

Texas A&M defeats Oklahoma 41-13 in 77th AT&T Cotton Bowl Classic

Another chapter can be added to the legend of Johnny Football after the talented freshman quarterback dazzled over 87,000 fans at Cowboys Stadium and helped guide Texas A&M to a dominating 41-13 win over Oklahoma in the 77th AT&T Cotton Bowl Classic.

“To come in and go against a Big 12 rival and do everything we wanted as a team, and send these seniors out with a win, we couldn’t feel any better,” Manziel said.

On the game’s opening drive, Texas A&M fans let out a thunderous roar when Manziel avoided numerous Oklahoma defenders and set the tempo with an explosive 24-yard run.

Just two plays later, Manziel called his own number again and scampered for 23 more yards, but this time, he tiptoed down the sideline and leaped into the end zone to give the Aggies an early 7-0 lead.

It was a play that can be described as simply amazing - something Manziel has been all season.

“It’s been crazy,” Manziel said. “It’s been a rollercoaster to see how things have played out from the first game to where they are now and what things have played out in my life as well as everybody on this team, how we’ve progressed as a team, how we’ve continued to get better every week. We came and played one of our best games all year today.”

Manziel accounted for four total touchdowns and finished the game with 229 yards on the ground and 287 yards passing en route to being named Offensive MVP.

His 516 yards of total offense broke former Texas Tech quarterback Graham Harrell’s Cotton Bowl record. The 2012 Heisman Trophy winner continued to rewrite the record book as he also set the all-time FBS bowl mark for most rushing yards by a quarterback.

“You’ve got to give it to him,” said Oklahoma strong safety Javon Harris. “He’s not a Heisman winner for no reason. You’ve got to give him props for what he did today.”

But it was freshman running back Trey Williams who broke the game open with 6:30 remaining in the third quarter.

The true freshman, who just a year ago helped Spring Dekaney win the 5A Division II state title at Cowboys Stadium, found a hole and dashed 30 yards to give the Aggies a commanding 27-13 lead.

On the ensuing Texas A&M possession, Manziel continued to work his magic and found Ryan Swope for a 33-yard touchdown on a key fourth down. Swope led Texas A&M with eight receptions for 104 yards and became the school’s all-time leading receiver in terms of yards.

“The coaches did a great job of putting a great game plan together,” Manziel said. “Everybody has this time to scheme up and they put a good game plan together and really the offensive line, the receivers, everybody went out and executed tonight. It was a great night for the offense.”

Midway through the fourth quarter, Manziel hammered the final nail in the coffin and put the Aggies up 41-13 with his second touchdown pass of the night, a 34-yard strike to Uzoma Nwachukwu.

“We knew what we had to accomplish tonight. The coaches put us in a good situation. We had trust in them,” Swope said. “Offensively, we went in at halftime, made some adjustments and knew that guys had to step up and make plays. Everyone just bought in. It was real fun.”

Oklahoma quarterback Landry Jones set his own Cotton Bowl record with 23 completions in the first half. His biggest completion of the night came just before halftime when he cut the Texas A&M lead to one on a 6-yard touchdown pass to Justin Brown.

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(page 2)

But Jones and the entire Oklahoma offense struggled to get anything going in the second half, failing to pick up a first down on their first three possessions in the third quarter.

“In the second half it totally broke down offensively and defensively,” said Oklahoma head coach Bob Stoops. “Defense couldn’t get off the field. We had guys plenty of times in position to make a play. Couldn’t make a play. That’s just where we are. They totally outplayed us in every way.”

The Sooners showed signs of life early in the game when Harris picked off a Manziel pass in the end zone. But Jones followed that up with a costly interception and gave the ball right back to the Aggies. Manziel avenged his only mistake of the game with a 5-yard touchdown run on a three-play drive off the interception.

“Johnny Manziel is everything he was billed to be, expected him to be,” Stoops said. “But, again, Coach (Kevin) Sumlin and his staff totally outplayed us, out coached us the whole second half. It’s a team effort. When you lose like that in the second half, the offense goes.”

Before the season began many experts projected Texas A&M to struggle in its first year in the SEC. But the Aggies proved their doubters wrong and finished with 11 wins for the first time since 1998 including a signature victory over Alabama, which is competing for the BCS national championship.

Texas A&M set an SEC record with more than 7,000 yards of total offense including 663 on Friday night.

With the win over its former Big 12 foe, Texas A&M moved past Arkansas for most Cotton Bowl Classic victories by an SEC team with five.

“There was reason for people to doubt us. You know, moving into a new league, .500 program over the last 10 years, I don’t know why anybody wouldn’t have doubted us,” first-year Texas A&M head coach Kevin Sumlin said. “I don’t see one game, and I’ve said this before, one game doesn’t define a program, doesn’t define your recruiting. I think your body of work does. This game tonight was indicative of how these guys have played all year.”