

# WSSU's Red Sea of Sound will perform at halftime of Wake Forest football opener next week

[By John Dell Winston-Salem Journal](#)



Winston-Salem State's Scarlet Lace performs with the Red Sea of Sound marching band during halftime of a football game against Virginia Union last season. Photo Credit: Allison Lee Isley/Journal



Winston-Salem State's Silky Smooth performs with the Red Sea of Sound marching band during halftime of the football game against Virginia Union last season at Bowman Gray Stadium. Photo Credit: Allison Lee Isley/Journal

Winston-Salem State's award-winning band, The Red Sea of Sound, will be taking its talent across town to perform at Wake Forest's season-opening game next week.

The Deacons, who have won three straight bowl games, will open their season on Aug. 30 at 8 p.m. against Utah State at BB&T Field.

The Red Sea of Sound has won numerous awards through the years under the direction of Dr. Michael Magruder, the director of the band and the chairman of the music department at WSSU.

“We’re thrilled to be invited to perform during Wake Forest’s home opener,” Magruder said in a statement. “Deacon fans better get ready because when the Red Sea takes the field, they can expect to be entertained.”

As part of the Wake Forest Fan Ambassador program, 1,000 tickets have been purchased for the game and will be given to WSSU students, faculty and staff.

Wake Forest's band, The Spirit of the Old Gold and Black, will join WSSU's band for a performance. WSSU's band will perform for four minutes with the Wake band joining it for another performance.

The Red Sea of Sound, which traditionally has around 150 students, has a vibrant sound that includes dancers and produces high energy throughout its performances.

John Currie, the athletics director at Wake Forest, said in a statement he's excited about the historic moment. It's the first time the WSSU band will perform at a Wake Forest football game.

“The spirit of collaboration between Dr. Tim Heath, our brand new Director of Athletic Bands, and Winston-Salem State’s Dr. Michael Magruder has led us to this partnership,” Currie said. “Dr. (Nathan) Hatch and Chancellor Elwood Robinson are close friends who have long worked together to better serve Winston-Salem and we are excited to welcome all of our friends and neighbors to opening night.”

Throughout the years, the Red Sea of Sound has been invited to the prestigious Honda Battle of the Bands in Atlanta. The band has performed at the event seven times in the last 11 years.

Last year, the Red Sea of Sound was also featured on ESPN's "First Take" for a promotional video for the show. The show is hosted by Stephen A. Smith, a WSSU graduate who played on the basketball team and has been inducted into the Big House Gaines and the CIAA halls of fame.

Bill Hayes, a former WSSU football coach and athletics director, said he doesn't think the band has performed at a Wake Forest game before.

"I think that's great because the fans are in for a real treat," said Hayes, who retired from WSSU as athletics director in 2014.

Hayes, who was an assistant football coach at Wake Forest in the mid-1970s before becoming the head coach at WSSU, says it's great to hear that Wake Forest is reaching out to WSSU.

"We need more of that in my opinion," Hayes said. "I know the band will be excited to perform because they always do a great job."

When Hayes was told that the Red Sea of Sound will play for four minutes he laughed a little bit. There have been numerous times over the years at WSSU football games when the band has performed past its allotted time during halftime.

"In the CIAA, four minutes means about nine minutes," Hayes said.

Wake Forest's band is the oldest college marching band in North Carolina and has performed at Wake Forest's last three bowl wins — the 2016 Military Bowl in Annapolis, Md., the 2017 Belk Bowl in Charlotte, and last year's Birmingham Bowl in Birmingham, Ala.

“I believe bringing both bands together will provide a great opportunity for fellowship and collaborative music-making," Heath said. "We hope this event will further unite the city of Winston-Salem through the spirit of music.”