

Pasadena gala adds to excitement of Monday night's BCS game

By Adam Poulisse, Pasadena Star-News
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Star-studded event is a prelude to the Auburn-Florida State showdown



PASADENA >> Rather than sporting team-colored warpaint, dozens of musicians, athletes and movie stars donned sparkling dresses and steam-pressed tuxedos on Sunday to add to the hype for Monday's Bowl Championship Series game at the Rose Bowl.

The 2014 Tournament of Roses and the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission (LASEC) hosted "A Taste of LA," party presented by Western Asset at the Pasadena Convention Center on

Green Street to highlight not just the BCS game between the Auburn Tigers and the undefeated Florida State Seminoles, but the food, art and entertainment options in Southern California.

"You want people to spend money in L.A., and you want them to come back and spend more," said Kathy Schloessman, president of the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment Commission. "The game is going to speak for itself. This is to show the real taste of L.A."

Since it runs so close to the Rose Bowl game on Jan. 1, many teams stay in Orange County to avoid overlapping or booking problems, which results in a business boom for Orange County rather than Los Angeles County, according to Rose Bowl president Scott Jenkins.

Several Southland-native businesses and organizations such as Pink's, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros. Pictures, The "Entertainment Tonight" spin-off "The Insider" and more lined the inside of the convention center with businesses putting the Southland's best foot forward. Visitors could put themselves on the set of "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues" using a Paramount Pictures green screen, or get up-close with Superman costumes from Warner Bros. Pictures' "Man of Steel."

A makeshift Hollywood Bowl played music. Life-sized versions of Bart, Homer and Lisa Simpson from the historic Fox animated comedy "The Simpsons" posed for photos, and so did a so-authentic-you-swore-it-was-really-her wax version of Lady Gaga from Madame Tussauds in Hollywood.

And in true Los Angeles fashion, celebrities roamed a red carpet, with some actors and musicians among sharing the spotlight with many notable current and former NFL football players and ESPN sports analysts.

"I don't think there's a more majestic setting than the Rose Bowl," said Neil Everett, ESPN sportscaster.

“My grandfather played here at the fifth Rose Bowl.”

Almost 30 high-profile athletes, actors and musicians were scheduled to walk the red carpet on Sunday.

“People love the whole celebrity thing,” Schloessman said. “The question I get all the time is, ‘Oh my god, where can I see some celebrities?’ The pressure is on to show some celebrities.”

All of Sunday’s ballyhoo doubled since the game marked the end of an era. The game marks the last year of the BCS before it goes to a four-team College Football Playoff system next year.

“I’m a traditionalist,” said Scott Jenkins, Rose Bowl president, “This further modification came from an outcry from the public and the media. It concerns us greatly on the impact of Pasadena.”

Everett says the change may need some tweaking.

“Like everything else, it remains to be seen,” he said. “Nothing is perfect.”

Preparing to host the BCS game right after the Rose Bowl is “exhausting,” Jenkins said.

“It takes nearly a thousand volunteers to put on the Rose Parade and the game, and then we have to put on another game,” he said. “As soon as we clear everyone from the Rose Bowl, we start painting the field again. It’s an 18-hour process.”

Sunday’s event also showcased Florida State and Auburn pride, both off the red carpet, and on it.

“You’ve just had the 100th Rose Bowl game, how fitting to have the last BCS game,” said FSU alumna and former NFL lineman Jamie Dukes.

Taylor Hicks, “American Idol” winner and Auburn alum, said rooting for his alma mater was a “no-brainer,” right after playing a little ditty on his signature harmonica.

“Auburn is destined to win this,” Hicks said. “I think it’s a pretty fair assessment they’ll win.”

The game is scheduled to start at 5:30 p.m., today.

URL:

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