

1978 COTTON BOWL

Notre Dame 38 - Texas 10

DALLAS — And then there were none. Not one unbeaten football team in major college football remained.

Dan Devine's Fighting Irish of Notre Dame took care of the last one, using an unrelenting defense to force six Texas turnovers and an opportunistic offense which capitalized on five of them to rout the previously unbeaten Longhorns 38-10 in the Cotton Bowl and claim the national championship for themselves.

The victory elevated Notre Dame into the top spot in both the AP and UPI final polls. Meanwhile, Texas - which had held the number-one ranking in both polls coming into the game - slipped to fourth in AP and fifth in UPI.

The Irish were devastating, particularly in the trenches, where the Irish defensive line threw a lasso around Texas Heisman Trophy winner Earl Campbell. Though Campbell did gain 116 yards on 29 carries, they were all tough yards. His longest run from scrimmage was only 18 late in the second quarter.

The Irish also forced the Longhorns into six turnovers, three fumbles and three interceptions, and took advantage of what Texas gave them with an offensive line performance which was awesome.

Backs Jerome Heavens and Vagas Ferguson gained 102 and 100 yards, respectively, by going where the Longhorns weren't. Ferguson, who also scored three touchdowns, won the outstanding offensive player honor.

Defensively, the top honor went to Irish middle linebacker Bob Golic, who made 17 tackles and blocked a field-goal attempt by Russell Erxleben.

After the teams had traded field goals in the first quarter - Notre Dame's Dave Reeve hit a 47-yarder (after a Texas fumble) before Erxleben connected on a 42-yarder into a 12 mph wind - Golic and teammates Mike Calhoun and Doug Becker forced a Ham Jones fumble on a screen pass from Randy McEachern and Jim Browner recovered at the Longhorn 27.

Senior captain Terry Eurick scored on the fifth play after that turnover to give the Irish a 10-3 lead on the first play of the second quarter.

Defensive tackle Ken Dike then got into the act on Texas' next possession, stripping a scrambling McEachern of the ball, which Willie Fry recovered at the Longhorn 35.

Five plays later, Eurick scampered in from the 10 for a 17-3 lead.

An interception by linebacker Becker set up Notre Dame's third touchdown of the period, a 17-yard pass from Joe Montana to Ferguson.

But the Longhorns threw a scare into the Irish late in the quarter when McEachern directed a 68-yard, six-play drive in just 22 seconds to score. The touchdown came on a 13-yard aerial from McEachern to Mike Lockett after Irish safety Jim Browner had been called for interference on the last play of the first half.

The Irish regained the lost momentum when linebacker Steve Heimkreiter intercepted a McEachern pass midway through the third quarter. Ferguson went the final three yards on the 29-yard drive off left tackle to score, making it 31-10.

The loss ended a storybook season for first-year coach Fred Akers whose Longhorns had won 11 straight games. Notre Dame survived an early loss to Mississippi to finish 11-1 with 10 straight victories.

Most Outstanding Offensive Player

Vagas Ferguson, Running Back

Most Outstanding Defensive Player

Bob Golic, Linebacker

SCORING SUMMARY

Notre Dame	3	21	7	7	38
Texas	3	7	0	0	10
Attendance: 76,701	Weather: Fair, 35 degrees				

Team	Score	Qtr.	Left	Time	Play
Notre Dame	3-0	1	11:35	Reeve 47 FG	<i>Drive: 32 yards in four plays; Time Elapsed: 0:59.</i>
Texas	3-3	1	6:07	Erxleben 42 FG	<i>Drive: 80 yards in 11 plays; Time Elapsed: 5:18</i> <i>Big Plays: Jones runs of 40 and seven yards.</i>
Notre Dame	10-3	2	14:56	Eurick 6 run (Reeve kick)	<i>Drive: 27 yards in five plays; Time Elapsed: 1:06</i> <i>Big Plays: J. Browner recovered fumble at UT 27; Montana to MacAfee for 10 yds, Heavens run for 10 yds.</i>
Notre Dame	17-3	2	11:37	Eurick 10 run (Reeve kick)	<i>Drive: 35 yards in five plays; Time Elapsed: 1:32.</i>
Notre Dame	24-3	2	7:28	Ferguson 17 pass from Montana (Reeve kick)	<i>Drive: 20 yards in three plays; Time Elapsed: 0:39</i> <i>Big Plays: Becker intercepted Texas pass and returned it to Texas 17-yard line.</i>
Texas	24-10	2	0:00	Lockett 13 pass from McEachern (Erxleben kick)	<i>Drive: 68 yards in six plays; Time Elapsed: 0:20.</i>
Notre Dame	31-10	3	6:49	Ferguson 3 run (Reeve kick)	<i>Drive: 29 yards in seven plays; Time Elapsed: 2:20</i> <i>Big Plays: Heimkreiter interception on UT 26, Montana passes to Waymer for 12 yds and Eurick for 12 yds.</i>
Notre Dame	38-10	4	9:41	Ferguson 26 run (Reeve kick)	<i>Drive: 50 yards in five plays; Time Elapsed: 2:01.</i>

TEAM STATISTICS

	UT	ND
First Downs	16	26
By Rushing	6	15
By Passing	9	11
By Penalty	1	0
Rushing Attempts	50	53
Yards Rushing	190	250
Yards Lost Rushing	59	7
Net Yards Rushing	131	243
Net Yards Passing	160	156
Passes Attempted	24	32
Passes Completed	11	14
Had Intercepted	3	1
Total Offensive Plays	74	85
Total Net Yards	291	399
Avg. Gain Per Play	3.9	4.7
Fumbles: No.-Lost	3-3	0-0
Penalties: No.-Yds.	1-5	4-37
Interceptions: No.-Yds.	1-0	3-20
Punts: No.-Yds.	3-120	5-152
Avg. Per Punt	40.0	30.4
Punt Returns: No.-Yds.	1-1	0-0
Kickoff Returns: No.-Yds.	8-81	1-17

INDIVIDUAL RUSHING

UT: Earl Campbell 29-116; Ham Jones 11-63; Paul Thompson 1-2; Johnnie Johnson 1-2; Randy McEachern 8-(-52).

ND: Jerome Heavens 22-101; Vagas Ferguson 21-100; Terry Eurick 4-16; Rusty Lisch 2-16; Jim Stone 2-4; Dave Mitchell 1-3; Joe Montana 1-3.

INDIVIDUAL PASSING

UT: Randy McEachern 24-11-3-160.

ND: Joe Montana 25-10-1-111; Rusty Lisch 7-4-0-45.

INDIVIDUAL RECEIVING

UT: Gil Harris 4-57; Alfred Jackson 3-33; Lam Jones 1-34; Ronnie Miksch 1-18; Mike Lockett 1-13; Ham Jones 1-5.

ND: Ken MacAfee 4-45; Dave Waymer 3-38; Vagas Ferguson 3-23; Kris Haines 2-29; Terry Eurick 1-12; Pete Pallas 1-9.