



OHIO STATE USC

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2018
DEC. 29, '17

ATTENDANCE: 67,510

Whenever conference champions tangle in postseason play it tends to grab attention. And, when the teams involved are Ohio State and USC, it makes for a matchup of mega proportions. These two college football bluebloods made the 83rd Goodyear Cotton Bowl a highly anticipated attraction. Both teams sported identical 11-2 records with lofty national rankings. The Buckeyes checked in at No. 5 in the final College Football Playoff rankings while the Trojans finished up the regular season at No. 8.

For the first time, Ohio State and USC clashed in a bowl game outside of their celebrated Rose Bowl skirmishes. The Classic would be their eighth bowl matchup against one another and their 24th meeting overall with USC holding a 13-10-1 advantage in the series. The Trojans had recorded seven consecutive victories over the Buckeyes, a streak that spanned 44 years.

While the Trojans held the historical edge, Ohio State came to North Texas with something to prove. The Buckeyes had barely missed landing a berth in the national semifinals. And, it was J.T. Barrett, OSU's brilliant senior quarterback, who seized the moment offensively. Playing in his final collegiate game and just two hours away from his hometown of Wichita Falls, Barrett rushed for two touchdowns and threw for 114 yards to lead the Buckeyes to a compelling victory over USC.

The Buckeye defense took control less than two minutes into the game. USC quarterback Sam Darnold had just connected with standout receiver Deontay Burnett for 16 yards and an apparent first down. That's when cornerback Kendall Sheffield unloaded on Burnett to force a fumble. Safety Damon Webb scooped up the loose football and rambled 20 yards to the USC 19.

It was the first of four costly turnovers for the Trojans and the Buckeyes were quick to capitalize. A nine-yard pass to Marcus Baugh moved OSU to the USC six, and freshman running back J.K. Dobbins carried for five more yards to the one. Barrett then cashed in for the touchdown to give Ohio State an early 7-0 lead with 12:25 on the clock.

Soon, the Buckeyes were on the move again. A USC punt pinned the Buckeyes on their eight-yard line. But, a key third-down pass from Barrett to receiver Austin Mack covered 33 yards and gave Ohio State room to breathe at the Buckeye 43. Barrett and Mack hooked up again two plays later for a 15-yard gain to the USC 40. The drive eventually stalled just inside the Trojan 10 as the opening period came to an end. On the first play of the second quarter, in came junior placekicker Sean Nuernberger to boot a 26-yard field goal and push the Buckeyes to a 10-0 advantage.

More fireworks erupted seconds later when Webb picked off Darnold on a first down pass and sprinted 23 yards to the end zone to pad the Ohio State lead at 17-0.

The Buckeyes' final score came on the heels of yet another fumble when Darnold was sacked by defensive end Tyquan Lewis after the Trojans marched 65 yards from their own 12 to the Ohio State 23. Linebacker Jerome Baker grabbed the loose ball and ran 13 yards before being hauled down at the Buckeyes' 41.

Barrett passed for 16 yards to Mike Weber out of the backfield to move inside USC territory and a facemask penalty tacked 15 more yards onto the play. The Buckeyes were back in scoring position at the 28. After calling timeout with 5:36 left to play in the half, Barrett raced 28 yards for his second touchdown of the game and Ohio State was well in command, 24-0.

USC finally got untracked with the recovery of a fumbled punt return at the Buckeye 15. Darnold, the first Trojan quarterback in history to pass for more than 4,000 yards in a single season, jumped on the turnover and fired a pass to tight end Daniel Imatorbhebhe at the one. Two plays later, tailback Ronald Jones scored to trim the Buckeye lead to 24-7.

USC fought back and played well in the second half, but by that point the damage had been done. Ohio State's suffocating defense continued to harass Darnold. USC mounted one last drive in the game's final seven minutes only to see it stall at the Ohio State 18 with just 31 seconds to play.

Three years earlier, Ohio State had defeated Oregon 42-20 at AT&T Stadium to claim the first national title of the College Football Playoff era. Now, the Buckeyes added the Field Scovell Trophy to their collection and left Arlington with a resounding 24-7 victory over a longtime rival.

Game Summary

USC	0	7	0	0	7
OHIO STATE	7	17	0	0	24

FIRST QUARTER

Ohio State: J.T. Barrett 1 run (Sean Nuernberger kick), 12:25, 19 yds in 5 plays, following fumble

SECOND QUARTER

Ohio State: Nuernberger 26 FG, 14:55, 83 yds in 13 plays, following punt
Ohio State: Damon Webb 23 interception return (Nuernberger kick), 14:42
Ohio State: Barrett 28 run (Nuernberger kick), 5:27, 59 yds in 2 plays, following fumble
USC: Ronald Jones 1 run (Chase McGrath kick), 1:59, 15 yds in 3 plays, following fumble

OUTSTANDING PLAYERS

J.T. Barrett, Ohio State
Damon Webb, Ohio State
COACHES
Clay Helton, USC
Urban Meyer, Ohio State

WEATHER

Indoors

Game Statistics

TEAM STATS	USC	OSU	
First Downs	23	13	RUSHING
Rushing	5	6	USC: Jones 19-64, Ware 3-9, Malepeai 1-2, Carr 2-0, Darnold 11(-18).
Passing	16	5	Ohio State: Barrett 16-66, Campbell 3-42, Dobbins 13-39, Weber 5-18, Team 1(-2).
Penalty	2	2	PASSING
Rushes-Net Yards	36-57	38-163	USC: Darnold 26-45-1, 356 yds.
Net Yards Passing	356	114	Ohio State: Barrett 11-17-0, 114 yds.
Passes	26-45-1	11-17-0	RECEIVING
Total Plays	81	55	USC: Burnett 12-139, Vaughns 6-119, Pittman 3-69, Imatorbhebhe 2-25, Malepeai 1-3, Petite 1-2, Carr 1(-1).
Total Net Yards	413	277	Ohio State: Baugh 4-40, Mack 3-56, Weber 1-16, Hill 1-3, McLaurin 1-2, Campbell 1(-3).
Fumbles-Lost	3-3	1-1	PUNTING
Penalties-Yards	3-35	3-30	USC: Budrovich 6-34.3
Punts-Average	6-34.3	7-45.9	Ohio State: Chrisman 7-45.9