brown, an AP All-American, SEC Defensive Player of the Year and a finalist for seven national awards. The Tigers also are aided by senior defensive end Marlon Davidson, junior linebacker K.J. Britt and senior defensive back Jeremiah Dinson, the team’s leading tackler at 79.

Offensively, Auburn has been carried by quarterback Bo Nix, son of Tigers legend Patrick Nix. The younger Nix set team freshman records for completions (200), yards (2,366) and touchdown passes (15). He also rushed for 301 yards and seven scores.

Nix relies on sophomore running back JaTarvius Whitlow (739 yards, nine touchdowns) and sophomore receiver Seth Williams (801 yards, eight touchdowns).

“There’s no doubt that this Outback Bowl is going to be a dogfight,” Malzahn said. “Minnesota just jumps off the film and that’s a good thing. You want to play a good team.”

“We have taken a huge step this season in our progress and our culture,” Fleck said. “Getting a chance to compete against an SEC powerhouse like Auburn is a challenge that we relish. I can’t express how meaningful it would be to finish our season with a victory. It would really be something.”

For both Minnesota and Auburn, it would be an attention-getting exclamation point.



Coaches Pump Up Bowl Supporters At DeBartolo Contract Signing

More than 700 Outback Bowl sponsors and club members got to meet the coaches from the Auburn University and the University of Minnesota at the *DeBartolo Contract Signing* on December 12th.

After a media session with local media outlets, Gophers Head Coach P. J. Fleck and Tigers Head Coach Gus Malzahn mingled with Outback Bowl supporters and their guests in the West Club of Raymond James Stadium.

Guests also got to hear from the coaches, as well as the athletic directors while feasting on delicious Outback Steakhouse food.



They even got a chance to meet the famous “Bloom Man” and “Shrimp Girl”
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



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Clearwater Beach Day Ready to Welcome Outback Bowl Fans

Presented by Visit St Pete Clearwater



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.

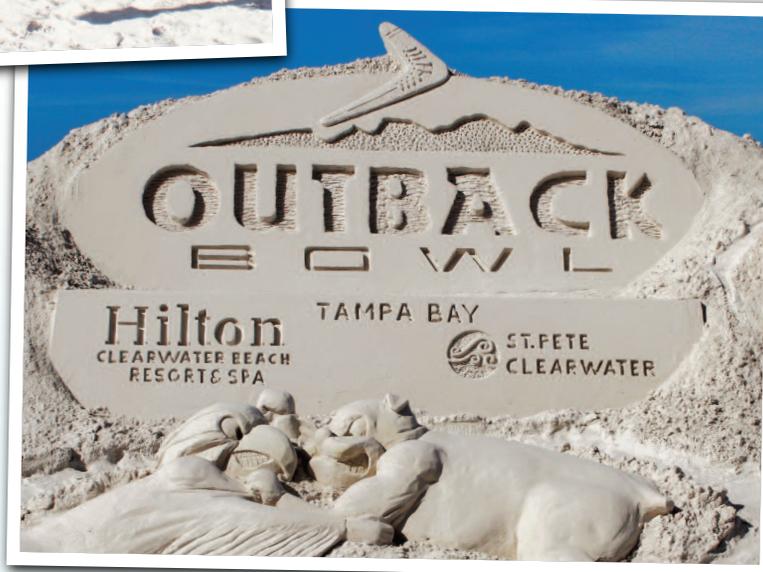
All the festivities take place behind the **Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa** (just north of Pier 60) and run from 11:30 AM to about 4:00 PM. Fans are encouraged to arrive early for the best parking. There are a number of new parking options along the island along with a park and ride ferry service from downtown Clearwater and the Clearwater Ferry service via the water. Food and drinks along with bowl merchandise will be available for purchase.

Come on out and enjoy No. 1 ranked U.S. beaches with your Tiger and Gopher friends!

Visit St Pete-Clearwater is the presenting sponsor of the event. Additional sponsors include the **Amplify Clearwater Chamber**, 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 or call the Bowl office at 813-874-BOWL.

One of the most popular annual traditions of Outback Bowl Week for thousands of visiting fans from around the country is when they join the teams, college bands, cheerleaders and local residents for **Clearwater Beach Day**. This year's event will be held Monday, December 30th and feature performances by the University of Minnesota and Auburn University marching bands and cheerleader



Players, Fans Will Be In For Wild Time At Busch Gardens

Outback Bowl fans will get to join the Minnesota Gopher and Auburn Tiger players for some wild rides, shows and even animal encounters at Busch Gardens when they head to the park on Saturday, December 28th. Each year the world

famous theme park hosts the participating teams for a special day during "Bowl Week."

The park features many great animal exhibits along with exciting coasters such as Falcon Fury, North America's 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 Tigeris with a death grip on the handles is a famous football player for one of the teams!

Some of the players will also get a behind-the-scenes animal encounter as well.

In addition, the Minnesota and Auburn Marching bands are expected to make an appearance at the park on December 31st. Normal park admission prices apply for both days and tickets are available at the gate or online at www.BuschGardens.com. Teams typically arrive in mid-afternoon on the Team Day.



Outback Bowl New Year's Eve Parade To Ring In 2020

Thousands of Outback Bowl fans will head to Tampa's Ybor City historic district on December 31st for the annual *Outback Bowl New Year's Eve Parade*. The parade steps off at 5:30 PM. as about a

dozen high school marching bands from around the country will join the University of Minnesota and Auburn University marching bands, along with 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 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. After the parade check out all the unique places in Ybor or jump on the trolley cars and head to Sparkman Wharf for a laser light show and live music.

It's a fun way to usher in the new year with family and friends!

The Parade & Pep Rally is sponsored by *Bud Light*, 970 WFLA, MIX 100.7, 98 ROCK.





Boomerang 2019-2020 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' coaching staffs will enjoy a special luncheon hosted by Outback Steakhouse. (Private event)

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 PM.

DECEMBER 28 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 29 TEAM NIGHT AT TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING**

Both teams will attend the Tampa Bay Lightning NHL hockey game against the Detroit Red Wings. A few players will also compete in a fun competition at intermission. The puck drops at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available at Ticketmaster or the Amalie Arena box office.



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, Amplify Clearwater, the Hilton, Clearwater Gas System, Allegiant, St. Pete Clearwater International Airport, 93.3FLZ, 97.0WFLA and 62.0 WDAE Radio.



RxBENEFITS GRIDIRON GALA

This is a prestigious evening event for bowl sponsors, VIP's and the college administrators at the Marriott Waterstreet (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 starting at 4:00 p.m. Admission to park required.



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 a dozen high school marching bands from around the country along with the college bands! This free family event is sponsored by Bud Light, Mix 100.7, US 103.5, 98Rock, 97.0 WFLA and 62.0 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, Newsradio 970AM and 62.0 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 12:15 p.m.

OUTBACK BOWL 2020**

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.).

OUTBACK HALFTIME SHOW

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

Official Game Sponsors

