

2021 NCCAA Victory Bowl Preview

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By **Jorden Hampton**



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The Sterling Warriors and Southwestern Assemblies Lions football programs will face off in the 24th NCCAA Victory Bowl on Saturday November 20th. The Victory Bowl is a championship football game between the two top rated teams that don't have postseason commitments. The Warriors will be competing in their first NCCAA Victory Bowl. The Warriors enter the game with a 6-5 record and have maintained a number 4 ranking during the regular season. Sterling will travel to Waxahachie, Texas to play Southwestern. The Lions enter the game 8-3 and have been to the victory bowl twice. Southwestern Assemblies won the bowl in 2015 after defeating Northwestern 10-7 and lost the bowl in 2017 after losing to Campbellsville 41-28.

Southwestern Assemblies enters Saturday's contest with momentum and experience. Fourth-year head coach Ryan Smith will have to remind his team that this is a familiar position and they have been successful in the past. Coach Smith was not with the team during their Victory Bowl win, but past experience can be a significant factor when playing in big games.

The Lions offense has been clicking on all cylinders this season. Coach Smith's team is averaging 41.6 points per game and Quarterback Jordan Barlow has thrown 23 touchdown passes with only 6 turnovers. The Lions will have to rely on good quarterback play from Barlow to secure a victory. Barlow has a 55.9 completion percentage and has thrown for 2,524 yards. Southwestern Assemblies have been formidable on the defensive side of the ball as well. They have recorded 25 sacks and 14 interceptions.

Fourth-year coach Chase Hansen and his Sterling football team have a lot to prove in their first NCCAA Victory Bowl appearance. They have experienced both disappointing and rewarding seasons. Hansen's team went 1-8 in 2020 and 7-3 in 2019. This Saturday the Warriors have an opportunity to prove themselves against a strong Lions team. The offense is averaging 27 points per game and will have to sustain drives in order to keep Jordan Barlow and the Southwestern offense on the sidelines. If the Warriors can do so they may have a chance at beating Southwestern and winning their first Victory Bowl which would be a huge accomplishment for Coach Hansen's team.