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Michigan State comes back to stun Baylor in Cotton Bowl

ARLINGTON — Michigan State made the seemingly impossible, possible.

Marcus Rush blocked a Baylor field goal with the Spartans down six points with just over a minute to play. Michigan State scored three touchdowns in the final quarter to win a wacky Cotton Bowl, 42-41.

Brice Petty passed for a career high and Cotton Bowl record 550 yards and three touchdowns. The Bears finished with 603 yards through the air, a new FBS record.

It was hard for Petty to appreciate what he and the offense had accomplished.

“It’s all for naught when you lose,” Petty said. “It’s a flashback (to last year). Now, I’m sitting on the podium with coach and a couple guys again talking about would have, could have, should have. That’s never the spot you want to be in when you got the game like we had it.”

It took the Spartans less than three minutes to score on the first possession of the game, highlighted by a 65-yard run by running back Jeremy Langford.

After gaining 44 yards to get to midfield, Petty hit KD Cannon with a 49-yard strike to tie it up, but Michigan State again answered with a 7-play, 60-yard drive to take what would be their last lead until the final moments of the game.

The Bears rattled off 27 unanswered points, and held a 34-14 lead midway through the third quarter.

Taylor Young picked off Michigan State quarterback Connor Cook midway through the fourth quarter, and it looked like the Baylor was in the clear.

But in the words of ESPN personality Lee Corso, “Not so fast, my friend.” The Spartans rallied from a double-digit deficit in each of their last four bowl games, all of which they won.

After missing out on the playoffs coupled with the way things finished in the Cotton Bowl, head coach Art Briles was clearly dissipated with how the season ended for Baylor.

"It's got nothing to do with the playoff, it's just something to do with this football game," he said. "We played a lot of good games over the last seven seasons and won a lot of good games. This is one of the tougher (losses) that I've ever experienced."

Freshman KD Cannon finished with 197 receiving yards and a pair of touchdowns, and sophomore Corey Coleman added 150 yards and a score.

The largest touchdown reception of the game came when 6-foot-7, 390 pound offensive lineman LaQuan McGowan hauled in an 18-yard pass from Petty in the third quarter and rumbled in for the score.

While the Baylor passing game was on point all afternoon, the rushing game was shut down by the MSU defensive line.

Running back Shock Linwood, who averaged more than 100 yards per game during the regular season, had 26 yards, while as a team the Bears totaled -20 yards on the ground.

"We certainly would have liked to run the ball better down the stretch," Briles said. "When we did attempt to run, we never really felt that we had the seams there that we wanted to be able to sustain."

The attitude of Baylor all week leading up to the game was on finishing the game after getting upset by Central Florida a year ago in the Fiesta Bowl.

Now, Petty ends a very successful career with a loss, and the bad taste of losing will stay with the Bears for months to come.

"I'm really proud of our football team," Briles said. "Any time you put so much into something for so long, like we do, like our players do, it certainly is unpleasant when the outcome is a reality like what happened today."