

Nebraska tops Michigan in close Alamo Bowl victory

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — If Nebraska returns to national prominence next season, the Cornhuskers will remember the Alamo Bowl — especially the frantic final play.

Zac Taylor threw a 13-yard touchdown pass to Terrence Nunn with 4:29 left, and Nebraska survived Michigan's lateral-filled, game-ending play to beat the No. 20 Wolverines 32-28 on Wednesday night.

"This puts us back on the map," said Cory Ross, who ran for 161 yards.

The game ended on a bizarre play, with Michigan's Chad Henne throwing a short pass and his teammates lateraling eight times up and down the field before the play fizzled out with Titus Brothers shoving Tyler Ecker out of bounds at the Nebraska 13. Extra players and some coaches from both teams were on the field as the play finished.

"I'm thankful we didn't get penalized," coach Bill Callahan said. "We thought the game was over, but the ball was still going down on the field. We were very fortunate we stayed alert and made the play to end the game."

Nebraska overcame a nine-point deficit in the fourth quarter.

"We showed them that Nebraska is back on the rise," Taylor said.

The Huskers (8-4) won the Alamo for the third time in six years and finished a season with three straight victories for the first time since 1999.

Henne threw three touchdown passes and also ran for a score. His 7-yard scramble with 11:40 left gave the Wolverines a 28-17 lead.

But Nebraska used a long punt

return and a turnover to end Michigan's season with another disappointment. The Wolverines, ranked as high as No. 3 in September, finished 7-5, with their losses coming by a combined 21 points.

"We just didn't finish," Michigan running back Mike Hart said. "That's been a problem all year."

Ross highlighted his night with a 31-yard touchdown that pulled Nebraska to 28-25 with 8:08 left. That score was set up by Cortney Grixby's 28-yard punt return to the Michigan 38.

"It was a huge hole that Greg Austin set up for me," Ross said of his touchdown. "It was there. There wasn't anything crazy I had to do other than run."

The Huskers took the lead after Henne fumbled and Ola Dagundaro returned the ball to the Michigan 17. Three plays later, Taylor connected with Nunn for his third touchdown pass and second to Nunn.

Michigan drove to the Nebraska 18, but Zackary Bowman tipped away Henne's fourth-down pass to Mario Manningham.

"The turnovers were really monumental," said Michigan coach Lloyd Carr, whose team lost two fumbles and had an interception. "The offense was outstanding in the first half. We gave our offense some opportunities but didn't capitalize on it."

Taylor was 14 of 31 for 167 yards, with two interceptions. He was sacked four times and hit hard on many other occasions.

"We don't like to see him take hits," Callahan said. "He's a courageous young man. He stays right in there in the pocket. There's flurry all around him, he stays as calm as any

quarterback I've coached."

Henne, 20-of-42 for 219 yards, erased a 17-14 deficit in the third quarter with a 21-yard pass to Manningham. Henne's touchdown run made it 28-17.

Nebraska, back at a bowl after having its NCAA-record run of 35 straight postseason appearances end last year, ran its record to 5-0 in games at the Alamodome. The Huskers have won three bowls in San Antonio and two Big 12 championships.

"Something's in the air down here," Ross said. "I think I'm going to move here."

The Huskers are 13-10 in Callahan's two seasons after beating Kansas State, Colorado and Michigan to finish the season. They haven't been in the Top 25 since the end of the 2003 season.

"We have something special going here, so we're just going to keep going," Taylor said.

Hart, who was injured most of the season, led Michigan with 74 yards on 19 carries.

The game was tied 14-14 at half-time, and Michigan benefited from a third-quarter video review that overturned a Nebraska touchdown and forced the Huskers to settle for Jordan Congdon's 20-yard field goal. Taylor's 3-yard pass to Nunn was disallowed when it was ruled that Nunn reeled in the ball after it hit the ground.

The Wolverines then marched 58 yards in six plays to take a 21-17 lead.

Henne completed passes of 12 and 18 yards, and got 15 more yards on Titus Adams' roughing-the-passer penalty, before Henne hit Manningham for a touchdown.

Chiefs know the odds are against them

KANSASCITY, Mo. (AP) — As three-team parlays go, this would be a Las Vegas long shot.

Kansas City (9-6) must beat the 11-4 AFC North champion Cincinnati Bengals; San Diego (9-6) must lose to 12-3 Denver even though the AFC West champion Broncos will be resting several starters; and the lowly 5-10 Detroit Lions will have to go into Pittsburgh and somehow find a way to upset the streaking Steelers (10-5).

If all that happens, the Chiefs will be in the playoffs for the second time in three years and Dick Vermeil will add at least one more game to a long coaching career.

Vermeil's message to his team on Wednesday, their first day back at practice, was not to worry about all the loose ends.

"We're realistic," Vermeil said. "But I'm not going to say we're not

going to be (in the playoffs). The only thing I'm going to do is try to control the things that we have control of. If we'd controlled it better earlier, we wouldn't be in the situation we're in."

The Bengals can create an opportunity to improve their position from No. 4 seed to No. 3 in the AFC, but may be short-handed if several key players, including quarterback Carson Palmer, are held out of part or all the game to nurse injuries.

The Chiefs' bodies are mostly healthy. It's their psyches that could need assistance.

In what would be the worst kind of downer, they might even take the field Sunday knowing their fate is already sealed.

If San Diego beats the Broncos on Saturday, then there is no way the Chiefs can slip past the Steelers in a tiebreaker for the final wild-card

slot.

"I think if that happened, we would respond pretty well," full-back Tony Richardson said. "If we find out our fate on Saturday, that will be unfortunate. But there's enough character guys in here with a lot of pride who would still want to get 10 wins."

The biggest obstacle the Bengals may have to overcome will be running back Larry Johnson, who had 131 tough yards in the slippery mud against the Chargers last week and was named AFC offensive player of the week.

It's the second time Johnson has won the award during his amazing eight-week run of 100-yard rushing games. Already named to his first Pro Bowl, Johnson has rushed for 1,549 yards, leading the AFC and ranking third in the NFL.

He needs just 67 more yards to break the Chiefs record of 1,615 yards established by Holmes in 2002.

Johnson declined to speak with the Kansas City media on Wednesday, but went to special lengths to extend his thanks to his teammates.

"Today he acknowledged his appreciation for the offensive linemen and fullback and tight ends by presenting them all with a beautiful watch in appreciation, which was a very meaningful thing for the offensive linemen, tight end and blocking fullback," Vermeil said.

"It's more than just a gesture. It's a token of respect and appreciation."

Vermeil said Johnson made his presentation after practice.

AP Briefs

ATHLETES OF THE YEAR
Lance Armstrong was honored as The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year for the third straight year and Annika Sorenstam was the landslide female winner.

Armstrong, the only athlete to be selected by sports writers four times since the honor first was awarded in 1931, retired after winning his seventh consecutive Tour de France in July.

Armstrong received 30 of the 83 votes cast. Heisman Trophy-winning running back Reggie Bush of Southern California was second with 23 votes.

Sorenstam received 47 of 81 votes to become the first golfer since Babe Zaharias (1945-47) to win the AP Female Athlete of the Year award three straight years.

The Swedish star won 10 tournaments in 2005 and became the first woman in 19 years to capture the first two legs of the Grand Slam.

Danica Patrick, the rookie race car driver whose fourth-place finish at the Indianapolis 500 was the best ever by a female, received 17 votes.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Pete Carroll, who coached Southern California from mediocrity to dominance since being hired in 2001, agreed to a contract extension with the school.

Neither Carroll nor USC athletic director Mike Garrett would provide specifics of the deal.

The top-ranked Trojans are one win away from an unprecedented third straight national championship, an accomplishment they can achieve by beating No. 2 Texas in the Rose Bowl next Wednesday

night.

USC enters the Rose Bowl with a 34-game winning streak, and has a 48-3 record the past four seasons after going 6-6 in Carroll's first year.

PRO BASKETBALL
DENVER (AP) — Denver Nuggets center Marcus Camby, the NBA's leading rebounder, is out indefinitely with a broken right pinkie.

Camby will need surgery on the finger, after which a timeline for his return will be set.

HOCKEY
SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Wayne Gretzky returned to the Phoenix Coyotes' bench just eight days after his mother's death.

Gretzky was back with the Coyotes after a 10-day leave of absence to be with his mother, Phyllis, who died of lung cancer on Dec. 19 in Brantford, Ontario.

His return game featured four goals in 2:58 by his inspired team, which helped produce a 5-4 victory over the San Jose Sharks.

Phoenix lost three of the five games Gretzky missed.

PRO FOOTBALL
OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP) — Brian Billick will return as coach of the Baltimore Ravens next year despite two straight disappointing seasons.

Baltimore missed the playoffs in 2004, and this season the Ravens are assured their third losing record in Billick's seven years as head coach.

But the Ravens (6-9) also have won four of their last six, including two in a row over Green Bay and Minnesota by a combined score of 78-26.

TV LISTINGS

SATURDAY							DECEMBER 31						
	6 AM	6:30	7 AM	7:30	8 AM	8:30	9 AM	9:30	10 AM	10:30	11 AM	11:30	
KLBY/ABC (4) (6)	La Gente	BusinessWeek	Good Morning America (CC)		Lilo & Stitch	Buzz-Maggie	Proud Family	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Phil of Future	Kim Possible	Power Rangers	
KSNK/NBC (8) (8)	Today (CC)				Paid Program	Paid Program	Tuten-stein (EI)	Time Warp	Trading Spaces	Darcy's Wild Life	Flight 29 Down	Endurance (EI)	
KBSL/CBS (12) (11)	Saturday Early Show (CC)				Lazy-Town	Go Diego	Backyardigans	Dora the Explorer	Little Bill (EI) (CC)	Blue's Clues	Paid Program	Paid Program	
K15CG (2)	Business	Market-Market	Thomas-Friends	Jay Jay the Jet	Bob the Builder	Real Wheels	DragonflyTV	Kids A Cookin'	Family Kitchen	Seasonings	Food	Victory Garden	
ESPN (28)	SportsCenter (CC)		SportsCenter (CC)		SportsCenter (CC)		Sports Reports	SportsCenter (Live) (CC)		NFL	College Gameday (Live) (CC)		
USA (37)	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	WWE A.M. Raw		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		
TBS (38)	(5:00) Movie: See Spot Run ★ (2001)		Movie: Major League II ★½ (1994, Comedy) (PA) <i>Charlie Sheen</i> . (CC)				Movie: Honey, I Shrunk the Kids ★★★ (1989, Fantasy) (PA) <i>Rick Moranis</i> . (CC)				Movie: The Goonies (1985)		
WGN (39)	Enterprise	Adelante Chicago	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	
TNT (40)	(5:00) Movie: To Die For ★★★ (1995)		Movie: Cocktail (1988) An arrogant young bartender uses his charm and good looks.				Movie: Blast From the Past ★★ (1999, Comedy) <i>Brendan Fraser</i> . (CC) (DVS)				Movie: As Good as It Gets ★★★ (1997)		
DSC (42)	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Earthquake Storms (CC)		Pompeii: The Last Day (CC)					Mega-Tsunamis (CC)	
A&E (47)	Murder, She Wrote (CC)		Ask This Old	Ask This Old	24 (CC)		24 1:00 AM - 2:00 AM (CC)		24 2:00 AM - 3:00 AM (CC)		24 3:00 AM - 4:00 AM (CC)		
HIST (48)	Automobiles Mustang (CC)		Unknown Civil War (N) (CC)		The Last Days of WWII May 27-June 2		Heavy Metal The Challenger tank.		Battlefield Detectives Waterloo		Mail Call D-Day Special (CC)		
NICK (55)	Rugrats (CC)	Grown Up	Jimmy Neutron	Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob	SpongeBob	Oddparents	Catscratch	Danny Phantom	Avatar-Last Air	Movie: Hey Arnold! The Movie (2002)		
DISN (56)	Koala Brothers	Higglytown	Einstein's	JoJo's Circus	Doodlebops	Charlie & Lola	The Wiggles	Lilo & Stitch	That's-Raven	That's-Raven	Phil of Future	Phil of Future	
FAM (58)	Power Rangers	Power Rangers	Power Rangers	Power Rangers	Get Ed Omnirex	Get Ed Z3R0	Super Robot	Super Robot	Kong-Series	Kong-Series	H.S. Heisman	Full House	
HALL (60)	Little House on the Prairie (Part 2 of 2)		Little House on the Prairie (CC)		Movie: Dead Man's Walk ★★½ (1996, Western) (Part 1 of 3) <i>Jonny Lee Miller</i> .				Movie: Dead Man's Walk ★★½ (1996, Western) (Part 2 of 3) <i>Jonny Lee Miller</i> .				

SATURDAY							DECEMBER 31						
	12 PM	12:30	1 PM	1:30	2 PM	2:30	3 PM	3:30	4 PM	4:30	5 PM	5:30	
KLBY/ABC (4) (6)	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	PGA Tour Season Preview (N) (CC)		Paid Program	ABC Wid News	
KSNK/NBC (3) (8)	Jeopardy!	Paid Program	Paid Program	Skiing: Olympic Freestyle Trials. (CC)			Kristi Yamaguchi Friends and Family From Albany, N.Y. (N) (CC)				Paid Program	NBC News	
KBSL/CBS (12) (11)	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	Paid Program	NFL Today Host Greg Gumbel. (Live)		NFL Football: Denver Broncos at San Diego Chargers. Qualcomm Stadium. (Live) (CC)					
K15CG (2)	Yankee Shop	This Old House	Ask This Old	Home-time	Wood-wright	For Your Home	Paint! Paint!	School-Fine Art	Love of Quilting	Piano Guy (CC)	Cabin Country	Rare Visions	
ESPN (28)	College Football: Autozone Liberty Bowl -- Fresno State vs. Tulsa. Memphis, Tenn. (Live) (CC)						College Basketball: Alabama at Oklahoma. (Live) (CC)				Operation		
USA (37)	Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		
TBS (38)	(11:10) Movie: The Goonies ★★½ (1985) Sean Astin. (CC)			Movie: The Birdcage ★★★ (1996, Comedy) A son's engagement throws a kink into a gay couple's life.				Movie: Ace Ventura: Pet Detective ★★ (1994, Comedy) Jim Carrey. (CC)					
WGN (39)	Soul Train Mike Jones; Corey Clark.		Movie: Trading Places ★★ (1983, Comedy) Eddie Murphy. (CC)			Farscape Premiere (CC)		Farscape Dream a Little Dream (CC)		America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)			
TNT (40)	(11:00) Movie: As Good as It Gets ★★★ (1997, Comedy-Drama) Jack Nicholson.			Movie: Mickey Blue Eyes ★★½ (1999, Comedy) Hugh Grant, James Caan. (CC)				Movie: Sister Act ★★ (1992, Comedy) Whoopi Goldberg. (Premiere) (CC)					
DSC (42)	America's Tsunami: Are We Next? Predicting tidal waves.				Supervolcano A powerful supervolcano lies under Yellowstone National Park. (CC)					Pompeii of the East (CC)			
A&E (47)	24 4:00 AM - 5:00 AM (CC)		24 5:00 AM - 6:00 AM (CC)		24 6:00AM - 7:00AM (CC)		24 7:00AM - 8:00AM (CC)		24 8:00AM - 9:00AM (CC)		24 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CC)		
HIST (48)	Modern Marvels		Band of Brothers (CC)			Band of Brothers (CC)		Band of Brothers (CC)			Band of Brothers (CC)		
NICK (55)	(11:00) Movie: Oddparents		The Fairly OddParents (CC)		All Grown Up Dude, Where's My Horse?		Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius		My Life as a Teenage Robot		Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius		
DISN (56)	Zack & Cody		That's-Raven		That's-Raven		Movie: The Princess Diaries ★★½ (2001, Comedy) Julie Andrews, Anne Hathaway.		Totally Suite New Year's Eve				
FAM (58)	Movie: Rookie of the Year ★★ (1993, Comedy) Thomas Ian Nicholas.				Movie: The Rookie ★★ (2002, Drama) A high-school baseball coach tries out for the major league. Dennis Quaid. (CC)					Movie: Field of Dreams (1989) (CC)			
HALL (60)	Movie: Dead Man's Walk ★★½ (1996, Western) (Part 3 of 3) Jonny Lee Miller.				Lonesome Dove (Part 1 of 4) (CC)				Lonesome Dove (Part 2 of 4) (CC)				

SATURDAY										DECEMBER 31			
	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30	
KLBY/ABC (4) (6)	News (CC)	The Insider	Movie: Snow Dogs (2002) A Miami dentist becomes a sled-dog racer in Alaska. (CC)				New Year's Rockin' Eve		News (CC)	Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve 2006 (Live) (CC)			
KSNK/NBC (8) (8)	News	Wheel of Fortune	Movie: A Knight's Tale ★★½ (2001, Adventure) A peasant poses as a knight for a shot at jousting glory. <i>Heath Ledger, Mark Addy</i> .						News	24 1:00PM - 2:00PM New Years			
KBSL/CBS (12) (11)	NFL Football: Broncos at Chargers		Cold Case It's Raining Men (CC)		Without a Trace Upstairs Downstairs		48 Hours Mystery The Other Woman		News (CC)	Drew Carey	Alias Page 47 (CC)		
K15CG (2)	Antiques Roadshow (CC)		Live From Lincoln Center Pianist Lang Lang performs.				Red Green	Austin City Limits Elvis Costello (CC)		Soundstage Fleetwood Mac (CC)	Tavis Smiley		
ESPN (28)	Opera-tion	NFL	NFL Football: New York Giants at Oakland Coliseum. (Live) (CC)				Raiders. McAfee	2006 ESPN2 New Year's Special (N)		SportsCenter (Live) (CC)			
USA (37)	Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Criminal Intent	Law & Order: Criminal Intent			
TBS (38)	Funniest Commercials: 2005		Movie: Tommy Boy ★★ (1995, Comedy) <i>Chris Farley, David Spade</i> . (CC)				Movie: Orange County ★★½ (2002, Comedy) <i>Colin Hanks</i> .		Movie: Ace Ventura: Pet Detective ★★ (1994, Comedy)				
WGN (39)	NBA Basketball: Phoenix Suns at Chicago Bulls. United Center. (Live) (CC)					WGN News	Movie: The Godfather ★★★★★ (1972, Drama) A mafia patriarch tries to hold his empire together. <i>Marlon Brando, Al Pacino</i> . (CC)						
TNT (40)	Movie: Miss Congeniality ★★ (2000, Comedy) <i>Sandra Bullock</i> . (CC) (DVS)		Movie: You've Got Mail ★★½ (1998, Comedy) Two bitter business rivals conduct an online love affair.					Movie: Sleepless in Seattle ★★½ (1993) <i>Tom Hanks</i> . (CC)					
DSC (42)	Americas Volcanoes		Killer Asteroids		Fireballs From Space		Comet Collision! (CC)		Pompeii of the East (CC)		Killer Asteroids		
A&E (47)	24 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CC)		24 11:00AM - 12:00 Noon (CC)		24 Jack turns the tables on Gaines.		24 1:00PM - 2:00PM (CC)		24 2:00PM - 3:00PM (CC)		24 11:00AM - 12:00 Noon (CC)		
HIST (48)	(5:50) Band of Brothers (CC)		Hooked: Illegal Drugs		Hooked: Illegal Drugs		Hooked: Illegal Drugs		Hooked: Illegal Drugs		Hooked: Illegal Drugs		
NICK (55)	The Fairly OddParents (CC)		Movie: Scooby-Doo ★★½ (2002) <i>Freddie Prinze Jr.</i> .			SpongeBob		Cosby Show	Cosby Show	Cosby Show	Cosby Show	Cosby Show	
DISN (56)	(4:45) Totally Suite New Year's Eve										Buzz-Maggie		
FAM (58)	(5:00) Movie: Field of Dreams (1989)		Movie: A League of Their Own ★★ (1992, Comedy) Based on the story of the all-girl baseball league of 1943. <i>Geena Davis</i> .					Movie: Splash ★★ (1984, Comedy) <i>Tom Hanks, Daryl Hannah</i> . (CC)					
HALL (60)	Lonesome Dove (Part 3 of 4) (CC)				Lonesome Dove (Part 4 of 4) (CC)				M*A*S*H Der Tag		M*A*S*H Hawkeye		
									M*A*S*H (CC)		M*A*S*H (CC)		



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