

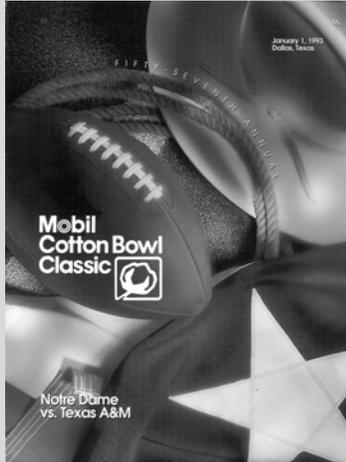


January 1, 1993

Notre Dame 28, Texas A&M 3

Attendance - 71,615

GAME SUMMARY



Notre Dame	0	7	14	7	-	28
Texas A&M	0	0	0	3	-	3

Second Quarter:

Notre Dame-Lake Dawson 40 pass from Rick Mirer (Craig Hentrich kick), 0:36, 64 yards in 6 plays following punt

Third Quarter:

Notre Dame-Jerome Bettis 26 pass from Mirer (Hentrich kick), 7:17, 65 yards in 10 plays following punt
 Notre Dame-Bettis 1 run (Hentrich kick), 0:33, 11 yards in 2 plays following fumble recovery by Demetrius DuBose

Fourth Quarter:

Texas A&M-Terry Venetoulis 41 FG, 14:27, 38 yards in 6 plays following kickoff
 Notre Dame-Bettis 4 run (Hentrich kick), 5:03, 82 yards in 16 plays following kickoff

OUTSTANDING PLAYERS

Devon McDonald, Notre Dame
 Rick Mirer, Notre Dame

COACHES

Lou Holtz, Notre Dame
 R. C. Slocum, Texas A&M

WEATHER

Cold, 35 degrees

In 1993, the newly formed College Football Bowl Coalition produced one of the most interesting matchups in the 57-year history of the Mobil Cotton Bowl Classic. Southwest Conference champion Texas A&M played its way back into the New Year's Day Classic for the second consecutive year, and in the process became the bowl's first-ever 12-0-0 team. In fact, only five teams in NCAA history had compiled such a record. The unbeaten Aggies climbed to No. 4 in the national rankings and were paired with fifth-ranked Notre Dame, a team that had rolled through the regular season with a 9-1-1 mark.

On selection day, the Fighting Irish may have been the hottest team in the country. Notre Dame won its last seven games after a mid-season loss to Stanford, including four consecutive victories over Top 25 teams to end the year. A return to Dallas marked Notre Dame's sixth trip to the Classic as well as its sixth consecutive post-season appearance under Lou Holtz. His first bowl trip with the Irish was in the 1988 Classic when Texas A&M scored a convincing 35-10 victory over Notre Dame. Now, five years later, this game had a special appeal in what would be only the second meeting ever for these two football programs.

Both teams were solid from top to bottom. The Irish were noted for an efficient ground attack behind tailback Reggie Brooks and fullback Jerome Bettis, and quarterback Rick Mirer was regarded as one of college football's finest passers. Defensively, Texas A&M was as hard-nosed as ever, led by linebacker Marcus Buckley who captained the Aggies' dominating "Wrecking Crew." It appeared to be a perfect match between Notre Dame's battle-tested veterans and Texas A&M's talented youngsters. And, for the game's first 29 minutes and 24 seconds it was. The Aggies' blitzing defensive scheme kept the potent Irish attack in check. Then, in the final minute of the half, came the one electric play that turned the complexion of the game completely toward Notre Dame.

With 45 seconds to play and facing third and 10 at the A&M 40, Mirer flipped a screen pass to split end Lake Dawson. Sprinting toward the middle of the field, Dawson received a clearing block from guard Todd Norman who took out the Aggies' All-America free safety Patrick Bates. Dawson cut up field behind his blockers and found clear sailing for the end zone. In seconds, the defensive stalemate had come to an end. This one play, executed to perfection, neutralized the effectiveness of A&M's blitzing defense the rest of the afternoon. Momentum flashed quickly to Notre Dame as the first half wound to a close.

Confident and leading 7-0, Notre Dame jumped on the Aggies with a vengeance to start the third quarter. On their first possession, the Irish drove 65 yards in 10 plays. Mirer ended the drive by hitting Bettis on a 26-yard scoring play and the margin increased to 14-0. Notre Dame's next offensive series covered 87 yards but ended at the A&M four-yard line. Brooks fumbled on first down and the Aggies momentarily dodged a big bullet. However, two plays later the Irish got the ball right back when A&M quarterback Corey Pullig coughed up the football and into the waiting arms of linebacker Demetrius DuBose at the 11. Thirty seconds later, Bettis barreled over from the one for Notre Dame's third touchdown and a 21-0 lead.

The Irish saved their best drive of the day for early in the fourth quarter. Notre Dame chewed up 82 yards in 16 plays and consumed more than nine minutes of the clock. Again, Bettis ended the drive with a four-yard touchdown run, his third score of the game. Only 5:03 was left to play and Notre Dame literally had dominated the second half in workmanlike fashion, methodically wearing down the Aggie defense while en route to a 28-3 victory.

Defensively, Notre Dame was relentless. Texas A&M couldn't generate a first down until late in the second quarter. The longest Aggie drive of the day was 46 yards, and the closest they came to the goal line was the Notre Dame 24. Terry Venetoulis' 41-yard field goal early

in the fourth quarter came after the Irish had taken a three touchdown lead. Fueling the Notre Dame defensive effort was senior Devon McDonald who logged 10 tackles, four behind the line of scrimmage for 22 yards in losses. Indeed, Notre Dame was impressive. The Irish limited Texas A&M, a team averaging better than 385 yards and 28 points a game, to just 165 yards and three points. Offensively, Notre Dame played to its strength, rushing for 290

yards and rolling up 439 yards overall. Brooks ran for 115 yards on 22 attempts, and Mirer completed 8-of-16 pass attempts for 119 yards and two touchdowns. But, statistics aside, the turning point in this Notre Dame victory can be traced back to that one decisive play near the end of the first half. Mirer's middle screen pass play to Dawson was just the spark the Irish needed to set this runaway train in motion.

GAME STATISTICS

TEAM STATS	ND	A&M	RUSHING
First Downs	28	11	Notre Dame - Brooks 22-115, Bettis 20-75, Mirer 13-55, Becton 5-26, Burris 2-8, Davis 1-8, Zellars 1-3.
Rushing	20	8	Texas A&M - Thomas 20-50, Brian Mitchell 1-12, Pullig 9-11, Carter 3-5.
Passing	6	2	PASSING
Penalty	2	1	Notre Dame - Mirer 8-16-0, 119 yards; Failla 1-1-0, 30 yards; Bettis 0-1-0.
Rushes-Net Yards	64-290	33-78	Texas A&M - Pullig 7-18-0, 87 yards.
Net Yards Passing	149	87	RECEIVING
Passes	9-18-0	7-18-0	Notre Dame - Dawson 2-46, Smith 3-38, Miller 1-30, Bettis 1-26, Brooks 1-5, Griggs 1-4.
Total Plays	82	51	Texas A&M - Tony Harrison 3-59, Schorp 2-14, Brian Mitchell 1-12, Groce 1-2.
Total Net Yards	439	165	
Fumbles-Lost	3-3	2-2	
Penalties-Yards	3-30	7-42	
Punts-Average	4-38.0	6-40.5	

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

PUNTING
Notre Dame - Hentrich 4-38.0.
Texas A&M - Davis 6-40.5.