



1916 Cumberland vs. Georgia Tech football game



This is an **old revision** of this page, as edited by [Dalliance](#) ([talk](#) | [contribs](#)) at 13:13, 15 February 2018 (*Reverted 1 pending edit by 64.58.241.210 to revision 822867214 by Chetsford*). The present address (URL) is a **permanent link** to this revision, which may differ significantly from the **current revision**.

The **1916 Cumberland vs. Georgia Tech football game** was the most lopsided in the history of college football, with Georgia Tech winning 222–0.^{[1][2][3]} The game was played on October 7, 1916, between the Georgia Tech Engineers and Cumberland College Bulldogs at Grant Field (now a part of Bobby Dodd Stadium) in Atlanta.



With Cumberland opting to punt on multiple possessions, the infamous score can be partially attributed to 97% of the game's plays occurring in Cumberland territory, with 64 of those plays occurring in Cumberland's own red zone.

Background

Cumberland College, a Presbyterian school in Lebanon, Tennessee, had discontinued its football program before the season but was not allowed to cancel its game against the Engineers.^{[1][2]} The fact that Cumberland's baseball team had crushed Georgia Tech earlier that year 22–0 (amidst allegations that Cumberland used professionals as ringers) probably accounted for Georgia Tech coach John Heisman's running up the score on the Bulldogs, Heisman also being the Engineers' baseball coach.^{[1][2]} (It's speculated that Heisman may have deliberately aimed for a score of exactly 222 as a numerically significant retaliation to Cumberland's 22.^[4]) He insisted on the schools' scheduling agreement, which required Cumberland to pay \$3,000 (equivalent to \$84,000 in 2023) to Tech if its football team failed to show.^{[1][2]} In fact, Heisman actually paid Cumberland \$500 (equivalent to \$14,000 in 2023) as an incentive to play the game; his letter to Cumberland's athletic department read in part:

I hearby offer you the sum of \$500 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Atlanta for your football team on the condition that you honor your contract by participating in and completing the Cumberland-Georgia Tech football game ... However, if this offer is refused ... I shall be forced to demand that your school reimburse the Tech Athletic Dept. in the amount of \$3,000 for losses from the projected net gate receipts ...^[5]

George E. Allen (who was elected to serve as Cumberland's football team student manager after first serving as the baseball team student manager) therefore put together a team of 12–16 players,^[a] most of whom were his fraternity brothers, to travel to Atlanta as Cumberland's football team.^[2]

Another reason for Heisman's plan to run up the score was the practice among the sportswriters of the time to rank teams based upon how many points they scored. Since this statistic did not account for the strength or weakness of a team's opponent, Heisman disagreed with the amount of weight the writers tended to assign to it, and he may have unleashed his players on Cumberland to make his point.^[6]

The game

Cumberland received the opening kickoff and failed to make a first down. After a punt, the Engineers scored on their first play.^{[1][3]} Cumberland then fumbled on their next play from the line of scrimmage, and a Georgia Tech player returned the fumble for a touchdown.^{[1][3]} The Bulldogs fumbled again on their next play, and it took Georgia Tech two rushes to score its third touchdown.^{[1][3]} Cumberland lost nine yards on its next possession, and Georgia Tech scored a fourth touchdown on another two-play drive.^{[2][3]}

Georgia Tech led 63–0 after the first quarter and 126–0 at halftime. Georgia Tech added 54 more points in the third quarter and 42 in the final period.^{[2][3]}

Georgia Tech scored a total of 32 touchdowns, and Georgia Tech's left end James Preas kicked 18 extra points.^[7] Cumberland's only effective defense was an extra point blocked with a sort of human pyramid.^[2]

Several myths have developed around the game. Some have written that Cumberland did not have a single play that gained yards; in fact, its longest play was a 10-yard pass (on 4th-and-22^{[1][2]} or 3rd-and-18^[3]). One page on Cumberland's website says Georgia Tech scored on every offensive play, but the play-by-play account of the game refutes this and suggests a more likely scenario: that Georgia Tech scored on every one of its sets of downs. However, neither team made a first down that was not also a touchdown, as Cumberland made no first downs in the entire game.^[3]

Cumberland purportedly completed 15 turnovers during the game: nine fumbles and six interceptions.

Sportswriter Grantland Rice wrote, "Cumberland's greatest individual play of the game occurred when fullback Allen circled right end for a 6-yard loss."^{[5][8]} At halftime, Heisman reportedly told his players, "You're doing all right, team, we're ahead. But you just can't tell what those Cumberland players have up their sleeves. They may spring a surprise. Be alert, men! Hit 'em clean, but hit 'em hard!"^{[8][9]} However, even Heisman relented, and shortened the quarters in the second half to 12 minutes each instead of 15.^[9]

As a general rule, the only thing necessary for a touchdown was to give a Tech back the ball and holler, ‘Here he comes’ and ‘There he goes.’

—*The Atlanta Journal*, 1916

Statistics

These statistics are based on the sources listed below and may be incomplete.

Team	Rushing				Passing				Kicking	
	Att	Yards	TD	Fumb Lost	Comp–Att	Yards	TD	Int	FGM–FGA	XPM–XPA
Cumberland	27	–42	0	9	2–18	14	0	6	0–0	0–0
Georgia Tech	26	522	18	0	0–0	0	0	0	0–0	30–32

1916 Week Two: Cumberland Bulldogs at Georgia Tech Engineers

Period	1	2	3	4	Total
Cumberland	0	0	0	0	0
Georgia Tech	63	63	54	42	222



The game in action

at Grant Field, Atlanta

- **Date:** October 7, 1916
- **Game time:** Day game
- **Play-by-Play** (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080527172833/http://www2.cumberland.edu/about/gotc/pbp.html>)

Game information

[\[show\]](#)

First quarter

- GT Strupper 80 yard run (Jim Preas kick)
- GT Marshall Guill 10 yard fumble return (Preas kick)
- GT Preas 5 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Strupper 10 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Canty Alexander recovered own fumble in end zone (Preas kick)
- GT Strupper 60 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Tommy Spence 35 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Strupper 45 yard punt return (Preas kick)
- GT Spence 90 yard kickoff return (Preas kick)

Top passers

- CU – Leon McDonald – 2/18, 14 YDS, 6 INT
- GT – none

Top rushers

- CU – Morris Gouger – 4 CAR, -2 YDS
- GT – G.E. "Strup" Strupper – 8 CAR, 195 YDS, 6 TD

Top receivers

- CU – George Murphy^[b] – REC, 10 YDS
- GT – none

Second quarter

- GT Jim Senter 20 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Preas 15 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Guill 20 yard interception return (Preas kick)
- GT George Griffin 10 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Strupper 3 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Bob Glover 4 yard run (Preas kick)
- GT Preas 10 yard fumble return (Preas kick)
- GT Stan Fellers 17 yard interception return (Preas kick)
- GT Fellers 33 yard punt return (Preas kick)

Third quarter

- GT Strupper 3 yard run (Spence kick)
- GT Buzz Shaver 25 yard punt return (Spence kick)

- GT Spence 10 yard run (Spence kick)
- GT Strupper 15 yard run (Spence kick)
- GT Spence 35 yard run (Spence kick)
- GT W.G. "Six" Carpenter 8 yard run (kick failed)
- GT Strupper 35 yard punt return (kick failed)
- GT Spence 20 yard interception return (Strupper kick)

Fourth quarter

- GT Fellers 40 yard interception return (Bill Fincher kick)
- GT Griffin 35 yard run (Fincher kick)
- GT Senter 2 yard run (Fincher kick)
- GT Fellers 40 yard punt return (Fincher kick)
- GT Fellers 15 yard run (Fincher kick)
- GT Senter 30 yard interception return (Fincher kick)

Records

Since World War II, only a handful of schools have topped 100 points in a college football game. The modern-era record for most points scored against a college opponent is 106 by Fort Valley State of Georgia against Knoxville College in 1969. In the previous year Houston defeated Tulsa 100–6 to set the NCAA record in major college football. In 1949 the University of Wyoming defeated University of Northern Colorado 103–0. The Division III football scoring record was set in 1968 when North Park University defeated North Central College 104–32, using ten passing touchdowns along the way.^[10]

Legacy

The game ball had the score written on it as a memento. It was donated to the Helms Athletic Foundation sports museum by Bill Schroeder, an avid sports collector. When the museum moved locations in the 1980s, the ball was boxed and remained in storage. In 2014, Ryan Schneider, a Georgia Tech alumnus, purchased the ball in a charity auction for \$40,388 (\$33,657 without buyer's premium), with the intention of donating it back to Georgia Tech.^[11]

In October 1956, a 40th reunion was held for players from both teams, of whom 28 were able to attend.^[9] While reminiscing, one of the Cumberland players pointed out one play that saved Cumberland from an even worse defeat; had Cumberland punted as normal instead of running a sneak, the score would probably have been 229–0.^[9]

See also

- List of 100-point games in college football

- List of historically significant college football games

Notes

- a. Conflicting sources report anywhere from 12 to 19 players (and of those 19, 3 got lost in Nashville and missed their train, leaving at most only 16 players).^[5]
- b. "George Murphy" may have actually been a ringer named John "Johnny Dog" Nelson, a sportswriter who had previous football experience.

References

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4. "Revisiting Georgia Tech 222, Cumberland 0 and how it may have saved the school" (<http://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/revisiting-georgia-tech-222-cumberland-0-and-how-it-may-have-saved-the-school/>). 7 October 2016. Retrieved 2 March 2017.
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External links

- The Game of the Century (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080609100108/http://www2.cumberland.edu/about/gotc/index.html>) at Cumberland University (via archive.org).
- GEORGIA TECH 222, CUMBERLAND 0. (<https://www.sbnation.com/college-football/2016/10/7/13199052/georgia-tech-cumberland-college-222-0-game-history-records>) – 100th anniversary tribute by SB Nation

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