

Sports



D2 New USD Athletic Director Bill McGillis says he always had the school in mind when climbing the ladder.



BRYCE MILLER Columnist

Bowl buddies with tales galore hit S.D.

They're wise-cracking fans for hire, two Midwest fraternity brothers at the University of Kansas in the early 1980s who caught a bowl game bug they couldn't shake.

On Jan. 1, 1984, Tom Hall and Brian Dixon attended the Sugar Bowl. Then they went to another bowl... and another... and another. The Poinsettia Bowl will be the 37th they've attended in 34 years.

If you see them, they'll unabashedly hit you up for a ticket, a beer — or both.

"The entrepreneurial spirit," Dixon called it.

They've witnessed the last gasp of the Bluebonnet

in 1987, Seattle's sayonara in 2002, the Silicon Valley crash of 2004. They've experienced the births of seven others.

They've slipped into luncheons and VIP tents with the skill of Cold War-era operatives. Job-related travel — Hall owns a parts company in Kansas City; Dixon works in sales in Denver — allows the pair to use points and frequent flyer miles to cover flights and hotels.

Mainly, they've maintained a dusty friendship thanks to college football despite lives scattered across different time zones.

"We have the passion for
SEE MILLER • D4



ETHAN MILLER GETTY IMAGES

Wyoming sophomore quarterback Josh Allen has passed for 26 touchdowns this season.

COWBOYS' PATIENCE PAYS OFF BIG TIME

Turnaround at Wyoming was very welcomed

BY KIRK KENNEY

Wyoming football fans didn't go looking for a rope to string up the coach after last year's 2-10 finish.

Probably because, being cowboys, they already knew where one was if they really wanted it.

Patience isn't what it used to be, even out on the prairie, so Wyoming's turnaround this season was welcome in more ways than one.

"It's been gratifying to go through it and say, 'We didn't divert from our plan,' said Wyoming coach Craig Bohl, who was given a little more rope because of a résumé that included three national championships at North Dakota State before coming to Laramie three years ago.

Wyoming (8-5) meets BYU (8-4) in
SEE POINSETTIA • D4

Poinsettia Bowl

BYU vs. Wyoming

Today: 6 p.m. at Qualcomm Stadium

On the air: ESPN; 1700-AM

Line: BYU by 10

D4 • Five things to watch for tonight, plus team rosters, statistics.

PEAVY ON THE PADRES'

24	at E. Michigan	27
38	at Colorado State	17
35	AIR FORCE	26
42	at Nevada	34
30	BOISE STATE	28
52	UTAH STATE	28
66	at UNLV	69
34	SAN DIEGO STATE	33
35	at New Mexico	56
24	San Diego State	27
Date	Opponent	Time
Today	BYU	6 p.m. ESPN

MILLER

Friends never pay for tickets

FROM D1
the bowl games, and this is our way of keeping this friendship together," said Hall, 56. "How many people have lost that great friend from college or high school just because they didn't make a commitment?"

The plan germinated during the third quarter of Auburn's 9-7 win against Michigan in '84 as Bo Jackson ran over Wolverines defenders and Al Del Greco kicked three field goals.

At the time, 18 bowl games existed. Hit 'em all. Easy enough, right?

"We didn't realize the landscape would change so much and the bowls would mushroom," said Dixon, 57. "At the end of the Micron PC Bowl in 2000, we had five left. Sixteen years later, having gone to 17 (more) bowl games, we now have eight left.

"The math just doesn't

perform at quarterback for the Cougars. This will be his first start of the season after Taysom Hill suffered a season-ending elbow injury. But the 23-year-old Mangum, only a sophomore, has plenty of experience. He played in all 13 games last season, threw for more than 3,300 yards and

common through he had some misfortune here, too. In the 1989 Holiday Bowl, Detmer threw for a single-game bowl record 576 yards, though BYU lost to Penn State 50-39. The following year, when he won the Heisman, the Cougars were routed 65-14 by Texas A&M in the Holiday Bowl and

win over the Aztecs, and though he had only 95 yards in the Mountain West title game loss, Hill averaged 5.8 yards per carry.

Only a junior, Hill goes into the game second in MW rushing to SDSU's D.J. Pumphrey with 1,767 yards. He had four more rushing

17-14), a Big 12 team (West Virginia, 35-23) and a Mountain West team (then-14th-ranked Boise State, 28-27). Eight wins included the Pac-12's Arizona, the Big Ten's Michigan State and the SEC's Mississippi State.

tod.leonard@suniontribune.com

18	ARIZONA	16
19	at Utah	20
14	UCLA	17
32	WEST VIRGINIA	35
55	TOLEDO	53
31	at Michigan St.	14
28	MISSISSIPPI ST. (OT)	21
27	at Boise St.	28
20	at Cincinnati	3
37	S. UTAH	7
51	UMASS	9
28	UTAH ST.	10
Date	Opponent	Time
Today	Wyoming	6 p.m. ESPN



DAVID BROOKS U-T

Brian Dixon (left) and Tom Hall, known as the "Bowl Guys," have been attending college bowls since 1984.

seem fair."

The friends bought tickets outside the Rose Bowl in 1990, when USC beat Michigan in Bo Schembechler's final game. At the gate, the tickets were identified as stolen from Michigan's ticket office.

The men talked themselves into the game anyway because, well, that's what they do. They vowed to test

their sales skills to avoid buying tickets again. The closest they've come to reaching for billfolds was at the sold-out Pinstripe Bowl in 2014.

"New York's not the kind of place where people are exactly giving away free stuff," Hall said. "A guy asked Brian how much he'd pay. Brian said, 'No, we're the Bowl Guys, so you give

them to us.' The guy said, 'Are you freakin' kidding me? Get a job, you loser.'

"Brian came back and said, 'This might be a little harder than we expected.'"

Fifteen minutes later, a man heard the friends telling the story outside of Yankee Stadium. He handed them two tickets. It was Scott Paterno, the son of late Nittany Lions coach Joe Paterno.

"We sat in the first row behind the Penn State bench," Dixon said.

The friends wake up on game day without declaring rooting interests. The loser of the previous year's game makes a choice based on the point spread in the local paper. Then it's a mad rush to merchandise stands as the two buy up hats, shirts and gobs of memorabilia for their opposing teams.

Dixon built a big advantage before losing six of the last seven. Hall holds a precarious 18-17 edge in the loser-buys-food-and-drinks competition heading into today's Wyoming-BYU matchup at Qualcomm Stadium.

The "Skin to Win Game" still causes Dixon to shake his head.

Bowling Green roared to a 28-3 halftime lead at the 1992 Las Vegas Bowl before Nevada, Hall's pick, roared back. Dixon laughed as he saw Hall shirtless among the bare-chested throng in the opposing stands in the second half.

Nevada briefly took a lead, but fell 35-34. The line, though, was a bet-salvaging 2½ points.

"Tom and his skin-to-win buds were celebrating all night," Dixon said.

The men rank bowls — the 1985 Holiday is No. 4 — along with bartenders on their website, www.Bowl-Guys.com. The second list, obviously, is a calculated plan to land free drinks. As a backup, they created "Bowl Guys" pins that they trade.

"We figured 75 cents for a \$5 beer was a pretty good deal," Hall said.

The more they talk, the more you laugh.

They're having fun. So, why stop?

bryce.miller@suniontribune.com

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

'TOPPERS GANG UP ON TIGERS

U-T NEWS SERVICES

Senior Anthony Wales gained 329 yards from scrimmage, and Western Kentucky earned a bowl victory for the third year in a row by beating Memphis 51-31 on Tuesday night in the Boca Raton Bowl.

Wales ran for 245 yards on 35 carries, added 84 yards on four catches, and scored three TDs.

Teammate Mike White

W. Kentucky 51, Memphis 31

threw for 336 yards and three touchdowns. Taywan Taylor had nine catches for 144 yards and his 17th touchdown of the season.

Odds makers had projected the game to be the highest-scoring of the bowls, and even WKU tackle Forrest Lamp got into the act, scoring on a 9-yard razzle-dazzle run. The Hilltoppers (11-3) gained 598 yards for interim head coach Nick Holt.

Notable

The NCAA issued a Notice of Allegations to Rutgers regarding possible violations by the Scarlet Knights' football program, NJ.com reported.

• James Madison sus-

POINSETTIA • BYU will be playing in its 33rd bowl game in the last 40 years

FROM D1
tonight's San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl.

It is the first bowl appearance in five years — and only the fourth over the past 23 years — for the Cowboys. By contrast, BYU almost considers bowls a birthright.

paste up around the locker room. During Tuesday's pregame press conference Bohl spoke of the struggles not just with the football program in particular but the state in general and offered: "Tough times don't last but tough people do."

So they've toughed it out,

The most eye-popping score of the season came in Wyoming's 69-66 triple overtime loss to UNLV. The game set a Mountain West scoring record.

While there are several reasons the Cowboys went from worst to first in the MW's Mountain Division,

The Cougars should have their hands full, but they are uniquely qualified this season to make some stops.

BYU will forever be known as the quarterback factory that produced the likes of Jim McMahon, Steve Young and Ty Detmer, among others, but this

bowl).

Mangum has experience after stepping in similarly last season, although the Cougars will rely as much as possible on senior running back Jamaal Williams (1,165 yards, 11 TDs).

BYU's offense has aided the defense with ball control,