

*To Hell With Race and Segregation -
We Just Wanted to Play:*
The Historic 1955 Junior Rose Bowl
Compton College (CA) vs Jones County
Junior College (MS)

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It was not a war. It was a game. Not just an ordinary game but a game which could confirm who would be the 1955 National Junior College Football Champions. It was the "big" game - the Junior Rose Bowl. Compton College Tatars (California) #1 vs Jones County Junior College Bobcats, JCJC, (Mississippi) #2.

This paper gives an overview of events which diverted world attention from a championship game to a racial issue. It elaborates upon the overt expressions of participants, administrators, city, county and county officials, and a host of others before and after the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl and including the 1995 reunion. It pursues the following questions: What were the overt attitudes, conduct and behavior of the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl participants?; What agitated factions in Mississippi to force JCJC to not compete in the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl when the previous year a Mississippi team competed against a team who had the same elements they were then opposing?; and, What values were drawn from the JCJC and the 1955 Compton Black players when both objected to the original invitation for Black players only to attend the reunion?

The evidence examined includes attendance records of the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl, archival material from the Jones County Junior College and Compton College,

newspapers, film and video material and interviews with JCJC Information Director, 1955 Junior Rose Bowl participants, players, administration, faculty, staff, and board members.

There is no evidence which remotely indicates that race was an issue in the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl. Toward the end of game when Compton was maintaining a 22-13 victory, JCJC displayed championship behavior and conduct. Finally, the 1995 reunion validated that it was not a war but a game.