

ULM accepts bid to play in I-Bowl

Written by Staff Reports

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The 2012 AdvoCare V100 Independence Bowl will feature the University of Louisiana-Monroe Warhawks in the program's first bowl game appearance in the 37th installment of the Independence Bowl, set for Friday, Dec. 28, at 1 p.m.

"We are pleased to announce that the AdvoCare V100 Independence Bowl will be hosting the University of Louisiana-Monroe, one of the best Cinderella stories of the 2012 college football season," 2012 Independence Bowl Chairman Jack Andres said. "They have garnered a lot of national attention this year and are incredibly fun to watch."

The Warhawks, coached by Todd Berry, finished the season 8-4 and are going to their first bowl game since becoming a member of the FBS in 1994. They jumped onto the national scene after upsetting No. 8 Arkansas in Little Rock, 34-31, to open the season. They converted on fourth down on six of seven attempts, including the game-winning touchdown in overtime.

In the following weeks, the Warhawks lost a close overtime thriller at Auburn, 31-28, and fell in a shootout to Baylor at home, 47-42. ULM set a stadium record for attendance in the game.

"We are very excited that the hard work of the team and the staff have been noticed by the Advocare V100 Independence Bowl," Berry said. "To have a historic season culminate in a Bowl such as the Independence Bowl and the great city of Shreveport, La., is extra special.

"This team continues to work very hard. The ULM faithful can be very proud of this team both on and off the field and can know that we will give a maximum effort towards bringing the Independence Bowl trophy home with us."

The ULM offense, which averages 442.7 yards per game and 35.5 points per game, is led by junior quarterback Kolton Browning. Browning finished the regular season with 2,830 yards passing and 27 touchdowns to just seven interceptions. He also led the team in rushing with 441 yards and seven touchdowns, despite missing almost two full games due to injury.

Junior receiver Brent Leonard emerged as Browning's top target, hauling in 97 catches for 1,042 yards and 10 touchdowns.

The ULM defense picked off 15 passes, which ranks 22nd nationally and first in the Sun Belt Conference. They rank 31st nationally out of 120 FBS teams listed on NCAA.org in turnovers gained with 24.

"We are thrilled and honored to be selected to participate in this year's Advocare V100 Independence Bowl," ULM's Director of Athletics Bobby Staub said. "We couldn't have picked a better location for our first-ever bowl game and look forward to our students, alumni and fans converging on Shreveport the week of December 28th."

An opponent for the Warhawks is still being decided by Independence Bowl officials.

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