

2006
JANUARY 2

ATTENDANCE: 74,222

ALABAMA
TEXAS TECH 13
10

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\$10

SEVENTIETH CLASSIC
GAME PROGRAM
DALLAS, TEXAS

The 70th AT&T Cotton Bowl Classic had it all: warm weather, bright sunshine, a sellout crowd and a Classic finish to remember. Alabama's Jamie Christensen kicked a career-best 45-yard field goal on the final play as time ran out, lifting the Crimson Tide to a 13-10 victory over the Texas Tech Red Raiders. A sellout crowd of 74,222, plus a national FOX TV audience, watched in 70-degree temperatures as the two teams worked their way toward only the second Cotton Bowl decided on the last play.

"Jamie had three game-winning kicks – what a way to finish this game and this season," said Alabama coach Mike Shula, whose team finished 10-2.

Christensen also made a 31-yarder in the third quarter, giving Alabama a 10-3, advantage. But in the second quarter, he had missed from 39 yards and later had a 38-yarder blocked. His opportunity to kick the game-winner, after Texas Tech tied it, 10-10, with 2:56 left, appeared unlikely considering Alabama's regular-season offensive output in 2005.

"I didn't want to go into overtime. I wanted to win it on offense," Shula said. "Our offensive line did a great job with the game on the line, and (quarterback) Brodie (Croyle) made some big plays."

Alabama, starting at its 14, covered 58 yards in 10 plays. Croyle made it happen, first with a 17-yard pass on third down to Matt Miller, giving the Tide a first down at its 35. He then delivered with an 11-yarder to Brandon Brooks and followed with a 23-yarder to Keith Brown, putting Alabama at the Tech 31 with 49 seconds left.

"Our plan going in was to stay out of third and long situations, but that's exactly where we were on that last drive," said Croyle, who completed 19 of 31 passes for 275 yards and one touchdown. "It was a good day. Our offensive line did a great job, and our running backs and receivers did a tremendous job fighting for extra yards."

Christensen's kick appeared to barely clear the crossbar, squeezing just inside the left upright.

"It didn't look very good when it left his foot," Texas Tech coach Mike Leach said. "I had high hopes at that point ... Did he make it?"

Christensen, when asked whether someone might have gotten a hand on the kick, said: "Actually, I didn't know whether it was going to be good until I saw the referee's hands go up. I knew I had hit it solidly, but I also kicked a little bit of ground and just didn't get the height on it that I wanted."

Croyle received the Sanford Trophy, which recognizes the game's outstanding offensive player and commemorates Cotton Bowl founder J. Curtis Sanford. Alabama linebacker DeMeco Ryans, who had seven tackles, five solo, and 1½ sacks, received the McKnight Trophy, which recognizes the game's outstanding defensive player and commemorates Felix McKnight, a celebrated Dallas newspaperman and long-time chairman of the Cotton Bowl team selection committee.

"It was a tightly contested game by two really good teams," said Leach, whose team finished 9-3. "I felt like they outplayed us on all three sides of the ball by a narrow margin."

Alabama grabbed a quick lead on Croyle's 76-yard pass to Brown with 11:37 left in the first quarter. The Tide continued to dominate until the closing three minutes when Tech took advantage of a short field and got the tying score on a 12-yard pass from Cody Hodges to Jarrett Hicks.

"That's a tough, tough Texas Tech team," Croyle said. "They fought and fought and fought. That might have been the most fun game I ever played in."

Alabama's offense controlled the ball for nearly 39 minutes, keeping Texas Tech, No.1 nationally in passing offense and No.2 in total offense, off the field. In the end, Tech could only watch as Christensen ended the Red Raiders' attempt to go to overtime and any dream of Tech taking home the Field Scovell Trophy.

Game Summary

TEXAS TECH	3	0	0	7	10
ALABAMA	7	0	3	3	13

FIRST QUARTER

Alabama: Keith Brown 76 pass from Brodie Croyle (Jamie Christensen kick), 11:37, 84 yards on 2 plays following punt.

Texas Tech: Alex Trlica 34 FG, 3:00, 69 yards on 10 plays following punt.

THIRD QUARTER

Alabama: Christensen 31 FG, 6:53, 67 yards on 17 plays following second half kickoff.

FOURTH QUARTER

Texas Tech: Jarrett Hicks 12 pass from Cody Hodges (Trlica kick), 2:56, 38 yards on two plays following punt.

Alabama: Christensen 45 FG, 0:00, 58 yards on 10 plays following kickoff.

OUTSTANDING PLAYERS

Brodie Croyle, Alabama
DeMeco Ryans, Alabama

COACHES

Mike Leach, Texas Tech
Mike Shula, Alabama

WEATHER

Clear, wind N/NW 10, 63 degrees

Game Statistics**TEAM STATS**

	BAMA	TECH
First Downs	18	21
Rushing	7	10
Passing	10	9
Penalty	1	2
Rushes-Net Yards	24-103	44-145
Net Yards Passing	226	275
Passes	16-36-0	19-31-0
Total Plays	60	75
Total Net Yards	329	420
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	10-65	4-35
Punts-Average	6-41.3	5-37.8

RUSHING

Texas Tech: Hodges 17-66, Filani 1-26, Henderson, 4-12, Amendola 1-5, Harrell 1(-6).

Alabama: Darby 29-81, Castille 6-22, Johns 3-19, McClain 1-11, Croyle 4-6, Brown 1-6.

PASSING

Texas Tech: Hodges 15-32-0, 196 yards; Harrell 1-4-0, 30 yards.

Alabama: Croyle 19-31-0, 275 yards.

RECEIVING

Texas Tech: Henderson 5-46, Filani 4-67, Johnson 3-56, Hicks 3-51, Amendola 1-6.

Alabama: Brown 5-141, Caddell 3-63, Castille 3-11, Darby 3-10, Miller 2-27, Brooks 1-11, McClain 1-11, McCall 1-1.

PUNTING

Texas Tech: Reyes 6-41.3.

Alabama: Schatz 5-37.8.