

# Kickoff for a cause

## Veterans, DAV honored at 2015 Quick Lane Bowl

Dozens of local veterans were honored as part of the 2nd Annual Quick Lane Bowl at Detroit's Ford Field in December.

Through the generosity of Quick Lane, DAV was given special honors as part of the college bowl game's lineup, pitting the University of Minnesota against Central Michigan University. In addition to numerous veterans taking part in the singing of the national anthem, DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2013, Michigan native and Army veteran John Todd, delivered the game ball prior to kickoff while Air Force Reservist Jim Richards was saluted during halftime for his service.

Also as part of the on-field honors, long-time DAV friend Ford Motor Co. led fundraising efforts by presenting a check for \$50,000 to National Adjutant Marc Burgess. Quick Lane also donated \$10 of every ticket sold to DAV, as well as proceeds of the game's 50/50 raffle.

In a tight fourth quarter, the Minnesota Golden Gophers bested the Central Michigan Chippewas 21-14 before a crowd of more than 34,000 fans.

"This has been a fantastic opportunity to spotlight veterans in the local community and broaden awareness for what DAV does," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "We're grateful to all of our friends and partners in the Detroit area—especially Quick Lane and Ford—for their commitment to highlighting veterans as part of this event."

Spokesman for the game, retired Detroit Lions wide-receiver and businessman Herman Moore, said he was excited the game would benefit America's military men and women.

“I’ve had the honor to spend time and build connections with members of the military,” said Moore. “It means a lot to me personally that Quick Lane has chosen to work with Disabled American Veterans for this event.”

Leading up to the game, former DAV National Service Officer and Army veteran Nick Koulchar—a double amputee—spoke to student athletes from both universities about his experiences finding meaning in his life in the wake of devastating life changes.

“Once I realized it wasn’t about, ‘My life is over,’ it’s about new ways to approach life, then it really became what I can figure out how to do next, said Koulchar.

Koulchar, who in 2008 lost both legs to a roadside bomb in Iraq, expressed to the players that, in addition to athletics such as hand-cycling and Crossfit, finding meaningful employment helped him achieve his “new□normal.”

“DAV was another worthwhile cause, another worthwhile mission that created structure in the life that I had lost when I lost my military career,” said Koulchar. “And once you leave college, you don’t have that structure anymore. It’s all you now, and trying to□figure that out can be scary and overwhelming.”

And true to his own advice, Koulchar is working toward new goals with each passing day. A veteran competitor of multiple hand-cycling races including the Marine Corps, New York City and Chicago marathons, he has now set his sights on the next goal—the □U.S. □Paralympics.