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CONFERENCE USA ANNOUNCES SEVEN FUTURE BOWL PARTNERSHIPS

IRVING, Texas – Conference USA Commissioner **Britton Banowsky** announced today that the conference has secured future commitments with seven bowl partners, the AutoZone Liberty Bowl, Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl, EagleBank Bowl, R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl, Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl, the St. Petersburg Bowl, along with the new Dallas Football Classic. These partnerships will include games following the 2010-2013 regular seasons and the agreements with seven bowls feature postseason games against seven different conferences. The Conference USA Board of Directors approved these agreements at its November 2, 2009 meeting.

"Postseason football is amazing and having the right mix of bowl games is important to every conference," said Banowsky. "When we began developing our new bowl agreements we wanted three things: great destinations; quality opponents; and, increased revenues. We are very pleased with our line-up for the 2010-2013 seasons and believe it delivers in every way."

It is important to note that a Conference USA champion may qualify for the Bowl Championship Series if ranked in the BCS final Top 12 or, in the BCS Top 16 and ranked higher than a team which receives automatic qualification.

Since partnering with the AutoZone Liberty Bowl in C-USA's inaugural season in 1996, the conference regular season champion has participated in the Memphis bowl game and posted an 8-6 record against opponents.

The league has partnered with the Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl (Fort Worth, Texas) in all but one year since 2003, the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl each year since 2002, the Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl six times in eight years and played in the inaugural St. Petersburg Bowl last December.

C-USA will continue to face a team from the Mountain West Conference in the Armed Forces Bowl, a Sun Belt Conference team in the R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl, a Western Athletic Conference foe in the Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl and a Big East squad in the St. Petersburg Bowl.

Conference USA began a partnership with the EagleBank Bowl in Washington, D.C. this season and will continue that in future years, facing an opponent from the ACC in 2010 and 2012.

An addition to the C-USA postseason lineup is the new Dallas Football Classic that will debut after the 2010 season. Subject to NCAA Football Issues Committee approval, this bowl will be played at the historic Cotton Bowl in Dallas and will feature's C-USA's first postseason matchup against the Big Ten Conference in 2011 and 2013.

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SELECTED QUOTES

C-USA BOWL PARTNERS

"The AutoZone Liberty Bowl is the seventh-oldest Bowl game in America with a great history and tradition. As we celebrate our 51st anniversary game, we are very proud to extend our partnership with C-USA."

Steve Ehrhart, Executive Director, AutoZone Liberty Bowl

"Conference USA has been a great partner and we look forward to many more great matchups as we continue our relationship."

Brant Ringler, Executive Director, Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl

"I am delighted with the Dallas Football Classic's involvement of Conference USA, especially with it being a Dallas-based conference. I have been fortunate to have worked with several Conference USA teams and they always play an exciting brand of football. We are honored to be a part of C-USA's bowl line-up."

Tom Starr, Executive Director, Dallas Football Classic

"For a new bowl, we are thrilled to have partnerships with three great football conferences in the ACC, Big 12 and Conference USA and teams in Navy and Army. All three conferences and both military academies have impressive football programs, fans and tradition. We look forward to compelling matchups each year as well as showcasing the wonderful pageantry and hospitality of the nation's capital to all participating teams."

Steve Beck, Executive Director, EagleBank Bowl

"We are excited about extending our partnership with Conference USA for another four years. The appeal and proximity of New Orleans to the fan bases of Conference USA schools makes this a natural relationship. In addition, the student-athletes, coaches, and administrators from our C-USA participants have all represented themselves, their universities and the conference with a high level of dignity and class."

Billy Ferrante, Executive Director, R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl

"Conference USA has been a great partner for the Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl since the bowl's inaugural game. Four of the five games were decided by less than a touchdown, and three of the C-USA/WAC match-ups were decided on the last play of the game."

Dave Matlin, Executive Director, Sheraton Hawai'i Bowl

"The St. Petersburg Bowl is thrilled to continue our relationship with Conference USA. We're excited to provide the St. Petersburg community as well as the teams and their fans with great matchups for the next four years."

Brett Dulaney, Executive Director, St. Petersburg Bowl

"We look forward to continuing with Conference USA in bringing exciting teams and matchups to the communities that host ESPN Regional's bowl games, and we're thrilled to give the teams, coaches and fans a first-class postseason experience."

Pete Derzis, Senior Vice President and General Manager of ESPN Regional Television

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C-USA FOOTBALL COACHES

"The relationships that Conference USA has developed and currently enjoys with our bowl partners serve as a testament to the continued growth and direction we want for our program at this time. If our post-season experiences over the last three years are any indication, we're certainly excited about continuing to be a part of first-class events in the future."

Skip Holtz, East Carolina

"This speaks volumes on the direction Conference USA is heading. With seven bowl tie-ins it gives everyone a chance at national exposure. It also rewards teams that are competing for the conference championship to get out and compete against teams in the post season."

Kevin Sumlin, Houston

"Conference USA has done a great job in securing agreements with quality bowl partners. These post season opportunities are great for the league as a whole and our program in terms of recruiting and exposure. It is exciting to be a part of a conference with so many post season opportunities."

Mark Snyder, Marshall

"It certainly speaks highly of our conference to have the number of bowl tie-ins that we have."

Tommy West, Memphis

"This is what makes Conference USA such an outstanding conference. Bowl games are a tremendous reward for our student-athletes and with seven opportunities, C-USA has sent a clear message that our conference appreciates the dedication and sacrifice required to compete at this level."

David Bailiff, Rice

"I'm happy that Conference USA was able to secure these seven bowl partnerships. These games will allow the student-athletes to test themselves against top-level opponents both here locally - in Dallas and Fort Worth - and in some great cities - Honolulu, Memphis, New Orleans, St. Petersburg, Washington, D.C."

June Jones, SMU

"Conference USA continues to strive to enable its member schools the most opportunities in regards to playing in postseason games. Our bowl lineup gives our programs a chance to play schools from four different BCS automatic qualifying conferences. This announcement is exciting for not only our program and our school but the conference as a whole."

Larry Fedora, Southern Miss

"I believe Conference USA's bowl partnership gives our league credibility and commitment and is great opportunity for the member schools. It gives each of the C-USA schools motivation toward playing hard and working toward becoming one of the bowl teams each season."

Bob Toledo, Tulane

"We're very excited about today's announcement. There's not any other at-large Conference in the country that is better represented with this many bowl tie-ins. It's great for our players and gives us tremendous goals to strive to achieve."

Todd Graham, Tulsa

"This is exciting news for our conference and makes a statement about what people around the country think about our league. These bowl opportunities will enhance recruiting for our schools and serve as rewards for all the hard work our players put in during the year."

Neil Callaway, UAB

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"I think it is a great lineup. There's a lot of good options in different parts of the country and they will create some exciting matchups for conference schools. The number one goal of our program will continue to be to win the conference from now until 2013. If that doesn't happen, we would be excited to go to any of these games as a reward for a good season. The conference put a good group together."

George O'Leary, UCF

"Britton Banowsky has done a masterful job of promoting Conference USA. These bowl opportunities give our student-athletes and fans the best of both worlds -- the opportunity to visit unique locales with convenient access."

Mike Price, UTEP

C-USA ADMINISTRATORS

"The new C-USA bowl arrangement for the next cycle (2010-2013) is certainly an improvement in the financial terms and the quality of opponents and should protect our traditional number of bowl eligible teams. The opportunity to potentially play teams from the ACC, Big East, Big Ten, SEC and possibly the Big 12 is huge for our league."

Richard Giannini, Southern Miss Director of Athletics/Chair of the Football Scheduling and Postseason Football Subcommittee

"This is a phenomenal achievement for our conference as we now have the opportunity to showcase our programs in great destinations with matchups that rival those of any conference in the country! This is a product of the growth and development of our football product and the great work of our conference office and bowl committee."

Rick Dickson, Tulane Director of Athletics/Chair of the Conference USA Athletics Directors Committee

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