No. 23 Pittsburgh Accepts Bid

No. 23 Pittsburgh Topples UConn To

Earn Bid To 75th Annual Brut Sun Bowl

EL PASO, Texas (December 6, 2008) - The University of Pittsburgh has accepted an invitation to play in the 75th annual Brut Sun Bowl, announced Sun Bowl Association executive director Bernie Olivas. The game will pit No. 23 Pittsburgh against a team from the Pac-10 Conference on Wednesday, Dec. 31 at noon (MT) at Sun Bowl Stadium.

"We are extremely happy to have extended an invitation to Pittsburgh to play in the 75th anniversary of the Brut Sun Bowl," said Sun Bowl Association executive director Bernie Olivas. "Pittsburgh has a storied football program and will be making its third trip to El Paso. They area team on the rise and we could not be more excited."

Pittsburgh (9-3, 5-2 Big East) secured the selection with a 34-10 road win over Connecticut. The win marked the fourth win in the last five games for the Panthers. Pittsburgh's opponent from the Pac-10 will be announced on Sunday at 5 p.m. MT.

"Everything about Pittsburgh right now is a positive. They really bring so much to the table," said SBA football chairman John Folmer. "Running back LeSean McCoy will remind a lot of people of Tony Dorsett, who rushed for 142 yards in the 1975 Sun Bowl for Pittsburgh. Local fans will also remember (head coach) Dave Wannstedt, who spent four seasons as the defensive coordinator of the Dallas Cowboys."

This

marks Pittsburgh
first nine-win regular season since 1982.

"Pitt
football and the Sun Bowl are synonymous with great football tradition. It is
an honor for us to be playing in the 75th anniversary of a game that has meant
so much to college football. We can't wait to bring our fine team to El Paso."

This
will mark the third appearance by the Panthers in the Brut Sun Bowl. The
Panthers first came to El Paso
under the direction of Johnny Majors in 1975 and returned in 1989 with Paul
Hackett at the helm.

"A
trip to El Paso for this year's Sun Bowl is a
tremendous reward for our football program and university," said Pittsburgh head coach
Dave Wannstedt. "I had the pleasure of being part of this great bowl game as a
first-year grad assistant at Pitt with Coach Majors back in 1975. Moreover, my
family and I are looking forward to returning to the great state of Texas, where we lived
during my days coaching with the Dallas Cowboys. The Sun Bowl has strong
tradition and we are excited to add to its wonderful history this New Year's
Eve."

Pittsburgh defeated Kansas,
33-19, in the 1975 Sun Bowl. Wannstedt served as a graduate assistant coach for
Majors. The Panthers set an NCAA bowl game record that day, as three players
from the same team rushed for 100 yards. Tony Dorsett rushed for 142 yards and
two touchdowns and Elliott Walker added 123 yards and two touchdowns, while the
game's MVP, quarterback Robert Haygood, added 101 yards rushing and 60 yards
through the air on eight of 11 passing.

Pittsburgh returned to the Sun Bowl in 1989 to take on Texas
A&M. A freshman quarterback named Alex Van Pelt led the Panthers on a
come-from-behind victory to secure a 31-28 win over the Aggies. Swervin' Curvin
Richards rushed for 156 yards that day for Pitt, while Van Pelt completed 20 of
40 passes for 354 yards and two touchdowns.

This
marks the 25th bowl appearance by Pittsburgh,
but the first since the 2004 season, when the Panthers won a share of the Big
East Conference title and participated in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. Pittsburgh is 11-13
all-time in bowl appearance and 2-0 in the Brut Sun Bowl.

The
Panthers are 22-22 against Pac-10 schools all-time - Arizona
(1-0), Arizona State
(0-1), California (3-2), Oregon
(2-2), Oregon State (1-0), Stanford (2-1), UCLA (5-9),
USC (4-6) and Washington (4-1).

The 75th Annual Brut Sun Bowl is scheduled
for Wednesday, Dec. 31 at noon (MST). CBS Sports will broadcast the game for the 41st consecutive year, which is the longest running partnership between a network and a bowl game. Ticket prices for the game are $15, $20, $30, $40, $50, and $60. Tickets can be purchased at the Sun Bowl Association office
(915-533-4416, 800-915-2695 or ticket@sunbowl.org), online at
www.ticketmaster.com or at any
TicketMaster outlet.