



January 1, 1954

Rice 28, Alabama 6

Attendance - 75,000

The celebrated bench tackle by Alabama's Tommy Lewis overshadowed the awesome performance of Rice's Dicky Maegle, who set all-time bowl records with 265 yards rushing and touchdown runs of 79, 95, and 34 yards. For the day, Maegle (then known as Moegle) averaged an unbelievable 24.1 yards per play on just 11 carries. Yet, it's Lewis who people seem to remember best.

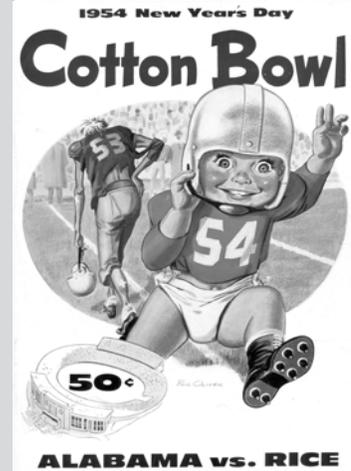
Lewis put the Crimson Tide ahead early on a one-yard plunge, but a blocked extra point left the score 6-0. Maegle tied it up on the first play of the second period with a magnificent 79-yard run— at that point, the longest scoring run ever in the Classic. Leroy Fenstemaker's extra point gave Rice the lead for good, but there was plenty more to come.

Minutes later, Alabama moved back into scoring position but fumbled the ball away to the Owls at the Rice 10-yard line. On the first play, Rice was penalized five yards for illegal procedure. Now, facing a first-and-15 situation, history was in the making. Taking a handoff from Fenstemaker, Maegle began his famous run around right end. The Owl line blocked perfectly. Blois Bridges made the block which allowed Maegle to turn the corner. Mac Taylor flattened another Alabama defender, and Gordon Kellogg took out the last man — Bart Starr, the defensive left halfback— and Maegle was long gone.

As Maegle approached midfield, Lewis leaped off the bench, stepped around a couple of teammates, ran laterally down the sideline before throwing a perfect block into Maegle's blind side as he hit the 42-yard mark. As some 75,000 fans looked on in disbelief, game announcers fumbled for words to describe what had just taken place. Maegle lay motionless on the turf. Referee Cliff Shaw, who had been following the play up the field, hesitated for a moment, and then shot his arms over his head, signaling touchdown. Some sportswriters were divided in their opinions on whether Maegle would have scored, although Meagle had teammate Dick Chapman nearby to screen Bill Oliver, the only Alabama player who appeared to have a shot at making a touchdown saving tackle. Almost a year later, writers participating in an Associated Press year-end poll, voted the 95-yard play as the sports oddity of 1954.

Maegle went on to score his third touchdown of the day, a 34-yard run which may have been his best individual effort of the game, and the Owls walked away with a 28-6 victory. It was the third Classic triumph in as many visits for Rice. But, no matter what else may have happened that day, it was the Maegle-Lewis collision that will be remembered most. A quick check of the record book and one can understand why. Complete with an asterisk, Maegle's 95-yard gallop remains as the longest — if not the most talked about — play in Cotton Bowl history.

GAME SUMMARY



Alabama	6	0	0	0	-	6
Rice	0	14	7	7	-	28

First Quarter:

Alabama-Tommy Lewis 1 run (Bobby Luna kick blocked), 3:31, 49 yards in 7 plays following pass interception by Bart Starr.

Second Quarter:

Rice-Dicky Maegle 79 run (Leroy Fenstemaker kick), 14:46, 82 yards in 2 plays following punt
Rice-Maegle awarded 95 run after bench tackle by Tommy Lewis.

Third Quarter:

Rice-Maegle 34 run (Fenstemaker kick), 4:56, 67 yards in 8 plays following punt.

Fourth Quarter:

Rice-Buddy Grantham 7 run (Sammy Burk kick), 14:25, 75 yards in 11 plays following punt.

OUTSTANDING PLAYERS

Richard Chapman, Rice
Dan Hart, Rice
Dicky Maegle, Rice

COACHES

Harold Drew, Alabama
Jess Neely, Rice

WEATHER

Ideal

FUN FACT #18

The "Bench Tackle of 1954" is the one play that college football will never forget. Just as it appeared that Rice halfback Dicky Maegle would score on a 95-yard touchdown run, Alabama's Tommy Lewis leaped off the Crimson Tide bench to tackle the Owls' All-America running back at the 42-yard line. Referee Cliff Shaw ruled that Maegle would have scored had it not been for Lewis' bizarre play and awarded the touchdown to Rice. Later, Lewis admitted that he was just "too full of Alabama" to watch Maegle race down the sideline for a touchdown.

GAME STATISTICS

TEAM STATS	Alabama	Rice
First Downs	11	14
Rushing	7	9
Passing	4	4
Penalty	0	1
Rushes-Net Yards	35-188	54-379
Net Yards Passing	67	59
Passes	7-16-0	4-10-2
Total Plays	51	64
Total Net Yards	255	438
Fumbles-Lost	4-4	1-0
Penalties-Yards	6-65	8-89
Punts-Average	7-42.7	8-25.1

RUSHING

Alabama - Oliver 2-56, Starr 11-54, Lewis 9-44, Tharp 6-14, Stone 4-11, Luna 3-9.
Rice - Maegle 11-265, Kellogg 14-32, Taylor 9-20, Garbrecht 3-14, Laviage 3-9, Nesrsta 3-9, K. Johnson 3-8, Grantham 1-7, C. Johnson 2-6, Ingram 1-4, Stone 1-4, Burk 1-2, Hart 1-2.

PASSING

Alabama - Starr 7-16-0, 67 yards.
Rice - Grantham 3-5-0, 43 yards; Fenstemaker 1-4-1, 16 yards; Nisbet 0-1-1.

RECEIVING

Alabama - Cummings 2-37, Stone 2-20, Oliver 1-15, Lewis 1-3, Ingram 1-(-8).
Rice - Holland 2-28, Bridges 1-16, Garbrecht 1-15.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

PUNTING

Alabama - Starr 7-42.7.
Rice - Maegle 6-26.3, Stone 1-35.0, Fenstemaker 1-17.0.