

## Buckeyes Hooked By Texas in Final Moments at Fiesta Bowl

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**GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP)** - Colt McCoy hit Quan Cosby for a 26-yard touchdown with 16 seconds to play, lifting the third-ranked Texas Longhorns to a 24-21 victory over No. 10 Ohio State on Monday night. The dramatic strike capped an 11-play, 78-yard drive that took only 1:42.

"It doesn't feel any better than to come from behind and win," Texas coach Mack Brown said. "It was just a classic, really, between Texas and Ohio State, the way it should be."

When it ended, Texas players rushed onto the field, then gathered in front of the band and sang "The Eyes of Texas" with jubilant fans.

As exhilarating as the victory was, it may not have been dominant enough to persuade voters that the Longhorns (12-1) deserve a share of the national championship. Because they were locked out of the Bowl Championship Series title game, Texas' only chance is The Associated Press Top 25.

McCoy had a message for the pollsters: "I don't think there's anybody in the country who can beat us at this point."

The Buckeyes (10-3) nearly did.

They flirted with the upset behind quarterbacks Terrelle Pryor and Todd Boeckman but instead went down to a third straight BCS bowl loss - a defeat that left the Big Ten 1-6 in this postseason.

It didn't help that Buckeyes tailback Chris "Beanie" Wells, who rushed for 106 yards on 16 carries, missed much of the second half with a concussion.

"That's the problem in tight ballgames like this," Ohio State coach Jim Tressel said. "Two outstanding teams, sometimes you finish it (and) the game ends when you are the one ahead, and sometimes the game ends when you're not."

The Longhorns rebounded after Ohio State had taken a 21-17 lead on a 15-yard run by Dan Herron with 2:05 to go.

That score came five minutes after Boeckman hit Pryor for a 5-yard score to cut Texas' lead to 17-15. Pryor's pass on the 2-point conversion was incomplete.

Boeckman completed five of 11 passes for 110 yards and a touchdown. Pryor was 5-for-14 for 66 yards, and also ran for 78 yards on 15 carries.

Brown, who once coached Vince Young to a national title, was impressed by Pryor, a rangy freshman.

"He will be a guy that's in a Heisman race, and it may be sooner than we think because he is a leader," Brown said.

But this night belonged to McCoy, himself a Heisman Trophy runner-up. He completed a school-record 41 of 59 passes for 414 yards and two touchdowns, ran for a score and was picked off once.

McCoy may have launched his candidacy for the 2009 award with a memorable march through the din of sold-out University of Phoenix Stadium, which was split between fans wearing burnt orange and others decked out in scarlet and gray.

Down 21-17 with 2:05 to play, McCoy calmly led the Longhorns down the field. He said he never doubted they would score.

"I can't think of a better place to be at that point," McCoy said.

On the touchdown, Cosby caught a short pass, slipped a tackle and sprinted toward the goal line before diving into the end zone.

"He made a play. I gave him a good ball," McCoy said. "I can't explain the feeling that we have right now. To have the faith and confidence in each other that we do, man, that was awesome."

McCoy completed seven of 10 passes for 76 yards on the final march and ran for the other 2 yards.

Before the touchdown, the biggest completion came on fourth-and-3 to James Kirkendoll at the Ohio State 40. The Buckeyes demanded a review, but

the spot was upheld, setting the stage for the winning touchdown.

"The (official) closest to the ball spotted it one place and the guy from the other side said he had a better vantage point," Tressel said.

For most of the night, the Buckeyes stifled the high-powered Longhorns, who averaged 43.9 points this season but mustered only a field goal in the first half. They didn't lead until a nifty third-quarter touchdown run by McCoy.

The Longhorns finished in a three-way tie atop the rugged Big 12 South and thought their 10-point victory over Oklahoma should have put them in the conference title game. But Oklahoma was declared the division winner on a BCS standings tiebreaker, and the Sooners ripped Missouri in the Big 12 playoff to earn a trip to the national championship.

"This team started this way and finished this way, and they're obviously one of the best teams in the country if not the best," Brown said.

The Longhorns didn't look like it early on. Texas brought Bevo, its steer mascot, but left its offense back in Austin, at least in a sluggish first half.

The Longhorns failed to score in the first quarter. Texas was shut out in only four quarters all season - and only once in the first quarter, in a 39-33 loss at Texas Tech on Nov. 1.

Ryan Pretorius' 30-yard field goal with 5:39 left in the second quarter sent Ohio State to a 6-3 halftime lead.

Texas' best chance came late in the second, when McCoy smartly marched the Longhorns from their own 9 to the Ohio State 16 in 47 seconds.

But on third-and-2 at the Buckeyes 16 and 9 seconds to go, McCoy threw perhaps his worst pass of the season. McCoy lobbed the ball toward Cosby at the goal line, but safety Anderson Russell picked it off to kill the threat.

Had McCoy thrown the ball into the seats, the Longhorns would have had time for a chip-shot field goal. But they went into the dressing room still down by three.

It didn't take McCoy long to atone for the miscue.

On Texas' first possession of the second half, he scored on a terrific 14-yard run to give the Longhorns their first lead. Taking a shotgun snap, McCoy bolted through the right side of the line, broke to the sideline and then spun past charging cornerback Malcolm Jenkins, who came up with nothing.

Seven minutes later, McCoy found Cosby in the back of the end zone to put the Longhorns up 17-6.

``He is strong-willed and he is a guy that's very confident, and he never thinks he is going to lose," Brown said.