

106th Rose Bowl



Photo by Mark J. Terrill/The Associated Press

Oregon quarterback Justin Herbert runs for a touchdown past Wisconsin linebacker Jack Sanborn Wednesday during the second half of the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.

Ducks outlast Wisconsin for thrilling Rose Bowl victory

By Greg Beacham
The Associated Press

PASADENA, California — Justin Herbert faked a handoff and went on the run of his life in the fourth quarter of the Rose Bowl.

Oregon's 6-foot-6 quarterback gracefully stiff-armed Wisconsin linebacker Jack Sanborn at the line of scrimmage. He surged downfield, found his blockers and sprinted to the green-painted end zone, even absorbing a very late hit from the frustrated Badgers as a reward.

The Eugene kid who took over his beloved hometown team during its worst season of this century had just scored the decisive touchdown of the biggest win of his career. A few minutes and a couple of big passes later, the Ducks all celebrated amid confetti and roses at midfield after Herbert's final college game.

"I wish it wasn't over," Herbert said. "This has been the best four years of my life. I've been honored to be a part of this team."

Herbert scored his third rushing touchdown of the 106th Rose Bowl on that thrilling 30-yard run with 7:41 to play Wednesday night, and No. 7 Oregon held off No. 11 Wisconsin 28-27 to win its third straight trip to the Granddaddy of Them All.

Herbert passed for just 138 yards without a touchdown, and Oregon (12-2) managed just 204 yards of offense — the fewest by any Rose Bowl team in 40 years. The Ducks still managed to win yet another frenetic edition of this venerated bowl game, surviving six lead changes and big special-teams mistakes by both schools.

While the offense sputtered, the Ducks scored 21 points off the Badgers' four turnovers, including Brady Breeze's early 31-yard fumble return for a TD off a botched punt.

And on the next snap after Breeze forced another fumble in the fourth quarter, Herbert rambled through the

Wisconsin defense for that 30-yard score in what's sure to be the signature moment of the four-year starter's career.

"I'm going to be honest with you, we've been telling him to run all year," Oregon linebacker La'Mar Winston Jr. said. "He runs in practice and torches, so I told him, 'Man, pull that thing and get loose.' Stiff-arming dudes. Juking dudes. Is he a running back or a quarterback? We don't know."

Winston's praise aside, Herbert had only 10 rushing touchdowns in the first 41 starts of his career. He turned into a big-play ball-carrier on Arroyo Seco's hallowed ground, and Oregon improbably relied on its quarterback's long legs to grind out a landmark victory under second-year head coach Mario Cristobal, Herbert's third coach in four years.

Herbert scored on runs of 4 and 5 yards in the first half, stiff-arming Wisconsin defenders on both runs. After his go-ahead TD, Herbert got back to what he normally does best: He made a key 12-yard throw to Mycah Pittman for a first down with 1:51 to play, and his 28-yard throw to Juwan Johnson with 1:03 left allowed the Ducks to run out the clock.

"We knew coming in that he was athletic," Sanborn said. "We didn't have good angles and miscommunications. Something we have to be better at in a game like this. It's not the first game he ran with the ball."

Three years after coach Mark Helfrich was fired when the Ducks went 4-8 in Herbert's freshman season, Oregon held on to cap a Pac-12 championship campaign with its 12th win in 13 games and the fourth Rose Bowl victory in school history.

"To realize where we were, and where we are now, it's been a great journey," Herbert said. "For us to stick together through those tough times is just a testament to all the guys on the team, and all the hard work we've put in."

Aron Cruickshank returned an early kickoff 95 yards for a touchdown for the Big Ten runner-up Badgers (10-4), but they lost in their fourth consecutive trip to Pasadena over the last 10 years, including two losses to Oregon.

Jonathan Taylor rushed for 94 yards and Quintez Cephus caught seven passes for 59 yards and a score, but Wisconsin quarterback Jack Coan's offense couldn't capitalize on its whopping advantages in time of possession (38:03-21:57) and total yards (322-204).

"There's a slim chance you could win, but it definitely puts you in a tough position when you have self-inflicted penalties, special teams problems, turnovers," said Taylor, who is likely headed to the NFL. "When you're playing an elite team like Oregon, a great team like that, they'll capitalize on those mistakes."

BIG RETURN

Herbert scored his first TD on the Ducks' drive from the kickoff in 68-degree temperatures on another postcard-perfect New Year's Day in Pasadena, but Cruickshank took the ensuing kick straight down the Oregon sideline for an electrifying score and a rarity in the Rose Bowl.

The kickoff return was just the second for a touchdown in Wisconsin's lengthy bowl history, but just the third in 106 Rose Bowls — and the first in 17 years.

BOTCHED PUNT

Oregon got a break right after half-time when Wisconsin punter Anthony Lotti caught the snap, but dropped the ball on the ground instead of kicking it under pressure. Breeze alertly picked it up and sprinted for the go-ahead score.

The Badgers responded with a drive capped by Mason Stokke's 2-yard scoring run, and they went up 27-21 on a field goal with 12:09 to play.

But Breeze forced another fumble by Wisconsin's Danny Davis with a big hit, and Herbert took the next snap on his 30-yard TD run.

Sen. Hansell takes in Rose Bowl win

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Among the tens of thousands of Duck fans in attendance Wednesday to witness Oregon's thrilling 28-27 Rose Bowl victory over Wisconsin in Pasadena, California, was state Sen. Bill Hansell of Athena, a 1967 Oregon graduate who was taking in his fifth Rose Bowl witnessed the Ducks win for the third time.

"The thing that made this so unique is it was so close," Hansell said of the Ducks'

one-point victory, the closest in a Rose Bowl Game since Texas' 38-37 victory over Michigan in the 2005 edition of the "Granddaddy of Them All." One has to go back to 1980 to find the last one-point Rose Bowl prior to that (USC 17, Ohio State 16).

"I haven't really thought about which is more special," he said about how the 2020 game stacked up with being in Pasadena for Oregon's 45-38 win over Wisconsin in 2012 or the 59-20 win over Florida State in 2015.

Hansell attended this year's

game with his son and a granddaughter, whom he said was witnessing a Rose Bowl for the first time in person.

"What I told her is I've been to these games when we've won, been when we've lost and it's a whole lot more fun when we win," Hansell said.

Hansell and the other Oregon fans in attendance — and the team — walked away as victors after Justin Herbert's 30-yard touchdown run — his third of the game — gave Oregon the lead for good with 7:41 to go.

"Our whole part of the stadium just erupted," Hansell said. "I thought he had handed the ball off first. Next thing we know the crowd is cheering and he's headed to the end zone. He had run so infrequently during the season, I thought it was interesting (that he rushed for three TDs). I heard (in) one interview that he (runs) all the time during practice. They just hadn't used him this way."

While it's the third win in the Rose Bowl for Oregon in

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Prep hoops roundup

LHS girls topple Yamhill-Carlton, win fifth straight



Submitted photo by Suzie Collman

La Grande's Ella Dunlap is shown last week in a game against Molalla. The Tigers ran over Yamhill-Carlton Thursday, 58-30.

Observer staff

Ella Dunlap scored a game-high 19 points Thursday as the La Grande Tigers opened the Banks Winter Shootout by throttling Yamhill-Carlton, 58-30.

La Grande broke the game open in the second quarter, pouring in 21 points to race out to a 34-15 lead at the half, and pushed the margin to 28 at 48-20 after three quarters.

Camryn Collman added 11 points and Lauran Rinker added eight for the Tigers, who won their fifth game in a row.

La Grande (7-3 overall) faces undefeated Clatskanie, the defending 3A state champions, Friday in the tournament semifinals.

Also Thursday UNION TAKES DOWN TOLEDO

Callie Glenn scored a game-high 16 points Thursday, and the Union Bobcats used a 14-3 second-quarter run to build a double-digit lead they wouldn't relinquish on the way to a 45-19 win over Toledo in their first game at the Toledo Holiday Tournament.

Brianna Kohr added 14 points for Union, which won its third game in a row. The second-quarter push gave the Bobcats a 24-10 halftime lead, which reached 39-16 through three quarters.

Union (9-2 overall) faces Knappa Friday in the tournament semifinals.

EAGLES DROP THIRD IN A ROW

Sabrina Albee and

Madelyn Nelson combined for 26 points Thursday, but the rest of the Joseph Eagles scored only four points as they fell to the Crane Mustangs, 54-30, in a contest in Pendleton.

Albee scored 16 points to lead Joseph, including 11 in the second half. Nelson had eight of her 10 points in the first half for the Eagles.

Joseph (7-4 overall) plays in Pendleton again Saturday, this time against Country Christian.

Boys EAGLES SPRINT PAST CRANE

Mason Ferre scored 20 points Thursday, Chase Murray added 19, and the Joseph Eagles ran over the Crane Mustangs in a matchup in Pendleton, 72-39.

Carson Littlepage added 14 points for the Eagles, who broke the game open early and never looked back. Joseph held a commanding 38-12 lead at the half, then pushed the margin to 62-21 after three as it cruised to its third win in a row and sixth in the last seven games.

Joseph (8-3 overall) faces Country Christian Saturday in Pendleton.

TOLEDO DRUBS UNION

The host Toledo Boomers ran away from the Union Bobcats Thursday at the Toledo Holiday Tournament, rolling to an 81-36 victory.

Stats were not available. Union (7-4 overall) faces Illinois Valley Friday in the tournament's consolation semifinals.

Ducks, Beavs fall in Pac-12 openers

The Associated Press

BOULDER, Colorado — McKinley Wright IV scored 11 of his 21 points in the final 5 minutes, and Colorado beat another ranked team, taking down No. 4 Oregon 74-65 on Thursday night.

Tyler Bey added 15 points and grabbed 14 rebounds as the Buffaloes (12-2, 1-0 Pac-12) improved to 9-0 all-time against the

Ducks (11-3, 0-1) in Boulder.

Colorado also moved to 2-1 against ranked teams this season. The Buffaloes are 19-32 under coach Tad Boyle versus teams in the AP Top 25 since he took over in 2010-11. He accounts for 30% of Colorado's 63 wins over ranked opponents since 1949-50.

This was a matchup between the teams picked to finish first (Oregon) and second (Colorado) in the

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