

= 2004 Emerald Bowl =

The 2004 Emerald Bowl was a post @-@ season college football bowl game between the New Mexico Lobos and the Navy Midshipmen on December 30 , 2004 at SBC Park in San Francisco , California , United States . The game , which Navy won with a final score of 34 ? 19 , was highlighted by a 26 @-@ play drive from the Midshipmen that took up almost 15 minutes of game time and set the record for the longest drive in a National Collegiate Athletic Association ( NCAA ) college football game . The contest was the third time the Emerald Bowl was played and the final game of the 2004 NCAA football season for both teams .

The conference independent Navy Midshipmen , who finished the regular season with a 9 ? 2 record , accepted an invitation to play in the game on November 22 , 2004 . Eight days later , the 7 ? 4 New Mexico Lobos agreed to fill the open spot reserved for a Mountain West Conference team . Leading up to the game , sports writers predicted that a major highlight of the contest would be the rushing offenses of Midshipmen head coach Paul Johnson and Lobos head coach Rocky Long ; both teams ranked in the top rushing offenses in the Football Bowl Subdivision ( FBS ) . The Lobos also ranked as one of the nation 's top rushing defenses .

The game began at 1 : 35 p.m. PST in rainy conditions that had affected the San Francisco Bay Area for days before the contest . The Lobos scored a touchdown on the game 's first drive to take an early lead , but the Midshipmen scored three touchdowns to bring the score to 21 ? 7 early in the second quarter . After the Lobos narrowed that lead to 12 points by the end of the third quarter , the Midshipmen began a long drive which took up much of the fourth quarter . The drive ended with a field goal , which gave Navy a 15 @-@ point lead with a little over two minutes remaining in the game . On the next drive from the Lobos , the Midshipmen forced a turnover on downs and ran out the clock with their last possession to win the game .

Midshipmen players Aaron Polanco and Vaughn Kelley were named the game 's offensive and defensive Most Valuable Players , respectively . The win caused the Midshipmen to finish the season with a 10 ? 2 record , their best record since the 1905 season . After the game , the Associated Press College Poll and the USA Today Coaches ' Poll ranked the team as the 24th best in the nation . The loss caused the Lobos ' record to fall to 7 ? 5 .

= = Team selection = =

First played in 2002 when it was called the Diamond Walnut San Francisco Bowl , organizers announced a new name in May 2004 for that year 's iteration of the annual game for the 2004 ? 05 NCAA football bowl season . The new title for the game was derived from the Emerald Nuts brand owned by the game 's primary sponsor , Diamond Foods . Originally , the game was to feature the sixth bowl eligible team from the Pacific @-@ 10 Conference and the third eligible team from the Mountain West Conference .

= = = Navy = = =

Since only two teams from the Pacific @-@ 10 Conference had become bowl eligible near the end of the 2004 NCAA Division I @-@ A football season , organizers looked to the United States Naval Academy Midshipmen , who were not a member of any athletic conference , to fill the open spot . The team accepted their invitation to play in the Emerald Bowl on November 22 , two days after defeating the Rutgers Scarlet Knights with a score of 54 ? 21 to earn an 8 ? 2 record . The Midshipmen had originally intended to play in the 2004 Liberty Bowl , but chose the Emerald Bowl when it looked as though Liberty Bowl organizers were seeking a matchup of more " high @-@ powered offenses " . After defeating the Army Black Knights with a score of 42 ? 13 in that year 's Army ? Navy Game , the Midshipmen ended the regular season with a record of 9 ? 2 , the first time since the 1963 college football season that Navy had won nine or more games in a season . Wins over Army and the Air Force Falcons secured Navy 's second consecutive Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief 's Trophy . Navy 's previous bowl game , the 2003 Houston Bowl , had ended in a 38 ?

14 loss to the Texas Tech Red Raiders .

== New Mexico ==

The University of New Mexico Lobos accepted the game 's other invitation on December 30 , 2004 . The Lobos finished the regular season with five straight wins , culminating in a 16 ? 9 win over conference rival Wyoming to finish with a record of 7 ? 4 . The game marked the first time in the program 's history the team had played in three straight bowl games , having lost in the 2002 and 2003 editions of the Las Vegas Bowl to the UCLA Bruins and the Oregon State Beavers , respectively . The bowl game was the first meeting between was the two teams .

== Pre @-@ game buildup ==

Prior to the game , spread bettors favored the New Mexico Lobos by a single point . Given both teams ' propensity for running the ball and the rainy weather conditions that had affected the San Francisco area for days prior to the game , analysts expected that it would center around both teams ' rushing offenses . The Baltimore Sun sports writer Kent Baker predicted that " the teams ' non @-@ reliance on the pass will serve both well . The game should be fairly low scoring and rapidly played , with the Midshipmen eking out a victory . "

== Navy ==

The Midshipmen triple option rushing offense , including future National Football League ( NFL ) fullback Kyle Eckel , ranked third among FBS teams in total rushing yards and averaged 291 rushing yards per game . The Midshipmen passing offense , however , ranked 116th out of 117 FBS teams . Using a 3 ? 4 defensive scheme , the Midshipmen had experienced mixed levels of defensive success . Although the defensive backs had set a team record for interceptions returned for touchdowns during the season , analysts and fans criticized the squad for a 42 ? 10 loss to the Tulane Green Wave . Special teams play was a noted weakness for Navy ; kicker Geoff Blumenfeld had missed seven of ten field goal attempts during the season , including three at distances shorter than 30 yards . The Midshipmen , who had recently completed rigorous midterm exams , were also mourning the death of former teammate J. P. Blecksmith , who had been killed at the Second Battle of Fallujah in the Iraq war in November .

== New Mexico ==

The Lobos also relied heavily on their rushing offense . Running back DonTrell Moore had gained 3 @, @ 667 career yards and averaged 106 rushing yards per game coming into the contest . When both Moore and quarterback Kole McKamey played for the Lobos , the team had a record of 6 ? 1 , averaging 21 @. @ 4 offensive points per game ; however , when either player was sidelined with an injury , the team 's record dropped to 1 ? 3 and the offense averaged 10 @. @ 3 points per game . The Lobos ' passing offense also ranked near the bottom of the FBS , at 115th . Wide receiver Hank Baskett led the team with 49 receptions for 793 yards during the season . The Lobos entered the bowl game with the eighth best rushing defense in the country , allowing an average of 93 @. @ 6 rushing yards per game . The team had allowed 107 yards of rushing offense in its previous four games combined ; it ranked first in the Mountain West Conference in fewest points allowed and most sacks , and had not allowed a rushing touchdown it its last five games . With a win , Lobos head coach Rocky Long would set a team record for most wins as a head coach .

== Game summary ==

The 2004 Emerald Bowl began with a 1 : 35 p.m. PST kickoff time in SBC Park . Because the field had been converted from the baseball diamond typically used by the San Francisco Giants , both

teams shared the same sideline during the game . Rainy conditions caused the field 's natural grass surface to become muddier as the game progressed . Although 30 @, @ 563 tickets were sold , an increase of 19 percent from the 2003 game , official in @-@ stadium attendance was listed at 28 @, @ 856 , an increase of 28 percent over the previous year . Despite New Mexico 's closer proximity to the bowl site , Midshipmen fans comprised a large portion of the crowd ; Navy directly sold 18 @, @ 000 tickets prior to the game and was given credit for 22 @, @ 000 . The game aired live on ESPN2 , with Eric Collins and Andre Ware serving as announcers . With a Nielsen rating of 2 @. @ 04 , the game was watched by over four million households , approximately 65 percent more viewers than the previous year .

= = = First quarter = = =

The Midshipmen kicked off to the Lobos to begin the game . New Mexico then executed a 66 @-@ yard drive that comprised nearly seven minutes of game time , which ended when quarterback Kole McKamey threw a 9 @-@ yard touchdown pass to Logan Hall . Midshipmen quarterback Aaron Polanco responded on the next drive by scoring a 14 @-@ yard rushing touchdown , tying the score at 7 ? 7 . On the following drive from the Lobos , running back DonTrell Moore tore his anterior cruciate ligament ( ACL ) when Midshipmen cornerback Vaughn Kelley made a low tackle . Moore fumbled the ball as he was tackled , and did not return for the remainder of the game . Midshipmen linebacker Lane Jackson recovered the fumble . On the Midshipmen 's next drive , running back Frank Divis executed a halfback option pass trick play to Polanco for 17 yards , the team 's biggest gain of the first quarter . Two plays later , Polanco scored another touchdown on a 1 @-@ yard run up the middle , giving Navy a 14 ? 7 lead at the end of the first quarter .

= = = Second quarter = = =

The Midshipmen began the second quarter with a two @-@ play , 30 @-@ second drive that ended with a 61 @-@ yard touchdown pass from Polanco to receiver Corey Dryden , increasing the team 's lead to 21 ? 7 . The Lobos responded with a rushing touchdown from running back Rodney Ferguson , but kicker Wes Zunker 's extra point attempt was no good , making the score 21 ? 13 . Midshipmen kicker Geoff Blumenfeld added a 27 @-@ yard field goal to bring the score to 24 ? 13 . McKamey scored another rushing touchdown to cap off another long drive , this time taking up over five minutes of game time , but the team 's two @-@ point conversion attempt failed . Lane Jackson intercepted McKamey 's pass on the Lobos final drive before half @-@ time , ending the first half of the game with a score of 24 ? 19 in favor of the Midshipmen .

= = = Third quarter = = =

The Lobos began the second half of the game with a kickoff to Navy , and after an unsuccessful drive from each team , the Midshipmen began a drive on their own 25 @-@ yard line with 11 : 30 left in the quarter . With 7 : 01 left , Polanco scored another rushing touchdown for the Midshipmen , this time for 28 yards . The next Lobos drive began with two penalties from the Midshipmen , moving New Mexico from its own 31 @-@ yard line to Navy 's 49 before their first snap . The Lobos moved 48 yards over the course of eight plays and almost five minutes of game time , but the team committed a turnover on downs inches away from the goal line when running back D.D. Cox was forced out of bounds on fourth down , preventing the team from scoring any points . Getting the ball back with a 31 ? 19 lead , Navy began their next drive on their own 1 @-@ yard line with 1 : 41 remaining in the third quarter . Polanco rushed for three more plays before the end of the quarter .

= = = Fourth quarter = = =

Continuing Navy 's drive from the previous quarter , Polanco and Eckel continued to run up the middle and the right side of New Mexico 's defense for small gains . Polanco attempted two passes ,

the first of which was incomplete and the second to slotback Marco Nelson for a first down at the Midshipmen 44 @-@ yard line . After 12 plays and over six minutes of game time , the drive reached midfield . After six more rushing plays from Polanco , Eckel , and slotback Eric Roberts , the team reached the Lobos ' 28 @-@ yard line . Needing three yards to achieve a fourth down conversion , Navy coach Paul Johnson called a time @-@ out . On the next play , Frank Divis threw his second halfback option pass of the day to Polanco , gaining six yards to keep the drive alive . Eckel , Divis , and Roberts rushed for six more plays before the drive came to a halt at the Lobos ' 5 @-@ yard line . On the final play of the drive , Midshipman kicker Geoff Blumenfeld kicked a 22 @-@ yard field goal to make the score 34 ? 19 with 2 : 07 left in the game .

The Lobos gained three more first downs on their final drive , but were unable to score again before turning the ball over on downs . The Midshipmen ran one more quarterback kneel play to run out the clock , winning the game with a final score of 34 ? 19 .

= = = Scoring summary = = =

= = Final statistics = =

Though the Lobos gained more first downs and yards on offense than the Midshipmen , their three turnovers and Navy 's extended drive in the third and fourth quarters led to the lopsided final score . The 14 @-@ minute , 26 @-@ second final drive from the Midshipmen , measured by its 26 total plays , set a record for the longest drive in a game . Prior to the contest , the NCAA had not kept a record for longest drive , but began keeping track for the 2005 edition of the record book . No drive in either college football or in the NFL has exceeded the record in terms of total plays or in time of possession since the game was played . At post @-@ game press conferences , both coaches discussed the characteristics of the drive :

I think that you have to give the defense on the other side some credit because they kept us out of the end zone and we had 26 plays . I wasn 't a lot of big plays , it was four yards , five yards . Running the clock was kinda just what the doctor ordered at that point in the game .

I 've never seen a drive like that ... In fact it wasn 't even as if we were playing bad defense . I think their average gain was 3 @.@ 6 yards ; we just couldn 't make them punt .

Midshipmen quarterback Aaron Polanco was named as the offensive Most Valuable Player ( MVP ) of the game , finishing the contest with 101 passing yards and 136 rushing yards , a new team bowl record for the Midshipmen . Polanco also had two receptions for 23 yards , achieving the rare feat of leading his team in rushing yards , passing yards , and receptions . Polanco finished the season with 16 touchdowns , more than any other quarterback in the nation . Additionally , Midshipmen fullback Kyle Eckel ran for 85 yards on 24 carries , becoming the Midshipmen 's fourth @-@ leading rusher of all time . Navy cornerback Vaughn Kelley had nine tackles in the game , including the forced fumble in the first quarter , and was named as the defensive MVP of the game . Navy kicker Geoff Blumenfeld exceeded analysts ' expectations by making all three of his field goal attempts during the game , and New Mexico kicker Wes Zunker missed his first extra point attempt after 46 consecutive conversions , one away from the school record .

= = Game images = =

= = Post @-@ game effects = =

The win lifted the Midshipmen 's record for that season to 10 ? 2 , Navy 's second 10 @-@ win season in its history and first in 99 years . It was the first bowl game victory for the Midshipmen since the 1996 Aloha Bowl . As a result of the win , the team finished the season ranked 24th in both the Associated Press and USA Today Coaches ' Poll , the first time since 1978 that the Midshipmen finished the season ranked in any major poll . For his coaching accomplishments that year , head

coach Paul Johnson was awarded the 2004 Bobby Dodd Coach of the Year Award . The next season , Navy played in the inaugural 2005 Poinsettia Bowl , defeating the Colorado State Rams 51 ? 30 . In November 2012 , Navy accepted an invitation to Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl , the newest name for the Emerald Bowl , based on the team 's positive experiences from this game .

The Lobos ended the season with a 7 ? 5 record , finishing second in the Mountain West Conference behind the Utah Utes . After undergoing surgery to repair his ACL , running back DonTrell Moore returned to compete for the 2005 New Mexico Lobos football team , becoming the sixth college player to rush for over 1 @, @ 000 yards for four straight seasons . The team finished with a 6 ? 5 record in 2005 , but did not play in a bowl game .