

U.S. Army Bowl 2.0 Promises America's Biggest Week in Football Fueled By Football's Established and New Power Players

This past June, a room packed with media from Dallas and around the nation were on hand at Dallas Cowboy's headquarters in Frisco Texas to cover the biggest football story of the day. These reporters did not gather for a Cowboys free agent signing, or to report on the latest sideline incident involving over-involved parents or the latest NCAA position on image and likeness for college athletes.

The reporters covered one of football's great feel-good stories of the year – the return of the U.S. Army to the national high school football scene.

The U.S. Army Bowl announced plans to play the nation's biggest high school football game in Frisco, Texas, on December 17th at The Ford Center, home to the Dallas Cowboys. In the room were representatives from the nation's most powerful forces within football – the Dallas Cowboys, the U.S. Army, and the Bally Sports Network.

Also, in the room were football's new power players from the non-contact world, such as Johnathon Mumphrey, President of DR Sportz, owner of the nation's top 7v7 platform. There were also representatives from the football's biggest scouting network nationally and internationally. The combined influence spanned over 250,000 top athletes from the non-tackle to the tackle world.

The creator of the Bowl, Rich McGuinness, a former collegiate wide receiver from New Jersey, could not help but smile. For McGuinness, this journey to create the biggest high school football event and 'America's Biggest Week in Football' had started more than 20 years earlier in Dallas where he initially launched the first ever national high school all-star game at Highlander Park Stadium. "Seeing those brands and football leaders in that room coming together 20 years later was special," McGuinness remarked. Given the latest challenges to America's favorite sport in a post-COVID world, this seems exactly what the grassroots football world really needs – teamwork and leadership.

Over the years, the Bowl became the nation's biggest high school football platform featuring top preps like Reggie Bush, Adrian Peterson, Tim Tebow, Andrew Luck and Micah Parsons. The Bowl eventually moved to San Antonio and drew over 40,000 fans. In most years, the television ratings rivaled or surpassed big time college events in basketball and football.

The Bowl also launched the idea of prep athletes making their college commitment, by donning college caps made famous, when Chris Leak, the nation's number one ranked quarterback, announced his college choice at halftime of the Bowl in 2008. Celebrities like Alicia Keys, Snoop Dog and Deion Sanders made appearances on game day over the years. For millions of high school and college football fans, it became a can't-miss television event.

But McGuinness' proudest achievement was the Bowl's partnership with the U.S. Army, which forged a legacy with high school football coaches that remain vibrant today. "The Army's core values and focus on teamwork mirrored the same values as high school football teams across America. It was an unbelievable fit," stated McGuinness.

Over the years, more than 2,000 high school football coaches participated in the Bowl by sending an athlete, attending the Bowl or coaching in the Bowl. The Bowl legacy created an army of coaches across

America. Over the past year, McGuinness has been working to connect these alumni coaches to the Army through the App called “Go Army Edge”, a free planning and play-making tool for high school coaches and athletes. The Bowl has also turned into a year-round activation program using 7v7 events in the spring and summer to connect recruiters to thousands of high school football players. These 1-day events allow athletes to learn more about the Army in breakout sessions with the typical busy fall football season.

Before selling his interest in the Bowl, McGuinness launched other brands like Football University and a reality show about eight quarterbacks called ‘The Ride’ on MTV. He launched a 7v7 network with over 1,000 high schools, as McGuinness believed the non-contact 7v7 football would grow dramatically across the country. His intuition was correct.

Until COVID, McGuinness led the Pro Football Hall of Fame efforts into grassroots football by building the biggest event portfolio that featured the World Bowl (CBS) in Mexico and football academies in Europe, Latin America, and China. His team hosted the biggest flag event in the country, which took place at the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

McGuinness’ new vision for the Bowl reflects his past success, but also the current reality of football and his core beliefs. “The Bowl will always be a calling for the best of the best,” McGuinness stated. “The best seniors, the best undergraduates, the best middle school athletes and best tackle and non-tackle teams will be showcased during Bowl Week like no other event,” McGuinness stated.

“This is the biggest evaluation platform in the nation,” stated legendary college coach Noel Mazzone (UCLA, Texas A&M, Arizona) who will be overseeing the athlete evaluations with over 50 former college coaches and evaluators. The Bowl will soon announce a new partner with a prominent recruiting company to collect and distribute athlete data and evaluations of top prospects to hundreds of college coaches.

“Every football group will be featured,” McGuinness says. The nation’s top flag teams, men and women, and 7v7 teams will play the championship games inside The Ford Center after the Bowl making for an exciting day of football.

The Bally Sports Network will be on-hand to serve as the national media partner. Owned by Sinclair Media, the Bally Sports Network (formerly known as the Fox Sports Regional Networks) holds the broadcasting rights to 38 NBA, MLB and NHL franchises. The network produces hundreds of hours of college football content and close to 500 local high schools game per year.

“The Bowl 2.0 will be exciting, inclusive, global and inspirational,” McGuinness promises. All athletes will attend breakout sessions with football legends, top trainers, and media executives to learn the latest on subjects on the value of image and likeness.

But most of all, the Bowl will remain character- based. “We still believe football is America’s best team sport ever created,” says Marc Boldurian, the Bowl Director, who oversees the national selection for many Bowl events.

Besides McGuinness, the Bowl vision is supported by a Board of Advisors, made up of prominent football figures such as longtime Cowboys Player Development Director Steve Caricoff, former Army General Robert Van Antwerp, who oversaw the development of Army soldiers and the growth of the

Bowl 10 years ago and David Baker, who was president of the Pro Football Hall of Fame for almost eight years.

“Talent is important, but character is critical, not only in football but for the US Army and in life” stated David Baker. “The U.S. Army & the game of football have been great partners in forging character of tomorrow’s leaders. Football needs this event. Our country needs this event. This very special event celebrates the very best of us and ALL of us teaming up TOGETHER to become the very best we can be. This Bowl changes lives,” Baker stated. Baker’s son, Sam, played in the Bowl in 2003 before becoming a three-time All American at USC and playing six years with the Atlanta Falcons.

Although his work started more than 20 years ago, the Bowl is more than what McGuinness ever expected. He never imagined a football-themed city like Frisco, Texas, which features a state-of-the-art indoor football stadium owned by the Cowboys, which will serve as the new home for the Bowl.

The Bowl announcement included a quote from Stephen Jones, Dallas Cowboys Chief Operating Officer, who stated “We built the venue to showcase iconic high school football games such as a game of this magnitude, and we recognize the U.S. Army’s commitment not only to the DFW region, but across the country.”

The official selection begins September 1st with the 1st round of invitations sent to the nation’s top players and teams. “The response so far has been great,” McGuinness stated. We expect to close registration by October 30th. Hopefully, we can grow the Bowl the following year to include more top athletes and teams.

“It is not too soon to think about the Bowl’s future over the next 20 years,” stated McGuinness.