

Cactus Bowl returns to Mountain America Stadium

Fiesta Sports Foundation CEO Erik Moses cites tradition in move to ASU from Chase Field

By Scott Bordow, ASU News
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The Cactus Bowl is coming home to Arizona State University and Mountain America Stadium.

Most recently known as the Rate Bowl, it was held at then-Sun Devil Stadium from 2006 to 2015 under a few names (including the Cactus Bowl) before moving to Chase Field, home of the Arizona Diamondbacks. The bowl game is relocating to Tempe because of impending renovations at Chase Field.

The game will be played on Saturday, Dec. 26, at 5:30 p.m., televised by ABC and will pit teams from the Big 10 and Big 12¹ Conferences.

At a press conference held inside the San Tan Ford Club at Mountain America Stadium, Sun Devil Athletics Director Graham Rossini said having the Cactus Bowl back at ASU is a great promotional vehicle for the university.

"There's no better way to amplify a university and an emotionally connected community than sports," Rossini said.

"So, if it's one more football game that we get to do at home, it's a great opportunity knowing there will be fans of both schools at the game. But there also will be a lot of Valley football fans that want to come support it," he said. "It fits very much in line with what we're trying to do, welcoming people into our venues and using them as community assets."

Fiesta Sports Foundation Executive Director and CEO Erik Moses, whose organization hosts the Cactus Bowl, said returning to Tempe is a nod to the organization's roots.

"We return to a place that is essential to the origin story of the Fiesta Sports Foundation, and that's Arizona State University," Moses said, acknowledging the first Fiesta Bowl was also played at Sun Devil Stadium, in 1971.

Interested in attending?

Fans wanting tickets to the game can visit seatgeek.com. Those interested in premium seating and suites sales can call 480-350-0911 or email premium@fiestasports.org.

“(Mountain America) Stadium is the kind of environment college football fans expect, with seats right on top of the action and familiar sight lines and the kind of amenities that football fans enjoy,” he said.

Rossini said he expects the game will have an indirect positive impact on the ASU football program, the university and the city of Tempe.

“There’s no doubt,” he said. “It showcases where we get to call home. We’re very bullish on this being the best place in the country to live, and I can’t think of a better way to do that than at 5:30 p.m. on a Saturday on ABC at that time of year.

“You can imagine the blimps and wide shots of the stadium between the buttes and Tempe Town Lake and Camelback Mountain. It’s just an incredible showcase.”

Bowl history at a glance

The game was founded in 1989 as the Copper Bowl in Tucson.

It’s gone through several different names in its 37-year life span. In chronological order: Insight.com Bowl, Insight Bowl, Buffalo Wild Wings Bowl, Cactus Bowl, Cheez-It Bowl, Guaranteed Rate Bowl and Rate Bowl

The most-attended game in Cactus Bowl history came on Dec. 30, 2011, when Oklahoma defeated Iowa in Tempe before 54,247 fans.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

¹ ASU, a member of the Big 12, is ineligible to play in the game because it is in the final year of its legacy bowl pool contract with its former conference, the Pac 12.

Main image



Mountain America Stadium is the new home of the Cactus Bowl, to be held on Dec. 26. The bowl was previously held at ASU from 2006 to 2015 at then-Sun Devil Stadium. Photo courtesy of Fiesta Sports Foundation

Gallery



From left: Fiesta Sports Foundation Executive Director and CEO Erik Moses, Tempe Vice Mayor Doreen Garlid, Fiesta Sports Foundation Board Chair Nick Smith and ASU Athletics Director Graham Rossini pose with Spirit, the Fiesta Sports Foundation mascot, at the press conference announcing the return of the Cactus Bowl to be played at Mountain America Stadium this December.



Former Sun Devil quarterback Rudy Carpenter was on hand for the Cactus Bowl press conference. Carpenter started in the final 43 games of his career and was the 2005 Offensive MVP for the Insight Bowl (one of the former names of the Cactus Bowl) as a freshman.



The Cactus Bowl has had different names over the years. On Dec. 27, 2005, ASU defeated Rutgers in what was then called the Insight Bowl at Chase Field in Phoenix. ASU won 45- 40.