

biggest upset in college football history

The biggest upset in college football history is a topic that stirs passionate debate among fans, analysts, and players alike. The beauty of college football lies in its unpredictability, where even the most formidable teams can fall to underdogs. While there are countless memorable moments, one game stands out as the most shocking upset in the sport's storied history: the 2007 clash between the Appalachian State Mountaineers and the Michigan Wolverines.

Background of the Teams

Before delving into the details of this unforgettable game, it's essential to understand the context in which it occurred.

Appalachian State Mountaineers

The Mountaineers, a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) team, had established themselves as a powerhouse at the lower level. They had won three consecutive FCS national championships from 2005 to 2007. Coached by Jerry Moore, Appalachian State was known for its disciplined play, strong defense, and a potent running game, but they were still considered an underdog heading into the 2007 season opener against a prestigious Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) program.

Michigan Wolverines

On the other hand, the Michigan Wolverines were a college football juggernaut, boasting a storied history filled with national championships and Heisman Trophy winners. Under the leadership of head coach Lloyd Carr, Michigan entered the 2007 season ranked fifth in the nation, with aspirations of competing for a national title. The Wolverines had a rich tradition, playing in the Big Ten Conference, and their home games at Michigan Stadium drew large crowds, making it one of the toughest environments for any opponent.

The Game: September 1, 2007

The stage was set on September 1, 2007, when Appalachian State traveled to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to face the Wolverines. The anticipation was electric, and the expectations were overwhelmingly in favor of Michigan. The Wolverines were favored by 30 points, making it one of the largest point spreads in college football history for a matchup between an FCS and FBS team.

First Half: A Tale of Two Halves

The game began with Michigan dominating early on, as expected. The Wolverines quickly established a 14-0 lead, showcasing their speed and physicality. However, the Mountaineers responded admirably. They scored a touchdown in the second quarter, narrowing the gap to 14-7. This score rattled Michigan fans, who were beginning to realize that their team might not run away with the game as anticipated.

As halftime approached, Michigan managed to increase their lead to 21-7. The Wolverines appeared in control, but the Mountaineers regrouped during the break, determined to prove their worth.

Second Half: The Upset Unfolds

The second half was a different story. Appalachian State came out with newfound energy and confidence. The Mountaineers' defense tightened, stifling Michigan's offensive efforts. In a remarkable turn of events, Appalachian State scored another touchdown, making the score 21-14. With each passing minute, the tension mounted, and the possibility of an upset loomed larger.

With just over four minutes remaining in the game, the Mountaineers orchestrated a thrilling drive that culminated in a game-tying touchdown. The score was now 21-21, silencing the Michigan crowd and electrifying the Appalachian State faithful.

As the clock ticked down, Michigan had a chance to win the game with a field goal. However, disaster struck. The Wolverines fumbled on their last possession, giving Appalachian State the opportunity they had fought so hard to earn. With only seconds left, the Mountaineers lined up for a field goal attempt. The kick was good, and the unthinkable happened: Appalachian State defeated Michigan 34-32.

The Aftermath: A Shocking Legacy

The implications of this upset were profound, resonating far beyond the final score.

Impact on Rankings and Perception

1. Appalachian State's Rise: The victory catapulted the Mountaineers into the national spotlight, marking them as a legitimate contender in college football. They went on to finish the 2007 season with a 13-2 record, securing another FCS national championship.

2. Michigan's Fall: Conversely, the loss was catastrophic for Michigan. The Wolverines fell out of the top 25 rankings and struggled throughout the season, finishing with a disappointing 9-4 record. The defeat sparked intense scrutiny of Carr's coaching and led to significant changes in the program in the following years.

Cultural and Historical Significance

The game is often referenced in discussions about the unpredictability of college football. It serves as a reminder that anything can happen on game day, making the sport exciting and engaging for fans.

- Inspiration for Underdogs: The victory inspired countless underdog teams at all levels of competition. It illustrated that with determination, skill, and a strong game plan, even the most significant obstacles can be overcome.
- A Changing Landscape: The game also highlighted the growing competitiveness of FCS programs, challenging the long-held belief that FBS teams were invulnerable to defeat by their lower-division counterparts.

Conclusion

The 2007 clash between Appalachian State and Michigan stands as the **biggest upset in college football history**, a game that will be remembered for generations. It is a testament to the unpredictability of sports and the drama that unfolds on the field. This monumental upset not only altered the trajectories of both programs but also left an indelible mark on the history of college football, reminding us all that in this sport, anything is possible.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is considered the biggest upset in college football history?

The biggest upset in college football history is often cited as the 2007 game where the unranked Appalachian State Mountaineers defeated the No. 5 ranked Michigan Wolverines at Michigan Stadium.

Why was the Appalachian State vs. Michigan game in 2007 so significant?

The game was significant because it marked the first time a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) team defeated a ranked Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) team in the history of college football, shocking fans and analysts alike.

What were the implications of the Appalachian State upset for Michigan's season?

The upset had major implications for Michigan, leading to a disappointing season ending with a 9-4 record, and it ultimately contributed to the firing of head coach Lloyd Carr after the season.

How did the public and media react to the upset?

The public and media were stunned, with many considering it one of the greatest upsets in sports history. It generated extensive coverage and conversation about the potential for FCS teams to compete with FBS teams.

What was the final score of the Appalachian State vs. Michigan game?

The final score of the game was Appalachian State 34, Michigan 32.

Have there been other notable upsets in college football history?

Yes, other notable upsets include Stanford defeating USC in 2007 and Georgia Southern beating Florida in 1990, but none have had the same level of impact and recognition as the Appalachian State vs. Michigan game.

What has been the legacy of the 2007 upset for FCS programs?

The legacy of the 2007 upset has inspired FCS programs to believe in their potential to compete against FBS teams, leading to several more competitive matchups in subsequent years.

How did Appalachian State perform in the following seasons after their upset of Michigan?

After their historic upset, Appalachian State continued to perform well, winning three consecutive FCS national championships from 2006 to 2008, solidifying their status as a powerhouse at the FCS level.

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