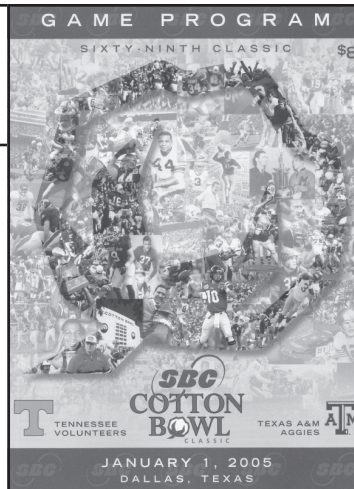


**2005**  
JANUARY 1

**TENNESSEE**  
**TEXAS A&M**

**38**  
**07**



ATTENDANCE: **75,704**

The Tennessee quarterback position was a revolving door during the 2004 campaign. Two signal callers had gone down to injury during the season, and the Volunteers were down to their third QB against a resurgent Texas A&M squad in the 69th SBC Cotton Bowl.

Rick Clausen easily erased any doubts the Vols had at quarterback. The junior looked like an all-conference performer from the opening drive, and when the 2005 Classic was over, Clausen walked away with the J. Curtis Sanford Offensive MVP Trophy after leading Tennessee to a surprising 38-7 win over the Aggies.

The No. 15 Vols (10-3) raced to a 28-0 lead midway through the second quarter behind Clausen's passing, then rode their bruising running game to finish off No. 22 Texas A&M (7-5).

Clausen was 18 of 27 passing for 222 yards and a career-high three touchdown passes. The Tennessee defense gave Clausen and the Vols ample opportunities by forcing A&M into a season-high five turnovers. The Aggies had only turned the ball over eight times in the first 11 games.

The crowd of 75,704 was the fourth largest in Cotton Bowl history and the biggest since the 1978 Notre Dame-Texas game. The largely maroon-clad crowd had turned out in droves to support their Aggies, who were making their first bowl appearance since December 2001.

Tennessee wasted little time in gaining momentum by taking the opening drive 80 yards, capped off by a 57-yard pass from Clausen to C.J. Fayton for the Vols' first score. Tennessee had squelched any home-field advantage the Aggies might have enjoyed.

Ultimately penalties and missed tackles also doomed A&M. An off-side penalty kept alive Tennessee's first drive. Two plays later, the Aggies missed a tackle on Fayton after his catch that he turned into the Vols' first touchdown.

A&M responded by driving to the Tennessee 23, but running back Courtney Lewis couldn't hold on to the errant pitch from quarterback Reggie McNeal, and the Vols' Turk McBride recovered the fumble.

On the first snap of the Aggies' next drive, McNeal had the ball pop loose at his 28-yard line as his helmet came flying off after a jarring hit by Tennessee's Justin Harrell. The sophomore defensive tackle went on to earn the Felix McKnight Defensive MVP Trophy.

Tennessee's Corey Campbell recovered the loose ball for the Vols. Four plays later, Tennessee scored on a 12-yard pass from Clausen to Cory Anderson for a 14-0 lead.

Then, just when A&M appeared to be gaining some momentum early in the second quarter, Erik Mayes muffed a punt. The Vols' Corey Larkins recovered at A&M's 8-yard line, and Tennessee's offense needed one play to go up 21-0 on a Cedric Houston run.

The Volunteer ground assault grinded out the clock in the second half behind the running of Houston, Gerald Riggs and David Yancey. The three backs combined for 223 yards on 44 carries. Riggs led all rushers with 102 yards on 18 carries. The junior tailback scored the Vols final touchdown on a 9-yard run in the third quarter. Tennessee added a 37-yard field goal from James Wilhoit to take a commanding 38-0 lead.

A&M's highly touted offense led by McNeal was held in check until the junior quarterback connected with Earvin Taylor of a 5-yard pass for the Aggies' only touchdown with just over five minutes left in the fourth quarter. McNeal, still was able to establish a new school single-season passing record of 2,791 yards on a pass to Taylor to start the game.

McNeal's mark stood as one of the few highlights for the Aggies. Rather, the Vols set new highs, and in the process, the 2005 SBC Cotton Bowl Champions gave Tennessee fans great optimism heading into the year ahead.

**Game Summary**

<b>TENNESSEE</b>	14	14	10	0	<b>38</b>
<b>TEXAS A&amp;M</b>	0	0	0	7	<b>7</b>

**FIRST QUARTER**

Tennessee: CJ Fayton 57 pass from Rick Clausen (James Wilhoit kick), 12:33, 80 yards on 6 plays following opening kick.

Tennessee: Cory Anderson 12 pass from Clausen (Wilhoit kick), 3:52, 28 yards on 4 plays following fumble recovery by Corey Campbell.

**SECOND QUARTER**

Tennessee: Cedric Houston 8 run (Wilhoit kick), 13:05, 8 yards in 1 play following fumble recovery by Corey Larkins.

Tennessee: Tony Brown 13 pass from Clausen (Wilhoit kick), 8:54, 67 yards on 12 plays following punt.

**THIRD QUARTER**

Tennessee: Gerald Riggs 9 run (Wilhoit kick), 6:04, 94 yards in 12 plays following

turnover on downs.  
Tennessee: Wilhoit 37 FG, 2:36, 26 yards in 8 plays following punt.

**FOURTH QUARTER**

Texas A&M: Earvin Taylor 5 pass from Reggie McNeal (Todd Pegram kick), 5:13, 69 yards in 9 plays following punt.

**OUTSTANDING PLAYERS**

Rick Clausen, Tennessee  
Justin Harrell, Tennessee

**COACHES**

Phillip Fulmer, Tennessee  
Dennis Franchione, Texas A&M

**WEATHER**

Mostly cloudy, wind SW 15-20mph, 69 degrees

**Game Statistics**

TEAM STATS	TENN.	A&M	RUSHING
First Downs	32	17	Tennessee: Riggs 18-104, Houston 13-62, Yancey 13-59, Anderson 3-20, Meachem 1-7, Holbert 2-3, Team 1-(-2), Schaeffer 3-(-10). Texas A&M: Thomas 1-54, McNeal 9-18, Carter 2-11, Lewis 6-(-6).
Rushing	17	3	<b>PASSING</b> Tennessee: Clausen 18-27-0, 222 yards; Schaeffer 1-4-0, 11 yards. Texas A&M: McNeal 23-38-1, 241 yards.
Passing	10	11	<b>RECEIVING</b> Tennessee: Fayton 3-94, Meachem 3-30, Swain 3-24, Hannon 3-19, Anderson 2-23, C. Brown 2-18, T. Brown 1-13, Smith 1-11, Houston 1-1. Texas A&M: Mobley 5-70, Murphy 5-39, Taylor 5-39, Thomas 2-33, Carter 2-10, Lewis 1-25, Riley 1-16, Joseph 1-5, Stuts 1-4.
Penalty	5	3	<b>PUNTING</b> Tennessee: Colquitt 4-34.0. Texas A&M: Young 5-43.2.
Rushes-Net Yards	54-241	18-77	
Net Yards Passing	233	241	
Passes	19-31-0	23-38-1	
Total Plays	85	56	
Total Net Yards	474	318	
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	4-4	
Penalties-Yards	9-100	7-65	
Punts-Average	4-34.0	5-43.2	