

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# NCAA certifies bowl for Charlotte

*Postseason event would match ACC, Big East football teams*

BY RON GREEN JR.  
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A college football bowl game in Charlotte moved one step closer to reality Thursday when it received NCAA certification.

Tentatively called the Queen City Bowl, the game is expected to match teams from the ACC and the Big East at Ericsson Stadium in late December.

The first game could be this

year, though a date has not been determined.

The NCAA committee also certified new postseason games in San Francisco and Hawaii.

"We've been working on this for two years and much of the work has been done below the radar," said Ken Haines, chief operating officer for Raycom Sports, which would operate the bowl. "But we feel we have the strong support of the community to make this work."

The next step, Haines said, is to sign a title sponsor. He said his company already has several leads and he expects to complete a sponsorship agreement with a local company "sooner rather

than later."

The Charlotte game would be a new bowl, not a relocated game.

"This also puts us and the city in a position where we can be a player should something develop with a national championship playoff movement," Haines said. "It is far better to be in the loop than on the sidelines should something develop."

By having the ACC and Big East tied into the game, Haines said it will be easier to bring in teams located relatively close to Charlotte.

"The two ingredients you must have to be successful are strong local sponsorship and teams within driving distance,"

Haines said.

The only ACC teams located a significant distance from Charlotte are Maryland and Florida State. Virginia Tech and West Virginia are the two closest Big East teams.

Should either league not produce a bowl-eligible team for the game, Haines said, teams from other conferences would be considered.

No decision has been made, Haines said, on where the new game will fall in the unofficial bowl hierarchy. In addition to sending its champion to the Bowl Championship Series each year, the ACC also has ties to the Peach, Gator and Tangerine

bowls.

"There is a strong movement among conferences to place teams in geographic proximity to bowls rather than ranking them and fitting them into slots," Haines said.

Raycom Sports has brought three regular-season college football games to Ericsson Stadium in the past. North Carolina met N.C. State here twice and East Carolina met West Virginia once.

The company has also run a bowl game in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for 11 years.

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