

= 1947 Sun Bowl =

The 1947 Sun Bowl was a post @-@ season American college football bowl game between the Virginia Tech Hokies of the Southern Conference and the Cincinnati Bearcats . It took place on January 1 , 1947 , at Kidd Field in El Paso , Texas . Cincinnati defeated Virginia Tech 18 ? 6 in cold and icy conditions that led to a scoreless first half and three blocked extra points by Virginia Tech . The game was the first NCAA @-@ sanctioned post @-@ season football contest for Cincinnati , and was the first bowl game in Virginia Tech history . The 1947 game was also the 13th edition of the Sun Bowl , which had been played every year since 1935 . In exchange for their participation in the event , each team received \$ 9 @,@ 438 .

= = Pregame buildup = =

The 1947 Sun Bowl game was held as the culminating event of the Sun Carnival and was held at 15 @,@ 000 @-@ seat Kidd Field on the campus of Texas Western University , today known as the University of Texas El Paso . The matchup of Virginia Tech and Cincinnati was out of character for the Sun Bowl , which traditionally matched the champion of the Border Conference with the best possible opponent . Hardin @-@ Simmons University , champions of the Border Conference , declined a Sun Bowl bid , as did the second @-@ place team , Texas Tech . With no other option , a member of the Sun Bowl Committee ? who happened to be an alumnus of Virginia Tech ? suggested inviting the Hokies to play against Cincinnati , which had already accepted an invitation .

= = = Virginia Tech = = =

Virginia Tech came into the game having gone 3 @-@ 3 @-@ 3 under coach James Kitts . Kitts , in his first year replacing coach H. M. McEver , had coached the team in 1941 before the outbreak of World War II interrupted the Virginia Tech football program . During the 1946 season , Kitts ' team defeated the No. 12 N.C. State Wolfpack for the first win over an Associated Press Top 25 team in school history , the Washington and Lee University Generals , and the Hokies ' traditional rivals , the Virginia Military Institute Keydets . During Virginia Tech 's preparations before its departure for El Paso , heavy snow fell on Blacksburg , Virginia , forcing the team to use snowplows and construction equipment to clear a space for the team to practice . The Hokies traveled to El Paso without star punter and rusher Bobby Smith , who had been injured in Virginia Tech 's final regular @-@ season game .

= = = Cincinnati = = =

The Cincinnati Bearcats traveled to El Paso having amassed an 8 ? 2 record under second @-@ year head coach Ray Nolting , who took the head coaching position in Cincinnati with the revival of the football program after the end of World War Two . The Bearcats ' two losses came against Kentucky and at Tulsa , and they earned wins against tough opponents such as Indiana , Michigan State , and Ohio .

The 1947 Sun Bowl was the Bearcats ' first official bowl game , but two 1902 post @-@ season games in New Orleans , Louisiana , may be considered the first bowl games in Cincinnati football history . In 1902 , Cincinnati completed a 7 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 season , losing only to the Carlisle Indians . Following the conclusion of its football schedule , the Bearcats were invited to New Orleans by the Southern Athletic Club to play a football game on New Year 's Day . Cincinnati easily defeated the Athletic Club team , and at the victory party following the win , students from nearby Louisiana State University invited the Cincinnati players to come to their school to play another game . That game , which took place a few days later , resulted in a 22 ? 0 Cincinnati win , and may be considered the first bowl game .

= = Game summary = =

The game was played in extremely cold and icy conditions , still the worst in Sun Bowl history . Three inches of snow fell on top of a layer of frozen rain the day before the game , and at kickoff the teams took the field under cloudy skies and in below @-@ freezing temperatures . Despite the inclement weather , 15 @,@ 000 @-@ seat Kidd Field was approximately half full , and bowl officials estimated the crowd at around 10 @,@ 000 people .

Weather conditions allowed both teams ' defenses to dominate in the first half . Virginia Tech had the best chance to score of either team in the first half when it drove to a first down inside the Cincinnati two @-@ yard line late in the first quarter . On four straight running plays , however , the Bearcats ' defense held , and Virginia Tech was denied a scoring opportunity .

In the second half , however , Cincinnati 's offense managed to begin moving the ball effectively . On Cincinnati 's first play of the second half , halfback Roger Stephens broke through the Virginia Tech defensive line for 26 yards , taking the ball inside Virginia Tech territory . Cincinnati 's drive would overcome two 15 @-@ yard penalties and one five @-@ yard penalty en route to a touchdown just a few plays later . On its next possession , Cincinnati 's All @-@ American Roger Stephens again broke off another long run , this time for 19 yards , setting up another Bearcats ' touchdown . Virginia Tech countered with a long drive that reached the Cincinnati 23 @-@ yard line before an errant pass was intercepted by the Bearcats in the end zone . Virginia Tech managed a defensive stop , however , and marched down the field for a touchdown to climb within six points . Cincinnati sealed its victory , however , when Bearcats ' halfback Harold Johnson intercepted a Virginia Tech pass late in the fourth quarter , returning it all the way to the Virginia Tech 25 @-@ yard line . That return set up a Cincinnati touchdown and put the Bearcats up by the game 's final score , 18 ? 6 .

= = Statistical summary = =

Virginia Tech blocked all three Cincinnati extra point attempts , while Virginia Tech 's sole extra point kick missed . Cincinnati 's kicking woes were also reflected in their punting game . Cincinnati averaged just 19 yards a punt , setting the record for the lowest punting average in Sun Bowl history . All 24 of the game 's points were scored in the second half . Virginia Tech earned just 34 rushing yards against the Bearcats ' defense while allowing 369 yards to Cincinnati 's rushing offense . Those two totals are the least @-@ gained and most @-@ allowed marks in Virginia Tech bowl game history .

Prior to 1954 , the Sun Bowl did not award most valuable player honors , but Harold Johnson from Cincinnati was statistically the game 's most valuable player , intercepting two Virginia Tech passes (one in the end zone) and scoring the first touchdown of the game on a 13 @-@ yard run .