Office at Qualcomm Stadium:
9449 Friars Road, Suite L-55
San Diego, CA 92108

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 601400
San Diego, CA 92160-1400

phone: 619/283-5808
fax: 619/281-7947
website: PacificLifeHolidayBowl.com

CALIFORNIA GOLDEN BEARS TO FACE TEXAS A&M AGGIES IN 29TH PACIFIC LIFE HOLIDAY BOWL

"I can't begin to tell you how excited the Pacific Life Holiday Bowl family is about this matchup," Holiday Bowl president Doug Sawyer said.

The University of California Golden Bears and the Texas A&M University Aggies have accepted invitations to play in the 29th annual Pacific Life Holiday Bowl.

Texas A&M finished the regular season with a 9-3 overall mark and posted a 5-3 record in the Big 12 Conference. The Aggies, currently ranked #22 in the Associated Press poll and #24 in the USA Today poll, defeated Texas last week in Austin by a final score of 12-7.

"San Diegans still remember the Aggies' visit here 16 years ago," Sawyer said. "They truly are the whole package; a great football team, an unbelievable marching band and tremendous fans." The Aggies defeated the BYU Cougars in the 1990 Holiday Bowl, 65-14. That 51-point margin of victory remains a bowl record.

In addition to this being the 29th annual Pacific Life Holiday Bowl, it will mark the 29th bowl game for Texas A&M, which has an overall record of 13-15 in bowl games. This marks the 16th bowl game for the Aggies since the 1985 season.

"This season has been all about the young men who play for Texas A&M and the players are very excited about the opportunity to play in the Holiday Bowl," said Aggie Head Coach Dennis Franchione. "The majority of our guys have never been to California so they are thrilled. I know the California Golden Bears will be a great challenge and we look forward to the hospitality of the good folks in San Diego. Having coached in the WAC, I know that area is terrific and I have always wanted to coach in the Holiday Bowl."

Texas A&M Director of Athletics Bill Byrne has been a part of the Holiday Bowl tradition once before.

"Texas A&M University is very excited about playing in the Holiday Bowl," Byrne said. "I have been a part of the Holiday Bowl experience before and the Red Coats do a great job. This is a great reward for the players who have worked so hard. I know the 12th Man will be in the stands at Qualcomm Stadium."

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The Aggies' offense, ranked 7th in the nation in rushing, is led by two sophomores, QB Stephen McGee and RB Javorskie Lane. With 19 touchdowns on the season, Lane ranks 6th in the nation in scoring. The A&M defense is anchored by junior defensive lineman Chris Harrington, who finished the regular season with 7.5 sacks and 11.5 tackles for loss.

The California Golden Bears are currently 6-2 in the Pacific-10 Conference, and 8-3 overall. Their regular season ends on December 2nd in *The Big Game*, where they will host the Stanford Cardinal.

"We are so pleased to have the opportunity to welcome Coach Tedford and the Golden Bears back to San Diego again," Sawyer said. "As we saw in 2004, their fans are incredibly loyal, loud and enthusiastic. We really look forward to seeing them again this December."

This year will mark the Golden Bears' second appearance in the Pacific Life Holiday Bowl. In 2004, they were defeated 45-31 by the Texas Tech Red Raiders. This will be the team's fourth straight bowl appearance, most recently defeating BYU 35-28 in the 2005 Las Vegas Bowl. They have had 16 prior bowl appearances, and have an overall bowl record of 7-8-1.

"I have been very fortunate to be able to go to the Holiday Bowl a couple of times," said Tedford. "It's always been a great experience. They have a lot of rich tradition and they do a first-class job of putting on the game. The Red Coats are very hospitable and make it a very positive experience for the staff, the players and the fans."

This will mark the first time in California history that the Golden Bears have advanced to four straight bowl games. In addition to Cal's 2004 Holiday Bowl appearance, the Bears went to the Insight Bowl in 2003 and the Las Vegas Bowl last year. In addition, Cal now has five straight winning seasons for the first time since a six-year stretch from 1947-52.

"The University of California is excited about partnering with our friends at the Holiday Bowl for another great post-season bowl experience for the entire Cal community," California Director of Athletics Sandy Barbour said. "San Diego is a great holiday destination, and as our student-athletes and staff know from experience, the Holiday Bowl really knows how to host a spectacular event. With our great presence in Southern California and the San Diego area, it is going to

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be an excellent opportunity to gather the Cal family to do battle with our Big 12 opponent."

The Golden Bears are led by a group of exciting playmakers on both sides of the ball. Defensively, senior cornerback Daymeion Hughes leads the Pac-10 with eight interceptions, senior linebacker Desmond Bishop is second in the league in tackles and senior tackle Brandon Mebane is a strong force up front. On the offensive side of the field, junior running back Marshawn Lynch has rushed for over 1,000 yards for the second straight year while sophomore quarterback Nate Longshore has thrown for 21 touchdowns and over 2,500 yards. The most dazzling standout for the Bears, however, may be sophomore WR DeSean Jackson, who leads the nation in punt return average, including four punts returned for touchdowns this year. He also has nine receiving touchdowns to join Lynch atop the Pac-10 in total touchdowns.

California and Texas A&M have met twice before, with each squad winning on the foe's home turf in close, hard-fought games. The Aggies won in Berkeley, 29-28, in 1981 and the Golden Bears edged the Aggies, 19-17, to open the 1983 season at Kyle Field. That last matchup featured the debut of Texas A&M's 12th Man Kickoff team, making the game even more memorable.

The 2005 Pacific Life Holiday Bowl featured a 17-14 Oklahoma Sooners victory over the Oregon Ducks.