



COLLEGE FOOTBALL'S MOST MEMORABLE GAMES



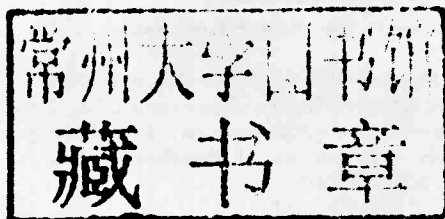
Fred Eisenhammer and Eric B. Sondheimer

SECOND EDITION

College Football's Most Memorable Games

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FRED EISENHAMMER
and ERIC B. SONDHEIMER



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On the cover: Appalachian State lineman John Holt (67) celebrating
the victory over Michigan on September 1, 2007 (Keith Cline);
(inset) Notre Dame left end Knute Rockne outrunning Army defenders
on November 1, 1913 (Notre Dame Sports Information Department)

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College Football's Most
Memorable Games

SECOND EDITION

In memory of my loving wife, Arlene,
the most unselfish and kindest person I ever met
—F. E.

To my mom and dad, Thelma and Carl,
for their dedication
—E. B. S.

Acknowledgments

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Alabama	Iowa	Southern Methodist
Appalachian State	Kentucky	Stanford
Arkansas	Louisiana State	Syracuse
Army	Marquette	Texas
Boise State	Miami	Texas A&M
Boston College	Michigan	Texas Christian
Brigham Young	Michigan State	UCLA
California	Navy	USC
Clemson	Nebraska	West Virginia
Colorado	Notre Dame	Wisconsin
Columbia	Ohio State	Yale
Florida State	Penn State	
Harvard	Rice	

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Additionally, we want to sincerely thank the many athletes and coaches who gave us their valuable time to provide insights into the book's memorable games. These individuals, 19 of whom have since passed away, are listed in their order of appearance in *College Football's Most Memorable Games*: Cal's Roy Riegels (1908–1993); Columbia's Cliff Montgomery (1910–2005); Stanford's Robert (Bones) Hamilton (1912–1996); Notre Dame's Bill Shakespeare (1912–1974); Notre Dame's Andy Pilney (1913–1996); Southern Methodist's Bobby Wilson (1913–1999); Texas Christian's Sammy Baugh (1914–2008); USC's Al Krueger (1919–1999); Michigan's Al Wistert; Stanford's Frankie Albert (1920–2002); Texas' Ralph Ellsworth (1924–1998); Texas' Hub Bechtol (1926–2004); Missouri's Jim Kekeris (1923–1997); Army's Glenn Davis (1924–

2005); Navy's Pete Williams; Columbia's Gene Rossides; Rice's Dicky Moegle; Alabama's Tommy Lewis; Michigan State's David Kaiser; Syracuse's Roy Simmons (1901–1994); Syracuse's Jim Brown; Colgate's Kevin Conwick; Notre Dame's Terry Brennan; Mississippi's Billy Brewer; Wisconsin's Ron VanderKelen; USC's Craig Fertig (1942–2008); USC's John McKay (1923–2001); UCLA's Don Manning; UCLA's Bob Stiles; Notre Dame's Ara Parseghian; UCLA's Tommy Prothro (1920–1995); USC's O.J. Simpson; Texas A&M's Gene Stallings; Texas A&M's Curley Hallman; Alabama's Dude Hennessey; Harvard's Frank Champi; Texas' Darrell Royal; Texas' James Street; Stanford's Jim Plunkett; Nebraska's Bob Devaney; Stanford's Don Bunce (1949–2003); UCLA's Homer Smith; UCLA's Kermit Johnson; Ohio State's Archie Griffin; Notre Dame's Tom Clements; USC's Pat Haden; USC's Anthony Davis; USC's Frank Jordan; Clemson's Steve Fuller; Notre Dame's Dave Huffman; Notre Dame's Dan Devine (1924–2002); Alabama's Tony Nathan; Brigham Young's LaVelle Edwards; Brigham Young's Clay Brown; Alabama's Tommy Wilcox; Cal's Kevin Moen; Nebraska's Tom Osborne; Miami's Howard Schnellenberger; Boston College's Gerald Phelan; Iowa's Chuck Long; Notre Dame's Frank Stams; Colorado's Jim Harper; Colorado's Sean Brown; Nebraska's Matt Davison; Miami's Larry Coker; Ohio State's Andy Groom; Arkansas' Tony Bua; Kentucky's Jared Lorenzen; USC's Matt Leinart; Boise State's Ian Johnson; Appalachian State's Jerome Touchstone; Florida State's Bobby Bowden; Florida State's EJ Manuel.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	1
<i>Introduction</i>	5
Notre Dame Passes Into a New Era <i>Notre Dame 35, Army 13 • November 1, 1913</i>	9
Illinois' Grange Runs Up 402 Yards <i>Illinois 39, Michigan 14 • October 18, 1924</i>	12
Notre Dame Wins One for "The Gipper" <i>Notre Dame 12, Army 6 • November 10, 1928</i>	15
Riegels Leads Cal the Wrong Way <i>Georgia Tech 8, Cal 7 • January 1, 1929</i>	17
Columbia Sandbags Stanford <i>Columbia 7, Stanford 0 • January 1, 1934</i>	20
Notre Dame Displays Luck of the Irish <i>Notre Dame 18, Ohio State 13 • November 2, 1935</i>	24
SMU's Wilson Bests TCU's Baugh <i>Southern Methodist 20, Texas Christian 14 • November 30, 1935</i>	28
Baugh Enjoys Stirring TCU Farewell <i>Texas Christian 16, Marquette 6 • January 1, 1937</i>	32
USC Subs Sink Duke <i>USC 7, Duke 3 • January 2, 1939</i>	35
Harmon's Birthday Produces Michigan Celebration <i>Michigan 41, Cal 0 • September 28, 1940</i>	38
New Formation Fits Stanford to a T <i>Stanford 21, Nebraska 13 • January 1, 1941</i>	40

Texas' Layne Lights Up the Scoreboard <i>Texas 40, Missouri 27 • January 1, 1946</i>	43
Army, Notre Dame Battle to a Draw <i>Army 0, Notre Dame 0 • November 9, 1946</i>	46
Army Weathers Stormy Second Half to Outlast Navy <i>Army 21, Navy 18 • November 30, 1946</i>	51
Columbia Rallies to Snap Army's 32-Game Unbeaten Streak <i>Columbia 21, Army 20 • October 25, 1947</i>	54
Rice's Moege Magnificent Despite Off-the-Bench Tackle <i>Rice 28, Alabama 6 • January 1, 1954</i>	57
Kaiser's First Field Goal Lifts Michigan State <i>Michigan State 17, UCLA 14 • January 2, 1956</i>	61
Syracuse's Brown Scores NCAA-Record 43 Points <i>Syracuse 61, Colgate 7 • November 17, 1956</i>	64
Notre Dame Shatters Oklahoma's 47-Game Winning Streak <i>Notre Dame 7, Oklahoma 0 • November 16, 1957</i>	67
Cannon Provides Firepower for LSU <i>Louisiana State 7, Mississippi 3 • October 31, 1959</i>	70
USC's 42 Points Barely Enough <i>USC 42, Wisconsin 37 • January 1, 1963</i>	73
USC's Big Win Not So Rosy <i>USC 20, Notre Dame 17 • November 28, 1964</i>	76
"Gutty Little Bruins" Rise Up <i>UCLA 14, Michigan State 12 • January 1, 1966</i>	80
Notre Dame Settles for Its Comeback Tie <i>Notre Dame 10, Michigan State 10 • November 19, 1966</i>	84
USC, Simpson Sprint Past UCLA <i>USC 21, UCLA 20 • November 18, 1967</i>	87
Texas A&M's Stallings Bears Down Against His Teacher <i>Texas A&M 20, Alabama 16 • January 1, 1968</i>	91
Harvard's Champi Enjoys a Dream Performance <i>Harvard 29, Yale 29 • November 23, 1968</i>	94
A Royal Gamble Pays Off <i>Texas 15, Arkansas 14 • December 6, 1969</i>	97
Stanford Beats the Odds, Ohio State <i>Stanford 27, Ohio State 17 • January 1, 1971</i>	100

Nebraska Lives Up to No. 1 Billing <i>Nebraska 35, Oklahoma 31 • November 25, 1971</i>	103
Stanford Repeats Rose Bowl Upset <i>Stanford 13, Michigan 12 • January 1, 1972</i>	107
UCLA's Wishbone Cracks No. 1 Nebraska <i>UCLA 20, Nebraska 17 • September 9, 1972</i>	110
USC's Davis Flashes Into Spotlight <i>USC 45, Notre Dame 23 • December 2, 1972</i>	113
Big Ten Rivals Fit to Be Tied <i>Ohio State 10, Michigan 10 • November 24, 1973</i>	116
Parseghian Makes the Winning Call <i>Notre Dame 24, Alabama 23 • December 31, 1973</i>	119
USC Scores Final 55 Points in Huge Reversal <i>USC 55, Notre Dame 24 • November 30, 1974</i>	122
USC Shuns Tie, Overcomes Ohio State <i>USC 18, Ohio State 17 • January 1, 1975</i>	126
USC Outlasts Notre Dame, Montana <i>USC 27, Notre Dame 25 • November 25, 1978</i>	128
Hayes' Punch Mars Gator Bowl <i>Clemson 17, Ohio State 15 • December 29, 1978</i>	133
Notre Dame, Montana Dazzling in Fourth Quarter <i>Notre Dame 35, Houston 34 • January 1, 1979</i>	137
Alabama's Defense Pins Penn State <i>Alabama 14, Penn State 7 • January 1, 1979</i>	141
BYU Celebrates Holiday Bowl Comeback <i>Brigham Young 46, Southern Methodist 45 • December 19, 1980</i>	143
Alabama's Bear Makes His Mark <i>Alabama 28, Auburn 17 • November 28, 1981</i>	147
Five Laterals Later, Cal Prevails <i>Cal 25, Stanford 20 • November 20, 1982</i>	150
Miami Wins Game for the Ages <i>Miami 31, Nebraska 30 • January 2, 1984</i>	153
Maryland's Miraculous Comeback <i>Maryland 42, Miami 40 • November 10, 1984</i>	155
Flutie's Fabulous Finish <i>Boston College 47, Miami 45 • November 23, 1984</i>	159

Iowa Gets Big Kick Out of Victory	
<i>Iowa 12, Michigan 10 • October 19, 1985</i>	163
Penn State Grounds Testaverde	
<i>Penn State 14, Miami 10 • January 2, 1987</i>	166
Notre Dame Survives Brawl with Miami	
<i>Notre Dame 31, Miami 30 • October 15, 1988</i>	169
Amazing Drive Propels Miami	
<i>Miami 27, Notre Dame 10 • November 25, 1989</i>	173
Five Downs and a Cloud of Controversy	
<i>Colorado 33, Missouri 31 • October 6, 1990</i>	176
Nebraska's Finishing Kick	
<i>Nebraska 45, Missouri 38 (overtime) • November 8, 1997</i>	179
Hurricanes Downgraded	
<i>Ohio State 31, Miami 24 (two overtimes) • January 3, 2003</i>	184
Overtime Kings	
<i>Arkansas 71, Kentucky 63 (seven overtimes) • November 1, 2003</i>	189
USC Wins on a Push	
<i>USC 34, Notre Dame 31 • October 15, 2005</i>	194
Texas, Young Scramble USC's Plans	
<i>Texas 41, USC 38 • January 4, 2006</i>	198
An Engaging Performance	
<i>Boise State 43, Oklahoma 42 (overtime) • January 1, 2007</i>	203
Bringing Down the House	
<i>Appalachian State 34, Michigan 32 • September 2, 2007</i>	207
Bowden Bows Out in Style	
<i>Florida State 33, West Virginia 21 • January 1, 2010</i>	211
<i>Bibliography</i>	217
<i>Index</i>	219

Preface

About 20 years ago, Eric Sondheimer and I combined forces in an effort to detail the most interesting, the most entertaining, the most talked-about games in college football history. In other words, we wanted to compile the most memorable games ever played.

It wasn't easy.

Even though we had closely followed college football for years, we had to journey far back in time, and then journey further back in time to locate all the titanic tussles.

In our search, we uncovered a treasure trove of nuggets—which we presented in *College Football's Most Memorable Games, 1913 Through 1990: The Stories of 54 History-Making Contests*, published in 1992.

We started our list of extraordinary games with one that was played in 1913. The match-up pitted Notre Dame against heavily favored Army in West Point, New York.

It was a significant contest because Notre Dame demonstrated how a well-tuned passing attack could overcome a physically stronger opponent. The Fighting Irish's 38–13 victory made college football teams recalibrate the importance of the aerial attack. It also was a game that featured left end Knute Rockne, who became more prominent years later as Notre Dame's football coach.

Nowadays, fans enjoy heavily publicized games that are attended by huge crowds and involve football stalwarts like Notre Dame, USC, Oklahoma, Alabama and Miami. But it was teams like Army and Columbia that helped pave the way for the modern era with some terrific performances in college football's early days.

To make the memorable games fresh and come alive, we talked to many of the players and coaches who were involved in the various games. It was gratifying to hear the athletes speak so freely and animatedly about their roles in games that were played, in many cases, decades earlier.

We believe these precious remembrances helped give the book its zing. We also included previously reported quotes that we found in newspapers and other reference material so we could turn out well-rounded accounts.

We knew that our efforts to create a list of top games would require a lot of research. At the time, Eric was the prep sports editor of the *Los Angeles Daily News* and I worked as a copy editor/news editor in the sports department of the *Los Angeles Times*. Fortunately, we were good friends, and that got us through our fierce battles trying to whittle down our list of games from more than 100 candidates.

And that brings us to our second edition, which covers games from 1913 to 2010.

The college football landscape has changed markedly in the last two decades and so have Eric and I. Eric now works as a sports reporter and high school sports columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, while I've left the *Times* after working there for 20 years to concentrate on my writing.

The past two decades have proved quite fertile for memorable games and Eric and I knocked heads—once again—over which contests were worthy of adding.

Since the first book was published, some new rules have been installed. Teams that are tied after regulation now go into overtime to determine a winner. In many cases, they can play two overtimes or more—whatever it takes to declare a winner. Overtime rules give each team one possession per extra session, 25 yards away from the other team's goal line.

The NCAA rule change mandating overtime led to one of the greatest games in history: Arkansas' 71–63 victory over Kentucky in seven overtimes in 2003. One of the many highlights from that contest occurred after Jared Lorenzen, Kentucky's charismatic quarterback, got disgusted in the fourth quarter at the sight of many of his team's fans filtering out with the Wildcats trailing. Lorenzen turned to the fans from the sideline and announced: "Where the hell are you going? You're going to miss a hell of a game." Years later, Lorenzen said: "I didn't realize it was going to be *that* good of a game, that it was going seven overtimes."

Another development has been the creation of the Bowl Championship Series. This system selects the match-ups for the prestigious bowl games—including the so-called national championship game that pairs the top two ranked teams.

In recent years, two contests from the BCS championship game have stood out as particularly outstanding. One was Ohio State's 31–24 controversial double-overtime upset of Miami in the 2003 Fiesta Bowl. And the other was Texas' thrilling 41–38 victory over USC in the 2006 Rose Bowl in a game that featured the brilliance of Longhorn quarterback Vince Young.

Then there was the 2007 Fiesta Bowl, a game that may stand above all others for its drama and theatrics. It certainly was one of the craziest games ever played. Boise State emptied its bag of gadget plays en route to a stunning 43–42 overtime victory over favored Oklahoma. Boise State running back Ian Johnson punctuated the win by proposing to his longtime girlfriend on national

television shortly after he scored the winning two-point conversion on a statue-of-liberty play.

Those four fantastic finishes are all included in our second edition—along with four others.

One is Nebraska's 47–45 overtime victory over Missouri in 1997. It's known as the Flea Kicker game.

Another is USC's 34–31 win over Notre Dame in 2005. It's known as the "Bush Push" game.

A third is Appalachian State's 34–32 season-opening victory over fifth-ranked Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 2007. It's known simply as a shocker.

And the fourth is Florida State's 33–21 victory over West Virginia in the 2010 Gator Bowl. It's known as the final coaching game for Florida State's Bobby Bowden, a college football icon.

We have included dozens of new photos, including many of the game's noteworthy or game-winning plays. To keep the book compact and provocative from start to finish, we've painstakingly edged out two chapters to make room for our eight new entries.

The following is a summary and tribute to the two games that we eliminated:

- Princeton's 21–18 victory over Chicago in 1922 in a clash of the nation's titans. Princeton scored the upset by wiping out an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter and then staging a dramatic goal-line stand with less than a minute remaining.
- Texas' 21–17 victory over Notre Dame in the 1970 Cotton Bowl in which the Longhorns shook off a determined upset bid to remain undefeated. Texas Coach Darrell Royal pulled out all the stops with some bold decisions as the Longhorns pinned down the national championship.

The second edition of *College Football's Most Memorable Games* provides updates on many of the individuals who had prominent roles in our first edition.

Sadly, we've noted in our Acknowledgments the deaths of many of the players and coaches who we interviewed for our first edition. Several conversations that we had with them may have been one of the last interviews they had granted.

Eric and I hope that readers will find something they didn't already know about each of these contests in the second edition. We want these stories to be exciting, but we also enjoy finding tidbits about the games that aren't so well-known.

Will there be a third edition of *College Football's Most Memorable Games*? We'll have to see what college football will bring us in the coming years. Will there be games that have the kookiness of Cal's five-lateral victory

over Stanford in which Cal's Kevin Moen brushed past on-the-field Stanford band members to score the winning touchdown in 1982?

Will there be games with the same shocking finish as Doug Flutie's "Hail Mary" touchdown pass against Miami in 1984?

Will there be games with as much controversy as Colorado's five-downs victory over Missouri in 1990?

We expect there will be, but only time will tell.

—Fred Eisenhammer

Introduction

Near the end of the 1966 football season, Michigan State played host to Notre Dame in what the media billed as “The Game of the Century.” Indeed, the game had all the ingredients of a classic college football matchup. Notre Dame, ranked No. 1 in the country, was outscoring opponents by an average of 38 to 4. Second-ranked Michigan State was outscoring opponents by a margin of 31 to 11.

The Fighting Irish rallied from a 10–0 deficit to finish in a 10–10 tie, but the game ended on a controversial note. Notre Dame Coach Ara Parseghian decided to keep the ball on the ground and run out the clock with 1:15 remaining and Notre Dame in possession at its 30-yard line.

It was one of the most memorable games in college football history, but there have been many, many others.

Such well-known professional football players as Sammy Baugh, Jim Brown, O.J. Simpson, Jim Plunkett, Joe Montana and Jim McMahon played leading roles in some of college football’s greatest games. But other players—whose names would generally be remembered in the context of a single play—also played pivotal roles in memorable games. For instance:

- In the 1929 Rose Bowl, Roy Riegels of Cal picked up a Georgia Tech fumble and raced 65 yards toward the wrong goal line and was downed at his team’s one-yard line. For his monumental gaffe, he was tagged with a nickname that stuck: “Wrong Way” Riegels.
- In the 1954 Cotton Bowl, Alabama’s Tommy Lewis gained notoriety when he bolted from the sidelines to tackle Rice halfback Dicky Moegle in the middle of what undoubtedly would have been a 95-yard touchdown run.
- In 1984, Gerald Phelan gave Boston College an improbable 47–45 victory over Miami when he caught a 48-yard desperation pass from Doug Flutie as time expired.

There are several ways a college football game typically can qualify to belong among the sport’s most memorable.

A single electrifying play can catapult the game to national prominence. “Wrong Way” Riegels single-handedly made the game against Georgia Tech memorable. Cal, likewise, turned its annual “Big Game” against Stanford into a giant game in 1982. After Stanford took a 20–19 lead with four seconds remaining, Cal’s ensuing kickoff return produced one of the most bizarre endings in history. The Bears lateraled five times on the return en route to scoring the winning touchdown, navigating through Stanford’s team and Stanford’s band.

Spectacular individual performances also can make a game memorable. In 1924, for instance, halfback Red Grange amassed 402 yards in total offense and scored five touchdowns in leading Illinois to a 39–14 victory over Michigan. Jim Brown, likewise, enjoyed a terrific effort in his final regular-season game for Syracuse. He set an NCAA Division I record with 43 points against Colgate in 1956, scoring six touchdowns and kicking seven point-afterers.

Spectacular comebacks also have made games special. The 1963 Rose Bowl was renowned for its exciting finish. Wisconsin trailed USC, 42–14, early in the fourth quarter but rallied behind quarterback Ron VanderKelen before losing, 42–37. Some consider it the most thrilling bowl game ever.

In 1974, USC put together a rousing comeback by scoring 55 points in 17 minutes to rally from a 24–0 deficit and shock Notre Dame, 55–24. Maryland didn’t take a back seat to anyone in comebacks when the Terrapins rallied from a 31–0 halftime deficit to overcome Miami, 42–40, in 1984.

Huge upsets or stunning victories also have provided memorable games. An 18-point underdog against Oklahoma in 1957, Notre Dame snapped the Sooners’ 47-game winning streak with a 7–0 victory—one year after Oklahoma had handed the Irish a 40–0 defeat in South Bend, Indiana.

Certain games become more prominent because national ratings, perhaps even the No. 1 ranking, are involved. The buildup to the 1966 Michigan State–Notre Dame game was heightened because the No. 1 ranking hinged on the outcome. Thus, many bowl games oftentimes are elevated to the status of memorable because of their importance to national rankings.

National rankings, however, don’t necessarily have to be at stake for a game to earn hallowed status. Rivals Harvard and Yale were both 8–0 in 1968 but no threats to winning the national championship when they squared off for the Ivy League title. Yale opened a 29–13 lead, but Harvard stormed back with 16 points in the final 42 seconds to finish in a 29–29 tie. The *Harvard Crimson* student newspaper proudly announced: “HARVARD BEATS YALE, 29–29.”

The national ratings became a regular feature in 1936 when the Associated Press introduced its weekly sportswriters and broadcasters top 20 poll. In 1950, United Press International came up with national rankings of its own, using votes by college football coaches. Sponsorship of the coaches poll has since changed hands several times; it is now being run by *USA Today*.