

Little Rock Touchdown Club Announces 2017 Lineup - August 9, 2017

For a fifth consecutive season, University of Arkansas head football coach Bret Bielema will speak to the Little Rock Touchdown Club. Bielema will kick off the club's 14th season when he speaks on Monday, Aug. 21, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in west Little Rock.

Simmons Bank is the lead sponsor of the Little Rock Touchdown Club for a fourth consecutive season. The Little Rock Touchdown Club serves as the Arkansas chapter for the National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame.

The club's 2017 schedule was announced Wednesday, August 9, during a news conference in the lobby of the Simmons Tower in downtown Little Rock. David Bazzel, the club's president and an inductee into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame, made the announcement.

"We're delighted to be able to sponsor the club for another season," said George Makris, the chairman and CEO of Simmons First National Corp. "Hundreds of people from across the state attend club meetings to hear the star-studded lineup of speakers. It's become an important part of the Arkansas sports scene."

With the unexpected news of coaching changes buzzing within the SEC, Bazzel anticipates large crowds at the club's meetings. The Little Rock Touchdown Club meets at Embassy Suites, located 11301 Financial Centre Parkway in Little Rock. Membership dues start at \$75 and can be paid online at LRTouchdown.com. Lunch begins at 11 a.m. each week with the program beginning at 11:50 a.m.

The Little Rock Touchdown Club began in August 2004 when a small group gathered at what was then the Little Rock Hilton to discuss football. The club now has more than 500 members.

Other speakers for 2017 include:

- Monday, August 28 - Steve Spurrier, Florida/South Carolina
- Tuesday, September 5 - Mike Ditka, Chicago Bears; Dan Hampton, Chicago Bears; Cliff Harris, Dallas Cowboys
- Monday, September 11 - Jeff Long, Arkansas AD
- Monday, September 18 - Tommy Tuberville, Ole Miss/Auburn
- Monday, September 25 - Barry Alvarez, Wisconsin AD
- Monday, October 9 - Barrett Jones, Alabama All-American
- Monday, October 16 - Bob Stoops, Oklahoma
- Monday, October 23 - Blake Anderson, Arkansas State University
- Monday, October 30 - SWC Hall of Fame Induction - This will mark the third consecutive year for the club to host the Arkansas inductions into the Southwest Conference Hall of Fame, which is headquartered in Waco, Texas.
- Monday, November 6 - Steve Campbell, UCA
- Monday, November 13 - Steve Hatchell, James Street Award, CEO, National Football Foundation
- Monday, November 20 - Dari Nowkhah, SEC Network
- Thursday, January 11, 2018 - Marcus Allen, Heisman Trophy Winner, Super Bowl MVP NFL Hall of Fame

Awards sponsored by the club include:

- The Cliff Harris Award for the nation's top small college defensive player
- The Dan Hampton Award for the top Arkansas high school and college defensive linemen
- The Willie Roaf Award for the top Arkansas high school and college offensive linemen
- The Sully Award, named for KATV sports director Steve Sullivan, for the top college and high school play-by-play calls on radio play calls on radio in the state
- The Paul Eells Award, given to the Razorback football player who shows the most courage and perseverance in the face of difficult circumstances
- The James Street Sportsmanship Award, honoring a football player from each of the 14 high school football programs in Pulaski County. Honorees must exhibit outstanding sportsmanship toward teammates, coaches and opponents.

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