

For Official Release  
PR 001-12302023  
Office of the Governor  
Utulei, American Samoa  
December 30, 2023



## **Samoa Bowl 2023 Football Game: Back to the Roots**



The Samoa Bowl 2023 featured an exciting football game that highlighted camaraderie and sportsmanship, celebrating the true essence of brotherhood. The matchup, held at the Veterans Memorial Stadium in Tafuna, was more than just a competition on the field; it reflected unity, teamwork, and the spirit of community. The "Back to the Roots" themed Samoa Bowl had Team Manu'a and Team Tutuila competing for victory, embracing their shared connection as athletes and community members.

Prior to kick-off, players from both teams participated in the opening ceremony. In his special remarks, Lieutenant Governor Talauega E.V. Ale stated “It has been at the forefront of this administration and the intent of Honorable Lemanu, to revive and bring back the Samoa Bowl games.” He continued, “this allows all our players the opportunity to grow the game, improve and showcase their skills and talent, and continue to encourage and nurture the samoan culture.” The presentation of colors was done by the Samoana High School JROTC, and performing the invocation and benediction was Rev. Mageo Patolo Mageo. Singing the US National Anthem was Ms. Vasati Tavita and the AS anthem was sung by Fagaitua High School junior, Ms. Peau Sila.

Team Manu’a emerged victorious. Regardless of the final score, the teams came together in a post-game celebration highlighting their shared love for the game. Players exchanged handshakes, high-fives, and words of encouragement, solidifying the idea that, on and off the field, they are brothers united by their passion for football.

Following the conclusion of the football match, a closing ceremony took place, during which special awards were presented. These special awards were given to:

- Outstanding Offensive Lineman - Malcolm Polu Jr (Manu’a)
- Outstanding Defensive Lineman - Mark Tolua (Manu’a)
- Outstanding Offensive Player - Semisi Moli (Manu’a)
- Outstanding Defensive Player - Kilipa Samaeli (Tutuila)
- Outstanding Special Teams Player - Edward Loke (Tutuila)
- Most Valuable Player - Kanai Satele (Manu’a)
- Outstanding Assistant Coach - Travis Pavihi (Tutuila)
- Outstanding Head Coach - Tofinuu Oakland Salave’a (Manu’a)
- Samoa Bowl 2023 Runner Up Team (2nd Place) - Team Tutuila
- Samoa Bowl 2023 Champions - Team Manu’a

Chief of Staff and Samoa Bowl Chairman Loa Tuimavave Tuimavave T. Laupola delivered final remarks expressing gratitude to those that have made this year’s Samoa Bowl event successful. “To everyone who contributed to the success of this championship – the players, coaches, organizers, volunteers, sponsors, and the entire football community – your dedication has made this event a spectacle to behold.” The night concluded with the crowd singing *Lo ta nu’u*.

The Samoa Bowl church service will take place Sunday, December 31, 2023 at the CCCAS Pago Pago Church at 9:30 am, and to conclude with the farewell luncheon at the Governor H. Rex Lee Auditorium immediately after.

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