



# Kansas Shrine Bowl

East-West Charity All-Star Football Since 1974

BENEFITING SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN



## Kansas Shrine Bowl faces first major hurdle amid COVID-19 crisis

*Washburn closes campus for the summer, Shrine Bowl hopes to find alternate location for 2020 game*

In light of health and safety concerns because of Covid-19, Washburn University representatives notified the Kansas Shrine Bowl they would be closing their campus to outside events for the remainder of the summer and would not be able to host the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Kansas Shrine Bowl, scheduled for Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup>.

“This is a tremendous setback for our event, but we certainly understand the concerns and ultimate decision made by Washburn University leadership,” said B.J. Harris, Executive Director of the Kansas Shrine Bowl. Washburn noted that the university’s residence halls and dining facilities are not scheduled to re-open until fall due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Those facilities would be needed to host the high school players from across the state who compete in the annual game. In addition to the all-star football game, the bowl week also includes the Kansas Masonic All-State Marching Band Camp, Kansas Shrine Bowl All-Star Cheer Camp, Kansas’ largest shrine parade, Sports-In-Kansas High School Football Combine, Strong Legs Run 5K, Jr. All-Star Challenge, golf tournament, appreciation banquet, and more.

“We are disappointed that we will not be able to host the Shrine Bowl football game this year,” said Jerry Farley, Washburn University president. “However, we are proud to be a part of the important work of the network raising money to support Shriners Hospitals for Children.”

The Kansas Shrine Bowl Board of Directors are still hopeful they can find a host location in time for the 2020 event. “The phased approach to opening is different throughout the state, based on the severity of cases in each region. We’re still hopeful we can find a venue and host city that hasn’t been impacted as greatly and might be closer to being able to accommodate a large event this summer,” said Harris.

“Ad Astra: A Plan to Reopen Kansas” released by the Governor’s office on April 30<sup>th</sup>, had the “Phase Out” beginning as early as June 15<sup>th</sup>. In that phase of the plan, “...mass gathering limits are significantly relaxed...” making the execution of the event feasible. That phase could go into effect nearly a month prior to the Kansas Shrine Bowl.

Topeka last hosted the Kansas Shrine Bowl in 2013, with one of the largest crowds ever in attendance. The 2020 event in Topeka was set to be another huge success. “We definitely hope to return to Topeka in the future,” Harris stated. “There has been so much work already put in by so many wonderful people at Washburn, Visit Topeka, Ramada Inn and more. We hope to reward their efforts by bringing our event to the Capital city soon.”

“Visit Topeka was deeply saddened by the recent news of the 2020 Kansas Shrine Bowl not being hosted at Washburn University as they deal with the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis.” Said Jessica Schenkel, Vice President of Visit Topeka. “We feel for all of our community partners who were involved with each facet of the accompanying events and for the families and fans of the 47th Annual Game. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Washburn University and the Kansas Shrine Bowl to bring this event back to Topeka in the future.” The Kansas Shrine Bowl is scheduled to make its first ever appearance in Hutchinson on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and will head back to Pittsburg on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.

*(continued...)*

**Supported by Kansas Shrine Centers: Abdallah, Overland Park; Arab, Topeka; Isis, Salina; Midian, Wichita; and Mirza, Pittsburg**

“Of course, we recognize the battle we have before us, but we owe it to our participants and the patients at Shriners Hospitals for Children, who benefit from our fundraiser, to do what we can to hold an event,” added Harris. “The Class of 2020 has already endured more than their fair share with this crisis. We are still hopeful we can be a light at the end of the tunnel by hosting our 2020 event.”

The Kansas Shrine Bowl encourages the players and their families, the registered participants, and other stakeholders to follow their social media channels for additional updates as they become available.

---

For questions contact B.J. Harris at 913-602-4359 or email [director@KansasShrineBowl.com](mailto:director@KansasShrineBowl.com)

---

---

The Kansas Shrine Bowl is an all-star high school senior, East vs. West, football game put on each year in Kansas, by the Kansas Shrine. It is a 501(c) 3 non-profit charity that produces annual events and related activities, with net proceeds benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children. The Kansas Shrine Bowl has sent over \$3M to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

The game has been played throughout Kansas each summer since 1974. Host cities have included Lawrence, Manhattan, Wichita, Topeka, Hays, Emporia, Pittsburg, and Dodge City. The West football team camp will be held at Kansas Wesleyan in Salina, Kansas, and the East will be held at Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas. The East Camp Directors are Jack Call and Tim Williams. The West Camp Directors are Richard Steele and Greg King.

Beginning in 1974, the flagship event has been the East/West All-Star Football Game. As of 2019, the West leads the series with 28 wins, the East has 17 wins, and there has been one tie. Notable alumni include former All-Pro Wide Receiver Jordy Nelson, NFL Hall of Famer Barry Sanders, former Kansas State and Kansas City Chiefs Linebacker Gary Spani, former Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year and Super Bowl Champion Linebacker Mark Simoneau and many others.

The Kansas Shrine Bowl also includes the Kansas Masonic All-State Marching band camp, held annually at each host site. The week also includes the Kansas Shrine Bowl Cheer Camp, which culminates with performances at each game.

Other bowl weekend activities include, the Kansas Shrine Bowl Banquet, the state’s largest Shrine Parade, Shriner’s Hospitals for Children Free Screening Clinic, Strong Legs Run 5K & Walk, Junior All-Star Challenge (ages 5–14), High School Football Combine/Clinic and 4-Man Golf Scramble.

All Shrine Bowl events are produced and presented to benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children [SHC]. SHC is a health care system of 22 hospitals dedicated to improving the lives of children by providing pediatric specialty care, innovative research, and outstanding teaching programs for medical professionals. Children up to the age of 18 are eligible for care and receive all services in a family-centered environment, regardless of the patients' ability to pay.