



# TIDES

THE INSTITUTE FOR DIVERSITY AND ETHICS IN SPORT

MAKING WAVES OF CHANGE

## Keeping Score When It Counts:

Assessing the Academic Records of the  
2023-2024 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams

By Adrien Bouchet

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The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport  
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in the College of Business Administration of the  
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# *Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2023-2024 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams*

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## Executive Summary

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The overall academic success of college football student-athletes has remained constant this year; however, the gap between white and Black football student-athletes increased for the 82 Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) bowl-bound schools. The results were reported in “**Keeping Score When It Counts: Assessing the Academic Records of the 2023-24 Bowl-Bound College Football Teams**,” a study released by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) which is in the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program at the University of Central Florida.

There was one additional bowl game, between two HBCU (Historically Black College or University) schools that competed in the Football Championship Series (FCS) with representatives from the MEAC and the SWAC. This bowl was the Cricket Celebration Bowl, which this year featured Howard University and Florida A&M University. The data for this game is not included in the calculations presented in this report, because these schools are not FBS schools.

Adrien Bouchet, director of TIDES and the primary author of the study, said, “The academic success of FBS football student-athletes has remained unchanged from last year’s all-time high. The overall football student-athlete Graduation Success Rate (GSR) remained constant at 83.0 percent, same as 2022.

## *Overall Football Student-Athlete GSR*

<b>83.0%</b> 2022	<b>83.0%</b> 2023
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## *Average GSR for Black Football Student-Athletes*

<b>79.5%</b> 2022		<b>79.3%</b> 2023
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## *Average GSR for White Football Student-Athletes*

<b>91.0%</b> 2022		<b>92.5%</b> 2023
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Bouchet stated, “The gap between white and Black football student-athletes increased slightly this year, so it continues to be a major issue. The gap this year is 13.2 percent, up from 11.6 percent last year. Among the 82 bowl-bound teams, the average GSR for Black student-athletes is 79.3 percent, slightly down from 79.5 percent in 2022. The average GSR for white football student-athletes increased from 91.0 in 2022 to 92.5 percent in 2023.

Bouchet continued, “The University of Alabama, the University of Michigan, the University of Washington, and the University of Texas at Austin, were selected to compete in the College Football Playoff for the National Championship. Alabama, Michigan, and Washington had high graduation rates, while Texas had lower graduation rates. Ohio State and Michigan had higher academic standing, but Texas struggled academically.

The four schools graduated 93 percent, 89 percent, 84 percent, and 75 percent of all their football student-athletes, respectively. As for their Black football student-athletes, they graduated 92 percent, 88 percent, 81 percent, and 68 percent, respectively. Their white football student-athletes graduated at rates of 94 percent, 100 percent, 95 percent, and 92 percent, respectively. The substantial graduation rate gap between white and Black football student-athletes at a school competing for a national championship is disturbing.

All four schools did well with their Academic Progress Rates (APR), with Texas behind the others. APRs for the four schools were Alabama 995, Michigan 987, Washington 986, and Texas 974.

If the College Football Playoff selection was based on the **APR** of the bowl-selected teams, then the four-team playoff may have looked like this:

#### **Rose Bowl**

#1 seed: Northwestern University (APR 996)

#4 seed: University of Alabama (APR 995)

#### **Sugar Bowl**

#2 seed: University of Wisconsin-Madison (APR 996)

#3 seed: Clemson University (APR 995)

*\*GSR for football student athletes was used as a tie breaker for seeding purposes*

If the College Football Playoff selection was based on the football student athlete **GSR** of the bowl-selected teams, then the four-team playoff may have looked like this:

#### **Rose Bowl**

#1 seed: Clemson University (GSR 99%)

#4 seed: University of Louisville (GSR 96%)

#### **Sugar Bowl**

#2 seed: Northwestern University (GSR 97%)

#3 seed: Boston College (GSR 97%)

*\*APR for football student athletes was used as a tie breaker for seeding purposes*

Troubling statistics in the study of the bowl-bound teams included:

- 82 schools (100.0 percent) had GSRs of 70 percent or higher for white football student-athletes, which was around 1.2 times the number of schools with equivalent GSRs for Black football student-athletes (69 schools or 84.1 percent).
- University of Georgia had a GSR for Black football student-athletes that was 57 percentage points lower than their rate for white football student-athletes. In 2023 there were five bowl bound teams that had a GSR for their Black football student-athletes at least 30 percentage points lower than that of their white football student-athletes.
- In 2023, 22.0 percent of bowl-bound schools (18 total) had GSRs for Black football student-athletes that were at least 20 percentage points lower than their rates for white football student-athletes.

There were nine schools that had a GSR for their Black football student-athletes that exceeded their rates for white football student-athletes, two more than 2022. They were University of Wyoming, Auburn University, University of Texas at San Antonio, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Arkansas State University, Rice University, Oregon State University, Boston College and Northwestern University.

There were six schools that had an overall GSR for football student-athletes that was better than the overall GSR for student-athletes of the school, two less than 2022. Those schools were the University of Louisville, Clemson University, the United State Air Force Academy, Kansas State University, Boise State University, and the University of Toledo.

NCAA statistics were used in this study. The Institute reviewed data collected by the NCAA from member institutions for the graduation rate study. The Institute reviewed the six-year graduation rates of each school's freshman class that enrolled in 2016-2017, and it then calculated a four-class average for the Graduation Success Rate freshmen classes of (2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17).

## Keeping Score at a Glance

### *Bowl-Bound Schools with GSR for Black Football Student-Athletes exceeding White Football Student-Athletes*

7      ↑      9  
-2022-      -2023-

***"There were nine schools that had a GSR for the Black football student-athletes, two more than 2022."***

This year, 15 of the 42 (35.7 percent) bowl games, to include the College Football National Championship Game, hosted participants where both had APRs higher than or equal to 970. This is compared to 13 of 41 (31.7 percent) bowl games in 2022 and 13 of 43 (30.2 percent) bowl games in 2021. This is a dramatic increase from the 2 of 35 bowl games (5.7 percent) a decade ago in 2013.

These bowl games include:

#### **The College Football Playoff National Championship Game**

- University of Michigan: **987**
- University of Washington: **986**

#### **The Sugar Bowl (CFP Semifinal)**

- University of Texas at Austin: **974**
- University of Washington: **986**

#### **The Rose Bowl (CFP Semifinal):**

- University of Alabama: **995**
- University of Michigan: **987**

#### **The Cotton Bowl**

- University of Missouri: **989**
- Ohio State University: **993**

#### **The Armed Forces Bowl**

- James Madison University: **970**
- United Air Force Academy: **992**

#### **The Gasparilla Bowl**

- Georgia Institute of Technology: **978**
- University of Central Florida: **984**

#### **The Fenway Bowl**

- Boston College: **985**
- Southern Methodist University: **974**

#### **The Las Vegas Bowl**

- University of Utah: **988**
- Northwestern University: **996**

#### **The Gator Bowl**

- Clemson University: **995**
- University of Kentucky: **970**

#### **The Holiday Bowl**

- University of Louisville: **982**
- University of Southern California: **972**

#### **The Pinstripe Bowl**

- Rutgers University–New Brunswick: **974**
- University of Miami: **978**

#### **The Duke's Mayo Bowl**

- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: **982**
- West Virginia University: **977**

#### **The Sun Bowl**

- Oregon State University: **973**
- University of Notre Dame: **989**

#### **The Arizona Bowl**

- University of Toledo: **975**
- University of Wyoming: **974**

#### **The Pop-Tarts Bowl**

- North Carolina State University: **975**
- Kansas State University: **978**

The NCAA created the APR in 2004 as part of an academic reform package designed to more accurately measure student-athletes' academic success as well as improve graduation rates at member institutions. The APR holds each team accountable for the success of student-athletes in the classroom and their progression towards graduation. Individual teams are penalized if they fall below an APR score of 930, which is an expected graduation rate of 50 percent of its student-athletes. Up to 10 percent of scholarships can be taken away. Teams can also be subject to historical penalties for poor academic performance over time.

According to the NCAA, the APR is calculated as follows:

- Each student-athlete receiving athletically related financial aid earns one point for staying in school and one point for being academically eligible.
- A team's total points are divided by points possible and then multiplied by 1,000 to equal the team's Academic Progress Rate.
- In addition to a team's current-year APR, its rolling four-year APR is also used to determine accountability.

The new postseason eligibility structure took effect in the 2012-13 academic year, with a three-year implementation window, which moved the benchmark from 900 to 930. For access to postseason competition in 2021-2022, teams must achieve a 930 four-year average APR or a 940 average over the most recent two years to participate in championships.

Bowl-bound FBS schools in "Power Five" conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, PAC-12, and Southeastern Conference) had an average APR of 974.2. This was 8.8 points higher than bowl-bound schools in "Group of Five" conferences (American Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, and Sun Belt Conference) with an average score 965.4. This is a significant widening from the 1.4 point average difference between Power Five conferences with an average APR of 970.0 and the Group of Five conferences with an average APR of 968.6 in 2022.

Bowl-bound schools in the Big Ten Conference had the highest average APR among all FBS conferences and the American Athletic Conference had the highest average GSR for Black football student-athletes among all FBS conferences.

The APR data does not include data from the 2022-23 academic performances of the teams in the study but instead uses four years of data ending in the 2020-21 school year. This is the most updated data available on the NCAA website and provided by the NCAA.

The Institute has taken the position that Federal Graduation Rates (FGR) give an unfair depiction of a school because it does not account for transfer students. A student-athlete who transfers in good standing and graduates at another institution counts as a non-graduate at the initial school. The FGR also does not count a junior college student who transfers into a four-year college and graduates as a graduate, or a former student-athlete who returns and graduates more than six years after original enrollment. The Institute supports the NCAA's use of the GSR, developed in 2002, which accounts for these factors, as a better way to fairly measure the results. Based on the data from 2018-21, depending on the sport, race, and gender in the categories of Division I overall, men's overall, football, men's basketball and women's basketball, the NCAA's GSR rates are between 18 and 35 percentage points higher than the federal government's FGR (Federal Graduation Rate) rates which allow comparisons with non-athlete students.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport ("TIDES" or the "Institute") serves as a comprehensive resource for issues related to gender and race in amateur, collegiate, and professional sport. The Institute researches and publishes a variety of studies, including annual studies of student-athlete graduation rates and racial attitudes in sport as well as the internationally recognized Racial and Gender Report Card, an assessment of hiring practices in professional and college sport. The Institute also monitors some of the critical ethical issues in college and professional sport, including the potential for exploitation of student-athletes, gambling, performance-enhancing drugs, and violence in sport.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport is part of the DeVos Sport Business Management Graduate Program in the University of Central Florida's College of Business Administration. This landmark program focuses on business skills necessary for graduates to conduct successful careers in the rapidly changing and dynamic sports industry while also emphasizing diversity, community service and social issues in sport.



BOWL GAMES			Overall	Black	White	Football and			
Bowl Name	School Name	Conference	APR	Football Student-Athletes	Football Student-Athletes	Football Student-Athletes	Overall Student-Athletes	Student-Athlete Diff	White and Black Diff
			(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(% points)	(% points)	
National Championship	University of Michigan	Big Ten	987	89.00%	88.00%	100.00%	96.00%	-7.00%	-12.00%
	University of Washington	Pac-12	986	84.00%	81.00%	95.00%	91.00%	-7.00%	-14.00%
Rose Bowl (CFP) Semi	University of Alabama	SEC	995	93.00%	92.00%	94.00%	95.00%	-2.00%	-2.00%
	University of Michigan	Big Ten	987	89.00%	88.00%	100.00%	96.00%	-7.00%	-12.00%
Sugar Bowl (CFP) Semi	University of Texas at Austin	Big 12	974	75.00%	68.00%	92.00%	89.00%	-14.00%	-24.00%
	University of Washington	Pac-12	986	84.00%	81.00%	95.00%	91.00%	-7.00%	-14.00%
Peach Bowl	University of Mississippi	SEC	995	85.00%	81.00%	100.00%	90.00%	-5.00%	-19.00%
	Pennsylvania State University	Big Ten	958	93.00%	88.00%	100.00%	93.00%	0.00%	-12.00%
Fiesta Bowl	Liberty University	Conference USA	978	81.00%	75.00%	92.00%	90.00%	-9.00%	-17.00%
	University of Oregon	Pac-12	950	80.00%	71.00%	95.00%	85.00%	-5.00%	-24.00%
Cotton Bowl	University of Missouri	SEC	989	74.00%	70.00%	85.00%	87.00%	-13.00%	-15.00%
	Ohio State University	Big Ten	993	87.00%	84.00%	94.00%	93.00%	-6.00%	-10.00%
Orange Bowl	University of Georgia	SEC	965	41.00%	32.00%	89.00%	86.00%	-45.00%	-57.00%
	Florida State University	ACC	972	69.00%	65.00%	100.00%	87.00%	-18.00%	-35.00%
Famous Toastery Bowl	Western Kentucky University	Conference USA	969	78.00%	74.00%	89.00%	88.00%	-10.00%	-15.00%
	Old Dominion University	Sun Belt	963	76.00%	75.00%	91.00%	88.00%	-12.00%	-16.00%
Cure Bowl	Miami University	MAC	965	93.00%	91.00%	97.00%	96.00%	-3.00%	-6.00%
	Appalachian State University	Sun Belt	966	82.00%	73.00%	100.00%	89.00%	-7.00%	-27.00%
Boca Raton Bowl	University of South Florida	American	967	76.00%	75.00%	100.00%	87.00%	-11.00%	-25.00%
	Syracuse University	ACC	955	82.00%	75.00%	100.00%	94.00%	-12.00%	-25.00%
New Mexico Bowl	New Mexico State University	Conference USA	916	86.00%	78.00%	95.00%	87.00%	-1.00%	-17.00%
	California State University, Fresno	Mountain West	967	69.00%	60.00%	89.00%	83.00%	-14.00%	-29.00%
Independence Bowl	University of California, Berkeley	Pac-12	978	84.00%	79.00%	84.00%	91.00%	-7.00%	-5.00%
	Texas Tech University	Big 12	966	73.00%	58.00%	96.00%	85.00%	-12.00%	-38.00%
68 Ventures Bowl	University of South Alabama	Sun Belt	959	82.00%	79.00%	94.00%	91.00%	-9.00%	-15.00%
	Eastern Michigan University	MAC	975	81.00%	76.00%	85.00%	89.00%	-8.00%	-9.00%
LA Bowl	University of California, Los Angeles	Pac-12	960	64.00%	59.00%	90.00%	89.00%	-25.00%	-31.00%
	Boise State University	Mountain West	988	95.00%	90.00%	95.00%	94.00%	1.00%	-5.00%
New Orleans Bowl	Jacksonville State University	Conference USA	949	83.00%	81.00%	91.00%	85.00%	-2.00%	-10.00%
	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Sun Belt	952	79.00%	80.00%	78.00%	87.00%	-8.00%	2.00%
Myrtle Beach Bowl	Georgia Southern University	Sun Belt	947	70.00%	67.00%	80.00%	85.00%	-15.00%	-13.00%
	Ohio University	MAC	956	91.00%	90.00%	94.00%	94.00%	-3.00%	-4.00%
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl	Georgia State University	Sun Belt	972	74.00%	75.00%	83.00%	84.00%	-10.00%	-8.00%
	Utah State University	Mountain West	965	87.00%	81.00%	85.00%	90.00%	-3.00%	-4.00%
Frisco Bowl	University of Texas at San Antonio	American	944	89.00%	90.00%	88.00%	89.00%	0.00%	2.00%
	Marshall University	Sun Belt	961	80.00%	77.00%	84.00%	91.00%	-11.00%	-7.00%
Armed Forces Bowl	James Madison University	Sun Belt	970	79.00%	76.00%	85.00%	91.00%	-12.00%	-9.00%
	United States Air Force Academy	Mountain West	992	95.00%	88.00%	100.00%	93.00%	2.00%	-12.00%
Gasparilla Bowl	Georgia Institute of Technology	ACC	978	88.00%	82.00%	95.00%	92.00%	-4.00%	-13.00%
	University of Central Florida	Big 12	984	89.00%	85.00%	94.00%	92.00%	-3.00%	-9.00%
Hawaii Bowl	San Jose State University	Mountain West	962	69.00%	65.00%	84.00%	84.00%	-15.00%	-19.00%
	Coastal Carolina University	Sun Belt	976	74.00%	73.00%	88.00%	87.00%	-13.00%	-15.00%
Camellia Bowl	Arkansas State University	Sun Belt	967	78.00%	77.00%	75.00%	85.00%	-7.00%	2.00%
	Northern Illinois University	MAC	967	83.00%	82.00%	92.00%	88.00%	-5.00%	-10.00%
Quick Lane Bowl	Bowling Green State University	MAC	964	71.00%	64.00%	81.00%	89.00%	-18.00%	-17.00%
	University of Minnesota	Big Ten	992	90.00%	81.00%	100.00%	95.00%	-5.00%	-19.00%
Military Bowl	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	ACC	967	78.00%	74.00%	86.00%	92.00%	-14.00%	-12.00%
	Tulane University	American	981	88.00%	86.00%	100.00%	93.00%	-5.00%	-14.00%
Birmingham Bowl	Troy University	Sun Belt	961	71.00%	71.00%	77.00%	85.00%	-14.00%	-6.00%
	Duke University	ACC	983	93.00%	89.00%	100.00%	98.00%	-5.00%	-11.00%
First Responder Bowl	Texas State University	Sun Belt	954	72.00%	64.00%	84.00%	82.00%	-10.00%	-20.00%
	Rice University	American	987	93.00%	94.00%	91.00%	94.00%	-1.00%	3.00%
Liberty Bowl	University of Memphis	American	962	93.00%	90.00%	100.00%	93.00%	0.00%	-10.00%
	Iowa State University	Big 12	987	93.00%	92.00%	95.00%	95.00%	-2.00%	-3.00%
Holiday Bowl	University of Louisville	ACC	982	96.00%	95.00%	100.00%	93.00%	3.00%	-5.00%
	University of Southern California	Pac-12	972	80.00%	74.00%	93.00%	93.00%	-13.00%	-19.00%
Guaranteed Rate Bowl	University of Kansas	Big 12	958	86.00%	84.00%	91.00%	90.00%	-4.00%	-7.00%
	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Mountain West	981	85.00%	82.00%	100.00%	88.00%	-3.00%	-18.00%
Fenway Bowl	Southern Methodist University	American	974	89.00%	88.00%	93.00%	92.00%	-3.00%	-5.00%
	Boston College	ACC	985	97.00%	100.00%	97.00%	98.00%	-1.00%	3.00%
Pinstripe Bowl	Rutgers University-New Brunswick	Big Ten	974	80.00%	80.00%	89.00%	93.00%	-13.00%	-9.00%
	University of Miami	ACC	978	87.00%	84.00%	100.00%	94.00%	-7.00%	-16.00%
Cheez-It Bowl	University of Iowa	Big Ten	968	81.00%	65.00%	94.00%	89.00%	-8.00%	-29.00%
	University of Tennessee	SEC	946	85.00%	79.00%	100.00%	94.00%	-9.00%	-21.00%
Alamo Bowl	University of Oklahoma	Big 12	967	77.00%	67.00%	92.00%	89.00%	-12.00%	-25.00%
	University of Arizona	Pac-12	966	81.00%	76.00%	100.00%	89.00%	-8.00%	-24.00%
Duke's Mayo Bowl	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	ACC	982	77.00%	70.00%	90.00%	92.00%	-15.00%	-20.00%
	West Virginia University	Big 12	977	89.00%	81.00%	100.00%	94.00%	-5.00%	-19.00%
Music City Bowl	Auburn University	SEC	985	84.00%	84.00%	83.00%	94.00%	-10.00%	1.00%
	University of Maryland, College Park	ACC	948	77.00%	73.00%	85.00%	88.00%	-11.00%	-12.00%
Las Vegas Bowl	University of Utah	Pac-12	988	93.00%	92.00%	100.00%	94.00%	-1.00%	-8.00%
	Northwestern University	Big Ten	996	97.00%	100.00%	97.00%	98.00%	-1.00%	3.00%
Gator Bowl	Clemson University	ACC	995	99.00%	98.00%	100.00%	97.00%	2.00%	-2.00%
	University of Kentucky	SEC	970	86.00%	84.00%	94.00%	92.00%	-6.00%	-10.00%
Sun Bowl	Oregon State University	Pac-12	973	86.00%	83.00%	80.00%	88.00%	-2.00%	3.00%
	University of Notre Dame	Independent	989	94.00%	91.00%	95.00%	98.00%	-4.00%	-4.00%
Arizona Bowl	University of Toledo	MAC	975	94.00%	91.00%	100.00%	93.00%	1.00%	-9.00%
	University of Wyoming	Mountain West	974	84.00%	85.00%	84.00%	90.00%	-6.00%	1.00%
Reliaquest Bowl	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Big Ten	996	89.00%	85.00%	92.00%	93.00%	-4.00%	-7.00%
	Louisiana State University	SEC	923	69.00%	65.00%	100.00%	91.00%	-22.00%	-35.00%
Pop Tarts Bowl	North Carolina State University	ACC	975	78.00%	78.00%	94.00%	92.00%	-14.00%	-16.00%
	Kansas State University	Big 12	978	95.00%	95.00%	100.00%	93.00%	2.00%	-5.00%
Texas Bowl	Texas A&M University	SEC	949	79.00%	74.00%	100.00%	87.00%	-8.00%	-26.00%
	Oklahoma State University	Big 12	976	86.00%	91.00%	93.00%	92.00%	-6.00%	-2.00%
Averages			971	82.95%	79.33%	92.52%	90.66%	-7.71%	-13.20%