



Arizona Interscholastic Association
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NEWS RELEASE

7TH ANNUAL SOLLENBERGER CLASSIC *to be held at University of Phoenix Stadium*

PHOENIX, AZ (August 7, 2012) – For the second time in as many years, the 7th Annual Sollenberger Classic will feature two games at University of Phoenix Stadium, in partnership with the Arizona Cardinals, on Saturday, August 18, 2012.

“The Arizona Cardinals are proud to once again be partnering with the AIA to host the Sollenberger Classic at University of Phoenix Stadium,” said team President Michael Bidwill. “The Cardinals are fortunate to have such an outstanding venue to play our home games and I know for the four high school teams coming to University of Phoenix Stadium it will be an experience they will never forget.”

In the first game, the Arizona Interscholastic Association’s (AIA) Division IV state champion, Blue Ridge High School, will compete against the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association’s (NIAA) Class 3A title game runner-up, Moapa Valley High School. The second game will feature the AIA’s Division I state champion, Desert Vista High School, and the NIAA’s 4A Sunset Region runner-up, Palo Verde High School.

“The Sollenberger Classic has evolved into a true classic showcasing the best of high school football in our two neighboring states,” said Harold Slemmer, Ed.D., Executive Director of the AIA. “I’m glad to see how this game continues to evolve since its inception and this has brought true honor to the name of Barry Sollenberger.”

“The State of Nevada is honored to be now in our fifth year of participation in the Barry Sollenberger Football Classic,” NIAA Executive Director Eddie Bonine said. “The AIA and the NIAA’s partnership in this event has proven to be a wonderful experience for our athletes, coaches and fans alike. This year’s format, again featuring two games, is outstanding and will once again allow more participants to enjoy this first-class event.”

Representing Arizona is the Blue Ridge Yellowjackets and the Desert Vista Thunder. After losing the year prior to Show Low High School in the championship game, Blue Ridge, coached by Paul Moro, won the Division IV title over rival Show Low 35-14. Blue Ridge finished the year a perfect 14 wins and no losses.

“It is an honor for our school to be able to participate in the Sollenberger Classic,” Coach Moro said. “I knew Barry (Sollenberger) and for Blue Ridge and myself to now be part of his legacy is humbling. We are excited to play in Phoenix against a first class school like Moapa Valley.”

The Thunder is coached by Dan Hinds, and is fresh of their state championship victory against Hamilton, defeating the Huskies 45 to 19. Desert Vista finished the year with 13 wins and one loss.

“Desert Vista is very honored to play in the Sollenberger Classic,” coach Hinds said. “Palo Verde is a quality team with a rich tradition. They are very well coached, and make very few mistakes/penalties. Having this great honor gives us the opportunity to play one of the top teams in the southwest, which

will prepare our players for upcoming opponents on our schedule. Our players are very excited and are working hard this summer to prepare themselves for this great event.”

Representing Nevada is the Moapa Valley Pirates and the Palo Verde Panthers. Moapa Valley was the runner-up to Truckee in the NIAA Class 3A championship for the second straight year. The Pirates are coached by Brent Lewis and finished the 2011 campaign with 10 wins and three losses.

“We are honored to be invited back to the Sollenberger classic for the 2nd year in a row,” Coach Lewis stated. “We had a great experience last year representing Nevada against Show Low High School and we hope to represent Nevada again proudly against another great program, Blue Ridge High School. The AIA and NIAA both put together a once in a life time experience for our kids and staff with the opportunity of playing at the University of Phoenix Stadium. To be able to do it two years in a row will be awesome. The AIA was a tremendous host for us last year and treated us like kings so we are very excited to come back for another year.”

Head Coach Darwin Rost leads the Palo Verde Panthers to their first Sollenberger Classic, as runner-ups to the NIAA Class 4A Sunset Region. The Panthers finished the 2011 campaign with a record of 11 wins and one loss.

“The Palo Verde High School football program is proud to have the opportunity to represent the state of Nevada in the 2012 Sollenberger Classic,” Coach Rost said. “We look forward to opening the 2012 season against Desert Vista High School on August 18. This game will provide an exciting and memorable start to our 2012 season.”

Bonine and Slemmer both want to “thank the Arizona Cardinals’ management team” for their time and dedication to this annual event.

Bonine concluded, “The NIAA will continue our efforts to solidify the relationship between our two boarding state associations, and will continue to be committed to the AIA and its recognition for Barry. We are sincerely grateful for the outreach the AIA has displayed to the youth of Nevada.”

Tickets for the Sollenberger Classic are \$10.00 for adults, \$6.00 for students (ages 6-18) and children 5 and younger admitted free.

Game time is 3:00 p.m. between Blue Ridge and Moapa Valley, and 7:00 p.m. between Desert Vista and Palo Verde. Both games will be broadcast live on www.aia365.com and the night cap will be broadcast on the KDUS-1060AM as well.

Sollenberger Classic History

The Sollenberger Classic honors the late Barry Sollenberger, a former AIA employee. As a sports historian, Sollenberger was devoted to the task of documenting the achievements of high school athletes in the state of Arizona.

The first game honoring Barry was held at Sun Devil Stadium on the campus of Arizona State University. Chandler Hamilton, the 2005 AIA 5A Division I state runner-ups, defeated Mesa Red Mountain 21-7 on Friday, August 25, 2006.

The Phoenix Brophy Prep Broncos hosted Tucson Salpointe Catholic at Phoenix College on Thursday, August 23, 2007. The Broncos defeated Salpointe Catholic 33-17 to take hold of the Sollenberger Classic Trophy.

In 2008, Phoenix Brophy Prep, the 2007 AIA 5A D-I state champions, defeated Las Vegas Bishop Gorman, the 2007 NIAA 4A state champions, 16-6. The game was played on August 23, 2008 at University of Phoenix Stadium, home to the Arizona Cardinals.

In 2009, the Sollenberger Classic was played in Reno, Nevada at MacKay Stadium on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. AIA 5A D-II defending state champion Peoria Centennial defeated NIAA 4A defending state champion Reno McQueen 51-20 on August 22, 2009.

The Hamilton Huskies and Bishop Gorman Gaels made their second Sollenberger Classic appearance in 2010 at NAU's J. Lawrence Walkup Skydome. The Huskies, the AIA defending 5A-I state champion, defeated the Gaels, the NIAA defending 4A state champion, 24 to 17, in a tightly contested game.

In 2011, the Sollenberger Classic was hosted at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. This marked the first year the Classic would feature two games. In the first game, the NIAA Class 3A runner-up Moapa Valley defeated the AIA Class 3A defending state champion Show Low, 28 to 26. In the second game, the NIAA Class 4A defending state champion Bishop Gorman defeated the AIA Class 5A-II defending state champion Chaparral, 42-22.

About Arizona Interscholastic Association

The AIA is a voluntary association of public and private high schools which was established by and is responsible to its members. The democratic governance of the AIA provides representation and input opportunities to all its member schools through their governing board members, administrators and teachers who serve on the Legislative Council, Executive Board and ad hoc committees. There are currently 275 member high schools with over 305,000 students under the AIA. The AIA was established in 1925. The AIA is online at www.aiaonline.org.

About Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association

The NIAA is a non-profit organization of secondary schools in Nevada established in 1922. The NIAA is the governing body of high school athletics and activities in the Silver State as recognized by the Nevada state legislature. The NIAA has 105 member schools divided into four classifications and is responsible for sponsoring, directing and developing athletics and activities in Nevada's high schools. The NIAA is online at: www.niaa.com.

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