

= 2012 Hawaii Bowl =

The 2012 Sheraton Hawaii Bowl was a post @-@ season American college football bowl game held on December 24 , 2012 at Aloha Stadium in Honolulu , Hawaii in the United States . The eleventh edition of the Hawaii Bowl began at 3 : 00 p.m. HAST and aired on ESPN . It featured the SMU Mustangs from Conference USA against the Mountain West Conference co @-@ champion Fresno State Bulldogs , and was the final game of the 2012 NCAA Division I FBS football season for both teams . The Mustangs accepted their invitation after earning a 6 @-@ 6 record in the regular season , while the Bulldogs accepted their invitation after a 9 @-@ 3 regular season record .

The pre @-@ game buildup focused primarily on the strong rushing attacks of both teams as well as the overall sound offense of Fresno State . Most analysts predicted a resounding victory by Fresno State . The point spread favored Fresno State as 12 @-@ point favorites over the Mustangs . Contrary to predictions , SMU won the game by a score of 43 @-@ 10 , largely thanks to the play of defensive end Margus Hunt , who forced two fumbles and totaled three sacks (including one safety) as well as two interceptions that were returned for touchdowns . Consequently , Hunt and Fresno State 's Davante Adams , who totaled 13 receptions for 144 yards and a touchdown , were named the game 's co @-@ Most Valuable Player (MVP) .

= = Teams = =

Conference USA has had its tie @-@ in to the Hawaii Bowl ever since the game 's establishment in 2002 . The Mountain West Conference started its affiliation with the game when the hometown Hawaii Warriors moved to said conference (previously , Hawaii , and said tie @-@ in , belonged to the Western Athletic Conference) . In fact , Hawaii has an automatic bid to the bowl game should it be eligible ; however , because of its 3 @-@ 9 record in 2012 , it was not bowl @-@ eligible , leaving the spot to the fifth bowl @-@ eligible Mountain West team . The 2012 Hawaii Bowl was the seventh meeting between Fresno State and SMU , the last one coming in 2004 .

This was the Mustangs ' second Hawaii Bowl , following the 2009 game where they defeated the Nevada Wolf Pack by a score of 45 @-@ 10 (SMU 's first bowl bid since playing in Hawaii in the 1984 Aloha Bowl , and their first since the program was relaunched in 1989 after being shut down for two years due to massive NCAA rules violations) . It also was the Mustangs ' final game as a member of Conference USA before they moved to the Big East Conference in 2013 .

= = Pregame buildup = =

One of the keys to the game , according to ESPN.com blogger Matt Fortuna , was to stop the run . Both teams had 1 @,@ 000 + yard rushers (Zach Line for SMU , Robbie Rouse for Fresno State) , but SMU 's rush defense (24th in FBS) was better than Fresno State 's (73rd in FBS) . Many analysts predicted that Fresno State would emerge victorious , some going as far as to predict a blowout , but said that for SMU to emerge victorious , they would have to win the field position battle as well as create turnovers .

= = = Fresno State = = =

In their first season in the Mountain West , the Bulldogs became co @-@ champions with a 7 @-@ 1 conference record . This was the Bulldogs ' first appearance in the Hawaii Bowl . Coming into the 2012 season , Bulldogs ' coach Tim DeRuyter said that his team would challenge for a Mountain West Conference title . After making good on that promise , the Bulldogs attempted to achieve their first bowl victory since the 2007 Humanitarian Bowl . A victory in the Hawaii Bowl would have given Fresno State a 10 @-@ win season for the first time since 2001 , when quarterback Derek Carr 's older brother David was the Bulldogs ' quarterback .

= = = = Offense = = = =

Fresno State was led offensively by their quarterback , junior Derek Carr , who finished 14th in the country in quarterback rating (155 @.@ 9) , 8th in passing yards (4 @.@ 104) , and tied for 3rd in touchdowns (37) . Carr was named the Mountain West Conference Player of the Year and announced before the game that he would return to Fresno State to play his senior season . The Bulldogs were riding a five @.@ game winning streak coming into the game ; the fewest points they scored during any game of that streak was 42 . The Bulldogs ' rushing attack was led by 5 @.@ foot , 7 @.@ inch (1 @.@ 70 m) 190 @.@ pound (86 kg) senior running back Robbie Rouse , who rushed for 1490 yards , which ranked 14th in the country . Rouse , who rushed for over 100 yards in nine games during the regular season , was also Fresno State 's second @.@ leading receiver (in terms of receptions) , catching the ball 63 times for 435 yards . Carr 's top target in the passing game was redshirt freshman wideout Davante Adams , who had broken several school records during his freshman year including becoming just the seventh freshman in school history to record over 100 yards receiving in a single game and setting the single @.@ game school record for a freshman by recording 12 receptions against Oregon . In total , Adams amassed 102 catches for 1312 yards and 14 touchdowns , all of which led the team . His efforts earned him a spot on Phil Steele 's fourth @.@ team All @.@ America squad and accolades as the Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year . Fresno State 's starter at tight end was senior Marcel Jensen , who totaled 20 receptions for 339 yards and 4 touchdowns , all of which were career highs . Jensen was an honorable mention all @.@ conference honoree . The Bulldogs ' offensive line was anchored by junior left tackle Austin Wentworth , who achieved first @.@ team all @.@ conference honors .

===== Defense =====

Described as " well @.@ rounded and explosive " by SBNation.com , Fresno State 's defense was paramount to their success during the season . Their 3 @.@ 4 defense was installed by their first @.@ year coach , DeRuyter , and proved effective throughout the season . They finished third in the NCAA in interceptions , amassing 22 of them . 8 of those 22 interceptions came from Fresno State 's defensive leader , Mountain West Conference Defensive Player of the Year , first @.@ team All @.@ American , and NCAA leader in interceptions senior safety Phillip Thomas , who also recorded a career high 82 tackles and finished second on the team with 4 sacks , the second @.@ most by a defensive back in the country . Fresno State 's defense was also successful rushing the passer ; they finished ninth in the NCAA in sacks with 39 of them . Fresno State 's front seven was led by sophomore Tyeler Davison , who achieved first team all @.@ conference accolades and recorded six tackles for loss during the season . The Bulldogs ' leader in sacks was junior nose tackle Andy Jennings , who achieved 5 @.@ 5 of them . The Bulldogs ' linebackers were led by senior Travis Brown . Brown totaled 68 tackles and was a first team all @.@ conference selection .

===== SMU =====

Coming into the 2012 season , SMU was widely expected to finish third in the Conference USA West Division . They exceeded that expectation by finishing second in the C @.@ USA West and earning a bid to the Hawaii Bowl . A year after his season ended due to a foot injury , running back Zach Line was poised to have a breakout year and was expected to win the Conference USA Offensive Player of the Year award .

===== Offense =====

At quarterback , University of Texas transfer Garrett Gilbert started for the Mustangs and struggled ; he totaled a 53 % completion percentage , 15 touchdowns , and 15 interceptions , the latter of which was tied for ninth @.@ most in the NCAA . The Mustangs ' offensive leader was three @.@ time All @.@ Conference USA player and 2012 Conference USA Offensive Player of the Year running back

Zach Line , who had totaled 4 @, @ 185 rushing yards and 37 touchdowns in his career coming into the game . Line was also the Mustangs ' fourth @-@ leading receiver (in terms of receptions) , totaling 33 for 229 yards . SMU 's wide receiving corps featured a trio of standouts : senior Darius Johnson , junior Jeremy Johnson , and sophomore Der 'rikk Thompson . The former Johnson , who is one of just two SMU players ever to record three 60 @-@ catch seasons , led the Mustangs with 787 receiving yards from 64 receptions which included 5 touchdowns . The latter Johnson totaled 67 receptions , which led the team , for 679 yards and 3 touchdowns . Thompson , who led the trio by averaging 13 @. @ 0 yards per reception , caught the ball 41 times for 535 yards and 4 touchdowns during the regular season . Coach June Jones ' spread offense did not employ a tight end , and none were on the roster for the Mustangs . The Mustangs ' offensive line was led by senior Bryan Collins , who achieved 2nd team all @-@ conference honors .

= = = = Defense = = = =

The Mustangs were defensively anchored by senior defensive end Margus Hunt , who achieved eight sacks en route to a first @-@ team all @-@ conference selection . Prior to the game , there was significant hype surrounding the defensive matchup between Fresno State 's Davante Adams and SMU 's cornerback junior Kenneth Acker , who intercepted the ball three times during the season . Acker achieved second @-@ team all @-@ conference accolades . SMU 's defense also had an all @-@ conference honoree in the linebacking corps , senior Ja 'Gared Davis , who totaled 77 tackles during the season . The Mustangs were prolific in turnovers and led the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) in interceptions returned for touchdowns (8) , tied for fourth in interceptions (21) , and finished third in total takeaways (37) . Despite their success with turnovers , the Mustangs were far more mediocre in scoring defense , in which they allowed 25 @. @ 7 points per game (tied for 54th nationally) , and total defense , in which they gave up 396 @. @ 1 yards per game (62nd nationally) .

= = Game summary = =

= = = Game notes = = =

= = = = First quarter = = = =

SMU received the ball to start the game and marched down the field on an 8 @-@ play , 52 @-@ yard drive highlighted by a 37 @-@ yard run by quarterback Garrett Gilbert to set up a 41 @-@ yard field goal attempt by Chase Hover which he missed . Fresno State 's subsequent drive lasted only two series and ended in a punt . The remainder of the first quarter 's drives ended in punts . There were a total of three drives that went three @-@ and @-@ out in the quarter , two by SMU and one by Fresno State .

= = = = Second quarter = = = =

SMU struck first in the second quarter via a 17 @-@ yard rush from Gilbert , their quarterback , to put the Bulldogs up 7 @-@ 0 . Fresno State 's ensuing drive started with a first down , but ended when quarterback Derek Carr was sacked by SMU defender Margus Hunt ; Hunt forced a fumble that was recovered by the Mustangs at the Fresno State 16 @-@ yard line . SMU gained only three yards on their drive , but due to their excellent field position , kicker Chase Hover was able to convert a 30 @-@ yard field goal making it 10 @-@ 0 .

Fresno State 's offensive woes continued on their next drive . On second down , Carr was sacked for a loss of 18 yards to the 6 @-@ yard line . On third down , Hunt recorded another sack which resulted in a safety to make the score 12 @-@ 0 SMU . Zach Line rushed for an 8 @-@ yard

touchdown to cap an 11 @-@ play , 67 @-@ yard drive after the safety . This made the score 19 @-@ 0 .

Hunt continued his fantastic first @-@ half performance on Fresno State 's next drive , forcing running back Robbie Rouse to fumble . It was recovered by safety Taylor Reed . Hover kicked a 48 @-@ yard field goal to make the score 22 @-@ 0 . Fresno State finally started to put together a solid drive at the end of the half including three consecutive first @-@ down passes from Carr to Isaiah Burse for 16 yards , Greg Watson for 12 yards , and Davante Adams for 33 yards respectively that set up first and goal at the three @-@ yard line with 0 : 39 remaining in the half . The Bulldogs failed to execute , however , and ended the half without scoring at all . The final play of the half was a pass to tight end Marcel Jensen in the end zone , but he dropped the ball , thus ending the scoring threat .

== == Third quarter == ==

Since SMU had received the ball to start the game , Fresno State got possession to start the second half . The first play from scrimmage of the half was a 38 @-@ yard pass from Carr to Burse which got the Bulldogs up to the Mustangs ' 41 @-@ yard line . The drive stalled from there , however , after a six @-@ yard loss on a pass play , a false start penalty , a pass completed for no gain , and an incomplete pass . After a 42 @-@ yard punt that was returned for 4 yards , SMU was set up at their 14 @-@ yard line . The ensuing drive for SMU showed promise after they got into Bulldog territory , but an interception by Sean Alston returned for 50 yards to the SMU 15 ended any chance of scoring for the Mustangs . Fresno State finally put points on the board after setting up in the red zone ; Carr threw a 6 @-@ yard pass to Adams making the score 22 @-@ 7 after Quentin Breshears tacked on the point after . On the ensuing drive , SMU ran 7 plays for 75 yards in 3 : 20 in a drive that culminated with a 21 @-@ yard touchdown pass from Gilbert to Darius Johnson ; the drive included a 27 @-@ yard rush by Zach Line as well as a 19 @-@ yard pass from Gilbert to Der 'rikk Thompson . After the TD , the score was 29 @-@ 7 SMU . The teams then exchanged punts for the remainder of the quarter .

== == Fourth quarter == ==

Fresno State was able to run a 7 @-@ play , 72 @-@ yard drive to begin the fourth quarter that culminated with a 32 @-@ yard field goal by Breshears making the score 29 @-@ 10 . Any chance of a Bulldog comeback was quashed after Carr threw two interceptions returned for touchdowns to Reed and Hayden Greenbauer , the latter of which came with just 1 : 14 to play . The final score was 43 @-@ 10 , the Mustangs victorious .

== == Post @-@ game == ==

SMU 's resounding victory was considered an upset , and during the game , the Mustangs set a single @-@ season record for most interceptions returned for a touchdown (8) , surpassing the 2011 Southern Miss Golden Eagles football team . Margus Hunt was named the game 's Most Valuable Player because of his two @-@ forced fumble , three @-@ sack (including one safety) performance . In total , the Mustangs achieved seven sacks , the most Fresno State had surrendered in a single game all year . Davante Adams ' third @-@ quarter touchdown reception lengthened his streak to eight consecutive games with a touchdown reception , tying a Fresno State record that was set by Henry Ellard in 1982 .

== == Scoring summary == ==

== == Statistics == ==

===== Team statistics =====

===== Individual statistics =====

===== Passing =====

===== Rushing =====

===== Receiving =====

Source :