



2015 POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL ■ DECEMBER 24, 2015; NOON ET **ESPN** ■ POPEYESBAHAMASBOWL.COM

## POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL COMMUNICATIONS

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## POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL IMPORTANT DATES

- Nov. 2** ..... Online media credential applications available
- Dec. 4** ..... Marathon MAC Football Championship - Detroit, Mich. (Ford Field)
- Dec. 5** ..... Conference USA Football Championship - Site TBA
- Dec. 6** ..... Selection Sunday (teams announced after 3 pm ET)
- Dec. 10-11** ..... Team site visits
- Dec. 11** ..... Head Coaches Press Conference (Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium)
- Dec. 11** ..... Credential applications close
- Dec. 20** ..... Team Arrivals
- Dec. 21-23** .... Team Practices
- Dec. 23** ..... Popeyes Bahamas Bowl Press Conference (Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium).
- Dec. 24** ..... Popeyes Bahamas Bowl (Noon ET; Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium; Nassau, Bahamas - ESPN)

## #PASSPORTKICKOFF

**#PassportToKickoff** is not only our hashtag, but a reminder that all U.S. citizens must have a valid passport to travel to the **Bahamas** & the **Popeyes Bahamas Bowl**. For passport info:  
**[passports.state.gov](http://passports.state.gov)**

## POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL WEEK 1 NOTEBOOK

**SINCE WE LAST VISITED:** The Popeyes Bahamas Bowl begins the march to its' 2015 game this week-end. Since WKU's thrilling 49-48 victory over Central Michigan in the inaugural game, **ESPN Events** acquired the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl (May 12) and **Popeyes** extended their title sponsor agreement in a multiyear deal (June 9). In addition, the final play of the 2014 game, in which Central Michigan covered 75 yards after a catch and three laterals to score, was selected as the top play of the bowl season by *SportsCenter* and was a finalist for a 2015 Best Play ESPY.

**THIS WEEKEND:** The 2015 college football season begins Thursday, Sept. 3 when three C-USA and four MAC schools are in action. C-USA games involving ranked opponents are UTSA at No. 22 Arizona on Thursday and UTEP at No. 18 Arkansas on Saturday. The MAC has three games vs. ranked opponents, led by a Friday visit by No. 5 Michigan State to Kalamazoo to face Western Michigan. Saturday, Akron plays at No. 19 Oklahoma and Bowling Green visits No. 25 Tennessee.

**C-USA NOTES:** Charlotte joins Conference USA this year, but the league stays at 13 members as UAB dropped football after the 2014 season (will restart the program in 2017). Charlotte, under head coach **Brad Lambert**, will take UAB's place in the C-USA East Division. In a vote of the conference's media, WKU (East) and Louisiana Tech (West) were selected to win their respective divisions. WKU received votes in the Associated Press Poll, while Louisiana Tech and Marshall got votes in the USA Today Coaches' Poll. The league returns four players who rushed for over 1,200 yards in 2014.

**MAC NOTES:** in a vote of the conference's head coaches, Bowling Green (East) and Northern Illinois (West) were selected to win their respective divisions. The conference media selected Bowling Green (East) and Akron (West) to win their divisions. The MAC has two new head coaches in 2015 at Buffalo (**Lance Leipold**) and Central Michigan (**John Bonamego**). A total of 12 of the 13 MAC schools return their starting quarterback from 2014.

**C-USA vs. MAC:** The first of six games between Popeyes Bahamas Bowl conference partners C-USA and the MAC will take place Saturday when Old Dominion visits Eastern Michigan.

## FINAL 2015 C-USA STANDINGS



### EAST DIVISION

	<b>C-USA</b>	<b>Overall</b>
#* Marshall	7-1	13-1
* Middle Tennessee	5-3	6-6
* <b>WKU</b>	<b>4-4</b>	<b>8-5</b>
* UAB	4-4	6-6
* Old Dominion	4-4	6-6
FIU	3-5	4-8
Florida Atlantic	2-6	3-9

### WEST DIVISION

	<b>C-USA</b>	<b>Overall</b>
#* Louisiana Tech	7-1	9-5
* Rice	5-3	8-5
* UTEP	5-3	7-6
UTSA	3-5	4-8
North Texas	2-6	4-8
Southern Miss	1-7	3-9

\* - bowl eligible # - division champion  
**BOLD - Popeyes Bahamas Bowl participant**

## FINAL 2015 MAC STANDINGS



### EAST DIVISION

	<b>MAC</b>	<b>Overall</b>
#* Bowling Green	5-3	7-5
* Ohio	4-4	6-6
Buffalo	3-4	5-6
Akron	3-5	5-7
UMass	3-5	3-9
Miami	2-6	2-10
Kent State	1-6	2-9

### WEST DIVISION

	<b>MAC</b>	<b>Overall</b>
#* Northern Illinois	7-1	10-2
#* Toledo	7-1	8-4
* Western Michigan	6-2	8-4
* <b>Central Michigan</b>	<b>5-3</b>	<b>7-5</b>
Ball State	4-4	5-7
Eastern Michigan	1-7	2-10

\* - bowl eligible # - division champion  
**BOLD - Popeyes Bahamas Bowl participant**

**WEEK 1 SCHEDULE**

**CONFERENCE USA**

**Thursday, September 3**

FIU at UCF (CBSSN)  
 WKU at Vanderbilt (SECN)  
 UTSA at No. 22 Arizona (P12N)

**Friday, September 4**

Charlotte at Georgia State (ESPNU)

**Saturday, September 5**

Old Dominion at Eastern Michigan (ESPN3)  
 Florida Atlantic at Tulsa (CBSSN)  
 Wagner at Rice (ASN)  
 UTEP at No. 18 Arkansas (ESPNU)  
 Southern at Louisiana Tech (ASN)  
 Jackson State at Middle Tennessee  
 Mississippi St. at Southern Miss (FS1)

**Sunday, September 6**

Purdue at Marshall (FS1)

**MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE**

**Thursday, Sept. 3**

Oklahoma State at Central Michigan (ESPNU)  
 Stony Brook at Toledo (ESPN3)  
 VMI at Ball State (ESPN3)  
 Ohio at Idaho (ESPN3)

**Friday, September 4**

No. 5 Michigan State at Western Michigan (ESPNU)  
 Kent State at Illinois (BTN)

**Saturday, September 5**

Akron at No. 19 Oklahoma (FSN)  
 Albany at Buffalo (ESPN3)  
 Bowling Green at No. 25 Tennessee (SECN)  
 Old Dominion at Eastern Michigan (ESPN3)  
 Presbyterian at Miami (ESPN3)  
 UNLV at NIU (CBSSN)

\* - conference games  
 (TV/digital network in parentheses)  
 ASN - American Sports Network  
 BTN - Big Ten Network  
 CBSSN - CBS Sports Network  
 ESPN3 - ESPN3 (online)  
 FS1 - Fox Sports 1  
 FSN - Fox Sports Net  
 P12N - Pac-12 Network  
 SECN - SEC Network

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

*Each week in 2015, the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl will spotlight an alumni player from each of our partner conferences, Conference USA and the MAC.*

**T.Y. HILTON (FIU)**



Current Indianapolis Colts wide receiver **T.Y. Hilton** was a standout for FIU from 2008-11.

Hilton scored 37 touchdowns as a Panther, and he broke several FIU and Sun Belt career records, including receiving yards, receiving touchdowns, all-purpose yards and kickoff return yards.

As a senior in the 2011 Beef O'Brady's Bowl, Hilton was named the team's MVP for the game as he caught eight passes for 88 yards to go along with three carries for 23 yards and a touchdown. Hilton's eight catches in the game allowed him to set the single-season FIU record with 72 receptions.

He was a first-team All-Sun Belt selection in all four years, a 2011 honorable mention All-America by SportsIllustrated.com and a freshman All-America in 2008.

He was drafted in the third round by the Indianapolis Colts in 2012. In three seasons with the Colts, Hilton has become one of quarterback **Andrew Luck's** favorite receivers. Hilton had 82 receptions for 1,345 yards and seven touchdowns in 2014 on the way to a Pro Bowl selection. He was also an All-Rookie selection in 2012 by the Pro Football Writers of America.

**POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

The highest-ranked conference champion by the College Football Playoff Selection Committee from the American Athletic, Conference USA, Mid-American, Mountain West or Sun Belt will play annually in one of the College Football Playoff bowls (**VIZIO Fiesta** and **Chick-fil-A Peach** bowls for the 2015 season) if it is not selected for the Playoff Semifinals.

C-USA has 2015 tie-ins with the **Popeyes Bahamas, Arizona, Gildan New Mexico, Miami Beach, R&L Carriers New Orleans, St. Petersburg** and **Zaxby's Heart of Dallas** bowls, with a secondary tie-in with the **Camping World Independence Bowl** (if either the ACC or the SEC does not have enough eligible teams). There is no set selection order among C-USA's bowl partners

The **GoDaddy Bowl** has first choice of a MAC bowl-eligible team, and the remainder of the selections will follow, with no set selection order among the MAC's bowl partners. The MAC has 2015 tie-ins with **Popeyes Bahamas, Boca Raton, Famous Idaho Potato, GoDaddy** and **Raycom Media Camellia** bowls, with secondary tie-ins with the **San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl** (if Army is not bowl eligible), various ESPN owned-and-operated bowls and the **Quick Lane Bowl** (if either ACC or Big Ten does not have enough eligible teams).

The **2015 Popeyes Bahamas Bowl** participants will be announced **Sunday, December 6**.

**POPEYES BAHAMAS BOWL MEDIA PROJECTIONS**

<b>Media Organization (Reporter) - Date:</b> .....	<b>C-USA vs. MAC Matchup</b>
<b>USA Today - Sept. 2:</b> .....	Louisiana Tech vs. Bowling Green
<b>SI.com (Zac Ellis) - Sept. 1:</b> .....	Rice vs. Western Michigan
<b>CollegeFootballNews.com - Aug. 31:</b> .....	Middle Tennessee vs. Northern Illinois
<b>Orlando Sentinel (Brant Parsons) - Aug. 27:</b> .....	Louisiana Tech vs. Bowling Green
<b>FOXSports.com (Stuart Mandel) - Aug. 25:</b> .....	Middle Tennessee vs. Western Michigan
<b>SB Nation (Jason Kirk) - Aug. 25:</b> .....	Middle Tennessee vs. Akron
<b>CBSsports.com (Jerry Palm) - Aug. 12:</b> .....	Louisiana Tech vs. Bowling Green
<b>The Sporting News (Bill Bender) - July 20:</b> .....	WKU vs. Akron
<b>Phil Steele Magazine (Phil Steele) - July 20:</b> .....	WKU vs. Western Michigan
<b>Athlon Sports (Steven Lissan) - July 7:</b> .....	Middle Tennessee vs. Northern Illinois
<b>Associated Press (Ralph Russo) - June 9:</b> .....	Middle Tennessee vs. Ball State
<b>ESPN.com (Brett McMurphy) - May 5:</b> .....	Middle Tennessee vs. Bowling Green
<b>ESPN.com (Mark Schlabach) - May 5:</b> .....	Marshall vs. Toledo
<b>Bleacher Report (Brian Pedersen) - May 5:</b> .....	Marshall vs. Toledo
<b>NationalFootballPost.com (Dave Miller) - TBA:</b> .....	TBA
<b>NFL.com (Mike Huguenin) - TBA:</b> .....	TBA

