Mailing Address PO Box 601400 San Diego, CA 92160-1400
Office at Qualcomm Stadium 9449 Friars Rd, L-55 San Diego, CA 92108
Phone 619.285-5061 Fax 619.281.7947 Website poinsettiabowl.net

TCU and Northern Illinois Bound for San Diego

"We have quite a match-up and fans should be ready to watch an exciting football game," Poinsettia Bowl chairman Rudy Castruita said. "Now that we have the teams we're eager to kick off the festivities next month."

The Northern Illinois University Huskies and Texas Christian University Horned Frogs have accepted invitations to play in the second annual San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl.

TCU, the alma mater of current San Diego Chargers' running back LaDainian Tomlinson, currently has a 9-2 overall record (5-2, MWC), with one regular season game remaining. The Horned Frogs host Air Force on December 2nd. Dating back to the 2005 season, the Horned Frogs have won 20 of their last 23 contests, including their last six games in a row, which ties for the nation's 8th-longest current win streak.

"We are excited to receive the invitation to play in the Poinsettia Bowl," TCU football coach Gary Patterson said. "We look forward to going to San Diego. This is a great destination trip for our fans and alumni." The Horned Frogs appearance in the Poinsettia Bowl marks their 23rd bowl game and eighth in the last nine seasons. Most recently they defeated Iowa State 27-24 in the 2005 EV1.net Houston Bowl.

"The entire Poinsettia Bowl family looks forward to welcoming the Horned Frogs and their loyal fans to San Diego next month," said Castruita. "Their exciting brand of football surely will make for what will prove to be a very memorable performance for football fans all around the country."

This year's TCU squad features a defense that is ranked in the top-10 nationally in run defense, scoring defense and total defense. The Frogs are also among the Mountain West Conference leaders in several offensive categories, an offense which is led by the senior trio of QB Jeff Ballard, RB Lonta Hobbs, and WR Quentily Harmon.

The Horned Frogs' defense is led by safety Marvin White and junior defensive end Tommy Blake. White, a senior, leads the team with 75 tackles and four interceptions while Blake is a finalist for this year's Hendricks Award, an honor given to the nation's top defensive end. With one game remaining, Blake was the Mountain West leader with 11 tackles for loss, 5 sacks, and was among conference leaders with two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries.

Northern Illinois, the alma mater of San Diego Chargers' running back Michael Turner, finished their season 7-5, 5-3 in the Mid-American Conference. The Huskies have posted

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seven straight winning seasons and will be playing in their second bowl game in the last three years. Their most recent bowl appearance came in 2004, where they defeated Troy University, 34-21, in the Silicon Valley Football Classic.

"Who wouldn't want to be in San Diego in December?" said NIU Head Coach Joe Novak. "It's a great city with great weather, and it's a great sports town. It's going to be a special treat because a lot of our kids haven't been there before and it will be something they'll remember for the rest of their lives. We're thrilled that our team will be able to continue its season at the San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl."

Northern Illinois is coming off one of its top defensive performances of the season, a 31-10 victory over MAC West Division Champion Central Michigan on November 17. The Husky defense is led by sophomore Larry English, who ranks 10th in the nation with 11 sacks to go along with his 15 tackles for loss.

The Huskies feature the NCAA's leading rusher, Garrett Wolfe, who enters the game with 1,900 rushing yards on the season and ranks 11th all-time on the NCAA career rushing list. Wolfe, recently voted the MAC Offensive MVP, is also a semifinalist for the Doak Walker Award, given annually to the nation's top running back.