

INAUGURAL BOWL SEASON BESTIES AWARD WINNERS UNVEILED AT 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

*Winners in Five Categories Honored for Best-in-Class Efforts;
Valued Bowl System Members and Longtime
Contributors and Partners Recognized at Awards Ceremony*

DALLAS (April 25, 2023) -- Bowl Season has announced the winners of the inaugural “Bowl Season Besties Awards,” created to recognize “best in class” among the bowl games membership among five categories. The winners were recognized at an awards ceremony as part of the Bowl Season Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tenn., last week. The awards ceremony also recognized contributors and partners, as well as the valuable people who dedicate their lives and careers to bowl games.

Bowl Season put together an awards committee over the last year to organize and create the inaugural Bowl Season Besties, reflected from efforts around the 2022-23 Bowl Season. The committee, which was comprised of various key constituents of Bowl Season, identified five categories in which bowl organizations could put nomination submissions: Best in Events, Best in Student-Athlete Experience, Best in Community Engagement, Best in Marketing, and Best in Game Presentation.

“The awards ceremony is always one of the highlights of the Annual Meeting, and adding in the inaugural Bowl Season Besties Awards made it that much more exciting,” said Bowl Season Executive Director Nick Carparelli. “We were also very excited to honor some longtime valued contributors to bowl games and college football. We appreciate these friends who have given so much back to the game. Each of these award recipients is most deserving and we thank them for their dedication and service.”

The finalists and winners were voted on by a committee comprised of Bowl Executive Directors and the Bowl Season Awards Committee.

The five categories and winners of the inaugural Bowl Season Besties are:

Best in Events: Many people think that bowls are “just a football game” – however, that is simply not the case. All bowls host multiple ancillary events in the days, weeks and months leading up to the game for the teams and for the fans. The winner of Best in Events will be selected based on the criteria of creativity, meeting set goals (For example: Tickets sales to an event, raising funds for the community, etc.)

2022-23 Winner: TaxAct Texas Bowl – The Rodeo Bowl presented by Kroger.

Best in Student-Athlete Experience: The student-athlete experience is ultimately what the bowls are all about. Creating positive, unique, and memorable experiences for the teams is a top priority for all of Bowl Season membership. The winner of Best in Student-Athlete Experience will be selected based on creativity, student-athlete impact, and community impact based on stated goals for the experience.

2022-23 Winner: Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl -- Battle for Bowl Week; fun off-the-field competitions between the two schools.

Best in Community Engagement: Engaging the community is one of the keys to the success of Bowl games. The winner of Best in Community Engagement will be selected based on creativity and community impact.

2022-23 Winner: Goodyear Cotton Bowl – Radio Flyer & Starlight Children’s Foundation Hero Wagons for Kids.

Best in Marketing: Social media, traditional media, digital media – there are so many ways to market your bowl/brand. The winner of Best in Marketing will be selected based on the criteria of creativity, usefulness, and effectiveness through data (for example: increased ticket sales, social media followers, etc.).

2022-23 Winner: Cheez-It Bowl/Cheez-It Citrus Bowl – Assistant (to the) Director of Cheez Operations Campaign.

Best in Game Presentation: From fans to football players to sponsors to viewers watching on TV, game presentation is everything! The winner for Best in Game Presentation will be selected based on design and implementation creativity, impact and operational execution within your respective stadium.

2022-23 Winner: Duke’s Mayo Bowl – Y’all Star Winner, Millionth Fan, Deviled Egg Eating Contest, Mayo Dump.

Other award recipients included:

The Bowl Season Sustainability Award presented by REPREVE®

The Bowl Season Sustainability Award presented by REPREVE®, serves to recognize the efforts and outcomes of one leading bowl game that went above and beyond its normal requirements to make a difference to the environment, to their communities and their fans. The award went to **the Military Bowl presented by Peraton.**

The Wright Waters Legacy Award

The Wright Waters Legacy Award, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the bowl(s) they served or to the industry in general, was awarded to **Tom Starr**, who worked many years for the Freedom Bowl, the Sun Bowl, the Armed Forces Bowl, and the Heart of Dallas Bowl.

The Champions Award

Created in 2009, the Champions Award is presented annually to an individual who has throughout their career supported the purposes of the Bowls with special emphasis on student-athlete welfare. **Steve Spurrier** was this year’s recipient, former head coach at Duke, Florida and South Carolina.

Bowl Season Leadership Hall of Fame

Bowl Season welcomed four new members into the Leadership Hall of Fame. The honor recognizes individuals or groups who through their actions have contributed significantly to College Football Bowl organizations specifically and to the entire bowl system generally. The Leadership Hall of Fame commemorates the history and tradition of college football bowl games by saluting the people who devoted themselves to furthering the benefits of bowl games for the advancement of their communities and college football.

Consideration requires that an individual or group must have held a senior position, either as a staff member or a volunteer, and/or have played a significant leadership role in benefitting the bowl, the community, bowl participants and college football in general. Honorees shall have been inactive in the bowl for at least five years. Any of these criteria may be waived by a two-thirds vote of the selection committee. The Class of 2023 includes: **Dick Circuit, Holiday Bowl; Steve Hatchell, Orange Bowl; Paul Hoolahan, Sugar Bowl; and Olin Morris, Liberty Bowl**

Select executive directors were also honored at the awards ceremony with milestone years of service.

#bowlseason

About Bowl Season

Bowl Season is one of the greatest and longest running traditions in American sports, taking place in late December and running through early January, and has been college football’s post-season for over 100 years. It promotes the grand tradition of the bowl system and its endearing value to student-athletes, highlighting the broader university and college communities, including spirit squads, marching bands, athletic staff and fans. Bowl

Season spotlights the distinctiveness of each of the bowl games along with their histories and traditions and their proud communities - embracing and honoring the bowl experience for present and future generations.

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