

2011

The Refrigerator Bowl

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Recommended Citation

Lathrop, Suellyn, "The Refrigerator Bowl" (2011). *WKU History*. Paper 29.
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The Refrigerator Bowl

So-called because Evansville businesses engaged in manufacturing refrigerators sponsored the game, this was the first bowl game played by WKU. The game was held at the Reitz High School stadium on December 8, 1952 against the Arkansas State Indians. It was originally announced that WKU would meet Southeast Missouri in the Refrigerator Bowl. Three other teams were invited to play the Hilltoppers. Peru Teachers College of Peru, NE turned down the invitation because they believed the Hilltoppers were too tough. East Texas State had a previous engagement against Tennessee Tech in the Tangerine Bowl that year. ASU accepted the challenge.

Share a memory of this game and/or players – archives@wku.edu

The WKU team:

No.	Name	Class	Position	Hometown	Off/Defense
21	Walter Apperson	Sophomore	Center	Mayfield	Defense
23	Warren Mahan	Senior	Tackle	Louisville	Offense
24	Willard Price	Senior	Tackle	Louisville	Offense /Defense
25	Ed Worley	Sophomore	Tackle	Ellijay GA	Defense
26	Jim Phifer	Sophomore	Tackle	Chattanooga TN	Defense
27	William Ploumis	Junior	End	Pittsburgh PA	Offense
29	Don Chapman	Senior	Halfback	Massena NY	
30	Jim Gunnell	Sophomore	Halfback	Boys' Town NE	
31	Arnie Oaken	Sophomore	Center	Miami FL	Offense
32	Cecil Schirtzinger	Junior	Guard	Boys' Town NE	
33	Whitey Sanders	Sophomore	Quarterback	Pompano Beach FL	
34	Jerry Passafiume	Sophomore	Tackle	Louisville	Offense
36	Joe Goodman	Junior	End	Portsmouth OH	
37	Don Sparks	Sophomore	End	Ashland	
38	Bob Gleaves	Freshman	Fullback	Shelbyville TN	
39	Bill Jenkins	Freshman	Halfback	Lafayette TN	
40	Jim Sanford	Freshman	Halfback	Russellville	Defense
41	Vernon Wilson	Freshman	Guard	Evansville IN	
42	Bo Culley	Sophomore	Guard	Sturgis	
43	George Sauer	Junior	Guard	Louisville	
44	Ronnie Holzknrecht	Junior	Quarterback	Louisville	
45	Gordon Ware	Sophomore	Tackle	Owensboro	
46	Jack Binkley	Sophomore	End	Bellevue	
47	Bucky Hayes	Freshman	End	Murfreesboro TN	
48	Bob Bilyeu	Junior	Halfback	Bowling Green	Defense
49	John Sowders	Senior	Halfback	Bell County	Offense /Defense
50	Willie Watson	Senior	Fullback	Princeton	
51	Tom Patterson	Sophomore	Center	Vandergrift PA	Defense

52	Marvin Slatterly	Junior	Guard	Louisville	Offense /Defense
53	John Fox	Freshman	Guard	Marion	
54	James Fox	Freshman	Guard	Marion	
55	Buddy Dixon	Junior	Halfback	Nashville TN	
56	R.E. Simpson	Senior	End	Sturgis	Offense /Defense
58	Ray Nutter	Senior	Halfback	Nicholasville	
59	Ken Hudgins	Freshman	End	Chattanooga TN	
60	Gene McFadden	Junior	Fullback	Owensboro	Offense
62	Guy Newcom	Senior	Guard	Sturgis	
63	Joe Hardy	Sophomore	Halfback	Russellville	
64	Dave Patton	Freshman	Tackle	Chattanooga TN	
65	Jack Theuerkauf	Freshman	Tackle	Evansville IN	
66	Jimmy Feix	Senior	Quarterback	Henderson	Offense
67	Bill Tate	Junior	End	Chattanooga TN	Defense
69	Max Stevens	Senior	Halfback	Sturgis	Offense
70	Jimmy Hale	Sophomore	Halfback	Chattanooga TN	

Statistic	WKU	ASU
First Downs	22	15
Yards Rushing	326	213
Yards Passing	176	77
Total Yards	496	290
No. Plays	79	65
Average Gain	6.3	4.5
Passes Attempted	25	15
Passes Completed	16	5
Passes Intercepted by	3	2
Return Intercepted Pass	49	26
Punts	4	6
Punt Average	32.5	37.5
Yards Kicks Returned	64	81
Penalties	35	50

WKU	Yards	Average
Watson	77	4.1
Sanford	76	6.9
Stevens	62	8.9
McFadden	55	55
ASU		
Vidal	83	5.5
Daniels	75	4.5
Gebert	43	7.1

Score by Periods: WKU 0 14 13 7 -- 34; ASU 6 0 0 13 – 19

Refrigerator Bowl Games:

1948 – Evansville 13, Missouri Valley 7
1949 – Evansville 22, Hillsdale 7
1950 – Abilene Christian 13, Gustavus Adolphus 7
1951 – Arkansas State 46, Camp Breckinridge 12
1952 – WKU 34, Arkansas State 19
1953 – Sam Houston State 14, College of Idaho 12
1954 – Delaware 19, Kent State 7
1955 – Jacksonville State 12, Rhode Island 10
1956 – Sam Houston State 27, Middle Tennessee 13

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Borrone, Bert. "Arkansas State Coach is Impressed by Play of Hilltopper Defensive Platoon," November 24, 1952.

"Coach, Whose Team Beat Both, Thinks Hilltoppers, Indians Closely Matched," December 4, 1952.

"England Likes Topper Defense Against T," nd.

"Even-Money Choice in Bowl Game Today," December 7, 1952.

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"Tops Made Even-Money Choice in Bowl Game Today," December 1952.

"Toppers Resume Drills for Bowl Contest," December 1, 1952.

"Tops Accept Bowl Bid; Close Home Season Tomorrow," November 14, 1952.

"Western Still Without Foe in Refrigerator Bowl," November 16, 1952.

Robertson, Bill. "Powerful Western Kentucky Dethrones Arkansas," *Evansville Press*, December 8, 1952.

UA19/3 Football Office Records, Box 4

Refrigerator Bowl Correspondence & Contract

Refrigerator Bowl Program & Ticket

Refrigerator Bowl Alumni Newsletter