



## Sugar Bowl well prepared for national championship game

Allstate Sugar Bowl staff members moved back into their Louisiana Superdome Offices in the middle of September and also shared their two-bowl hosting plans for this coming January.

From the perspective of FWAA officers and staff, the bowl appears to have fully recovered from the effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which forced the bowl to move its 2006 game to Atlanta.

The 2007 Allstate Sugar Bowl Game was played at the Louisiana Superdome between LSU and Notre Dame. But this coming January will be the first time the bowl will under go the double-hosting format — the Allstate Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1 and then the Allstate BCS National Championship Game on Jan. 7.

One of the major differences will be the change of the press hotel, which actually went into effect last season for the Allstate Sugar Bowl game. The Hyatt, which was in close proximity to the Louisiana Superdome, has never re-opened because of damage from Katrina. The new main press hotel is the Marriott Convention Center, with press spillovers to nearby Marriott Courtyard and Marriott Springhill Suites. The Allstate Sugar Bowl has secured nearly 300 rooms at the main Marriott and a total of about 150 at the other two hotels for the news media.

All major pregame press conferences will be held at the Marriott Convention Center, except Media Day, when all players will be available at the Superdome. The Louisiana Superdome is

about a 10-15 minute bus ride from the press hotels. There also will be a media work room at the main press hotel, which was relatively unscathed by Katrina and is actually much newer than the Hyatt.

The FWAA Awards Breakfast on the day of the game and the earlier FWAA Board Meeting will be held at the press hotel, which also will have security check points into the media interview and hospitality areas and work room.

The Louisiana Superdome has had a stunning makeover from the images everyone saw during the Katrina evacuation. In the largest stadium rebuilding project in history, approximately \$193 million already has been pumped into the building in a myriad of structural areas and in amenities as well as in sound and video systems. In many respects, the Louisiana Superdome is in better shape than it has been in years.

The news media will have wireless Internet access and backups in the press box area, which was largely unaffected by the occupation of the dome in the days after Katrina.

Charles Bloom of the Southeastern Conference and BCS administrator Bill Hancock, in conjunction with Allstate Sugar Bowl staff of Chief Executive Officer Paul Hoolahan, President Ray Jean-dron, Director of Communications Duane Lewis (see Page for his bio) and Chief Operating Officer Jeff Hundley all have done an excellent job in preparing for the Allstate BCS National Championship Game.



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# President's column



**MIKE GRIFFITH**

I did not know Mike Gundy as a player. I do not know Mike Gundy as a coach.

Like most others, all I know of Oklahoma State football coach Mike Gundy is what I saw replayed on ESPN, and that is to know a man who failed to control his emotions in a professional press setting.

Lights, camera and action, indeed!

Earlier this week I issued a statement on behalf of the FWAAs condemning coach Gundy's actions as inappropriate.

Defending a player is fine. Confronting a columnist or a reporter is also within the bounds of acceptability.

But screaming in a bug-eyed rage for three minutes is hardly a means of effective communication. What about the other media members present to cover the event? They walked away from a post-game soap opera without comments on the game that their publication/channel/website paid for them to attend with money generated from advertisers/subscribers/viewers.

I stand by my judgment: Inappropriate.

If Gundy's desire was to defend or protect his player, why do so in such a way as to call national attention to the column in question?

The alternative would have been to handle the matter in another setting, in a professional manner, and let the Cowboys' players and fans enjoy the fruits of a hard-fought 49-45 shootout victory over Texas Tech.

Instead, the game was overshadowed, and coach Gundy's legacy has become that of a loose cannon.

Perhaps that's not fair, but that is the perception, and as we all know, perception can quickly overcome reality when one gets caught in, seeks out or reck-

lessly wanders into the national spotlight.

Coach Gundy encouraged reporters to take him on.

Many have obliged, seeing a 40-year-old man whose inability to control his emotions indicate he's in over his head and doesn't know how to handle the media.

As for Gundy's value as a leader, does he want his players to follow his lead and shout down anyone — women included — who dares oppose their views?

Many fans have e-mailed me, expressing disagreement with the FWAAs' condemnation of Gundy's behavior. Many suggest I was merely defending one of our own.

So, to better serve the public at-large, I asked Tennessee coach Phillip Fulmer, a former president of the American Football Coaches Association and one of the winningest coaches in college football history, how he felt about Gundy's rant.

Here was Fulmer's reply:

"In my 15 years as a head football coach, I have learned a lot about dealing with the media. I respect that they have a job to do, and some do it differently than others.

"The game of football is a very emotional and passionate game. We establish bonds with players and coaches, much as a parent and child. We see them with their helmets off, as young people growing and learning with experience.

"However, it is important for us to know where emotion should end, and composure and good example and representation takes control.

"I enjoy some columns more than others, and if a coach should critique the columnist you may have a columnist going on a tirade as well. In either case (coach or columnist), tirades are usually not the right course to take or the correct example to the very young men we are trying to influence."

OK, Fulmer is a conservative veteran coach. So how about what Terry Bowden, former Auburn coach and one of

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# Sugar Bowl names Duane Lewis director of communications

NEW ORLEANS — The Sugar Bowl Committee has named Plaquemine, La., native Duane Lewis as director of communications, according to an announcement by Sugar Bowl Chief Executive Officer Paul Hoolahan.

Lewis, 35, joins the Allstate Sugar Bowl after a 10-year public/media relations career with the National Football League's Super Bowl XXXIV Champion St. Louis Rams as their director of football media (2003-05) and, more recently, as director of new media (2006-07).

Lewis, a member of the FWAA, will serve a major role as the media director for the Allstate BCS National Championship Game on Jan. 7, 2008, when New Orleans will double host bowls in the space of a week. The actual Allstate Sugar Bowl Game will be played on Jan. 1, 2008.

"We're pleased to have Duane join our team here at

the Sugar Bowl," said Hoolahan. "His background is impressive and well-suited for us as we prepare to host the Allstate Sugar Bowl and the Allstate BCS National Championship Game in January 2008."

Working in more than 200 NFL games, Lewis' experience includes 10 playoff games with the Rams while also working five Super Bowls. During his tenure with the Rams, Lewis was selected by the NFL to work as part of the NFL's public relations staff for Super Bowl XXXIX in Jacksonville. He also was selected to work the 2000 and 2002 NFC Championship games.

Lewis earned his bachelors degree from Southern University-Baton Rouge. He also worked as a sports correspondent for both the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* and *The Baton Rouge Advocate* before beginning his NFL career.

# Fiesta veteran Gina Chappin chosen Rose Bowl media director

PASADENA — The Tournament of Roses has named Gina Chappin as Rose Bowl Game media director, CEO Mitch Dorger has announced.

Chappin joins the Rose Bowl Game after a 10-year public and media relations tenure with the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl and Insight Bowl, most recently as their director of communications.

"As the magnitude of the BCS has grown, we realize the importance of dedicating a person whose full-time focus will be on media operations." Dorger said, "We believe that Gina's talent, experience and sense of teamwork make her a perfect addition as we prepare for our first double-hosting championship game in 2010."

Rose Bowl Game media operations had been overseen by the Pac-10 office for more than 29 years. Chappin enters a newly created position for the Tournament after Jim Muldoon, the Pac-10's associate commissioner, communications and football administration, stepped down as Rose Bowl Game media director.

Chappin's experience includes assisting with two BCS National Championship Games (2003 and

2007). This past year, she played a key role as the Fiesta Bowl organization staged an unprecedented three games in eleven days with the Insight Bowl, Tostitos Fiesta Bowl and Tostitos BCS National Championship Game.

She began as an intern for the Insight Bowl while attending college and served in several media roles within the department before her recent appointment. Gina is a member of the Association for Women in Sports Media (AWSM), College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) and the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame (NFF & CHF).

Chappin will oversee all publicity efforts for the Rose Bowl Game, working closely with local and national media. She will be in charge of all game-week and game-day Rose Bowl media operations.

Chappin, a native of Northern California, earned a bachelors degree in communications from the University of Arizona.

## President's column (continued)

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the bolder coaches I have covered?

"All coaches have feelings that we want to express passionately, even strongly, in public, and yet we know we can't.

"At times, we wish we could tell fans how they should act, and tell writers how they should write, and we can't because they are doing their jobs, and we need to do ours.

"As much as any of us would applaud coach Gundy's intent to defend his players, none of us can agree with his tactics and timing. As much as I appreciate his pas-

sion for his players, there was only one person who crossed the line.

"I read the column. It was close whether she was getting into something that was iffy, but that was her prerogative.

"I had a good mentor, my father (Florida State coach Bobby Bowden), and his method was much less adversarial, and has been that way throughout his career.

"In reflection, I doubt coach Gundy feels he would do that again."

Let's hope so, Terry, for coach Gundy's sake, and the sake of the university and game he represents.



18652 Vista Del Sol  
Dallas, TX 75287

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