

Sawyer Finds Glory With 83-Yard Fumble Return

Over a month and a half before Ohio State's triumphant 28-14 win over Texas on Jan. 10, senior defensive end Jack Sawyer and the rest of the Buckeyes were preparing for their biggest game of the season against Michigan. For Sawyer, a local kid from Pickerington, Ohio, and one of several seniors who hadn't defeated the archrival Wolverines, a win over Michigan would have meant everything.

GAME NOTEBOOK Bobby Gorbett

Sawyer appeared to save his team with a spectacular play.

With less than eight minutes to go in the fourth quarter, Michigan had the ball at the 3-yard line on first-and-goal, but Sawyer read the eyes of Michigan quarterback Davis Warren, and although he made it only to the 12-yard line in his return, he seemed to save the Buckeyes with an interception.

As time wore on though, what had seemed like a fairytale ending for Sawyer developed into a nightmare. The Buckeye offense struggled to move the ball on their next drive, the defense wore down to allow a field goal, one last gasp from the offense went by the wayside, and the 2024 Ohio State team – with preseason national championship expectations – faced a world of criticism from the media and its own fan base.

Rather than crumbling under the intense pressure of an awful loss to Michigan, the Buckeyes banded together to dismantle their first two playoff opponents to set up a huge matchup with Texas in the College Football Playoff semifinal.



Jack Sawyer

The offense, plagued by mistakes and penalties, struggled to put points on the board, and with 15 minutes to go the Buckeyes and Longhorns were tied at 14. An extended offensive drive put the Buckeyes up seven with only 7:02 to go, but the Longhorns appeared to have their answer when they marched all the way down to the Buckeye 1-yard line on first-and-goal in the waning minutes.

Instead of folding and allowing a game-tying touchdown, the Buckeyes forced the Longhorns back to the 8-yard line on fourth-and-goal. It was there that Sawyer had his moment. With Texas starting quarterback Quinn Ewers dropping back to pass, Sawyer came flying around the edge and ripped the ball out of the hand of his former teammate and roommate to put the ball on the ground.

Unlike that fateful late November day, Sawyer's magical moment wasn't ruined by tacklers in front of him or a struggling offense. Instead, the ball bounced perfectly in front of him as he grabbed it and completed

Game Analysis

What Worked Well

It wasn't the first half that we saw from the Buckeyes in the first two games of the College Football Playoff. They scored 14 points in the first 30 minutes of the Cotton Bowl after getting a combined 55 points in the previous two first halves, and they needed a late 75-yard score from TreVeyon Henderson to get there. But while the OSU offense struggled to work through the penalties that were slowing it down, the defense didn't allow the Texas offense to get anything.

The Buckeyes went into the locker room with a 14-7 lead because Jim Knowles' unit was suffocating for quarterback Quinn Ewers and the Longhorns, and that was largely due to the front four of JT Tuimolao, Ty Hamilton, Tyleik Williams and Jack Sawyer.

In the first quarter, the Buckeyes continued their dominant pass rush with two sacks, adding another in the beginning of the second period. They were also able to keep batting down passes the entire game, an addition to the defense in the past three games that has been extremely important. The defensive linemen had three of the six passes broken up by the Buckeyes in the game, and Sawyer's touchdown in the fourth quarter secured the win.

What Didn't Work

Sometimes it feels cheap to say that the thing that went wrong in a game was penalties. It can be an easy cop-out since penalties are always a bad thing. But in this game, there was nothing that held this Ohio State offense back more than flags. When the Buckeye defense was dominant early in the game, it seemed like OSU should have been

cruising out to a huge lead as it had in the previous two games. But due to many different flags, they couldn't get anything going.

It began with an uncharacteristic 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on Henderson and continued with two holding penalties, two false starts and an unnecessary roughness, adding up to 60 yards lost on six flags for the Buckeye offense and three flags for 15 yards on the defense compared to a total of five penalties for 54 yards on Texas.

Both teams were hurt by penalties, but it seemed that this could have been a bigger win if Ohio State had been more disciplined early on.

Play Of The Game

There were many options for play of the game that continued to top the previous one. Henderson's touchdown at the end of the first half was the first contender before Will Howard ran for a long first down on a late fourth down.

Then after the Buckeyes went up 21-14, Texas drove down the field to the OSU 1-yard line before a 7-yard tackle for loss by Lathan Ransom and a Sawyer tip forced a fourth-and-8 that was likely for the game. That set up the play of the game, where Sawyer rushed around the edge and knocked the ball out of Ewers' hands, scooped the fumble up and ran it back 83 yards for a touchdown, the longest fumble recovery in the history of the College Football Playoff.

It was the signature moment of the nearby Pickerington, Ohio, native's Buckeye career and the nail in the coffin that helped send Ohio State to the national championship game against Notre Dame.

— Greg Wilson

one of the most iconic plays in Ohio State history with an 83-yard fumble return touchdown.

One may have guessed that Sawyer had all sorts of thoughts about fate or irony, or the fact that he was delivering Ohio State its biggest win in a decade, but what actually came into his head when he picked up the loose ball was something much simpler.

"S—t, I guess just don't fall," Sawyer joked about what went through his head when he had the ball in his hands. "I'm kidding, but no seriously I hit about the 30 and I looked back and I'm like, 'I hope I have some blockers. I'm running out of steam here.' But they were running with me side by side."

Sawyer's touchdown and the euphoric celebration after were certainly a far cry from the agony of the heart-wrenching loss to Michigan, but according to Ohio State head coach Ryan Day – who was seen jumping into Sawyer's arms on the sideline after the score – the adversity faced by this team is now a part of its story.

"No great accomplishments are ever achieved without going through adversity," Day said. "That's just the truth. We've gone through our share of adversity, and that's life, and I told those guys that. We're not focused about what's happened in the past, we're focused on right now and being right where we are. Then at the end, we want to be able to tell the story of this team, and that's really what this team is focused on right now."

Whether it was karma, fate or something else, everything lined up perfectly for Sawyer to have his signature moment, and according to Day, it summed up everything about him and the team.

"What happened on fourth down by Jack just symbolizes not only his career, but our team in general, who they are and the toughness," Day said. "The clutch play right there was something that I'm sure the whole city of Columbus was exploding and all of Buckeye Nation during that play."

Screen To Henderson Keeps Buckeyes In Front

Although the Longhorns never had the lead in the semifinals of the College Football Playoffs, there were a couple of instances when they seemed to have all of the momentum. Perhaps the most energized the Texas sideline was all game was after the Longhorns' first touchdown late in the first half, when Ewers found running back Jaydon Blue for an 18-yard pass to tie the game at seven.

After getting the ball back at their own 25-yard line with only 29 seconds left in the first half, Day and the Buckeyes had a decision to make – send the game into halftime tied with Texas feeling good about their chances or keep pushing to try to regain the lead. Day opted against running out the clock and instead dialed up a screen pass.

"The screen, we were laughing a little bit in the locker room, having some fun with it because we do screen drill," Day said. "I think sometimes these guys are like, 'Are we ever going to call a screen?' And I actually said to the coaches, 'We're going to stop doing screen drill because we don't call any big screens.' So sure enough, 'What do you want to run? You want to run the ball? You want to take a knee?' I said, 'No, just run the screen.'"

Day's call to run the screen may have been his best of the season, because when Will Howard dropped back to pass, Texas wasn't at all ready for a convoy of blockers to

get out in front of senior running back TreVeyon Henderson. After catching the pass 6 yards behind the line of scrimmage, Henderson found the hole, burst through it and went untouched for a 75-yard touchdown, the third-longest touchdown reception in playoff semifinal history.

"I don't think anyone thought that was going for 75 yards," Howard said of the play. "I mean that was trying to set something up. That's the kind of a drive start in that two-minute scenario and you run that first play, and we did it in the Tennessee game where we come out, we run the ball and if we get a positive gain maybe we can continue to work on our two-minute drill, but when you have a guy like (Henderson) that can make plays like that – Carson Hinzman made some unbelievable blocks down the field, the receivers stayed on their guys and (Henderson) took off. That was a huge play for us, a huge swing."

A couple of Ohio State offensive linemen made some nice blocks on Henderson's catch and run. Tegra Tshabola started the play with a solid block on Texas linebacker Anthony Hill Jr. before Hinzman pushed aside a pair of Longhorns himself.

A blitz from the Longhorns hurt their ability to cover the screen, but Day was pleased with how his team executed the play.

"Very well-executed," Day said. "The line got out there and (Howard) made a great play because they brought pressure. He just got it off, and TreVeyon went down and caught it. It



TreVeyon Henderson

OHIO STATE VS. TEXAS

BSB Quotebook: Ohio State 28, Texas 14

Ohio State head coach Ryan Day on what propelled his team to a win over Texas at the Cotton Bowl: "I believe that the resilience that we've had to show throughout the entire season and through some of these guys' careers has led us to this opportunity to win this game and go play for a national championship. We talked before the game about how you can leave a legacy. (You do that by) becoming your own legend, and there are some guys on this team today that I believe will become legends in Ohio State history. We also talked about how we want to keep this team together. It's a great team. They've been through a lot. They're resilient, and they're great people. They do everything the right way. And so now they get 10 more days together and an opportunity to tell their story if they go win one more."

More from Day on the team's resilience and character: "We've been through difficult times together. How do you know about someone's character? When you go through tough times with them. Everything is easy when things are going well. Everyone can be a front-runner. So I think we talk about those things because our story has been – the last couple years has been ups and downs. But to see the team play the way that they did in the fourth quarter today, I think that's why that's relevant. That's why we're talking about it. Because I don't think without going through those things, we would have come through the way we did in the fourth quarter. And now we have the opportunity to play for a national championship, and I couldn't be prouder of our guys, I couldn't be."

Texas head coach Steve Sarkisian on his initial thoughts of the Cotton Bowl thriller: "Hell of a football game. Two really good teams battling. They made two big plays. They hit the screen at the end of

the first half and got the sack-fumble on fourth down there for a touchdown. Give a ton of credit to Ohio State. They're a very good football team, well-coached. I'm really proud of our players for the resiliency they showed tonight to fight back to get into the game. As I told them, today's game is the life of a competitor. You put yourself in this arena. You compete your tail off. But we have nothing to hang our heads about because of the way they competed, not only tonight but this entire season."

Ohio State senior defensive end Jack Sawyer on his game-sealing, 83-yard scoop-and-score touchdown: "It just means everything to me. What a play. I kind of blacked out on the run over (to the end zone) when I picked it up, but I was just put into a great position by the coaches. I saw the ball popped out right to me after I tackled (Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers), and I was just thinking, I just need to stay on my feet, because like I said, I almost blacked out when I scooped it and I saw nothing but green grass ahead of me."

Ohio State senior wide receiver Emeka Egbuka on Sawyer's touchdown: "It was like something out of a movie or something like that. I was just screaming, everybody was screaming. It was probably the most legendary play that I've ever seen in person. It's going to go down as one of the greatest plays in Buckeye history if we win the one next week."

Ewers on his perspective of his former Ohio State roommate's scoop-and-score: "I felt him. I started drifting away. I thought I was going to be able to get the ball off before he got there, obviously. It's not like I tried to give them the game. But I saw Jack running with the ball down the sideline. It sucks, man. But he's a great player, great individual, great person. We were roommates when I was up at Ohio State. So

it just sucks. It sucks. Jack's a good player, and he made a good play."

Ohio State fifth-year quarterback Will Howard on how motivated he was to beat Texas for the first time in his career: "Yeah, that was a motivation for me. But, man, that didn't mean as much as keeping this team together. That's all we wanted to do. We talked about that this whole playoff. We're fighting for another chance to wear this jersey again and to be with this group again."

Howard on the offense's 13-play, 88-yard drive that gave the Buckeyes a 21-14 lead midway through the fourth quarter: "That was a statement drive. It took a lot – 13 plays, 88 yards. We talked about it before the game. 'We're going to have to work this game, and we're going to have to methodically move the ball down the field.' I'm just so proud of our offense that we were able to get the game – we talk about it all the time – get the game to the fourth quarter, and that's where we'll win it. We leaned back on our training. And all that work that we put in, that's for that time. I'm just so proud of our guys. The O-line played great."

Ohio State senior offensive lineman Donovan Jackson on what the overall message was in the huddle before Howard's key 18-yard rush on fourth-and-2: "We have to have it. I know it's an obvious answer, but in that situation, at that point of the game, we knew we had to have it. Coming off the sideline, Coach Day was like, 'The time is now. If you want to be great, you have to be great now.' So on fourth-and-2, running the ball, obviously Will trips up – I'm going to give him crap for that later – but being able to execute in that situation was a testament to everyone's hard work and drive to be successful."

was another huge play in the game."

Buckeyes Show Composure On The Final Scoring Drive

After being fairly unstoppable offensively in wins over Tennessee and Oregon in the first two rounds of the playoffs, the Buckeyes had more than their share of offensive struggles against Texas. Going up against a stand-out Texas defense, the Buckeyes' first drive of the game was the only one where they had sustained offensive success in the first three quarters.

There were all sorts of issues preventing the Buckeyes from moving the ball down the field. A few drives were derailed by costly penalties that backed the Buckeyes up, one was ended by an interception thrown by Howard, and a couple went scoreless after Texas' defense simply flexed its muscles and made some quality plays.

The Buckeyes' lack of offensive efficiency not only had the game tied at 14 heading into the fourth quarter but left the defense a bit tired, according to Day.

"At that moment I was getting concerned that the defense was getting worn out because we were not on the field very much and we needed a big, long drive, and that's what these guys answered with," Day said.

The Buckeyes' fourth-quarter go-ahead touchdown drive started with 14:47 left to go in the game at their own 12-yard line. They immediately got out of the shadow of their own end zone when Texas cornerback Malik Muhammad committed a pass-interference penalty against Emeka Egbuka, but two plays later they were faced with a third-and-8. The Buckeyes picked up Texas' blitz call on the third down to give Howard enough time to find his favorite target of the night, Carnell Tate, for an 18-yard gain.

Howard found running back Quinshon Judkins for a first down shortly thereafter, but after two plays and a false-start penalty, the Buckeyes had to get past another third-and-long to keep moving the ball down the field. Howard found Gee Scott Jr. well behind the marker on third-and-9, but the tight end fought through Texas defenders to bring up fourth-and-2 rather than fourth-and-5.

The fourth-and-short situation allowed offensive coordinator Chip Kelly to open up the playbook, and what he came up with was a quarterback draw play that worked to perfection. Howard had no defenders between himself and the end zone after picking up the crucial first down, but the former Kansas State transfer fell victim to the turf monster and went down at the Texas 16.

"That fourth down was huge, man, and they came out and gave us a good look for the play and the offensive line blocked it up well. I fell on purpose," Howard said with a laugh. "I'm joking. I didn't fall on purpose. It should have been a dang touchdown, but I was trying to keep a couple of seconds on the clock. No, I'm joking. But it was a great play and a statement drive."

Despite Howard's fall, the statement was officially made four plays later when, unlike Texas, Ohio State was able to punch the ball in the end zone at the goal line when it mattered most.

"We talk about it all the time," Howard said. "Get the game to the fourth quarter, and that's where we'll win it, and we leaned back on our training and all that work that we put in. That's for that time. I'm just so proud of our guys. The offensive line played great on that drive. The guys made some plays, and we were able to punch it in."



OHIO STATE VS. TEXAS

OSU Scores Late For Dramatic Win Over Texas

By CRAIG MERZ

Buckeye Sports Bulletin Staff Writer

Jack Sawyer's sack and scoop-and-score of 83 yards with 2:13 to play capped a memorable goal-line stand when Texas was driving for the tying touchdown and provided the insurance needed in a dramatic 28-14 victory for No. 8 seeded Ohio State (13-2) over the No. 5 Longhorns at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, on Jan. 10 in a College Football Playoff semifinal.

Quinshon Judkins' second rushing TD, a 1-yarder with 7:02 left in the game, put the Buckeyes ahead 21-14 after the Longhorns (13-3) had tied the game in the third quarter.

Late Magic

Ohio State won the toss and deferred to the second half, and Texas took the ball at the 25 after a touchdown.

Texas faced a third-and-2 at the 33, but Matthew Golden made a one-handed grab for a 24-yard gain to the OSU 43. Needing 4 yards on third down, Quintrevion Wisner ran for 1. On fourth down, former OSU QB Quinn Ewers threw incomplete, enabling the Buckeyes to get the ball at their 36.

From there, they went 64 yards in 10 plays and 4:18 to take a 7-0 lead at 7:24 of the first period on Judkins' 9-yard run, to make the Buckeyes three for three on their first drives of the playoffs.

Emeka Egbuka made a 5-yard catch on

third down to the OSU 48 to move the chains. Carnell Tate followed with a 14-yard catch to the Texas 38. On first down, Howard went deep to Jeremiah Smith at the 2, but the ball was too high even for the star freshman.

Egbuka made an 11-yard reception to the 23 on third-and-6, and Howard came right back to him for 14 to the 9. Tate then dropped a touchdown in the end zone on a slant before Judkins slipped through the line then powered his way into the end zone.

Texas overcame a 4-yard sack by JT Tuimoloau on the first snap of its next possession to get the yards back and more with a 15-yarder to DeAndre Moore Jr. and a 22-yard screen pass to Ryan Wingo to the OSU 42 that could have been a touchdown except for one-handed tackle by All-America safety Caleb Downs.

On third-and-12 (after a false start), Tuimoloau and Ty Hamilton forced a punt after a sack of 4 yards, and Brandon Inniss made a fair catch of a 40-yard punt by Michael Kern at the 8.

Tate on second down caught a 13-yarder, and Henderson ran for 22 to the OSU 48. Gee Scott Jr. chewed up 14 more with his catch to the 38 before Henderson lost his cool and effectively killed the drive. He ran for a yard then shoved a Texas player in the face, drawing a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty to the OSU 48.

A Howard keeper lost 2, and a pass to Judkins gained only 5 yards to end the first quarter in which OSU held a 122-71 advantage in total yards.

Joe McGuire's 40-yard punt to the 9 was returned 16 yards by Golden, who fumbled it at the 25 but made the recovery. The OSU defense came through again with the aid of a face-mask penalty on Texas. On third-and-11 from the Longhorn 24, Ewers was sacked for a third time, with Sonny Styles doing the honors for 10 yards.

After a 51-yard punt and a minus-1 yard return by Downs, OSU got possession at its 34 with 12:28 left in the half.

Tate had consecutive catches for a total of 12 yards, but a second-down hold on Egbuka torpedoed another drive. Having to go 20 yards, Will Kacmarek made a catch for 12 to the OSU 48 on second down, but a pass to Egbuka was incomplete and McGuire had his 43-yard punt downed at the 9.

Wisner ran for 7 and 4 yards for a first down at the 20. Styles popped Gunnar Helm at the 35 to break up a pass, but after Moore made a catch for 4 yards, Tuimoloau went to the turf holding his ankle. He left the game briefly.

Ewers had an incomplete, and OSU began at the 35 after a 41-yard punt. A holding penalty on Josh Fryar put the Buckeyes in a second-and-20. Scott got 7 yards back, but on third down a false start put them in an untenable third-and-18. Tate made a 15-yard reception, but OSU had to punt again, this time a 43-yarder to the 15.

Isaiah Bond, replacing the injured Golden, turned a short catch into 8 yards, and Jaydon Blue rushed for 3 and a first down before Wisner ran for 5. On third-and-5, Bond was open at the 46 but dropped the pass.

Kern punted 42 yards to the 27 with 3:23 left, and the Buckeyes went three-and-out with Howard suffering his first sack of the playoffs for 7 yards at the 2:00 timeout.

McGuire's punt went for only 39 yards for a fair catch at the Texas 41 with 1:51 left. With good field position for the first time and a fourth-down conversion, the Longhorns tied it 7-7 with 29 seconds left on an 18-yard catch by Blue.

With a third-and-10, Ewers scrambled for 9 to the 50. Ewers came out for heralded backup Arch Manning. He took the snap, went right and gained 8 yards. The play was reviewed for a fumble at the end, but the first down was upheld with 49 seconds left.

Silas Bolden made a catch at the 36, slipped a tackle and ran to the 18 for a 24-yard gain on the next play. After an incompletion, Ewers threw to the left corner for the score. The seven-play, 59-yard drive took 1:22.

With momentum having swung to the Longhorns, the Buckeyes made a stunning turnaround after the touchback. Howard dropped and tossed a screen pass to Henderson at the 19, and with a convoy of blockers running full steam ahead of him, he was home free from the OSU 40 and sprinted to a 75-yard TD with 13 seconds left for the 14-7 lead.

It was sweet redemption for Henderson. According to ESPN the Buckeyes had gained 118 yards and seven points on 15 plays before Henderson's penalty and 43 yards on 14 plays afterward.

Texas was able to move to its 48 before Ewers' Hail Mary attempt was incomplete to end the half.

OSU had 236 total yards, 200 of it passing. Texas had 133 of its 177 yards through the air. Howard was 14 of 19 for 200 yards. Tate was the leading receiver with five catches for 54 yards while Smith had one for 3 yards. Ewers was 10 of 20 for 133 yards.

Later Magic

Ohio State began at the 25 to start the second half. Egbuka had a catch for 13. Henderson went for 7 then 7 more to the Texas 48, but on the next play, Howard was intercepted by David Gbenda at the Texas 33 and he lost 3 yards on the return.

Wisner's catch went for 10 to the 40, but three plays and a 45-yard punt later, the Buckeye offense went back to work at the 12. On third-and-1, Judkins got nothing as he tried to run left to drop OSU to 2 of 7 on third downs.

Texas took over at the 33 following Mc-



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Guire's 46-yard punt. On third-and-10, Ewers was under pressure and about to be sacked by Sawyer when he sent an underhanded pass to Wisner for 14 yards to the 47 a split second before Ewers' knee hit the ground, which would have negated the completion.

Wisner rushed up the middle for 4 yards on third-and-3 to move the chains. Facing a third-and-1 after an 11-yard catch by Wisner, Wisner gained 4 to the 29 as the Buckeye defense wore down. On a third-and-7 from the 26, Ewers found Blue at the 13, and he went in from there to tie it 14-14 at 3:12 for Texas' first third-quarter touchdown in seven games.

The 67-yard drive used 12 plays and 5:18, and the Longhorns were 4 for 4 on third down.

OSU continued to ruin itself with penalties on its next possession from the 25 when a Tate 15-yard catch was negated by unnecessary roughness penalty for 15 yards to offensive lineman Austin Sieveld.

The Buckeyes still had a first down but started again at the 25. Howard lost 10 on a sack, Henderson ran for 5, and an incompletion led to a 41-yard punt by McGuire to the Texas 39 with 1:03 left in the third quarter.

Wisner ran for 7 and a pass to him lost 2 yards for the final play of the period to set up another third-down try of 5 yards. This time Ewers overthrew Golden, who returned from an ankle injury. A 44-yard punt placed the ball on the 12.

The Buckeyes, possibly with the season on the line, went those 88 yards on 13 plays in 7:45 to go ahead 21-14 with 7:02 remaining when Judkins scored from the 1.

On the first play, the Longhorns' Malik Muhammad was flagged for pass interference on Egbuka, a 15-yard infraction. Scott's catch went for minus-2, but Howard went back to him for 4, and on third-and-8, Tate got 18 on the catch to the OSU 47.

A deep ball to Egbuka was broken up at the 22 before Judkins' catch went for 11 and a first down. After an incompletion, Judkins picked up a 6-yard reception, but a false start made for a third-and-9 from the 41. Scott caught a short pass and gained 7.

On fourth-and-2 from the 34, after a Texas timeout with 9:50 left, Howard kept the ball and burst up the middle for 18 yards to the 16 but could have scored if he hadn't tripped over himself. Howard composed himself and passed 8 yards to Egbuka, and Judkins ran for 6 to the 2 and a first down. Howard ran for 1, and Judkins carried it in from there.

Ewers had a 34-yard pass to Helm to the OSU 25, but the tight end was flagged for taunting Downs, moving the ball back to the 40. No problem. Ewers went to Golden for 27 to the 13. Lathan Ransom later had a pass interference for the Buckeyes to the 2. Jermaine Matthews Jr. was also called for PI for a first at the 1.

Jerrick Gibson gained nothing on a run, Ransom made a tackle for a 7-yard loss on Wisner, and Sawyer broke up a pass for Wingo to set up fourth-and-goal from the 8.

Sawyer then got to his freshman roommate at Ohio State and sacked him for a 9-yard loss with the ball popping free into Sawyer's hands for a play that will go down as one of the great moments in Buckeye history.

Texas had the ball one more time, but Downs' interception ended its faint hope.

Ohio State outgained the Longhorns, 370-341, with Howard completing 24 of 33 passes for 289 yards, a score and a pick, while Ewers was 23 of 39 for 283 yards, two scores and an interception. Tate led Buckeye receivers with seven catches for 87 yards, and Egbuka and Scott had five catches each. Smith was targeted three times but had only the one catch for 3 yards.

The Numbers Game

Ohio State 28, Texas 14

Jan. 10, 2025 - AT&T Stadium (Cotton Bowl), Arlington, Texas

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
OHIO STATE	7	7	0	14	28
TEXAS	0	7	7	0	14

First Quarter

OSU - Judkins, 9-yard rush (Fielding kick), 7:24.

Second Quarter

TEX - Blue, 18-yard pass from Ewers (Stone kick), 0:29.

OSU - Henderson, 75-yard pass from Howard (Fielding kick), 0:13.

Third Quarter

TEX - Blue, 26-yard pass from Ewers (Stone kick), 3:12.

Fourth Quarter

OSU - Judkins, 1-yard rush (Fielding kick), 7:02.

OSU - Sawyer, 83-yard fumble return (Fielding kick), 2:13.

Att. - 74,527

Weather - Indoors

Team Statistics

	OSU	TEX
First Downs	18	20
Rushing	5	7
Passing	12	10
Penalty	1	3
Rushes-Yards	24-81	29-58
Passing Yards	289	283
Passes (Comp.-Att.-Int.)	24-33-1	23-39-1
Offensive Plays	57	68
Total Net Yards	370	341
Third Down Efficiency	3-10	5-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	1-3
Punts-Avg.	6-42.0	6-43.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	3-1
Penalties	9-75	5-54
Time of Possession	31:38	28:22

Individual Statistics

RUSHING (Att.-Net Yds.) - OSU: Henderson 6-42; Judkins 9-36; Howard 7-4; Egbuka 1-0; Team 1-(-1). **TEX:** Wisner 17-46; Blue 4-16; Manning 1-8; Wingo 1-6; Gibson 1-0; Ewers 5-(-18).

PASSING (Comp.-Att.-Int.-Yds.-TD) - OSU: Howard 24-33-1-289-1. **TEX:** Ewers 23-39-1-283-2.

RECEIVING (Rec.-Yds.) - OSU: Tate 7-87; Egbuka 5-51; Scott Jr. 5-30; Judkins 3-22; Kacmarek 2-21; Henderson 1-75; Smith 1-3. **TEX:** Wisner 6-42; Blue 5-59; Moore Jr. 4-31; Golden 2-51; Helm 2-42; Bolden 1-24; Wingo 1-22; Bond 1-8; Davis 1-4.

PUNTING (No.-Avg.-Long) - OSU: McGuire 6-42.0-46. **TEX:** Kern 6-43.8-51

PUNT RETURNS (No.-Yds.) - OSU: Egbuka 1-(-1). **TEX:** Bolden 2-16.

KICKOFF RETURNS (No.-Yds.) - OSU: None. **TEX:** None.

FUMBLE RECOVERIES (No.-Yds.) - OSU: Sawyer 1-83. **TEX:** None.

INTERCEPTIONS (No.-Yds.) - OSU: Downs 1-7. **TEX:** Gbenda 1-(-3).

SACKS (No.-Yds.) - OSU: Tuimolou 1.5-6; Styles 1-10; Sawyer 1-9; Hamilton 0.5-2. **TEX:** Broughton 1-10; Hill Jr. 0.5-4; Sorrell 0.5-3.

TACKLES FOR LOSS (No.-Yds.) - OSU: Styles 3-13; Tuimolou 2.5-8; Sawyer 1-9; Ransom 1-7; Downs 1-2; Hamilton 0.5-2. **TEX:** Broughton 1-10; Burke 1-2; Guilbeau 1-2; Hill Jr. 0.5-4; Sorrell 0.5-3.

TACKLES (Solo-Asst.-Tot.) - OSU: Styles 6-3-9; Simon 4-3-7; Tuimolou 3-4-7; Hancock 5-1-6; Igbinosun 4-1-5; Downs 4-1-5; Ransom 4-0-4; Williams 1-3-4; Hamilton 0-4-4. Sawyer 1-2-3; Burke 2-0-2; Reese 0-2-2; Curry 1-0-1; Smith 1-0-1; Styles Jr. 1-0-1; Mathews Jr. 1-0-1; McDonald 0-1-1; Kanu 0-1-1. **TEX:** Barron 4-2-6; Hill Jr. 4-2-6; Mukuba 3-3-6; Taaffe 2-3-5; Lefau 2-2-4; Simmons 2-2-4; Holmes 2-1-3; Muhammad 2-0-2; Blackwell Jr. 1-1-2; Collins 0-2-2; Lole 0-2-2; Moore 1-0-1; Burke 1-0-1; Gbenda 1-0-1; Broughton 1-0-1; Guilbeau 1-0-1; Savea 0-1-1; Roberson 0-1-1; Filsaime 0-1-1; Norton 0-1-1; Vasek 0-1-1; Sorrell 0-1-1.

PLAYERS IN THE GAME - OSU: Judkins, Tate, Howard, Egbuka, Smith, Montgomery, Fryar, Jackson, Hinzman, Tshabola, Kacmarek, Simon, Igbinosun, Burke, Downs, Sawyer, Tuimolou, Hamilton, Styles, Hancock, Ransom, Williams, Inniss, Melton, Reese, Mathews Jr., Styles Jr., Henderson, Fielding, McGuire, Ferlmann, Sieveld, Fitzpatrick, Adolph, Christian, Scott Jr., Hartford, Curry, Kanu, Jackson Jr., McDonald. **TEX:** Moore Jr., Golden, Wisner, Ewers, Campbell, Williams, Majors, Connor, Banks Jr., Davis, Helm, Hill Jr., Taaffe, Lefau, Guilbeau, Mukuba, Broughton, Muhammad, Barron, Moore, Sorrell, Collins, Simmons, Bolden, Stone, Norton, Manning, Niblett, Filsaime, Johnson-Ribell, Blue, Roberson, McDonald, Smith, Gbenda, Blackwell Jr., Kern, Baxter, Ratliff, Wingo, Hutson, St. Louis, Black, Agbo, Bond, Umeozulu, Baker, Goosby, Shannon, Holmes, Gibson, Burke, Vasek, January, Savea, Lole.

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