



***2024 Heritage Bowl powered by Riot
Game day: December 7, 2024***

Heritage Bowl Powered by Riot country's longest-running NCAA DII bowl tilt, hometown secret
Photo Credit/Keith Speer

Emporia State quarterback Braden Gleason (10) of Muldrow, Okla. scampers away from Southern Nazarene's David Omosigho (10), of Crandall, during the Hornets' 55-24 Heritage Bowl win last December at Community National Bank & Trust Stadium. Gleason was named MVP.

Media Contact: Raymond Linex, 903-229-1422, rlinex@cisd.org

CORSICANA – Borrowing for a bit from that classic played on the west coast, it really is the granddaddy of them all. Corsicana's Heritage Bowl Powered by Riot owns the distinction of being the longest continuous running NCAA Division II bowl game in the country, and it keeps growing every year.

Kickoff this fall is scheduled for noon Saturday, Dec. 7, at Community National Bank & Trust Stadium. It will be the seventh game in the series that started in 2017 as the Corsicana Bowl.

The game has garnered attraction from across the country and invites schools from three conferences – the Lone Star (LSC), Great American (GAC), and Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA). Teams will be announced after the regular season ends Nov. 16.

But the game that is televised nationally remains a secret to many in Navarro County. The Heritage Bowl committee wants to change that in 2024.

This year, all county residents will get in free. Students can wear football jerseys or spirit ware and adults can present IDs.

“Our game has a lot of attractive things to offer our friends in Corsicana and Navarro County,” Heritage Bowl Committee Chair Aric Bonner said. “Usually, the game is played on a gorgeous Saturday afternoon. The stadium is less than a half hour drive for almost everyone in the county. And the level of competition is stellar, as evidenced by who was on the field last year.”

While it pales in comparison to the tenure of the Rose Bowl, which was first played in 1902, the Heritage Bowl Powered by Riot product is first rate. Seventeen records fell during last year’s matchup in which Emporia State and quarterback Braden Gleason topped Southern Nazarene, 55-24, in a battle of Harlon Hill finalist signal callers. The Harlon Hill is the DII version of the Heisman Trophy.

Gleason threw for 417 yards and six touchdowns, ran for another, and outdueled SNU’s Gage Porter, who broke the bowl’s rushing record – by halftime. Overcoming injury, Porter ran for 248 yards and tied a bowl record with three rushing touchdowns.

Emporia State became the first repeat participant and, more importantly, two-time winner.

After the first and third quarters last year, two Navarro County residents participated in a Chick-Fil-A promotion that offered free chicken for a year with a made field goal. Each connected – and collected.

“Our boys have volunteered the last few years and that got us out last year,” county resident Matt Irvine said. “Our youngest son, Will (a member of the Mildred National Honor Society), was volunteering again and secretly was hoping to get a chance at the Kickin’ for Chicken contest.”

Will, a junior at Mildred, got that chance and his dad held the ball for him while his mom Tina filmed from the sidelines.

“It was an amazing experience for us to get to do that with Will, but the game itself also delivered,” Irvine said. “The skill level, execution, atmosphere ... you name it, it was far more than what I expected it to be.”

After the Live United Bowl in Texarkana, Ark. ceased operations in the summer after a 10-year run, the mantle was passed to the Heritage Bowl, which added Riot Platforms, Inc. as its presenting sponsor earlier this year. The other two active Division II bowl games are the America’s Crossroads Bowl in Indiana (founded in 2019) and the Florida Beach Bowl (2023).

“We’re proud to be the elder statesman of NCAA Division II football,” Bonner said. “We believe what we have to offer in Corsicana makes our game a desired destination for college football teams and fans each December.”

For more information on the game, visit www.heritagebowl.org.