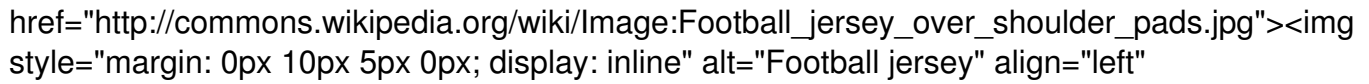


http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Football_jersey_over_shoulder_pads.jpgThe pundits use all sorts of platitudes when they describe a game like the 2009 Big 12 Championship. In the past 12 hours, I've heard a number of them - it all counts as a win in the win column or winning ugly is still winning. All true. And when everything was said and done last night in the Longhorn's 13-12 victory over the [Nebraska Cornhuskers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebraska_Cornhuskers "Nebraska Cornhuskers"), it only took one second on the clock to seal the deal. But it was the previous 59 minutes and 59 seconds that were so disturbing, and gave the nation of voters (Heisman and BCS alike) plenty of reasons to wonder if the Longhorns should be heading to the national championship game or not. There are two things I know from last night's game. One is that Texas has a spectacular defense - a national caliber defense without doubt. And the other thing I have had re-affirmed is the utterly anemic offensive play-calling that continues to hound the Horns. First, the defense. Spectacular. Phenomenal. Stifling. What other words are needed to describe it? They gave up just 106 yards to the Huskers - a total of 39 rushing yards and 67 passing yards. The season-low for Nebraska prior to this game was 180 yards. They limited Nebraska to only 5 first downs during the game. Three interceptions. And only four field goals scored against them. I would say that this was a statement game to tell the nation that this defense is truly Pasadena-ready. But then we have to look at the other side of the ball. And what I am seeing isn't good. The Longhorns offense put up a total of 202 yards - 184 passing yards and 18 rushing yards. Three interceptions. Some totally uninspired play-calling, and absolutely zero adjustment to the phenom that is Ndamukong Suh. The O-line gave up nine sacks. Nine! The Huskers had a great defensive line surge, and the short passes were covered. The quarterback draw? Essentially forgotten. Screens? Nope. The deep middle passing lanes? Forgotten. Of course, it didn't help that James Kirkendoll dropped a touchdown pass. But with the depth of receivers this year, why not just mix it up? Where was John Chiles? Marquise Goodwin? Greg Davis gets stuck in a playbook rut. Frankly, he did the same thing when Vince Young was in town - the difference being that Young would take a stranglehold on the game regardless of what play was called. Calling trick plays against mediocre teams does not constitute genius. Davis goes to the same thing over and over and over, and fails to adjust. Every time the Horns found a potentially-good adjustment (i.e. McCoy running up the middle), they kept going away from it. Will Muschamp, on the other hand, makes adjustments that address the problems of the game as it is being played. Huge difference, with hugely different results. See last night's scoreboard for further details. And then there was the last minute. Three time outs, a Husker kick-off out of bounds, and the Horns starting on their 40. There was a 19 yard pass to [Jordan Shipley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordan_Shipley "Jordan Shipley") that got them rolling. Tack on a 15 yard horsecollar penalty, and the Horns have great field position. Lots of time left, run a few plays, get a little closer, then, if needed, kick the short field goal. But inexplicably (unless you're Greg Davis) they did the unthinkable - they let the clock run and seemed to be content with getting to the 29 yard line. What were they thinking? A 46 yard field goal is not an easy kick, especially when you have enough time to get another first down and make it a far greater percentage kick.

It almost went horribly wrong from there. Mack Brown says he couldn't get the referee's attention to call the time out. Really? How about standing next to him? Are you telling me that 76,211 fans (a good percentage of which were Longhorn fans in stunned silence) were THAT loud? Mack, you play in a stadium that regularly seats over 100,000 people! The Horns get to the line, and fortunately McCoy throws the ball out of bounds with 1 second remaining and stops the clock.

I am not sure that the Longhorns should be taking clock management lessons from former Longhorn's defensive coach [Gene Chizik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_Chizik "Gene Chizik") now the head coach at Auburn. Chizik had lots of clock left against Alabama a week ago and forgot how to count down from 60 seconds.

Then we were left with the dramatic last-second field goal by Hunter Lawrence and now we're (hopefully) heading to Pasadena to take on Alabama in the National Championship.

 Fortunately, we also got to witness [Colt McCoy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colt_McCoy "Colt McCoy")'s 45th career win. He is now the winningest college football quarterback ever. Colt knows how to win. But when McCoy broke the record against Kansas two games ago, he barely got a mention on ESPN or any major media market outside of Austin. What's a guy got to do? Of course, this could be the result of the media's show the SEC the love, Tebow is a saint mentality. Yes, he's a great story but incessantly? If we should be calling him St. Tebow, then what is he the patron saint of? Over-rated quarterbacks?

But I digress. And by the way, his sainthood should have been revoked after the SEC championship against Alabama but, again, I digress.

Once again, we are reminded of why the BCS needs to have a playoff format. You now have 5 undefeated teams Alabama, Texas, TCU, Cincinnati, and Boise State. You have a very strong one-loss Florida and two-loss Oregon. And a whole lot of parity. Any team can win on any given Saturday even more reason to let them play a few given Saturdays to establish the real champion. But I'm not the only one to [write](http://www.rhubarbdiaris.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=154&Itemid=56 "December Delirium?") about [this](http://www.rhubarbdiaris.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=56 "Football Bracketology"), especially after [Texas Longhorns will play for the BCS national championship, but should they?](http://sports.espn.go.com/nfc/columns/story?columnist=wojciechowski_gene&id=4718287 "Texas Longhorns will play for the BCS national championship, but should they?")

last night. Fortunately, I don't have a vote in the process. Though I am (admittedly) a Longhorn through and through, I would have a very difficult time putting my vote towards both the Longhorn's (and McCoy's) causes. Right now, I don't think the Longhorns even qualify as the best team in Texas (all hail TCU), and the events of the past week or so would really have me giving Cincinnati or TCU the nod against Alabama. Better yet, Cincinnati vs. TCU and forget about Alabama, a team that survives on the field goal. And McCoy's performance last night albeit driven by Davis' play-calling and an absent offensive line doesn't help make the Heisman voting any easier.

I will gladly rest on another platitude though defense wins championships. In defense, we trust. And last night was another fine example of exactly that.

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