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November 20, 2023

Thanksgiving Weekend in New Orleans Goes to the Tigers and Jaguars

Schedule of Events for the 50th Annual Bayou Classic, Presented by Procter & Gamble

CELEBRATE THE 50th YEAR OF THE BIGGEST HBCU FOOTBALL CLASSIC

NEW ORLEANS –The Bayou Classic returns to New Orleans for its 50th Anniversary with its series of fan and family-friendly events throughout the Thanksgiving holiday and weekend. Each year, this weekend of events brings together family, friends and alumni of Southern University and Grambling State University to see one of America’s greatest college sports rivalries and celebrate football, family and the traditions surrounding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The 50th Annual Bayou Classic is presented by Procter & Gamble and its brands, including Crest, Febreze, Cascade, Dawn, Tide, Downey, Gain Laundry and Olay.

The Bayou Classic was first held under that name in 1974 at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans.

“We welcome fans, families, alumni and visitors to return to New Orleans and the Caesars Superdome to experience the best of the classics at this year’s 50th Annual celebration of the Number One HBCU Classic in the nation,” says Dottie Belletto, President and CEO of New Orleans Convention Company, Inc. (NOCCI), the management firm of the Bayou Classic.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023

Bayou Classic Thanksgiving Day Parade: The Annual Bayou Classic Parade moves back to Thanksgiving afternoon on a new downtown route. Starting at 3 pm on Thanksgiving afternoon, the parade starts at the Caesars Superdome and travels down Poydras, S. Peters, Canal, St. Charles and returns toward the Superdome via Poydras to end at Loyola (full route details below).

The Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands: The Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands added tremendous excitement to last year’s Bayou Classic in its inaugural year. The 2nd Annual event is being incorporated in the Friday night event – Bayou Classic Greek Show & Battle of the Bands – to open the event. This 2nd annual event will feature six of New Orleans’ top high school marching bands - St. Augustine, L.B. Laundry, Edna Karr, G.W. Carver, Abramson Sci Academy and McDonough 35, who will compete for an amazing array of music education prizes provided by the Ludwig, a Division of Conn Selmer, as well as trophies. Wild Wayne will host High School Battle of the Bands with a special appearance by Curtis Akeem, a Ludwig percussionist and social network influencer, known for his Dolla Watson comedic character.

Bayou Classic Fan Fest: Bayou Classic morning starts in Champion Square with the Bayou Classic Fan Fest. Live musical performances to get the crowd warmed up before kick-off. And fans can bring the whole family out to enjoy sponsor activations and special giveaways from P&G, Coca Cola, Diageo – its brands of Crown Royal, Ciroc, Don Julio and Tanqueray – Wells Fargo, the US Army, the National Medical Association, Cricket Wireless, Wendy's and more.

Gates open at 9am and is a free event hosted by **Wild Wayne**. House DJs for the event are **DJ Poppa** and **DJ Keith Scott**. Musical performances by King Bronze, Ydtheillest, Daniel Heartless, Subtweet Shawn, **Treety** and **Boosie**.

Pre-game activities: In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Bayou Classic, Entergy is presenting the pre-game ceremonies for Bayou Classic. This includes:

Lift Every Voice and Sing: The 50th Annual Bayou Classic will include a rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" performed by **Blair Dottin-Haley of The Blairisms**, Often referred to as "The Black National Anthem," Lift Every Voice and Sing was a hymn written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900.

National Anthem: GRAMMY® Award-winning singer, songwriter, producer and actor **Anthony Hamilton** and trio group, **The Ton3s**, will perform the National Anthem at the 50th Annual Bayou Classic.

Bayou Classic Gameday Kickoff: Kickoff for the 50th Annual Bayou Classic gameday is planned for 1 pm CST.

Bayou Classic Halftime Show: This year's Bayou Classic Halftime Show is once again presented by The Coca-Cola Company. This always-electrifying performance is one of the highlights of the weekend each year and the presenting sponsor is bringing special surprises to this year's performance.

Bayou Classic named among America's Most Cherished Thanksgiving Traditions: The Bayou Classic Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Bayou Classic Game were among America's Most Cherished Traditions of 2023, according to a nationwide poll of families. A poll revealed which Thanksgiving traditions in 2023 that families would most like to experience. With Bayou Classic on the list was the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York and the Newport Harbor Illuminated Boat Parade in Rhode Island.

QUICK FACTS

Visitors to New Orleans: Bayou Classic brings more than 250,000 visitors to New Orleans annually.

Hotel occupancy: Bayou Classic annually delivers a total citywide occupancy of more than 90 percent.

Bayou Classic rankings: The Southern University Jaguars lead the series of wins with 25 wins to Grambling State University Tigers' 24 wins – Grambling can even the record with a Bayou Classic win this year.

Bayou Classic Telecast: The 50th Annual Bayou Classic, Presented by Procter & Gamble will be televised on NBC National starting at 1 pm CST. The Bayou Classic has been nationally televised since 1991. The game will also be broadcast live on SiriusXM/ESPNU radio.

Tickets: Tickets for the 50th Annual Bayou Classic and the Battle of the Bands & Greek Show are on sale. Tickets for both events will be available for purchase at the following locations: the Bayou Classic website (www.mybayouclassic.com), Ticketmaster, the New Orleans Arena Box Office, the Grambling State University Ticket Office or the Southern University Ticket Office. Great seats are still available, but limited, for all events.

Bayou Classic Trophy: The presenting sponsor of the winning trophy for the 50th Annual Bayou Classic is AE Touch Technologies. The Bayou Classic MVP trophies are presented by AARP.

Bayou Classic Merchandise: In celebration of the momentous 50th anniversary of the Bayou Classic, Grambling State University and Southern University have joined forces with Gus Willey Apparel, a renowned New Orleans-based merchandise provider, to introduce a captivating line of commemorative merchandise. This exciting collaboration offers fans a unique opportunity to own special apparel and items that capture the spirit of the historic rivalry between these two institutions.

The commemorative merchandise lineup includes a range of carefully designed items that showcase the unique identities of both universities. Fans will be delighted to find a selection of stylish t-shirts and polos, adorned with vibrant school colors and iconic imagery that pays homage to Grambling and Southern. Additionally, the collection features beautifully crafted tumblers, perfect for showing off team pride while on the go. Fans can view merchandise at www.mybayouclassic.com/shop.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, November 23 – Thanksgiving Day

Annual Bayou Classic Thanksgiving Day Parade: 3:00 pm start time

Route details: The parade begins at the Caesars Superdome on Poydras Street, parades down Poydras Street to make a left on S. Peters Street, down S. Peters Street to make a left on Canal Street, continues on Canal Street to make a left on St. Charles Avenue, marches down St. Charles Avenue back to Poydras Street to make a right and ends at Poydras and Loyola streets.

The Annual Bayou Classic Parade continues this year in traditional, New Orleans fashion with 15 floats and more than 65 total units. Includes participation by all of the top New Orleans area high school bands and dance teams – more than 20 bands and dance teams participating.

Friday, November 25

Business at Bayou Classic: A Black Small Business Showcase: 10:30 am – 4:00 pm

Presented in partnership with the LA Chamber of Commerce

Hyatt Regency New Orleans

Business at Bayou is a business expo that showcases nonprofit, corporate, and local businesses. Students, Alumni, and Visitors are invited to stop by the Business at Bayou to purchase items from small black businesses and learn more about networking opportunities. Panel programs throughout the day include panels from IBM, J.P. Morgan Chase, USDA Rural & Farm Services, Gulf Coast Bank and a Fireside Chat entitled “Rebuilding Black Wall Street.”

2023 New Voices Pitch Competition: 1:00 pm

Presented by AARP

Hyatt Regency New Orleans

The New Voices Foundation will host the New Voices Pitch Competition. This in-person pitch competition will award five grants (one of each) – \$25,000, \$20,000, \$15,000, \$10,000, and \$5,000 – combined with personalized business skill development, coaching, and mentoring for each winner 3-6 months post-competition.

Bayou Classic Motivational Gameday Ball Run

Depart Baton Rouge: 5:30 am

Arrive in New Orleans at the Caesars Superdome: 1-1:30 pm

Southern University Army ROTC, along with Southern Navy and Grambling State University ROTC programs, will carry the official Bayou Classic gameday ball through seven parishes and more than a dozen towns as they run the ball more than 100 miles from the F.G. Clark Activity Center (7722 Scenic Highway) at Southern in Baton Rouge to the Caesars Superdome (Gate A ground level) in New Orleans. This long-distance run was the brainchild of a few Marines in 1992 who took it upon themselves to ensure the Bayou Classic game ball was ceremoniously delivered to game officials before the beginning of the historic rivalry football game between Grambling and Southern.

Battle of the Bands and Greek Show: 6:00 pm, doors open at 5:00 pm

Featuring the 2nd Annual Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands

Caesars Superdome; Ticket required for entry

NOTE: Media credentials are needed to attend this event. Clear bag policy for entrance.

Approximately 25,000 people will be at the show, as the Grambling and Southern's historic marching bands strut across the Superdome in a colorful showdown that is the highlight of The Bayou Classic weekend for many attendees. In addition, the Greek show will feature creative skits from traditionally black Greek organizations across Louisiana. Battle of the Bands will be hosted by **Big Tigger**. The event will open with the 2nd Annual Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands, which will be hosted by **Wild Wayne** with a special appearance by **Curtis Akeem McCullough AKA "Dolla Watson."** The Greek show will feature creative skits from traditionally black Greek organizations across Louisiana.

The 2nd Annual Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands will include bands from George Washington Carver High School, Abramson Sci Academy, L.B. Landry High School and McDonough 35 Senior High School.

Bayou Classic Official Battle of the Bands After Party: 11:00 pm start time

Presented by HEREWEGO Entertainment

Metropolitan Nightclub (Generations Hall); Ticket required for entry

Saturday, November 26

Doc Griggs "Two Times Around the Dome" Family Fitness Fun Walk: 7:30 am registration; 8:00 am start time

Caesars Superdome, Plaza Level at Gate C; Registration required for entry

Third Annual Special Olympics Unified Rivalry Flag Football Game

Saturday, November 26 at 9:00 am

Presented by Special Olympics Louisiana

St. Augustine Practice Field (2525 Bruxells Street)

Special Olympics Louisiana will host the third annual Unified Rivalry Flag Football Game between Southern University and Grambling State University during the Bayou Classic Weekend, in partnership with NOCCI. The flag football game will feature Special Olympics Louisiana athletes and Unified Partners that will represent both Southern University and Grambling State University. There will be an opening ceremony followed by the flag football game. The awards ceremony will take place inside Caesars Superdome during the annual Bayou Classic.

Bayou Classic Fan Festival: 9:00 am – Noon

The “Embrace the Culture” Stage is presented by The City of New Orleans, Office of Cultural Economy and the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund

Champions Square at the Caesars Superdome

NOTE: Clear bag policy for entrance.

The Bayou Classic Fan Fest will include live musical performances to get the crowd warmed up before kick-off. Gates open at 9am and is a free event hosted by **Wild Wayne**. House DJs for the event are **DJ Poppa** and **DJ Keith Scott**.

Schedule for Bayou Classic Fan Fest:

9:00 am	Gates open to Champions Square
10:15 am	AARP Dance Party to create the Largest Line Dance In Louisiana hosted by Game Ova Skip
10:30 am	King Bronze
10:35 am	Ydtheillest
10:40 am	Daniel Heartless
11:00 am	Subtweet Shawn
11:15 am	Treety
11:40 am	Boosie

Bring the whole family out to enjoy sponsor activations and special giveaways from P&G, Coca Cola, Diageo – its brands of Crown Royal, Ciroc, Don Julio and Tanqueray – Wells Fargo, the US Army, the National Medical Association, Cricket Wireless, Wendy's and more. Highlights include:

- Crest's Airstream Mobile Unit that will include free toothpaste samples, oral care education.
- The P & G Refresh Station including a grooming booth, photo station and dancing.
- The National Medical Association will be hosting health checks including BMI, high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Diageo bars showcasing its brands of Crown Royal, Ciroc, Don Julio and Tanqueray with sampling.

The 50th Annual Bayou Classic, Presented by Procter & Gamble: 1:00 pm (doors open at 11:00 am)

Caesars Superdome; Ticket required for entry

NOTE: Media credentials are needed to attend this event. Clear bag policy for entrance.

Game highlights:

Bayou Classic Pre-Game Ceremonies Presented by Entergy

Fan giveaway for the first 10,000 Bayou Classic fans

Bayou Classic sponsor Febreze (a member of the P&G family of products) invites Bayou Classic fans to cheer on their team with commemorative 50th anniversary Bayou Classic Febreze towels – one for the Southern Jaguar fans and one for Grambling Tiger fans. The first 10,000 fans to enter the Superdome are given complimentary towels.

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The 50th Annual Bayou Classic will include a rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” performed by **Blair Dottin-Haley of The Blairisms**. Blair is an amazing vocalist and has performed on stages all over the country, including the Apollo Theater, and his own, annual show in New Orleans – Lundi Gras Love.

National anthem

Anthony Hamilton & The Ton3s will perform the National Anthem at the 50th Annual Bayou Classic. GRAMMY® Award-winning singer, songwriter, producer and actor Anthony Hamilton has sold over 50 million albums worldwide and been proclaimed a "national treasure" by the *Los Angeles Times*. Hamilton will be accompanied by Vito, Tony Lelo, and 2E – the trio of North Carolina natives known as The Ton3s. The group started as background vocalists for Hamilton.

The 50th Annual Bayou Classic Halftime Show

Presented by The Coca-Cola Company

The electrifying halftime show will feature the Grambling State University’s World Famed Marching Band and Southern University’s Human Jukebox and Dancing Dolls and include very special guests for the 50th celebration of Bayou Classic. And attendees can expect a number of **halftime surprises** as both bands celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Bayou Classic.

Bayou Classic Official Celebrity After Party: 10:00 pm start time

Presented by HEREWEGO Entertainment

Metropolitan Nightclub (Generations Hall); Ticket required for entry

TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE – BUT LIMITED

Tickets are still available for purchase. Tickets for the 50th Annual Bayou Classic and the Battle of the Bands & Greek Show can be purchased at the following locations: the Bayou Classic website (www.mybayouclassic.com), Ticketmaster, the New Orleans Arena Box Office, the Grambling State University Ticket Office or the Southern University Ticket Office.

Seating

Grambling University is the home team at the 50th Annual Bayou Classic and its fans will sit on the west side (near sections 129-156) of the Caesars Superdome. Southern University, as the visiting team, will sit on the east side (near sections 101-128) of the Superdome.

For Battle of the Bands, Southern University “Human Jukebox” will be located on the South side of the Caesars Superdome (in front of section 141) and the Grambling State University Tiger Marching Band will be located on the North side (in front of section 143).

THE 50th ANNUAL BAYOU CLASSIC LOGO

Please note the special 50th Anniversary logo that was created to celebrate the 50th year of the HBCU Classic. You can access the logo here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kzpbsttegk4p04/AADPmTasJV2n7CnkYeC0a4V0a?dl=0>

ABOUT THE BAYOU CLASSIC

The Bayou Classic (www.mybayouclassic.com) features one of America's greatest college sports rivalries, bringing the fans and alumni of Southern University and Grambling State University to New Orleans for a celebration of football, family and the traditions and pageantry surrounding Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Proceeds from the annual series of Bayou Classic events provide support to the campuses' athletic programs and fund scholarships through the SU System Foundation and the GSU Foundation. The 50th Annual Bayou Classic will be played on Saturday, November 26, 2023.

For more information visit mybayouclassic.com or download the official Bayou Classic app, available on your app store of choice.

The 50th Annual Bayou Classic is supported by the following organizations:

Presenting Sponsor: Procter & Gamble and its brands, including Crest, Febreze, Cascade, Dawn, Tide, Downey, Gain Laundry and Olay.

Diamond Partner: Entergy and The Louisiana Office of Tourism, Louisiana Office of Culture Recreation & Tourism and Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser

Platinum Partners: AARP; AE Touch Technologies; The Coca-Cola Company; General Motors;; Wells Fargo

Gold Partners: CDW; The City of New Orleans, Office of Cultural Economy and the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund; Diageo and its brands, Crown Royal, Ciroc, Don Julio and Tanqueray; Hyatt Regency New Orleans; New Orleans & Company; Verizon

Silver Partners: AT&T Dream in Black; NUCOR Louisiana; Set Free Indeed Ministries

Bronze Partners:

Aetna; Air Products; Allstate; Cricket Wireless; Downtown Development District; ExxonMobil; Good Burger 2; Long Beach (Ca.) Police Department; National Medical Association Region V; US Army; Wendy's; Visit Baton Rouge

Partners: Son of a Saint; NBC Sports; WDSU-TV; Louisiana Highways Safety Commission; Ludwig – a division of Conn Selmer; NASA; Special Olympics Louisiana; Cumulus Media – New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette & Shreveport; Eyes Open Media/Tony Brown; WBOK 1230 AM; Red Peach Sports Radio

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