

= 2002 Gator Bowl =

The 2002 Gator Bowl was a post @-@ season American college football bowl game between the Virginia Tech Hokies and the Florida State Seminoles at Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville , Florida on January 1 , 2002 . The game was the final contest of the 2001 NCAA Division I @-@ A football season for both teams , and ended in a 30 @-@ 17 victory for Florida State .

Virginia Tech was selected to play in the 2002 Gator Bowl with an 8 ? 3 regular @-@ season record despite having just played in Jacksonville at the end of the previous year . The selection of Virginia Tech over the Syracuse Orangemen ( now just the " Orange " ) despite losing head @-@ to @-@ head and Syracuse having better conference and overall records was controversial . Florida State , who had failed to win at least a share of the Atlantic Coast Conference title for the first time since joining the league in 1992 , and who had played in all three BCS National Championship games held to that point , was selected as the opponent .

The 2002 Gator Bowl kicked off on January 1 , 2002 at Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville , Florida , exactly one year since the Hokies had last played in the game . The game 's early going seemed promising for the defense @-@ minded Hokies . In the first quarter , Tech held Florida State scoreless despite only managing a single field goal on offense . In the second quarter , however , Florida State began to find gaps in the Hokie defense and scored 10 points . At halftime , Florida State held a 10 ? 3 lead .

In the third quarter , Tech struck back . The Hokies scored 14 points in the quarter , while Florida State managed just a field goal . The Hokies ' All @-@ American tailback Lee Suggs had suffered a season @-@ ending injury in the first game of the season , but freshman Kevin Jones had carried the offense for the season , and continued to perform well in the post @-@ season Gator Bowl game . With a 5 @-@ yard run from Jones and a 55 @-@ yard pass from Grant Noel to André Davis , Tech took a 17 ? 13 lead going into the fourth quarter . But the lead quickly evaporated on a 77 @-@ yard catch and run from Chris Rix to Javon Walker .

Florida State added ten more points after the long touchdown pass , and the Seminoles went on to win the game , 30 ? 17 .

= = Team selection = =

At the start of the 2001 college football season , the Gator Bowl Committee held contracts with the Atlantic Coast Conference , Big East Conference , and Notre Dame , allowing the committee to select either Notre Dame or a team from each of the conferences to fill the two available slots . According to contract , the committee had the first selection of teams from each of the two conferences after the conferences ' champions were given automatic bids to a Bowl Championship Series game .

According to contract , the Gator Bowl was allowed to select any bowl @-@ eligible Big East team as long as it was within two wins of the second @-@ place team in the conference . This clause generated controversy when Virginia Tech ( 8 ? 3 record ) received the Big East 's Gator Bowl spot instead of Syracuse ( 9 ? 2 record ) . Syracuse fans , coaches , and players protested the selection of the third @-@ place Hokies ahead of second @-@ place Syracuse . Representing the Atlantic Coast conference was Florida State , which finished second in its conference with a record of 7 ? 4 .

= = = Florida State = = =

Florida State entered the 2001 college football season after a 13 ? 2 loss to Oklahoma in the national championship game . The loss was just the second for the Seminoles that season , and they finished with an 11 ? 2 record . Despite their appearance in the previous year 's national championship game , the Seminoles were ranked as the No. 5 team in the country in the USA Today college football preseason poll . Florida State , which had a 70 ? 2 record in Atlantic Coast Conference games since joining the conference , was again favored to win the ACC , but the

Seminoles faced challenges replacing Heisman Trophy @-@ winning quarterback Chris Weinke and 14 other starters from the previous year 's team . Adding to the Seminoles ' challenges in the 2001 season was the loss of two starting wide receivers : Robert Morgan and Anquan Boldin , both of whom suffered season @-@ ending injuries before the first game of the season .

The bad omens of the preseason were discarded in the Seminoles ' first two games of the season : a 55 ? 13 win against Duke and a 29 ? 7 victory over Alabama @-@ Birmingham . In their third game of the season , however , Florida State suffered what was then the worst defeat in its history of play as a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference , a 41 ? 9 loss to North Carolina . Florida State recovered from the loss by beating Wake Forest , 48 ? 24 , but lost to No. 2 Miami in the following week , 49 ? 27 .

Three wins followed the loss to Miami , but two losses followed the brief winning streak : to Atlantic Coast Conference rival NC State , 34 ? 28 , and in @-@ state rival Florida , 37 ? 13 . The loss to NC State was the Seminoles ' first home defeat at the hands of an ACC opponent and dropped the Seminoles out of contention for the ACC championship . Following the loss to Florida , the Seminoles accepted a bid to the Gator Bowl . Florida State 's final game , a win against ACC opponent Georgia Tech , had no effect other than to improve Florida State 's regular @-@ season record , and the Seminoles began to prepare for the Gator Bowl .

= = = Virginia Tech = = =

The Virginia Tech Hokies began the 2001 season having gone 11 ? 1 the previous season , ending with a 41 ? 20 victory in the 2001 Gator Bowl against Clemson . Fans ' hopes for the new season were not as high as the previous year , however . Star quarterback Michael Vick was selected with the first pick in the 2001 NFL Draft , and there were questions about how well the team would cope with the loss of Vick and several other important players . Despite those fears , the Hokies began the 2001 season ranked No. 9 in the coaches ' poll and were picked in the annual poll of media covering the Big East to finish second in that conference .

In the opening game of the season , Virginia Tech defeated Connecticut , 52 ? 10 , but lost starting running back Lee Suggs , who tore his anterior cruciate ligament during the game . Suggs ' absence did not affect the Hokies in their next game , as they defeated Western Michigan , 31 ? 0 . The Hokies continued their winning streak through the first Virginia Tech games of the season , heading into a conference contest against Syracuse with a 6 ? 0 record and ranked No. 5 in the country . On October 27 , however , Syracuse ended Tech 's 16 @-@ game home winning streak by defeating the Hokies , 22 ? 14 , in Lane Stadium .

The loss to Syracuse was followed by another to Pittsburgh in the following week . The twin losses effectively knocked Tech out of contention for the Big East championship , as the Hokies were then two games behind first @-@ place Miami . Tech won its next two games of the season , but because Miami remained undefeated , the matchup between No. 1 Miami and No. 14 Virginia Tech was played without conference title implications . Before the Miami game , Virginia Tech accepted a bid to the Gator Bowl , which had the first pick of Big East teams after the Bowl Championship Series gave an automatic bid to the Big East champion . Miami defeated Tech in the final regular @-@ season game for both teams , 26 ? 24 , and the Hokies began preparations for the Gator Bowl .

= = = Controversy = = =

Virginia Tech 's selection for the Gator Bowl was not without controversy . The Hokies ' three Big East losses pushed them to third place in the conference , behind Miami ( which earned an automatic bid to the national championship game ) and Syracuse , which lost only one Big East Conference game . Instead of attending the Gator Bowl , Syracuse earned a bid to the 2002 Insight Bowl , considered to be a less prestigious game due to its lesser payout and shorter history . Syracuse fans , coaches , and players were offended that Virginia Tech was awarded a bid to the Gator Bowl despite Syracuse 's better record due to Tech 's reputation for bringing large numbers of

fans to bowl games . In the wake of Tech 's selection , Syracuse athletic director Jake Crouthamel vowed to lobby for changes in the way the Gator Bowl 's Big East selection was made .

= = Pregame buildup = =

The Florida State / Virginia Tech matchup was the 31st game between the two teams since they first met in 1955 . At the time , Florida State held the advantage in wins , with a 19 ? 10 ? 1 record against Virginia Tech . Heading into the 2002 Gator Bowl , however , spread bettors predicted a reversal of that trend as Virginia Tech was favored to win by two points on Dec. 10 . This was reflective of an overall feeling of pessimism toward the Seminoles , who hadn 't finished out of first place in the ACC since joining the league in 1992 , and would not participate in the national championship game for the first time in four years . Because of this decline in stature , the fact that the game was a rematch of the 2000 national championship game received less coverage than it would have otherwise .

Ticket sales for the game were relatively rapid . By Dec. 7 , Virginia Tech had sold almost its entire initial allotment of 12 @, @ 500 tickets , Florida State fans had purchased approximately 6 @, @ 800 tickets , and total ticket sales neared the 50 @, @ 000 mark . Tech 's sales increased to more than 13 @, @ 000 by Dec. 14 , and Virginia Tech officials requested an initial allotment from the Gator Bowl . Four days later , more than 60 @, @ 000 tickets had been sold , and there were expectations that the game would be a sellout . The growing demand for tickets was demonstrated by an incident in which nearly 200 all @-@ access passes to the game were stolen in transit from the printer and resold , causing a police search for the culprits .

= = = Florida State offense = = =

At the conclusion of the regular season , Florida State was ranked No. 26 in total offense , averaging 426 @. @ 09 yards per game . The Seminoles ' rushing offense was ranked No. 55 ( 159 @. @ 64 yards per game ) , but their passing offense was No. 26 ( 266 @. @ 45 ypg ) and their scoring offense was No. 21 , averaging 33 @. @ 91 points per game on average .

On the field , the Seminoles ' offense was led by quarterback Chris Rix , whose passer rating of 150 @. @ 76 was the seventh @-@ highest in the country . Rix completed 165 of his 286 pass attempts for 2 @, @ 734 yards and 24 touchdowns , setting an Atlantic Coast Conference record for total offense by a freshman . In recognition of the achievement , he was named the ACC Freshman of the Year . Rix 's preferred passing target was wide receiver Javon Walker , who led the team by catching 45 passes for 944 yards and seven touchdowns . Fellow wide receiver Talman Gardner outpaced Walker in touchdowns , catching 11 during the season , enough for No. 5 in Florida State history to that point .

The Seminoles ' ground offense was led by running back Greg Jones , who finished the regular season with 713 yards and six rushing touchdowns . Florida State 's rushing game also was assisted by the mobility of Chris Rix , who gained 389 yards during the regular season , enough for No. 3 on the team in rushing yards . The Seminoles ' kicking game was run by placekicker Xavier Beitia , who successfully kicked 13 of 14 field goals and 44 of 48 extra points during the season for a total of 83 points .

= = = Virginia Tech offense = = =

Virginia Tech 's offense was slightly worse than the national average during the regular season . The Hokies were ranked No. 64 in total offense , averaging 374 @. @ 09 yards per game . In particular , Tech 's passing offense was lacking . That segment of the offense was ranked No. 86 , averaging 179 @. @ 36 yards . This figure was somewhat balanced by the Hokies ' rushing attack , which was ranked No. 55 ( 194 @. @ 73 ypg ) . Despite the worse @-@ than @-@ average yardage totals , Tech was ranked No. 25 in scoring offense , or 32 @. @ 64 points per game . Prior to the Gator Bowl , it was announced that Virginia Tech offensive coordinator Rickey Bustle would be

leaving the team to take the same position at the Louisiana @-@ Lafayette . Despite the move , he confirmed he would coach the Hokies during the bowl game in his last act as a Virginia Tech coach .

On the field , the Hokies were led by quarterback Grant Noel , who completed 146 of his 254 pass attempts for 1 @, @ 826 passing yards , 16 touchdowns , and 11 interceptions . Noel 's favorite passing target was André Davis , who caught 39 passes for 623 yards and seven touchdowns . In recognition of his success , Davis was named a first @-@ team all @-@ Big East selection . Fullback Jarrett Ferguson also set three single @-@ season receiving records by catching 25 passes for 256 yards and three touchdowns , all of which were school records for a fullback . Despite those numbers , most of Virginia Tech 's offense was gained on the ground . At the beginning of the season , running back Lee Suggs was the leader of the Hokies ' rushing offense . He set Virginia Tech records for career rushing touchdowns and career touchdowns before suffering a season @-@ ending injury in the Hokies ' game against Connecticut . Following Suggs ' injury , his role was taken up by freshman running back Kevin Jones , who set a Tech freshman running record by accumulating 957 yards . That figure also was the fifth most in Division I @-@ A , and he was named Big East rookie of the year and an All @-@ American by The Sporting News .

= = = Florida State defense = = =

Florida State 's defense was ranked No. 43 in the country at the conclusion of the regular season . The Seminoles allowed 356 @. @ 36 yards per game , on average . State 's rushing defense was ranked No. 32 ( 126 ypg ) , while its passing defense was ranked No. 76 ( 230 @. @ 36 ypg ) . The Seminoles ' defensive squad was led by middle linebacker Bradley Jennings , who had 121 tackles during the regular season ? the most on the team . Defensive tackle Darnell Dockett also was a standout performer statistically for the Seminoles , leading the team in tackles for loss and setting the single @-@ season and single @-@ game Florida State records in that category .

= = = Virginia Tech defense = = =

During the 2001 regular season , the Hokies ' defense was the second @-@ best in the country , allowing 237 @. @ 91 yards per game . In no defensive statistical category were the Hokies worse than No. 10 , and that ranking came in punt return defense , where Tech allowed 13 @. @ 33 yards per return . The Hokies were No. 2 in rushing defense ( 71 @. @ 64 ypg ) and No. 8 in passing defense ( 166 @. @ 27 ypg ) . Defensively , the Hokies were led by linebacker Ben Taylor , who had 121 tackles ( the most on the team ) and was named a semifinalist for the Butkus Award , given annually to the best linebacker in the country . Free safety Willie Pile was the team 's No. 2 tackler , accumulating 94 tackles , four interceptions , and two fumble recoveries . Unexpectedly , linebacker Chad Cooper was diagnosed with Guillain @-@ Barré syndrome and had to be hospitalized prior to the game .

= = Game summary = =

The 2002 Gator Bowl kicked off at 12 : 30 p.m. EST on January 1 , 2002 , at Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville , Florida . The in @-@ person attendance was announced as 72 @, @ 202 , and the television broadcast earned a Nielsen rating of 6 @. @ 9 . The Gator Bowl was the only New Year 's Day bowl game in 2002 to see a ratings increase over the previous year . The broadcast was provided by NBC , and Tom Hammond , Pat Haden , and Chris Wragge were the sportscasters . Country music artist Lee Greenwood performed his song " God Bless the USA " prior to the game , and sang the traditional pre @-@ game national anthem .

At kickoff , the weather was sunny with variable winds at 5 miles per hour ( 8 @. @ 0 km / h ) . The temperature was 46 ° F ( 8 ° C ) , and the humidity was 42 percent . David Witvoet was the referee . In exchange for playing in the game , the two teams split a payout of \$ 3 @, @ 212 @, @ 364 . Virginia Tech won the traditional pre @-@ game coin toss to determine first possession and elected

to kick off to Florida State to begin the state .

= = = First quarter = = =

The kickoff was fielded near the Florida State six @-@ yard line and returned 16 yards to the State 22 @-@ yard line . The first play of the game was a long pass by quarterback Chris Rix , but the throw was not caught . On the second play , Rix was sacked for a loss of nine yards . A third @-@ down pass was incomplete , and Florida State punted . Virginia Tech returned the kick into Florida State territory , and the Hokies ' offense began Tech 's first possession of the game at the State 48 @-@ yard line . The Hokies ' first play was an 18 @-@ yard pass from quarterback Grant Noel to tight end Bob Slowikowski , long enough for a first down at the Florida State 29 @-@ yard line . From there , running back Kevin Jones gained 12 yards and a first down on a run up the middle of the field . Jones gained three yards on the next play , then Noel was sacked by the Seminoles for a loss of nine yards . On third down , Jones regained some of the lost yardage but was unable to pick up a first down . Facing fourth down , Tech sent in kicker Carter Warley to attempt a 36 @-@ yard field goal . The kick was successful , and with 10 : 56 remaining in the first quarter , Virginia Tech took a 3 ? 0 lead .

Virginia Tech 's post @-@ score kickoff was downed in the end zone for a touchback , and Florida State 's second possession of the game began at its 20 @-@ yard line . On first down , running back Greg Jones gained four yards . A second @-@ down pass from Rix to Gardner gained 11 yards and the Seminoles ' first first down of the game . They were unable to gain another first down , however , and punted for the second time in the game . During the return , Florida State was penalized five yards for violating the halo rule that required two yards between the player catching the ball and the nearest defender . The rule has since been rescinded .

Virginia Tech 's second drive of the game started at its 28 @-@ yard line after the penalty . Jones was stopped for little or no gain on the first two plays of the drive , then Noel completed a long pass to wide receiver Andre Davis , who dodged defenders and advanced the ball to the Florida State 17 @-@ yard line , a gain of 55 yards and a first down . Two running plays after the long play gained little yardage , then Tech appeared to gain a touchdown on a passing play from Noel to wide receiver Ernst Wilford . During the play , however , a Tech offensive lineman committed a holding penalty that negated the score . After a 10 @-@ yard penalty , Noel fumbled the ball . The loose ball was recovered by Florida State at the State 45 @-@ yard line , and Tech was denied a chance to score .

On State 's first play after the turnover , Rix was sacked for a four @-@ yard loss . On the next play , Virginia Tech defender Eric Green jumped in front of an errant Rix pass and intercepted it . Green returned the ball to the State 44 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies ' offense started a drive inside Florida State territory . On the first play of the drive , Tech attempted a reverse pass , but the ball fell incomplete . Two subsequent plays were stopped for no gain , and Tech punted for the first time in the game .

The kick was stopped at the State five @-@ yard line , and with 3 : 56 remaining in the first quarter , State was pinned deep in its half of the field . After a running play gained four yards , State earned a first down at the 11 @-@ yard line with a seven @-@ yard pass . After the first down , Rix fumbled the ball , recovered it , and was sacked by the Tech defense at the State nine @-@ yard line . Two long rushing plays made up the lost yardage , and State earned a first down at their 27 @-@ yard line . From there , Rix completed a 44 @-@ yard pass to Javon Walker for a first down at the Tech 29 @-@ yard line . In the final seconds of the quarter , Rix attempted a touchdown pass , but the ball fell incomplete . With one quarter elapsed , Virginia Tech led , 3 ? 0 .

= = = Second quarter = = =

The second quarter of the Gator Bowl began with the Seminoles facing third down and 12 from the Virginia Tech 30 @-@ yard line . The first play of the quarter resulted in the third Virginia Tech sack of the game as Nathaniel Adibi tackled Rix for a long loss . The sack pushed Florida State out of

field goal range , and the Seminoles punted . The ball bounced out of bounds at the Tech 11 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies began their first possession of the second quarter . After a running play that was stopped for no gain , Noel completed a 20 @-@ yard pass to Slowikowski for a first down at their 31 @-@ yard line . Tech fumbled on the first play after the first down , Noel threw an incomplete pass , were pushed back five yards by a false start penalty , then had a first @-@ down run negated by a 10 @-@ yard holding penalty . Tech was unable to gain a first down after the penalties , and punted .

With 11 : 23 remaining in the first half , Florida State returned the kick to its 18 @-@ yard line and began its first full possession of the second quarter . After a running play was stopped for no gain , Florida State gained a first down on a short pass and a short run . After a 10 @-@ yard holding penalty against the Seminoles , Rix scrambled for eight yards and completed a 19 @-@ yard pass for a first down at the 50 @-@ yard line . After Rix gained five yards on another scramble , he threw two incomplete passes and the Seminoles punted . The ball rolled into the end zone , and Tech 's offense began a drive at its 20 @-@ yard line with 7 : 43 remaining in the first quarter .

Two incomplete passes and a one @-@ yard run later , Tech prepared to punt the ball away . During the kick , Florida State 's defense broke through the Virginia Tech offensive line and blocked the kick . The ball rolled inside the one @-@ yard line , where Florida State 's offense took over . On the first play after the block , Rix leaped across the goal line for the game 's first touchdown . The extra point attempt was a success , and with 6 : 32 remaining in the first half , Florida State took a 7 ? 3 lead .

The post @-@ score kickoff was returned to the Tech 34 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies began another drive . Two rushing plays resulted in a first down for the Hokies at their 49 @-@ yard line . The Hokies were unable to enter Florida State 's half of the field , however , as two incomplete passes and a running play resulted in a loss of yardage . Florida State 's offense returned to the game at their 30 @-@ yard line following the kick with 4 : 17 remaining in the first half .

On the first play of the drive , Rix completed a 42 @-@ yard pass to Craphonso Thorpe . On the next play , the Seminoles advanced the ball 11 more yards on a running play . From the Tech 18 @-@ yard line , the Seminoles were stopped for no gain , endured a sack of Rix , then committed a five @-@ yard false start penalty . After being pushed back to the Tech 34 @-@ yard line , the Seminoles were unable to get a first down and elected to try a long field goal kick . Florida State placekicker Xavier Beitia entered the game to attempt a 50 @-@ yard kick . The kick was successful , and with 1 : 27 remaining in the first half , Florida State extended its lead to 10 ? 3 .

After Virginia Tech went three @-@ and @-@ out , the Hokies punted to Florida State , who proceeded to run out the remaining seconds on the clock . The first half ended with Florida State leading , 10 ? 3 .

= = = Third quarter = = =

Because Florida State received the ball to begin the game , Virginia Tech received the ball to begin the second half . Florida State 's kickoff was returned to their 29 @-@ yard line , and Virginia Tech 's offense had the first possession of the second half . Jones rushed for six yards , then Noel completed a first @-@ down pass to Andre Davis at the Florida State 45 @-@ yard line . The Seminoles sacked Noel , but Noel regained the lost yardage and earned a first down with a completed pass to the 20 @-@ yard line . Three Tech rushes advanced the ball to the nine @-@ yard line and earned a first down . Two plays later , Jones dashed across the goal line for the first Tech touchdown of the game . The extra point kick was good , and Tech tied the score , 10 ? 10 , with 10 : 02 remaining in the third quarter .

Florida State received the Tech kickoff and returned it to their 23 @-@ yard line . After an incomplete pass from Rix , Virginia Tech 's defense was caught offsides , resulting in a five @-@ yard gain for Florida State . A short run after the penalty gained a first down , but on the first play after the first down , the Seminoles fumbled the ball . The loose ball was recovered by Virginia Tech 's defense , and the Hokies began their second possession of the second half at the State 31 @-@ yard line . Tech was unable to capitalize on the field position , however . Noel threw an incomplete

pass , was sacked , then threw a pass for a loss of yardage . Tech punted the ball , which was downed at the Florida State 12 @-@ yard line .

The Seminoles ' second possession of the second half began with more success than their first possession . State gained a first down on two running plays , then Rix completed a 14 @-@ yard pass for another first down . Now at their 36 @-@ yard line , the Seminoles advanced the ball for short ground gains on the next two plays , then Rix completed a 30 @-@ yard pass to Bell . Following the pass and first down , the Seminoles were at the Tech 34 @-@ yard line . Two short gains and an incomplete pass failed to gain another first down , so State head coach Bobby Bowden ordered kicker Beitia into the game to attempt a 47 @-@ yard field goal . The kick attempt was successful , and Beitia gave Florida State a 13 ? 10 lead with 1 : 42 remaining in the quarter .

Following Florida State 's kickoff and a 38 @-@ yard return , Virginia Tech 's offense began work at its 45 @-@ yard line . On the second play of the drive , Noel completed a 55 @-@ yard pass to Andre Davis , who ran into the end zone for Virginia Tech 's second touchdown of the game . The extra point kick was good , and Virginia Tech regained the lead , 17 ? 13 , with 40 seconds remaining in the quarter .

Virginia Tech kicked the ball off , and Florida State returned the kick 12 yards to its 18 @-@ yard line . The Seminoles gained five yards on two rushing plays before time ran out on the quarter , which ended with Virginia Tech leading , 17 ? 13 .

= = = Fourth quarter = = =

The fourth quarter began with Florida State in possession of the ball and facing a third down and five yards . On the first play of the quarter , Rix was hit by a Virginia Tech defender , but not before he released a 77 @-@ yard pass to Walker , who ran into the end zone for a touchdown . The extra point try was good , and Florida State regained the lead , 20 ? 17 , with 14 : 48 remaining in the game .

Florida State 's post @-@ score kickoff sailed through the end zone for a touchback , and Tech 's offense began its first drive of the quarter from its 20 @-@ yard line . Tech 's first play of the quarter was a 15 @-@ yard completed pass by Noel for a first down . That was followed by an 11 @-@ yard run by Jones for another first down . After an incomplete pass , Noel ran for a first down at the State 41 @-@ yard line . Inside Florida State territory , gaining ground became much more difficult . The next three plays netted Tech only nine yards , setting up a critical fourth @-@ and @-@ one play . With Virginia Tech outside field goal range and trailing , the Hokies needed another first down to move within potential scoring range . But on fourth down , Jones was stopped for no gain on a running play , and the Hokies turned the ball over on downs . The play later was cited as the game 's turning point .

After the turnover , Florida State received the ball at its 32 @-@ yard line with a 20 ? 17 lead and 12 : 08 remaining in the game . On the first play after the turnover , Rix completed a 51 @-@ yard pass to Walker for a first down at the Tech 18 @-@ yard line . The three plays that followed netted only three yards , and Beitia was sent into the game to attempt a 35 @-@ yard field goal . The kick ricocheted off one of the uprights but through the goal posts , extending the Seminoles ' lead to 23 ? 17 with 10 : 13 remaining in the game .

Florida State 's kickoff was fielded inside the Virginia Tech five @-@ yard line and returned to the Tech eight @-@ yard line . Tech gained five yards on two running plays , then Noel completed a 15 @-@ yard pass to Davis for a first down at the Tech 28 @-@ yard line . Noel and Jones each carried the ball , together gaining enough for a first down at the Tech 39 @-@ yard line . A completed pass and a short run by Jones resulted in another first down , this time at the 50 @-@ yard line . Florida State committed a five @-@ yard offsides penalty , but the Hokies were unable to gain a first down on the Seminoles ' side of the field . Rather than attempt to convert another fourth down , the Hokies punted the ball .

The kick was downed by Virginia Tech at the State 22 @-@ yard line with 5 : 22 remaining in the game . On the first play of the drive , Jones gained 13 yards and a first down at the 45 @-@ yard line of Florida State . This was followed by a 22 @-@ yard run and a first down by Jones at the Tech

33 @-@ yard line . Three more runs by Jones gained another nine yards , but rather than attempt a field goal , Bowden ordered his offense to attempt to convert the first down . A quarterback sneak resulted in just enough of a gain for a first down , and State 's drive continued . On the first play after the conversion , Rix completed a 23 @-@ yard pass to Walker for a touchdown . The score and subsequent extra point gave State a 30 ? 17 lead with 2 : 14 remaining in the game .

Virginia Tech returned Florida State 's kickoff to their 23 @-@ yard line . After an incomplete pass , the Hokies gained a first down at their 33 @-@ yard line with a short pass . After the first down , Noel was sacked on successive plays . During the second sack , Florida State lineman Darnell Dockett collided with Noel 's helmet , twisting Dockett 's knee . Following the injury , Tech sent in backup quarterback Bryan Randall to attempt a long pass . The pass was intercepted by Florida State with 19 seconds remaining in the game . Following the interception , the Seminoles ran out the clock and secured a 30 ? 17 win .

= = Statistical summary = =

In recognition of their performances during the game , Florida Statewide receiver Javon Walker was named the most valuable player of the winning team , and Virginia Tech wide receiver André Davis was named the most valuable player of the losing team . Walker finished the game with 195 receiving yards on just four receptions , an average of almost 50 yards ? half the field ? per reception . On the opposite side of the ball , Davis caught five passes for 158 yards , an average of more than 31 yards per catch .

The two teams ' quarterbacks benefited from their receivers ' success in eluding the opposing defenses . Florida State quarterback Chris Rix completed 12 of his 25 pass attempts for two touchdowns , 269 yards , and one interception . Rix also ran the ball 12 times during the game . Although he lost a total of 19 yards , one of his positive rushes resulted in a rushing touchdown . Despite that score , the game marked the first time all season that Rix had been held to negative rushing yardage . For Virginia Tech , quarterback Grant Noel completed 15 of 27 pass attempts for 269 yards and a touchdown . Backup quarterback Bryan Randall threw an interception on his only pass attempt of the game , and wide receiver Richard Johnson 's trick pass attempt fell incomplete .

On the ground , Florida State running back Greg Jones led all players with 23 carries for 120 yards . Virginia Tech running back Kevin Jones was second in overall rushing , having carried the ball 23 times for 55 yards and a touchdown . Defensively , Florida State had 12 tackles for loss , causing the Hokies negating 66 yards of offense . Virginia Tech had eight tackles for loss , encompassing 48 yards of loss . Five of Virginia Tech 's tackles for loss were sacks , while four of Florida State 's tackles for loss were sacks .

Beitia 's three successful field goals tied a Gator Bowl record . Rix 's 326 passing yards were the sixth @-@ most recorded in Gator Bowl history to that point , and Javon Walker 's 195 receiving yards were the second @-@ most ever recorded in a Gator Bowl . The 77 @-@ yard pass from Rix to Walker was the third @-@ longest in Gator Bowl history . On the opposite side of the ball , Davis ' 158 receiving yards were the ninth @-@ most recorded in Gator Bowl history , and his 55 @-@ yard reception from Noel was the ninth @-@ longest in Gator Bowl history . The two receivers ' totals also were Virginia Tech bowl @-@ game records : in one case , for receiving yards gained by a single player , in the other , for receiving yards allowed by a single player .

= = Postgame effects = =

Florida State 's victory raised it to a final record of 8 ? 4 , and Virginia Tech 's loss brought it also to a final record of 8 ? 4 . Following the loss , the Hokies had a 5 ? 10 record in bowl games , including 1 ? 3 in the Gator Bowl and 4 ? 5 in bowl games under head coach Frank Beamer . Florida State 's victory gave Seminoles head coach Bobby Bowden the 322nd win of his career , tying him for second in the overall Division I career wins list with Bear Bryant .

= = 2002 NFL Draft = =



Because of their strong performance in college and during the 2002 Gator Bowl , several players from each team were selected to play in the National Football League during the 2002 NFL Draft . Florida State had three players selected , led by wide receiver Javon Walker , who was picked in the first round ( 20th overall ) by the Green Bay Packers . Following Walker were defensive back Chris Hope ( 94th ) and Milford Brown , who was taken in the supplemental draft by the expansion Houston Texans . In addition to the Seminoles who were drafted , Florida State running back Eric Shelton transferred from the team because of a lack of playing time . Virginia Tech had eight players selected in the 2002 draft . The first of these was wide receiver Andre Davis , who was selected in the second round ( 47th overall ) , by the Cleveland Browns . Following Davis were linebacker Ben Taylor ( 111th ) , defensive back Kevin McAdam ( 148th ) , David Pugh ( 182nd ) , Bob Slowikowski ( 211th ) , Chad Beasley ( 218th ) , Derrius Monroe ( 224th ) , and Jarrett Ferguson ( 251st ) .

= = = Coaching changes = = =

Following the Gator Bowl loss , Virginia Tech offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Rickey Bustle became the head coach at Louisiana @-@ Lafayette as had been announced prior to the game . His position offensive coordinator was filled by then @-@ offensive line coach Bryan Stinespring . To fill the quarterbacks coach position vacated by Bustle , Tech hired former Notre Dame offensive coordinator Kevin Rogers .