

HUSKIES

The Apple Cup

Dogs and cats.

Could there be a more natural rivalry?

Huskies and Cougars.

The annual Washington-Washington State matchup is definitely one of the best rivalries in college football today. Up for grabs each year is the Apple Cup, a trophy sponsored by the Washington State Apple Commission and presented by the state's governor.

The series dates back to 1900 when the teams played to a 5-5 tie in Seattle, but only since 1962 has the winner been awarded the Apple Cup. Washington holds a 61-27-6 record in the 94-game series, and is 29-11 in Apple Cup games.

Like most rivalries, each game is a new chapter with unpredictable results, regardless of records, momentum or history. It is a game based more on emotion and determination than scouting reports and talent.

Though the schools are on opposite sides of the state, creating a geographic split among fans, the annual meeting splits the state in other ways — sometimes between members of the same family. Such was the case in 1990 when Husky freshman Travis Hanson waged a personal kicking battle with his brother Jason, the Cougars' All-American kicker.

But while individual stories give the Apple Cup its character, its enormity and magnitude come from the number of times the game has determined Rose Bowl fate for either team. In 1981 the two teams met in Seattle with a trip to Pasadena at stake along with the Apple Cup trophy — Washington prevailed 23-10.

Perhaps the most shocking upset in the series came in 1982 when the Huskies carried a 9-1 record and an eight-game Apple Cup winning streak into the contest, and needed only to defeat a 2-7-1 Cougar squad to make a third-straight Rose Bowl appearance.

Washington, which had held the No. 1 national ranking for seven weeks earlier in the season, had knocked off two top-10 teams in its previous two games and appeared to be on a roll to Pasadena. But the inspired Cougars, playing the Apple Cup at Martin Stadium for the first time since 1954, stunned the Huskies with a 24-20 defeat. The celebration in Pullman began immediately as Cougar fans poured onto the field to remove the goal posts, and carried them to the Palouse River for a trip downstream.

Washington seemed certain to take the lead and avoid the upset in the fourth quarter when All-American kicker Chuck Nelson set up for a 33-yard field goal with the Huskies trailing 21-20. But Nelson missed, halting his NCAA record for consecutive field goals at 30 as the Cougars went on to victory.

The 2000 Apple Cup again had the Rose Bowl on the line, with the 9-1 Huskies needing a win in Pullman to earn an invitation to the big game. Washington made sure from the start that there would be no upset, setting an Apple Cup record for victory margin with a 51-3 win.

If the '82 game was the most shocking, the '85 game in Husky Stadium goes down as one of the coldest on record. Snow fell in Seattle five days prior to kickoff and did not stop until there was more than a foot on the ground. The city was nearly paralyzed and the turf in Husky Stadium, while clear of snow, was frozen solid under the Arctic conditions. UW officials swept the snow from the seats and had to fill the toilets in the stadium with anti-freeze to keep them in working order.

The fans who braved the elements saw WSU running back Rueben Mayes skitter his way to 167 rushing yards as the Cougars defeated Washington 21-20.

The most impressive comeback in Apple Cup history belongs to the Huskies in 1975, when they turned a 27-14 deficit into a thrilling 28-27 victory in the final 3:01. The Cougars had the ball at the Husky 14-



The Apple Cup trophy is awarded annually to the winner of the game between Washington and Washington State. The Huskies lead the series 29-11 since it became known as the Apple Cup.

yard line and a chance to pad the lead, when they unexplicably put the ball in the air. Husky Al Burselson intercepted the ill-advised pass and returned it 93 yards for a touchdown. Washington then held the Cougars on their next possession and took over on their own 22-yard line with 1:56 remaining. One play later they led 28-27. On first down, Warren Moon passed the ball in the direction of a mob in the center of the field. It hit WSU's Tony Heath and ricocheted into the hands of Husky receiver Spider Gaines, who took it all the way for a 78-yard touchdown play. Two touchdowns in a little over a minute, and the Huskies were victorious in Don James's first Apple Cup.

In 1995 and 1996, fans were treated to wild Apple Cup finishes. The 1995 affair was settled with just over a minute to play when John Wales booted a 21-yard field goal to give Washington a 33-30 victory. Rashaan Shehee ran for 212 yards and three scores for the

Huskies while Cougar quarterback Ryan Leaf, in his first career start, passed for 291 yards and one score.

In 1996, in Pullman, the Huskies jumped out to a 24-point lead in the third quarter thanks to Corey Dillon's 155 rushing yards on 38 carries. Dillon recorded three TDs to cap his career. Cougar quarterback Ryan Leaf rallied WSU with 24 unanswered points and when Wales field goal was just left the game went into overtime. Brock Huard found Jerome Pathon for a three-yard score to give UW the lead. On fourth down, Leaf's pass to Chad Carpenter was caught just out of bounds to end the contest.

The Huskies current five-game winning streak is the longest in the series since Washington's eight-game streak from 1974-81.

For a list of top performances by Huskies and Cougars in the Apple Cup, see page 181.

Apple Cup Barbs

There have been many zingers tossed out between the Cougars and Huskies over the years, regarding the Apple Cup and the cross-state rivalry. Here are a few of the most colorful:

"They've got a lot of great dancers on their team. Too bad they can't hit as well as they dance."

—WSU's Timm Rosenbach after a 34-19 loss, 1987

"I'm a 2,000-word underdog."

—Don James on Jim Walden, 1985

"There are four important stages in your life. You're born, you play the Huskies, you get married and you die."

—WSU guard Dan Lynch, 1984

"I've always felt being a Cougar prepares you well for life. You learn not to expect too much."

—UW coach Don James, 1983

"Nobody in the press box, no other coach made that decision. I made the choice. The kids thought we should try a pass. I stupidly agreed."

—WSU coach Jim Sweeney after miracle Husky comeback, triggered by an interception, 1975

"I thought they might give it to me. Those are good at home, but we weren't at home."

—Chuck Nelson after first miss in 30 tries, 1982

"Nothing in my job — not the Rose Bowls, not the Holiday Bowls, nothing — is more important than beating the University of Washington."

—WSU coach Jim Walden, 1982

"To just think about losing this game makes me want to puke. It would absolutely disgust me."

— UW guard Trevor Highfield, 1995

"When I don't feel like running that extra lap or doing the 20 extra reps on the bench press, the thing that motivates me is the Cougars."

— UW fullback Richard Thomas, 1995

"That's what Huskies do. They either win and they're obnoxious about it, or they lose and they have excuses."

— Former WSU player Robbie Tobeck, 2000