



WestStar Bank Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational

Sun Bowl Announces Teams

**Field Set for 2012 WestStar Bank Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational**, WestStar Bank Announces Sponsorship Extension, tournament name change and dedication of Barry Kobren MVP Trophy.

The Sun Bowl Association and WestStar Bank are pleased announce the field for the 2012 WestStar Bank Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational. Nebraska, Central Michigan and Arkansas-Pine Bluff will join UTEP for the 51<sup>st</sup> edition of the tournament scheduled for Dec. 22-23, 2012 at the Don Haskins Center.

“Aligning with the Sun Bowl Association is a fabulous way for us to take part in one of El Paso’s hallmark winter events and share our passion for basketball with area fans,” said L. Frederick Francis, Executive Chairman at WestStar Bank. “The opportunity to continue our title sponsorship of this legendary tournament provides us an opportunity to show our continued commitment to the communities we serve.”

WestStar Bank has signed on to a five-year contract extension as sponsor of the nation’s oldest collegiate holiday basketball tournament that secures the event until 2016. Previously known as Bank of the West, WestStar Bank took over corporate sponsorship of the event in 2009 for a three-year contract that ended last year. With the institution’s recent name change, the tournament’s name has also changed to the WestStar Bank Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational.

“We are very excited to be able to continue this tradition with the help of our sponsors at WestStar Bank,” Sun Bowl Association Executive Director Bernie Olivas said. “El Paso has been very supportive of all of our events and that allows us to highlighting the beauty of our community. We look forward to hosting these teams and put together one of the best tournaments in the nation.”

Nebraska will be making its second appearance in the tournament. The Huskers were in El Paso for the 1985 invitational taking third place after a 78-61 loss to Alabama and a 69-66 win over Ohio State.

First-year head coach Tim Miles brings in the first Big 10 squad to the tournament since Northwestern appeared in 2003 and his second squad in as many years, his Colorado State Rams claimed last year’s title en route to an NCAA berth and a 20-win season.

“The Sun Bowl has done a great job in adding one more high-major program to what was already the strongest non-conference schedule in our school’s history,” UTEP Head Coach Tim Floyd said. “We’re glad that they recognize what our mission is, to secure one of the strongest non-conference slates in the country. It should be a great field.”

Nebraska and Central Michigan will open the tournament with a 5 p.m. tip-off on Saturday, Dec. 22, to be followed by UTEP and Arkansas-Pine Bluff at 7 p.m. The championship is slated for a 7 p.m. start on Sunday, Dec. 23, following the 5 p.m. consolation game.

Arkansas-Pine Bluff is also making their second trip to the tournament under fifth-year head

coach George Ivory. The Golden Lions are led by senior Mitchell Anderson who averaged a team high 10.9 points, 6.3 rebounds and 42 blocks.

Central Michigan is making their first appearance in the invitational under first-year head coach Keno Davis. Davis was tabbed the 2008 coach of the year by six organizations in his first year at Drake where he led the Bulldogs to a 28-5 season and the program's first ever Mountain Valley Conference tournament title.

The Chippewas will come to El Paso with 2012 PARADE All-American John Simons. The incoming freshman is a 6'8" forward that averaged over 28 points, 10 rebounds, 2.8 blocks and 2.4 steals as a senior at Cadillac High School.

UTEP, 74-22 all-time in the tournament and claiming 28 titles, will host the renamed tournament, previously the Bank of the West Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational, for the 51<sup>st</sup> year.

The Miners return three starters from last year's team including their scoring (John Bohannon), rebounding (Bohannon) and assist (Jacques Streeter) leaders. Forward/guard Julian Washburn also returns after earning a spot on the Conference USA All-Freshman Team a year ago. Washburn scored 348 points, the fifth-most by a UTEP freshman.

UTEP's recruiting class is regarded as one of the nation's best and features two players tabbed as national top-100 signees (Twymond Howard & Chris Washburn), a 7-1 center (Matt Willms) and a 6-6 point guard (McKenzie Moore).

### **Barry Kobren Most Valuable Player Trophy**

The WestStar Bank Don Haskins Sun Bowl Invitational most valuable award has been renamed the Barry Kobren Most Valuable Player Trophy in honor of the 25-year volunteer and Basketball Committee Chairman.

"It is a tremendous thrill to be honored for something I have truly loved being a part of for 25 years," Kobren said. "Through my participation in the Sun Bowl Association, I am thankful for the opportunity to promote my hometown of El Paso and bring recognition to this great community."

"I have to thank all of the volunteers and staff of the Sun Bowl, because it is their commitment that makes what I have done for the Sun Bowl Association so much easier and enjoyable. I am also thankful to my family for understanding what this has meant to me and standing by me."

**Tickets**

Beginning Dec. 1, tournament tickets will be available at the Sun Bowl Association office at (915-533-4416 or 800-915-BOWL), the UTEP Ticket Center (915-747-5234) and TicketMaster outlets. Tournament tickets can be reserved now by calling the Sun Bowl Association office. Tournament tickets are also included in UTEP season ticket packages.

**Four-Game, Two Night Package:**

\$40 (rows 1-34) and \$20 (rows 35-39)

\*\$20 UTEP students, plus one guest at same price

**Two-Game, One-Night Package (Day of Game Only):**

\$22 (rows 1-34) and \$12 (rows 35-39)

\*\$12 UTEP students, plus one guest at same price

\*Must purchase at the UTEP Ticket Center Only