

= 2012 New Mexico Bowl =

The 2012 Gildan New Mexico Bowl was a post @-@ season American college football bowl game that was held on December 15 , 2012 , at University Stadium on the campus of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque , New Mexico in the United States . The seventh edition of the New Mexico Bowl began at 11 : 00 a.m. MST and aired on ESPN . It featured the Nevada Wolf Pack , who represented the Mountain West Conference in their first year as a member , against the Arizona Wildcats , who represented the Pac @-@ 12 Conference . The Wolf Pack accepted their invitation with a 7 ? 4 record in their first eleven games of the season , while the Wildcats accepted their invitation after finishing the regular season at 7 ? 5 . The bowl was the first of 35 played in the 2012 ? 13 bowl game season .

Coming into the game , both teams had sound offenses and were led by their respective running backs , sophomore Ka 'Deem Carey for Arizona and senior Stephon Jefferson for Nevada , who ranked number one and number two respectively in total rushing yards during the regular season . Arizona and Nevada ranked third and fourth respectively in total offense . Both teams ' defenses were ranked towards the bottom of college football . Consequently , the game was widely expected to be high @-@ scoring .

Arizona won the game 49 ? 48 after scoring two touchdowns in the final two minutes to come back for the victory . As expected , the game was dominated by offense ; Arizona and Nevada combined for 1234 total yards and 70 first downs . Despite losing the game , Nevada possessed the ball nearly twice as long and gained twice as many rushing yards as Arizona . Arizona quarterback Matt Scott was named the game 's offensive most valuable player (MVP) , and teammate Marquis Flowers , a linebacker , was named the game 's defensive MVP .

= = Teams = =

The New Mexico Bowl is played annually at the campus stadium of the University of New Mexico , a founding member of the Mountain West Conference which has had a tie @-@ in since the game 's establishment in 2006 . 2012 was the first year of the Pac @-@ 12 's tie in . The game featured the nation 's top rushers , Arizona 's All @-@ American Ka 'Deem Carey (146 @.@ 4 ypg) and Nevada 's Stephon Jefferson (141 @.@ 9 ypg) . It also featured Arizona quarterback Matt Scott (3 @,@ 723 total offense yards) and Nevada quarterback Cody Fajardo (3 @,@ 511 total offense yards) .

This was the fourth meeting between these two teams . Arizona leads the all @-@ time record 2 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 . The last time they played was in 1941 .

= = = Arizona = = =

Arizona came off of a 7 @-@ 5 (4 @-@ 5 in conference) season in coach Rich Rodriguez 's debut with the team . Arizona started their season by beating Toledo , Oklahoma State , and South Carolina State prior to getting blown out 49 @-@ 0 by Oregon . Later in the season , Arizona beat USC who was ranked # 9 . Star running back Ka 'Deem Carey had his best game of the year against Colorado totaling 366 yards to give the Wildcats their sixth win of the season . Their regular season concluded with a loss to rival Arizona State 41 @-@ 34 .

The 2012 edition was the first appearance in the bowl for both Arizona and for the Pac @-@ 12 . Arizona , seventh best in the nation in total offense (521 @.@ 83 ypg) , was led by quarterback Matt Scott (338 @.@ 45 ypg , 3 @,@ 238 yards passing) , All @-@ American running back Ka 'Deem Carey who led the nation in rushing (146 @.@ 42 ypg) and set a school record with his 1 @,@ 757 rushing yards , good for 21 touchdowns , and wide receiver Austin Hill who totaled 1 @,@ 189 yards . 2012 was the first season in Arizona 's history during which they had a 3000 @-@ yard passer , a 1000 @-@ yard rusher , and a 1000 @-@ yard receiver . Senior place kicker John Bonano was named the 2012 Pac @-@ 12 Football Scholar @-@ Athlete of the Year (Physiology major with a 3 @.@ 927 GPA) .

== Nevada ==

The Wolf Pack came off their inaugural season as a member of the Mountain West , during which they compiled a conference record of 4 @-@ 3 , good for fifth place in the conference . They began their season by defeating rival California 31 @-@ 24 . After losing to South Florida by a single point , Nevada won five consecutive games to achieve bowl eligibility . The Wolf Pack then dropped three of their final four to bring their record to 7 @-@ 5 . After defeating the New Mexico Lobos to improve their record to 7 @-@ 4 , the Wolf Pack accepted an invitation to the New Mexico Bowl .

Nevada coach Chris Ault was one of three members of the College Football Hall of Fame to lead a team into a bowl game , along with Barry Alvarez (Wisconsin interim coach) and Steve Spurrier (South Carolina) . Nevada 's senior receiver Brandon Wimberly had caught a pass in all 39 games of his college career . This was the Wolf Pack 's second New Mexico Bowl ; they had previously played in the 2007 edition (then as a member of the Western Athletic Conference) , losing to the hometown New Mexico Lobos by a score of 23 @-@ 0 .

== Pregame buildup ==

This was the first bowl of the 2012 @-@ 13 College Football Bowl season . Prior to 2012 , the teams had not met since 1941 despite their close proximity . In 1941 , Arizona beat Nevada 26 ? 7 . Overall , the series record prior to the game was 1 ? 1 ? 1 . Arizona , who had appeared in a bowl game in four of the previous five seasons , made the Pac @-@ 12 's first appearance in the New Mexico Bowl . Nevada made its eighth consecutive bowl appearance and second all @-@ time in the New Mexico Bowl .

== Offense ==

Coming into the game , Arizona and Nevada were two of the top offenses in the country , ranking 7th and 10th in yards per game respectively . There was also significant hype surrounding the game because it featured two of the best running backs in the country , Ka 'Deem Carey for Arizona , and Stephon Jefferson for Nevada . Carey was ranked number one in the country in total rushing yards , while Jefferson was ranked number two . The duo were also prolific scorers ; Jefferson was second in the country in rushing touchdowns with 25 and Carey was third with 24 . The game was widely expected to be a shoot @-@ out , as both teams were in the top @-@ 20 scoring offenses in the regular season .

== Defense ==

There were very low expectations for the defenses ; the over / under was set at 75 @.@ 5 total points . During the regular season , both defenses were ranked in the bottom 30 (out of 120) in points allowed . Despite having three players on the All @-@ Mountain West team , Nevada allowed opponents to convert third downs 47 @.@ 2 % of the time (107th in the country) . Arizona was led defensively during the regular season by Jake Fischer , who accumulated 119 total tackles , while Nevada was led by Albert Rosette who totaled 135 regular season tackles .

== Game summary ==

== First quarter ==

Nevada methodically moved down the field on their first drive and scored first on a 16 @-@ yard run by Stephon Jefferson to cap off an 8 @-@ play , 75 @-@ yard drive . Later in the quarter , the Wolf Pack took a 14 @-@ 0 lead following a 17 @-@ yard touchdown pass from quarterback Cody

Fajardo to Zach Sudfeld . Arizona fumbled on the ensuing kickoff . On the first play of their drive , Nevada took a 21 @-@ 0 lead on a 28 @-@ yard touchdown pass to Sudfeld . All @-@ American running back Ka 'Deem Carey finally got Arizona on the board with a 21 @-@ yard touchdown run late in the first quarter .

= = = Second quarter = = =

In the second quarter , Arizona outscored Nevada 21 @-@ 10 . Taking advantage of two Nevada turnovers , an interception thrown by Cody Fajardo and a fumble by Stefphon Jefferson , Arizona was able to tie the game at 21 with one @-@ yard touchdown runs by Matt Scott and Carey , respectively . Nevada regained the lead on a 14 @-@ yard rushing touchdown by Jefferson , but Arizona tied the game once again on a 9 @-@ yard Carey touchdown run , his third of the game . Nevada enjoyed a three @-@ point lead at the half after a 27 field goal by Allen Hardison capped off a 16 @-@ play , 65 @-@ yard drive and made the score 31 @-@ 28 .

= = = Third quarter = = =

After kicking off to start the game , Arizona got the ball first in the second half . Their first drive went three @-@ and @-@ out . After a 51 @-@ yard punt , Nevada took over at their own 11 @-@ yard line . They put together an 11 @-@ play , 89 @-@ yard drive that culminated with a 33 @-@ yard touchdown pass from Cody Fajardo to Richy Turner . During the course of throwing the touchdown pass , Fajardo hurt his hand and was seen shaking it on his way to the end zone to celebrate the score . He returned for Nevada 's next offensive drive . Arizona 's next drive got them into Nevada territory , but an interception thrown by Matt Scott ended any hopes of scoring . Nevada took the field and drove 84 yards down the field on 15 plays . Near the end of the drive once Nevada was inside the 10 @-@ yard line , Fajardo ran the ball for a gain of three yards . During the course of the play , he took a hit to the head from an Arizona defender . He exited the game for one play , but subsequently returned on that drive and scored a one @-@ yard rushing touchdown . Arizona was held scoreless in the quarter , and heading into the final quarter of regulation , Nevada possessed a 45 @-@ 28 lead .

= = = Fourth quarter = = =

Arizona came in to the fourth quarter trailing Nevada by 17 points . Arizona was able to cut the lead to 45 @-@ 35 on a 63 @-@ yard touchdown pass from Scott to Austin Hill soon after the 4th quarter began . Nevada then took a 48 @-@ 35 lead on a 25 @-@ yard field goal from Hardison , for a 13 @-@ point lead with only 1 : 44 left in regulation time . Arizona , with no timeouts and needing two scores to win the game , was able to cut the lead down to 48 @-@ 42 with only 42 seconds left in regulation on a short touchdown pass from Scott to Hill . After Marquis Flowers successfully recovered the onside kick , Arizona quickly scored with another short Scott touchdown pass , this time to Tyler Slavin , to take tie the game at 48 with only 19 seconds left in regulation . Prior to the extra point attempt , Nevada coach Chris Ault called his final timeout to try to ice kicker John Bonano . The tactic was unsuccessful , as Bonano made the extra point to give Arizona a one @-@ point lead . The final 19 seconds of the game were the only time that Arizona led . Arizona held on to the lead after Arizona 's Flowers intercepted a Fajardo pass with a few seconds remaining in the game .

= = Scoring summary = =

= = Statistics = =

= = = Individual statistics = = =

Passing

Rushing

Receiving

= = Aftermath = =

On December 28 , 2012 , nearly two weeks after the bowl game , Nevada head coach Chris Ault announced that he would retire from his position as head football coach at Nevada . Son of former National Football League executive Bill Polian Brian Polian was subsequently signed a five @-@ year contract to be the new head coach of the Wolf Pack on January 7 , 2013 .