

# 2015 GameDay Recycling Challenge Report



## Overview

The GameDay Recycling Challenge is a nationwide competition among universities to reduce and recycle the waste generated at home football games. During each competition cycle, participating schools report recycling, compost and attendance data for at least one home football game. In 2015, schools rallied fans to recycle an impressive 2.1 million pounds of bottles, cans, paper, cardboard and more, and compost 457,000 pounds of food organics from stadiums and tailgating areas while also raising awareness and inspiring action around waste reduction.

The GameDay Recycling Challenge is administered by the College and University Recycling Coalition (CURC), RecycleMania, Keep America Beautiful and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WasteWise.

## Participant Summary

The 99 schools that participated in the 2015 GameDay Recycling Challenge represented 28 conferences and reported their results for 231 games.

### *Competing Conferences*

American Athletic Conference	Mid-American Conference
Atlantic Coast Conference	Mountain West Conference
Big Sky Conference	New England Small College Athletic Conference
Big South Conference	Northeast Conference
Big 10 Conference	Ohio Athletic Conference
Big 12 Conference	Old Dominion Athletic Conference
Colonial Athletic Association	Pacific 12 Conference
Division I-AA	Patriot League
Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference	Southeastern Conference
Great Northwest Athletic Conference	Southland Conference
Great West Conference	Sun Belt Conference
Ivy League	USA South Athletic Conference
Liberty League	Western Athletic Conference
Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference	Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference



## Facts and Figures by Materials Collected

Over the course of 231 games during the Challenge period, schools reported the following:

- 2,256 tons of trash
- 1,045 tons total of recyclable materials
  - 10 tons of Paper
  - 117 tons of Cardboard
  - 197 tons of Bottle & Cans
  - 721 tons of Mixed Recyclables
- 229 tons total of organic materials
  - 9 tons of surplus edible food were collected and donated
    - 8 schools participated in food recovery from 19 games
  - 220 tons of organic materials were composted

### *Glass Recycling*

Glass accounted for 29 percent of the total recyclables collected during the GameDay Recycling Challenge, or 605,500 pounds. Participants reported that glass made up the top recyclable material collected by weight--in some cases up to 65 percent of the total. Glass collections were especially high from tailgating areas and skybox or other VIP areas in stadiums, where concessionaires are likely to serve beer and wine from glass bottles.

## Reach and Engagement

### *Fans on Game Day*

Taking into account the attendance for all GRDC games on all campuses, 10.8 million fans were reached. Fan engagement included the collection of signatures on a pledge to recycle, t-shirt giveaways for recycling, and fun and informative casual conversations between GDRC volunteers and other fans.

### *Social Media*

During the competition period, GameDay Recycling Challenge Facebook posts and Tweets made over 50,000 impressions and approximately 1,000 engagements on both platforms. There was strong adoption of the hashtag #GameDayChallenge on Twitter and Instagram by campus sustainability and athletics office accounts, and most of these accounts also regularly posted about GDRC on Facebook. Post content included hype posts ahead of games, game day directions for fans and tailgaters around recycling and composting, and results. This means that messaging about the GameDay Recycling Challenge reached students and community fans that may not have otherwise been directly connected to the official GDRC channels.

Recycling champs Louisiana State University created even more virtual buzz by raffling a football autographed by Coach Les Miles to fans who tweeted or posted a recycling selfie, such as the tweet at right.



### *Traditional Media*

GDRC participants enjoyed features in campus print and online media, as well as permanent GDRC web pages tracking campus performance from year to year.

- Ohio University is named a national winner of 2015 GameDay Recycling Challenge ([Ohio University Compass](#))
- GameDay Recycling Challenge page ([Bowdoin College](#))
- GameDay Recycling Challenge page ([Georgia Tech](#))

### **2015 Winners and Looking Ahead**

Schools that measure waste and recycling in both their stadiums and tailgating areas are eligible to win two national categories: total recycling by pounds, and diversion rate. Schools that report from their stadium only or from their tailgating area only are ranked among their athletic conference peers. Louisiana State University ranked first in total recycling with 86,400 pounds. The LSU Fighting Tigers roared past the #2 ranked Clemson Tigers and #3 Tennessee Volunteers. Ohio University was named 2015 national winner with the highest diversion rate: 95.71 percent. A record number of Bobcat volunteers handed out blue bags to tailgaters, co-located trash and recycling bins, staffed zero waste stations, collected concessions recycling and even partnered with a local Boy Scout troop on a post-game cleanup. Roving volunteers worked throughout the game to prevent contamination in recycling bins and to pick out missed recyclables in waste bins. These efforts launched the Ohio University Bobcats ahead of the #2 ranked Duke Blue Devils and #3 ranked Colorado State Rams.

Participating schools were also divided by athletic conference and ranked in five additional categories: Recycling Per Capita, Waste Minimization Per Capita, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Per Capita, Organics Reduction Per Capita and Diversion Rate. 2015 results by conference are available for download [on the GDRC website here](#).

Each year, GDRC is pleased to add more schools to the [Zero Waste Wall of Fame](#), which recognizes schools that are approaching or have achieved 90% diversion rates within their football stadiums. With the growing trend of zero waste campuses and zero waste stadiums in particular, momentum around the GameDay Recycling Challenge is increasing. In 2016, it is expected that social media presence, reach and engagement will increase and continue to raise the profile of GDRC online and on game day to help campuses achieve their zero waste goals during football season and beyond.



Contact: Stacy Wheeler, 765-215-4828, [stacy.e.wheeler@icloud.com](mailto:stacy.e.wheeler@icloud.com)