

## Utah, California to Meet in SDCCU Poinsettia Bowl

December 06, 2009

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"We're so pleased that we will be welcoming these two terrific teams and their fans to San Diego later this month," said 2009 Bowl President Barbara Warden. "With the Utes and Golden Bears, I think it's safe to expect that we're in for one heck of a ball game."

Head Coach Kyle Whittingham leads his Utes into San Diego with a 9-3 overall record, 6-2 in the Mountain West Conference. This year's bowl game will be Utah's seventh straight bowl appearance, including a 35-32 victory over the Navy Midshipmen in the 2007 San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl.

Whittingham says, "We are looking forward to playing in the San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl for the second time in three years. We had a great experience when we played there in 2007 and our players and staff are excited to be going back. We have around 25 players on our roster from Southern California and we hope for a big turnout from our fans, as is typical anytime we play in Qualcomm Stadium. In addition, San Diego is easy to get to from Salt Lake City and a great vacation destination, especially at this time of the year. Cal is a formidable opponent and one we look forward to playing. We like playing Pac-10 teams and we anticipate a great game."

Utah is led on offense by two-time first-team all-conference tackle Zane Beadles and the first 1,000 rushing-receiving tandem at Utah in 18 years. Running back Eddie Wide (1,032 yards) and receiver David Reed (1,085 yards) joined Beadles on the 2009 all-MWC first team. Utah's defense ranks in the top 25 nationally in pass efficiency defense (No. 9), pass defense (No. 13), total defense (No. 19) and scoring defense (No. 22). The Utes, who allow just 19.7 point per game, are led by three first-team all-MWC defenders: end Koa Misi (65 tackles, 8.0 TFL, 4.5 sacks, 3 forced fumbles), linebacker Stevenson Sylvester (73 tackles, 4.5 TFL, 2.0 sacks) and free safety Robert Johnson (66 tackles, 5 interceptions, 4 pass breakups, 4.0 TFL, 2 touchdowns).

Head Coach Jeff Tedford brings his Golden Bears to San Diego after finishing the regular season with an 8-4 overall record, 5-4 in the Pac-10.

"We are looking forward to going to San Diego and playing in the San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl," Tedford said. "We've had great experiences in bowl games in San Diego in the past. We've always been treated very well, and the hospitality has been outstanding. We are looking forward to playing a quality opponent from the Mountain West Conference."

Cal will run its school-record string of consecutive bowl appearances to seven by participating in the 2009 San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl. The Golden Bears also have a current school-record string of four straight bowl victories and have won five of six bowls under head coach Jeff Tedford. The 2009 squad features the tailback tandem of

Jahvid Best (867 yards) and Shane Vereen (830 yards) although Best has not played or practiced since being injured against Oregon State on Nov. 7 and his status for the Poinsettia Bowl is uncertain. Quarterback Kevin Riley has put together a solid season as the starter in all 12 games, passing for career highs of 2,636 yards and 17 touchdowns. Riley's favorite target has been wide receiver Marvin Jones (38-607-6). Linebacker Mike Mohamed has been the team's top defensive player and is the Pac-10's leading tackler with an average of 8.8 per game and a total of 105 stops, while defensive lineman Tyson Alualu (60 tackles) leads the team in sacks (7.5) and tackles for loss (10.0) and is expected to be a high pick in next year's NFL Draft.

Cal holds a 4-2 edge over Utah in a series that dates back to 1920. The last time they played each other was in 2003. The Utes topped the Golden Bears 31-24 in Salt Lake City.

Tickets for the game can be purchased by calling TicketMaster at 619-220-TIXS (8497), or by visiting [www.PoinsettiaBowl.com](http://www.PoinsettiaBowl.com).