

Bowl Games

1991 ORANGE BOWL

Jan. 1, 1991 at Miami, Fla.

Colorado 10
Notre Dame 9

In an Orange Bowl where there was no shortage of heroes for Colorado, the No. 1 Buffaloes toppled No. 5 Notre Dame, 10-9, enabling the school to claim its first-ever national championship in football. CU overcame two key injuries in rallying in the second half for the victory.

After a scoreless first quarter, the Buffaloes drew first blood on a 22-yard field goal by Jim Harper three minutes into the second quarter. Notre Dame came right back, marching 62 yards in nine plays, with Ricky Watters scoring from two yards out. The score remained at 6-3, however, as CU's Ronnie Bradford charged through the line and blocked Craig Henrich's extra point try. Just prior to halftime, CU lost the services of quarterback Darian Hagan (knee injury) and outside linebacker Kanavis McGhee (shoulder). Both missed the remainder of the game.

Henrich booted a 24-yard field goal early in the second half to extend the Irish lead to 9-3. Charles S. Johnson took over at quarterback for the Buifs, with Notre Dame stopping CU cold on its first possession of the second half. On the first play of the next Notre Dame drive, Chad Brown forced Watters to fumble, with Paul Rose, subbing for McGhee, making the recovery.

Johnson, his feet now wet, coolly directed the Buffaloes to the go-ahead touchdown. Eric Bieniemy's one-yard touchdown run and Jim Harper's extra point kick late in the third quarter rallied CU into the lead. The Buffalo defense then held Notre Dame in check, as the Irish held on to the ball for only less than four minutes the rest of the game, mustering only 35 yards of total offense after CU went on top.

Colorado's road to the national championship wasn't without a couple of late scares. Notre Dame's Raghib Ismail broke loose on a punt return with less than a minute remaining, appearing to run 91 yards for a score, but CU's Tim James was clipped on the play, nullifying the gain. And with 13 seconds left in the game, the Irish still had a chance, especially with Henrich's leg. On its own 38, a completion in the 20-25 yard range would have set up a winning field goal attempt, but Deon Figures intercepted the Rick Mirer pass at the Buff 36 and ran out the clock with a 27-yard return.

Bieniemy rushed for a game-high 86 yards on 28 carries, with Johnson earning the MVP honor, completing five of six passes for 80 yards. Defensively, the Buifs limited the "Golden Domers" to just 264 yards, and Greg Thomas picked off a pair of Mirer passes in Colorado territory. The win, which gave CU an 11-1-1 record for the season, also snapped a seven-game CU bowl-losing streak. Notre Dame finished the year with a 9-3 mark, and finished No. 6 in

the nation.

Colorado	0	3	7	0	—	10
Notre Dame	0	6	3	0	—	9

CU—Harper 22 FG	3- 0	12:04	2Q
Notre Dame—Watters 2 run (kick blocked)	3- 6	7:32	2Q
Notre Dame—Henrich 24 FG	3- 9	10:10	3Q
CU—Bieniemy 1 run (Harper kick)	10- 9	4:26	3Q

Attendance: 77,062
Time: 3:26
Weather: 76 degrees, fair skies, 9 mph winds (E)

TEAM STATISTICS	COLORADO	NOTRE DAME
First Downs	19	18
Third Down Efficiency	6-16	5-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	1-1
Rushes—Net Yards.....	54-186	35-123
Passing Yards	109	141
Passes (Att-Comp-Int)	19-9-0	31-13-3
Total Offense	295	264
Return Yards.....	50	68
Punts: No-Average	7-40.4	3-51.0
Fumbles: No-Lost	2-1	2-2
Penalties/Yards.....	6/50	3/45
Quarterback Sacks—Yards.....	2-13	3-27
Time Possession	35:36	24:24

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Rushing—Colorado: Bieniemy 26-86, Hemingway 14-76, Hagan 7-36, Pritchard 2-24, Rouen, 1-minus 11, C.S. Johnson 4-minus 25. Notre Dame: Brooks 9-46, Watters 9-44, Bettis 3-27, Culver 5-9, Ismail 3-minus 1, Mirer 6-minus 2.
Passing—Colorado: Hagan 12-4-0, 29; C.S. Johnson 6-5-0, 80; Bieniemy 1-0-0, 0. Notre Dame: Mirer 31-13-3, 141.
Receiving—Colorado: Pritchard 3-45, S.Brown 2-23, Hemingway 2-13, Bieniemy 1-19, Boman 1-9. Notre Dame: Ismail 6-57, D.Brown 4-56, Jarrell 1-11, I.Smith 1-9, Davis 1-8.
Punting—Colorado: Rouen 7-40.4 (59 long). Notre Dame: Henrich 2-60.5 (77 long), Sexson 1-32.0.
Punt Returns—Colorado: none. Notre Dame: Ismail 4-68.
Kickoff Returns—Colorado: McCloughan 2-46, C.E.Johnson 1-3. Notre Dame: Ismail 2-30, Culver 1-23.
Interceptions—Colorado: Thomas 2-23, Figures 1-27. Notre Dame: none.
Tackle Leaders—Colorado: Biekert 8,3—11; Brown 8,2—10; Williams 4,4—8; Thomas 5,2—7; Figures 6,0—6; Howe 5,0—5. Notre Dame: Clark 8,3—11; Zorich 8,2—10; Stonebreaker 6,3—9; R.Smith 6,3—9; Dubose 4,3—7; Dahl 5,1—6.

1991 BLOCKBUSTER BOWL

Dec. 28, 1991 at Miami, Fla.

Alabama 30
Colorado 25

Jay Barker threw three touchdown passes and David Palmer scored twice to lead No. 8 and SEC runner-up Alabama to a 30-25 victory over No. 15 and co-Big Eight champion Colorado in the second annual Blockbuster Bowl.

Palmer scored the game's first points on a 52-yard punt return six minutes into the first quarter. The Buffaloes tied the score at 7-7 late in the quarter on a one-yard run by Scott Phillips, which was set up a Ron Woolfork blocked punt. Ted Johnson tackled Martin Houston in the endzone for a safety early in the second quarter, and then the teams traded field goals to enable CU to take a 12-10 lead at halftime.

Barker hooked up with Siran Stacy for a 13-yard touchdown play in the third quarter, only to see the Buifs come back 18 seconds later on a 62-yard scoring strike from Darian Hagan to Michael Westbrook. Barker added a 12-yard touchdown pass to Kevin Lee later in the quarter to give the Crimson Tide a 23-19 lead after three quarters. Barker and Palmer connected on a five-yard TD pass with 8:10 left in the game to put Alabama ahead 30-19, but the Buifs cut the lead to five on a 13-yard pass from Hagan to Charles Johnson with 3:30 left.

Colorado got the ball back with 1:49 left and drove to the 'Bama 33-yard line before being stopped on a fourth-and-one play with 40 seconds left. Alabama outgained CU, 307-199, running more plays (81-60) and holding on to the ball for 38:10. The game marked the debut of CU's new one-back, pass-oriented offense, which had some success. The change took place in CU's bowl practices and was surprise for the game, but at times it appeared that Alabama had found out somehow in advance because of the Crimson Tide's uncanny success on defense.

Alabama finished the season with an 11-1 mark, along with a final No. 5 ranking, while Colorado followed its first national championship season in 1990 with an 8-3-1 record and a No. 20 final ranking.

Colorado	7	5	7	6	—	25
Alabama	7	3	13	7	—	30

Alabama—Palmer 52 punt return (Wethington kick)	0- 7	8:49	1Q
CU—Phillips 1 run (Harper kick)	7- 7	1:34	1Q
CU—Safety, T.Johnson tackled Houston in end zone	9- 7	13:15	2Q
Alabama—Wethington 25 FG	9-10	2:00	2Q
CU—Harper 33 FG	12-10	0:00	2Q
Alabama—Stacy 13 pass from Barker (pass failed)	12-16	10:54	3Q
CU—Westbrook 62 pass from Hagan (Harper kick)	19-16	10:36	3Q
Alabama—Lee 12 pass from Barker (Wethington kick)	19-23	6:55	3Q
Alabama—Palmer 5 pass from Barker (Wethington kick)	19-30	8:10	4Q
CU—C.Johnson 13 pass from Hagan (pass failed)	25-30	3:30	4Q

Attendance: 52,644
Time: 3:45
Weather: 66 degrees, cloudy skies, light rainfall at times, 5 mph winds (W)

TEAM STATISTICS	COLORADO	ALABAMA
First Downs	8	19
Third Down Efficiency	1-16	5-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	1-1
Rushes—Net Yards.....	30-(-11)	64-153
Passing Yards	210	154
Passes (Att-Comp-Int)	30-11-1	17-12-1
Total Offense	199	307
Return Yards.....	50	68
Punts: No-Average	12-41.0	7-39.8
Fumbles: No-Lost	2-0	4-1
Penalties/Yards.....	6/60	6/33
Quarterback Sacks—Yards.....	6-49	7-33
Time Possession	21:50	38:10

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Rushing—Colorado: Hagan 14-12, Warren 6-7, Phillips 3-5, Hill 4-4, Brooks 2-minus 6, R.Smith 1-minus 33. Alabama: Stacy 26-111, Turner 9-43, Lassic 9-31, Palmer 6-21, Lynch 1-2, Houston 2-1, Anderson 1-minus 6, Lee 1-minus 13, Barker 9-minus 37.
Passing—Colorado: Hagan 30-11-1, 210. Alabama: Barker 16-12-1, 154; Stacy 1-0-0, 0.
Receiving—Colorado: Westbrook 3-87, C.Johnson 2-38, Henry 2-22, S.Brown 2-19, Hill 1-29, R.Smith 1-15. Alabama: Stacy 4-59, Lee 2-39, Palmer 2-14, Bussey 1-23, C.Brown 1-8, Houston 1-7, Harris 1-4.
Punting—Colorado: Berger 12-41.0 (59 long). Alabama: Williamson 7-39.8 (51 long), Team 1-0-0.
Punt Returns—Colorado: Woolfork 1-17, R.Smith 2-13, Hagan 1-0. Alabama: Palmer 6-74.
Kickoff Returns—Colorado: C.Johnson 3-71, Westbrook 1-22, Hudson 1-17, Embree 1-3. Alabama: Palmer 2-37, Lassic 1-20.
Interceptions—Colorado: Bradford 1-17. Alabama: McMillan 1-49.
Tackle Leaders—Colorado: C.Brown 14,3—17; Thomas 8,2—10; Renfro 6,4—10; Biekert 7,2—9; T.Johnson 7,2—9; Woolfork 6,2—8. Alabama: Hall 5,0—5; London 4,1—5; Sullins 4,0—4; Teague 3,1—4.