




Presented by 

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 25, 2024

Thanksgiving Weekend in New Orleans Goes to the Tigers and Jaguars

Schedule of Events for the 51st Annual Bayou Classic, Presented by Procter & Gamble

CELEBRATE THE 51st YEAR OF THE BIGGEST HBCU FOOTBALL CLASSIC

NEW ORLEANS –The Bayou Classic returns to New Orleans for its 51st year 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 Grambling State University and Southern 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 51st Annual Bayou Classic is presented by Procter & Gamble and its HBCYOU program and brands including Bevel, Bounty, Cascade, Charmin, Crest, Downy, Febreze, Gain, Gillette, Head & Shoulders, Old Spice, Swiffer, Tampax/Always and Tide.

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

“We are thrilled to welcome fans, families, alumni, and visitors back to New Orleans and the Caesars Superdome for the 51st Annual Bayou Classic, celebrating the nation’s premier HBCU Classic,” says Dottie Belletto, President and CEO of New Orleans Convention Company, Inc. (NOCCI), the management firm of the Bayou Classic.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

Bayou Classic Thanksgiving Day Parade: The Annual Bayou Classic Parade hits the streets of New Orleans on Thanksgiving afternoon. 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). During the parade, **Second Harvest Food Bank** will be in the last position with volunteers collecting food donations.

The Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands: The Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands adds tremendous excitement to Friday nights Greek Show & Battle of the Bands. This 3rd annual event will feature two of New Orleans’ top high school marching bands - G.W. Carver High School and Abramson Sci Academy – and two (new for this year) out of state marching bands – Craigmont High School of Memphis, Tenn. and Westbury High School of Southwest Houston, Texas – 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 once again host High School Battle of the Bands.

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, DXC Technology, Home Depot, US Army, US Navy, Wells Fargo and more. **Rally Cry**, a gaming technology company that builds inclusive gaming experiences for players of all ages and skill levels, will showcase its Rally Cry Championship Tour featuring a College Football 25 mobile gaming truck for students to compete in person for a piece of the prize pool and a custom championship trophy.

Gates open at 9am and is a free event hosted by **Wild Wayne**. Musical performances by King Bronze, NFL Reeke, BJ So Cole, **Snug, T99ZY, Subtweet Shawn, Webbie** and **Rick Ross**. DJs for Fan Fest will be DJ Poppa and DJ Keith Scott.

Pre-game activities: For the 51st Annual Bayou Classic:

Lift Every Voice and Sing: The 51st Annual Bayou Classic will include a rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” performed by **Blair Dottin-Haley**, of The Blairisms, with the Southern University Gospel Choir. 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® nominated, American contemporary Christian music and gospel singer **Koryn Hawthorne** will perform the National Anthem at the 51st Annual Bayou Classic. Hawthorne was a finalist in season 8 of NBC's singing competition The Voice. Her debut studio album, Unstoppable, earned her multiple awards nominations, including two GRAMMY® nominations.

Bayou Classic Gameday Kickoff: Kickoff for the 51st 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 both the Grambling State University World Famed Tiger Marching Band and Southern University Human Jukebox Marching Band will have special surprises to this year’s performance, including appearances by world-renowned guitarist **Jubu Smith, Boosie** and possible others.

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.

Economic impact: Bayou Classic annually generates \$26.5 million in overall economic output to the State of Louisiana, \$8.9 million in overall earnings, and more than 215 jobs. Including both direct, indirect and induced impacts, the Bayou Classic generates \$750,255 in total sales and excise tax revenue annually.

Bayou Classic rankings: The Southern University Jaguars lead the series of wins with 26 wins to Grambling State University Tigers’ 24 wins.

Bayou Classic Telecast: The 51st 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.

Annual attendance: The Bayou Classic is historically the largest HBCU football classic in the US. Attendance has grown each year to more than 64,000 attendees annually for the game.

Tickets: Tickets for the 51st 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 Post-Game Awards Celebration and Bayou Classic Trophy for the 51st Annual Bayou Classic is Entergy. The Bayou Classic MVP trophies are presented by AARP.

Two new head coaches: Both Southern and Grambling will have new head football coaches this year.

Grambling State officially announced **Mickey Joseph** as the next head football coach in December. Joseph most recently served as the interim head coach at Nebraska over the final nine games of the 2022 season. He also was the head coach for two seasons at Langston, going 13-7 and winning a conference championship in 2011.

Southern University Jaguars promoted interim head coach **Terrence Graves** as the program's new head football coach. Graves served under former head coach Eric Dooley as the team's assistant head coach, special teams coordinator, and linebackers coach. As the interim head coach, Graves guided the Jaguars to a victory over Grambling State in the 50th Annual Bayou Classic. He has the distinction of being the only coach to win the Bayou Classic as coach of the Southern Jaguars and Grambling Tigers.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, November 28 – 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 13 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.

During the parade, **Second Harvest Food Bank** will be in the last position with volunteers collecting food donations. All food donations will be distributed to the communities of Southern and Grambling to address food insecurities.

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.

Friday, November 29

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 multiple panels focused on “Bridging the Health Equity Gap for Black Communities: Access Awareness, and Advocacy,” “Prevention is Key: Navigating the Health Journey for Black Men: Preventative Care, Mental Health & Cardiovascular,” “Prevention and Protection Navigating and Addressing Unique Challenges for Black Communities in Sexual Health,” among other topics.

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 3rd Annual Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands

Bayou Classic Greek Show presented by Sprite

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 **Wild Wayne**. The event will open with the 3rd Annual Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands, which will also be hosted by Wild Wayne. The Greek show will feature creative skits from traditionally black Greek organizations across Louisiana.

The 3rd Annual Bayou Classic Invitational High School Battle of the Bands will include bands from George Washington Carver High School, Abramson Sci Academy, Craigmont High School of Memphis, Tenn. and Westbury High School of Southwest Houston, Texas. **The Roots of Music** will make an appearance at the beginning of the battle.

Black Friday: Bayou Classic Official Battle of the Bands Alumni After Party: 11:30 pm start time

Presented by HEREWEGO Entertainment

Metropolitan Nightclub (Generations Hall); Ticket required for entry

Saturday, November 30

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

Fourth Annual Special Olympics Unified Rivalry Flag Football Game: 9:00 am

Presented by Special Olympics Louisiana

St. Augustine Practice Field (2525 Bruxells Street)

Special Olympics Louisiana will host the fourth annual Unified Rivalry Flag Football Game between Southern University and Grambling State University during the Bayou Classic Weekend. 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.

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**.

Musical performers for Bayou Classic Fan Fest will be King Bronze, NFL Reeke, BJ So Cole, **Snug**, **T99ZY**, **Subtweet Shawn**, **Webbie** and **Rick Ross**.

Bring the whole family out to enjoy sponsor activations and special giveaways from P&G, Coca Cola, DXC Technologies, Home Depot, US Army, US Navy, Wells Fargo and more. **Rally Cry**, a gaming technology company that builds inclusive gaming experiences for players of all ages and skill levels, will showcase its Rally Cry Championship Tour featuring a College Football 25 mobile gaming truck for students to compete in person for a piece of the prize pool and a custom championship trophy.

New for this year is the **Health Zone, presented by LCMC Health**, where Fan Fest attendees can gain helpful health information and participate in a number of free health screenings.

The 51st Annual Bayou Classic, Presented by Procter & Gamble: 1:00 pm (doors open at 11:30da 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

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The 51st Annual Bayou Classic will include a rendition of “Lift Every Voice and Sing” performed by **Blair Dottin-Haley**, of The Blairisms, with the Southern University Gospel Choir. 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

GRAMMY® nominated, American contemporary Christian music and gospel singer **Koryn Hawthorne** will perform the National Anthem at the 51st Annual Bayou Classic. Hawthorne was a finalist in season 8 of NBC's singing competition The Voice. Her debut studio album,

Unstoppable, earned her multiple awards nominations, including two GRAMMY® nominations.

The 51st 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 51st celebration of Bayou Classic, including appearances by world-renowned guitarist **Jubu Smith, Boosie** and possible others.

The 51st Annual Bayou Classic Post-Game Awards Celebration

Presented by Entergy

The Luxe Escape: The Bayou Classic Official After Game Day Party: 3:30 pm start time

Presented by HEREWEGO Entertainment

Common House (420 Julia Street); Ticket required for entry

Luxury Tax: The Official Bayou Classic Weekend After Party: 10:00 pm start time

Presented by HEREWEGO Entertainment

Metropolitan Nightclub (Generations Hall); Ticket required for entry

Event will feature Rick Ross, Webbie and Snugg

TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE – BUT LIMITED

Tickets are still available for purchase. Tickets for the 51st 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.

Tickets for the 51st Annual Bayou Classic Football Game are available on every seating level of the Caesars Superdome, with prices ranging from \$20 to \$199 for advance purchases. Exclusive VIP North End Zone tickets are also available for \$150, offering premium seating, exclusive gameday entrance, access to the End Zone Club, and complimentary popcorn and soft drinks.

For the Battle of the Bands & Greek Show, general admission tickets start at \$25, with options for reserved seating also available. Please note that ticket prices will increase by \$10 on the event day.

Seating

On game day, the Southern University Jaguars will be the home team mainly sitting on the West Side near sections 129-156 of the Caesars Superdome and the Grambling University Tigers will be the visiting team mainly sitting on the East Side near Sections 101-128.

For Battle of the Bands & Greek Show, the Southern University "Human Jukebox" Marching Band will be on the South End Zone side of the Caesars Superdome and the Grambling State University Tiger Marching Band will be on the North End Zone side.

ABOUT THE BAYOU CLASSIC

The Bayou Classic, ranked as the #1 HBCU Classic in the nation, continues to be a beacon of legacy and tradition, attracting fans from across the country. This legendary game between the Grambling State University Tigers and Southern University Jaguars, and accompanying series of events, have proven to be a steadfast beacon of legacy and tradition that extends beyond the HBCU community.

Bayou Classic fans from across the nation journey to witness the electrifying football game between Grambling State and Southern, while eagerly awaiting the highly anticipated Greek Show & Battle of the Bands and halftime show featuring two of the greatest marching bands in the nation. The 51st Annual Bayou Classic, Presented by Procter & Gamble, will be played on Saturday, November 30, 2024 at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans.

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

The 51st Annual Bayou Classic is supported by the following organizations:

Presenting Sponsor: Procter & Gamble and its HBCYOU program and brands including Bevel, Bounty, Cascade, Charmin, Crest, Downy, Febreze, Gain, Gillette, Head & Shoulders, Old Spice, Swiffer, Tampax/Always and Tide.

Platinum Partners: The Coca-Cola Company; Entergy; General Motors;; Wells Fargo

Gold Partners: The City of New Orleans, Office of Cultural Economy and the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund; Diageo and its brands, Casamigos, Ciroc, Crown Royal and Tanqueray;

Silver Partners: AARP, ExxonMobil, Hyatt Regency New Orleans; New Orleans & Company; Verizon

Bronze Partners: Aetna; Air Products; Allstate; Cricket Wireless; Downtown Development District; Home Depot; Sprite; Thurgood Marchall College Fund; US Army; US Navy; Wendy's; Visit Baton Rouge

Partners: Son of a Saint; NBC Sports; WDSU-TV; DXC Technology; HereWeGo Entertainment; LA988 - LA Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health; Louisiana Healthcare Connections; Louisiana Highways Safety Commission; Ludwig – a division of Conn Selmer; NASA; Rally Cry; Special Olympics Louisiana; US Department of Health & Services;

#

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeffrey Ory, ABC, APR – Mobile: (504) 458-5866 (texts acceptable) – jeffrey@jeffreyory.com