

= 2006 Gator Bowl =

The 2006 Gator Bowl was a college football bowl game between the Louisville Cardinals and the Virginia Tech Hokies at Alltel Stadium in Jacksonville , Florida , United States , on January 2 , 2006 . The game was the final contest of the 2005 football season for each team and resulted in a 35 ? 24 Virginia Tech victory . Louisville represented the Big East Conference (Big East) , and Virginia Tech represented the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) in the competition .

Virginia Tech was selected as a participant in the 2006 Gator Bowl following a 10 ? 2 regular season that included wins over 15th @-@ ranked Georgia Tech and traditional rivals Virginia and West Virginia . A loss to Florida State in the inaugural ACC Championship Game gave Tech a position in the Gator Bowl instead of the more prestigious Bowl Championship Series @-@ run Orange Bowl game . Facing the 12th @-@ ranked Hokies were the 15th @-@ ranked Louisville Cardinals , who finished 9 ? 2 during the regular season of their first year in the Big East Conference . Louisville won its last five games before the Gator Bowl and participated in the Liberty Bowl at the end of the previous season . Pre @-@ game media coverage of the game focused on Virginia Tech 's fall from being a contender for the national championship , Louisville 's loss of star quarterback Brian Brohm to injury , the fact that both teams were playing under new conference affiliations , and the rise of Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick , younger brother of NFL star Michael Vick .

The 2006 Gator Bowl began on January 2 , 2006 , at 12 : 30 p.m. EST in Jacksonville . Louisville led for much of the game , beginning with an 11 @-@ yard touchdown pass in the first quarter by backup quarterback Hunter Cantwell , who filled in for the injured Brohm . Tech 's offense replied with a field goal , but Louisville was able to add another touchdown before the end of the quarter , extending its lead to 14 ? 3 . In the second quarter , Virginia Tech fought back and narrowed Louisville 's lead to a single touchdown . At halftime , the score was 17 ? 10 in Louisville 's favor . In the second half , Virginia Tech 's offense began to have success . Tech earned the only points of the third quarter ? a 28 @-@ yard field goal from kicker Brandon Pace ? to narrow Louisville 's lead to 17 ? 13 . In the fourth quarter , the game fully turned in the Hokies ' favor . Though Louisville scored a touchdown early in the quarter , Virginia Tech scored 22 unanswered points in the final 13 minutes of the game to take a 35 ? 24 lead and earn the win .

Tailback Cedric Humes was named the most valuable player of the game for Virginia Tech , and quarterback Hunter Cantwell was named the Cardinals ' most valuable player . Tech punter Nic Schmitt set Gator Bowl records for punt yardage and average punt distance , kicking the ball six times for 300 yards , an average of 50 yards per kick . Virginia Tech 's win was marred by excessive penalties and unsportsmanlike conduct that resulted in the ejection of one player . Following the game , Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick was released from the team as a result of several incidents of misconduct , including a stomp on Louisville defender Elvis Dumervil 's leg during the game . Several players who participated in the game , including Dumervil , later went on to careers in the National Football League .

= = Team selection = =

In the 2005 college football season , the Atlantic Coast Conference had an automatic bid to the Gator Bowl . By contract , the Gator Bowl Association ? which produces the game ? possessed the first pick of bowl @-@ eligible ACC teams after the winner of the ACC Championship Game was given a spot in a Bowl Championship Series (BCS) game . This was the final year that the Gator Bowl had first pick of eligible ACC teams , as contract renegotiations later resulted in the Gator Bowl slipping to the third selection , beginning with the 2006 college football season . Virginia Tech , losers of the 2005 ACC Championship Game , were chosen by the Gator Bowl Association to participate as the ACC 's representative to the 2006 Gator Bowl .

The other half of the matchup would consist of either Notre Dame or the first selection from the Big East Conference after that conference 's automatic BCS bid . Because Notre Dame was selected to play in the 2006 Fiesta Bowl , a BCS game , the Gator Bowl Association was required to select the Big East 's Louisville Cardinals , which , like Virginia Tech , finished second in their conference .

== = Virginia Tech == =

The Virginia Tech Hokies football team began the 2005 college football season as reigning Atlantic Coast Conference football champions . The Hokies also played in the 2005 Sugar Bowl against the third @-@ ranked Auburn Tigers , losing 16 ? 13 in a close contest . Expectations were high for the Hokies to repeat their ACC championship performance the next year , and a preseason poll of media covering ACC football resulted in Virginia Tech being picked to face Florida State in the inaugural ACC Championship Game .

In its first game of the season , however , eighth @-@ ranked Virginia Tech almost let those expectations fall short . At North Carolina State , the Hokies trailed at halftime and were tied at the beginning of the fourth quarter before eking out a 20 ? 16 win in the final minutes . The Hokies bounced back from the close contest in their second game of the season ? against the Duke Blue Devils ? as Tech raced to a 45 ? 0 victory . The Hokies held Duke to just 35 yards of total offense , Tech 's best defensive performance in the modern era .

The win over Duke was followed by several others in succession . Heading into their ninth game of the season , the Hokies were 8 ? 0 record and the third @-@ ranked college football team in the country . Against the fifth @-@ ranked Miami Hurricanes , however , Virginia Tech suffered its first defeat of the season , falling 27 ? 7 . Tech recovered by winning its next two games , earning a spot in the inaugural Atlantic Coast Conference Championship Game , held in Jacksonville , Florida . There , the Hokies lost , 27 ? 22 , to the Florida State Seminoles . The Seminoles earned an automatic bid to a Bowl Championship Series game by virtue of the victory ? had Virginia Tech won the game , it would have been awarded the bid . The day after Tech lost the ACC Championship Game , the Gator Bowl extended a formal invitation to Virginia Tech , which the Hokies accepted . Ninth @-@ ranked Miami , the same team that beat the Hokies 27 ? 7 earlier in the season , was considered for selection , but the Gator Bowl Association took into consideration Virginia Tech 's history of having a large fan base travel to its bowl games , and selected the Hokies on those grounds .

== = Louisville == =

The Louisville Cardinals football team came into the 2005 season having gone 11 ? 1 the previous season , including a season @-@ ending 44 ? 40 victory over Boise State in the 2004 Liberty Bowl . In addition , Louisville was also entering a new conference ? the Big East ? after departing Conference USA following the end of the 2004 season . In a poll of media members covering the Big East prior to the 2005 season , Louisville was predicted to win the Big East championship its first year in the conference .

In their first and second games of the season , the Cardinals lived up to that expectation . At in @-@ state rival Kentucky , Louisville earned a 31 ? 24 victory to win the Governor 's Cup . This was followed the next week by a 63 ? 27 victory over non @-@ conference opponent Oregon State . Unfortunately for the Cardinals , their first Big East conference game of the season ? and of school history ? did not go as well . At South Florida , the ninth @-@ ranked Cardinals were outscored 45 ? 14 , the first time in 13 games Louisville 's offense was held to less than 30 points .

Following the loss , Louisville recovered , scoring 61 points and 69 points , respectively , in non @-@ conference wins over Florida Atlantic University and North Carolina , returning to their previous offensive success . Again , however , Louisville faltered against a Big East opponent . The Cardinals ' second Big East game , at West Virginia University , was another Louisville loss , 46 ? 44 . West Virginia later went on to finish 11 ? 1 for the season , winning the Big East championship and defeating the Georgia Bulldogs in the 2006 Sugar Bowl .

Louisville , meanwhile , returned to its winning ways . The Cardinals , following their loss to the Mountaineers , won their first Big East game in school history the next week , over the Cincinnati Bearcats , 46 ? 22 . The rout of Cincinnati sparked a five @-@ game winning streak , which concluded on December 3 with a 30 ? 20 victory over the University of Connecticut Huskies .

Unfortunately for the Cardinals , starting quarterback Brian Brohm , who had the sixth @-@ best season (in terms of passing yards) in Louisville history , suffered a season @-@ ending knee injury . With West Virginia having won the Big East championship and an automatic Bowl Championship Series game bid , Big East second @-@ place Louisville was selected by the Gator Bowl even before the victory over Connecticut .

= = Pregame buildup = =

Pregame media and fan interest surrounding the game focused largely on Louisville 's top @-@ ranked offense and Virginia Tech 's first @-@ ranked scoring defense . Other major points of media coverage included the two teams ' quarterbacks : Louisville 's Hunter Cantwell , who replaced starter Brian Brohm after Brohm suffered a season @-@ ending knee injury ; and Virginia Tech 's Marcus Vick , brother of National Football League star Michael Vick . Also a concern for Louisville was the health of star running back Michael Bush , who missed two games in November due to an injury . On a wider note , there was also interest in the conference @-@ level showdown between a new Big East team (Louisville) and a team that left the Big East for the ACC after the 2003 season (Virginia Tech) . For Virginia Tech , there was also the hope of overcoming the disappointment of a season that saw the Hokies ranked third in the country and in the hunt for the national championship before failing to even win the Atlantic Coast Conference and missing a bid to a Bowl Championship Series game .

When betting on the game opened , spread bettors favored Virginia Tech by 10 points . Five days after betting opened , the point spread narrowed to 7 @.@ 5 , still in favor of Virginia Tech . Two weeks later , the point spread remained at 7 @.@ 5 in favor of Virginia Tech .

= = = Offensive matchup = = =

= = = = Louisville offense = = = =

Heading into the Gator Bowl , Louisville 's scoring offense was ranked third in the country ? averaging 45 @.@ 2 points per game ? and was held under 30 points just once in their preceding 21 games . The high @-@ powered Cardinals ' offense was predicted to pose a challenge for the Virginia Tech defense .

With star quarterback Brian Brohm having undergone surgery to repair a torn anterior cruciate ligament , there were some questions as to how backup Hunter Cantwell would perform under pressure . Cantwell played well in the Cardinals ' season @-@ ending contest against Connecticut , but some commentators predicted that Virginia Tech 's quicker defense would pose problems for him . In that contest , Cantwell completed 16 of 25 passes for 271 yards and a touchdown . In high school , Cantwell passed for 7 @, @ 272 yards and 70 touchdowns . His .606 career completion percentage ranked 11th in Kentucky state history .

Running back Michael Bush was predicted to return to form after suffering a foot injury that kept him out of two games in November . Bush ran for 121 yards and three touchdowns against Connecticut , his first game back from the injury . Heading into the Gator Bowl , Bush earned a school @-@ record 24 touchdowns and led the country in scoring . He ran for 1 @, @ 049 yards in nine games . He was also a capable receiver , catching 20 passes for 245 yards and a touchdown . But with Brohm on the sidelines , it was expected the Cardinals would rely on Bush 's legs more than usual , in an effort to minimize the need for the inexperienced Cantwell to pass the ball .

Louisville wide receiver Mario Urrutia , who caught 31 passes for 702 yards and six touchdowns during the regular season , stirred a bit of controversy in the final days leading up to the Gator Bowl after he declared that Virginia Tech 's first @-@ ranked defense was " mostly hype " .

= = = = Virginia Tech offense = = = =

Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick was considered the key player for the Virginia Tech offense heading into the Gator Bowl . The younger brother of first @-@ overall NFL Draft pick Michael Vick ? who also played for Tech ? Marcus led the league in passing efficiency (141 @.@ 6 rating) , completed 166 of 268 passes (60 @.@ 3 percent) for 2 @,@ 190 yards and 15 touchdowns , with ten interceptions . On the ground , he ran for 370 yards and six touchdowns . Prior to the Gator Bowl , he pledged that he would return for another season at Virginia Tech before entering the NFL draft . " The NFL is tough . It 's the real deal . You 've got to be ready for it . You just don 't want to rush into just throwing yourself out there because of the money or anything like that . You 've got to really be prepared for it " , he said .

On the ground , two different Tech players were predicted to share time running the ball . Senior running back Cedric Humes was predicted to get the bulk of the carries in the game , but redshirt freshman Branden Ore was also predicted to see some plays at times . Humes rushed the ball 140 times for 639 yards and ten touchdowns during the regular season . Ore , meanwhile , ran the ball for 591 yards and six touchdowns .

Wide receiver Josh Morgan was also considered a key component of the Hokie offense . Morgan finished the season with 28 receptions for 471 yards and four touchdowns . Prior to the game , Morgan predicted that if the Hokies executed their plays well , they would emerge the victors .

Backup guard Brandon Gore broke his ankle during the Hokies ' loss to Florida State and would not be able to participate . Senior Tech running back Mike Imoh , who shared time running the ball during the regular season with Ore and Humes , was also out after undergoing surgery to repair an injured ankle . Adding to the injury situation for Virginia Tech was offensive tackle Jimmy Martin , who suffered a sprained knee ligament in practice leading up to the game . Martin started 45 consecutive games prior to the Gator Bowl , a streak that was broken when he was replaced by Brandon Frye on the day of the game .

= = = Defensive matchup = = =

= = = = Louisville defense = = = =

Shortly after Louisville was selected to the 2006 Gator Bowl , Cardinals defensive end Elvis Dumervil was awarded the Bronko Nagurski Trophy , given annually to the top defensive college football player in the United States . Dumervil also earned several other honors in the weeks leading up to the game , including being named Big East Defensive Player of the Year , an Associated Press All @-@ American and earning the Ted Hendricks Award , given annually to the best defensive end in the country . Dumervil led the nation in sacks (20) and forced fumbles (10) during the regular season . Prior to the game , he announced that he was looking forward to the contest , saying , " To me , I wanted to play the best possible team in the Gator Bowl , and I think that 's what we 've got " .

A week and a half after Dumervil won the Nagurski Trophy , senior defensive tackle Montavious Stanley , who was a leader on defense for Louisville , underwent surgery to repair a torn pectoral muscle . Stanley was the Cardinals ' best run @-@ stopper on defense , amassing 48 tackles and 5 @.@ 5 sacks during the season .

= = = = Virginia Tech defense = = = =

Coming into the Gator Bowl , the Virginia Tech defense was ranked first in total defense , second in pass defense , fourth in rushing defense , and third in scoring defense , allowing an average of just over 12 points per game . The Virginia Tech defense was led by defensive end Darryl Tapp , a first @-@ team All @-@ ACC pick , an American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) All @-@ American , a finalist for the Lott Trophy , and a finalist for the Ted Hendricks Award . Tapp was considered a natural leader both on and off the field and led the Hokies ' defensive workouts during practice . Tapp finished the regular season with 45 tackles (including 12 @.@ 5 for a loss) and ten

sacks . He was also named a second @-@ team Associated Press All @-@ American , and he won the Dudley Award , given annually to the best college football player in the state of Virginia .

Tech cornerback Jimmy F. Williams , considered a cornerstone of the Hokie defense , was a finalist for the Nagurski Trophy that season , but lost to Louisville 's Elvis Dumervil . Williams was Tech 's sole first @-@ team Associated Press All @-@ American and also was named to the American Football Coaches Association , Football Writers Association of American and Walter Camp All @-@ America teams . He recorded 44 tackles and an interception for the Hokies in the regular season . Williams had foregone entering the NFL draft after the 2004 college football season in order to return to Virginia Tech for his senior season , and he was expected to be a high draft pick upon graduation .

= = Game summary = =

The 2006 Gator Bowl kicked off at 12 : 30 p.m. EST on January 2 , 2006 in Jacksonville , Florida . Official attendance for the game was listed as 63 @, @ 780 , placing it at 34th (out of 62) on the list of Gator Bowls in terms of attendance . At kickoff , the weather was mostly cloudy with a temperature of approximately 76 degrees . The wind was from the south @-@ southwest at 11 miles per hour (18 km / h) . Approximately 4 @. @ 14 million American households watched the game on television , earning the game a Nielsen rating of 3 @. @ 93 . The pre @-@ game show featured the Marching Virginians , the Cardinal Marching Band , and the Wachovia Dance Team , a collection of Jacksonville @-@ area entertainers . Also before kickoff , the stadium was overflowed by a flight of U.S. Navy F / A @-@ 18 Super Hornets from VFA @-@ 103 , based in Virginia . The national anthem was sung by Monty Lane Allen , member of a Gospel singing group .

= = = First quarter = = =

Virginia Tech won the ceremonial pre @-@ game coin toss to select first possession and deferred its option to the second half ; Louisville elected to receive the opening kick . The Cardinals began the game 's opening drive at their own 18 @-@ yard line after the opening kickoff . Running back Michael Bush rushed for 12 yards on the game 's opening play , netting the game 's first first down . Subsequent plays , however , saw Louisville struggle to gain another . Facing fourth down and six yards at their own 34 @-@ yard line , the Cardinals seemingly prepared to punt . Instead , the Cardinals executed a trick play by running back Kolby Smith , who ran with the ball . Smith surprised the Tech defense and broke free for a 30 @-@ yard run , converting the first down and continuing the Louisville drive . Eight plays later , Louisville quarterback Hunter Cantwell connected on an 11 @-@ yard pass to Mario Urrutia for a touchdown and the game 's first points . The extra point kick was good , and with 10 : 42 remaining in the first quarter , Louisville took a 7 ? 0 lead .

Virginia Tech 's first possession of the game began at its own 32 @-@ yard line after Louisville 's post @-@ touchdown kickoff . Tech running back Cedric Humes gained 12 yards and a first down on the Hokies ' first play of the game , and quarterback Marcus Vick completed a 24 @-@ yard pass to wide receiver Josh Hyman three plays later to get another first down and drive the Hokies into Louisville territory . After Vick was stopped for losses on two consecutive rushing plays , he completed another long pass to Hyman for a first down . Subsequent plays saw Tech advance into the Louisville red zone but fail to gain another first down . Kicker Brandon Pace entered the game to attempt a 36 @-@ yard field goal kick , which was successful . With six minutes remaining in the first quarter , Tech cut Louisville 's lead to 7 ? 3 .

Louisville 's second drive of the game was much quicker than the Cardinals ' first . After beginning at their own 20 @-@ yard line , it took the Cardinals just seven plays to travel 80 yards and earn a touchdown . Louisville was helped throughout the drive by repeated Virginia Tech personal foul penalties . Tech players committed three separate 15 @-@ yard personal fouls during the drive , one of which came after Louisville 's successful extra point kick when cornerback Jimmy Williams bumped a game official . Williams was ejected from the game for the contact and was removed from the field after watching the next series from the sidelines . The touchdown and extra point extended

Louisville 's first @-@ quarter lead to 14 ? 3 .

Tech received the ball at its 20 @-@ yard line with 2 : 44 remaining in the first quarter . Three quick rushes picked up 22 yards and two first downs , pushing the ball to the Tech 42 @-@ yard line . On the next play , however , wide receiver Justin Harper committed a 15 @-@ yard pass interference penalty , which negated much of the previous plays ' gains . Marcus Vick rushed for five yards , threw two incomplete passes , and was unable to get another first down after the penalty . With time winding down in the quarter , Tech was forced to punt the ball away . The game 's first punt traveled 53 yards , and Louisville took over on offense at its 40 @-@ yard line following a 25 @-@ yard punt return as time expired in the quarter . At the end of the first quarter , Louisville led Virginia Tech , 14 ? 3 .

= = = Second quarter = = =

Louisville began the second quarter in possession of the ball at its 40 @-@ yard line . Despite having good field position , the Cardinals were unable to gain more than four yards on three plays and were forced into their first punt of the game . Throughout much of the second quarter , both teams traded punts as each went three and out on several occasions . By the quarter 's halfway point , Virginia Tech punted the ball twice in the period . Louisville punted the ball three times after kicking no punts at all in the first quarter .

After the third Louisville punt , Virginia Tech took over at its 46 @-@ yard line . Unlike the previous second @-@ quarter possessions , which saw the Tech offense struggle to move the ball effectively , Tech began its drive with a five @-@ yard rush . After losing seven yards on the next play , Marcus Vick completed a 19 @-@ yard pass to tight end Jeff King , driving the Hokies into Louisville territory for the first time in the quarter . Two plays later , Vick connected with wide receiver Justin Harper on a 33 @-@ yard pass that resulted in the Hokies ' first touchdown of the game . With 4 : 56 remaining in the first half of the game , Tech trimmed Louisville 's lead to 14 ? 10 .

Following the Tech touchdown , Louisville attempted to answer with points of its own before halftime . After starting on his own 20 @-@ yard line , Hunter Cantwell completed two quick passes that resulted in 26 yards . Two plays later , Michael Bush broke free for a 34 @-@ yard run , driving Louisville deep into the Virginia Tech side of the field . Despite having a first down at the Virginia Tech 18 @-@ yard line , Louisville was unable to gain any yards on three consecutive plays . Bush was stopped for no gain on a rushing attempt , and two Cantwell passes fell incomplete . Kicker Arthur Carmody came in to complete a 35 @-@ yard field goal , and with 2 : 16 remaining in the first half , Louisville led by a score of 17 ? 10 .

After receiving Louisville 's kickoff , Virginia Tech elected to run out the clock and bring the first half to an end . During the process , Marcus Vick ran the ball on a designed play and was tackled by Cardinals defensive end Elvis Dumervil after Vick gained nine yards . Following the play , Vick paused , then stomped on Dumervil 's leg . Though referees failed to observe the stomp , television commentators replayed the action , and Tech coaches considered pulling Vick from the game as punishment . At the end of the first half of play , Louisville held a 17 ? 10 lead .

= = = Third quarter = = =

The second half of play began with Virginia Tech receiving the ball , going three and out , and punting the ball back to Louisville . The Cardinals reciprocated by also going three and out and punting the ball back to Virginia Tech . The Hokies began their second drive of the quarter at their one @-@ yard line . Despite beginning deep in their own end of the field , Virginia Tech mounted a successful drive . Tailback Branden Ore and quarterback Marcus Vick alternated rushes , picking up 18 yards and a first down . After Vick was sacked by the Louisville defense , he recovered by throwing a 29 @-@ yard pass for another first down . Following the pass , Vick and Ore rushed for six consecutive plays , alternating carries at various intervals . Inside the Louisville red zone , however , the Cardinals ' defense stiffened and the Tech offense began to falter . After Tech successfully gained a first down on fourth and one , the Hokies were unable to gain another . Tech

kicker Brandon Pace was forced to make his second field goal of the game , this one a 28 @-@ yarder , to make the game 17 ? 13 with 2 : 52 remaining in the quarter . The Tech drive began with 11 : 17 remaining in the quarter and took eight minutes and 25 seconds off the clock .

Louisville received the post @-@ field goal kickoff , but again went three and out , punting the ball back to Virginia Tech . Louisville did not pick up a first down in the third quarter , and Tech began yet another drive as time ran out in the quarter . With one quarter remaining in the game , Tech narrowed the Louisville lead to 17 ? 13 .

= = = Fourth quarter = = =

Shortly after the fourth quarter began , the Virginia Tech drive that began in the waning moments of the third quarter came to an end . The Hokies were forced to punt , and Louisville began its first drive of the fourth quarter . The Cardinals ' Harry Douglas ran for 29 yards on their first play of the drive . On the second , Hunter Cantwell completed a 29 @-@ yard touchdown pass to Gary Barnidge . It took Louisville just 33 seconds and two plays to travel 58 yards and earn a touchdown . The score gave Louisville a 24 ? 13 lead with 13 : 32 remaining to play . But just as it took Louisville just two plays to score , so too did it take Virginia Tech two plays to answer the Louisville touchdown . After taking over at his team 's 22 @-@ yard line , Marcus Vick completed a 54 @-@ yard pass to wide receiver David Clowney . Virginia Tech and Louisville committed offsetting 15 @-@ yard personal foul penalties before the play , to no effect on the Hokie offense . On the next play after the long pass , Cedric Humes rushed for 24 yards and the answering Hokie touchdown . It took just 28 seconds for Virginia Tech to answer the Louisville touchdown . Having done that , Tech went Louisville one better , successfully scoring a two @-@ point conversion on a pass from Vick to Morgan . The touchdown and two @-@ point conversion cut the Louisville lead to 24 ? 21 .

The Cardinals began their second drive of the quarter at their own 25 @-@ yard line . In fits and starts , the Louisville offense advanced down the field . Kolby Smith ran for a yard , Michael Bush for two , then six yards , and Cantwell completed two passes of seven yards each . The Cardinals were also helped by a defensive pass interference penalty against Virginia Tech , which gave Louisville a first down by penalty . As Louisville began to enter Tech territory in earnest , however , the Cardinals suffered their first turnover of the game . Facing third down and three yards from the Virginia Tech 40 @-@ yard line , Cantwell was sacked and fumbled the ball . Tech defender Xavier Adibi scooped up the loose ball , and Tech gained the initiative . Following the fumble , the Hokies began a drive at their 47 @-@ yard line . On the first play , Tech was aided by a pass interference penalty on Louisville . The penalty was followed by a three @-@ yard Cedric Humes rush and yet another pass interference penalty against Louisville . Humes rushed twice more for five yards , and Vick completed a 16 @-@ yard pass to David Clowney before Vick completed a five @-@ yard touchdown pass to Jeff King . The score and subsequent extra point gave Virginia Tech a 28 ? 24 lead ? its first of the game ? with 6 : 03 remaining .

Louisville took over on offense needing to get a touchdown to regain a lead before the waning clock finally ran out of time . After the Tech kickoff and a touchback , the Cardinals took over at their 20 @-@ yard line . Michael Bush ran for 10 yards and a first down , and Hunter Cantwell scrambled for six more on a rushing play . Facing third down and needing four yards , Cantwell dropped back to pass for the first down . As the pass soared through the air , Tech defender James Anderson jumped and caught the ball , intercepting it . Still on his feet , Anderson quickly rushed the other way and , unimpeded , ran 39 yards into the end zone for a Virginia Tech touchdown . The score and extra point energized Virginia Tech 's offense and defense and gave the Hokies an 11 @-@ point lead ? 35 ? 24 ? with 4 : 45 remaining in the game .

Louisville returned on offense , needing to score quickly , make a stop on defense , then score a second time to take the lead . The energized Tech defense was disinclined to allow any such thing . Though Cantwell completed two short passes for 16 yards and a first down , he was sacked on first down and the Tech defense prevented him from completing another pass . Two passes were knocked down by Hokie defenders , while another fell short . After Louisville failed to convert a fourth down , Virginia Tech took over on offense . The Hokies proceeded to run out the clock ,

executing two short rushes and an incomplete pass . Louisville had one final chance on offense after a Tech punt , but three consecutive desperation Hail Mary passes were unsuccessful . Two fell incomplete , and the third was intercepted by Tech cornerback Brandon Flowers . With time almost gone , Tech finished running out the clock and secured the victory . As time expired , Virginia Tech held a 35 ? 24 lead and won the 2006 Gator Bowl .

= = Final statistics = =

Running back Cedric Humes was named the game 's most valuable player for Virginia Tech , and quarterback Hunter Cantwell was named the Cardinals ' most valuable player . Tech punter Nic Schmitt set Gator Bowl record for punt yardage and average punt distance , kicking the ball six times for 300 yards , an average of 50 yards per kick .

Despite being more highly promoted in pregame media coverage , Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick was outperformed statistically by Louisville 's Hunter Cantwell . Vick completed 11 of 21 passes for 203 yards and two touchdowns . He also ran for 10 yards on 13 carries . Cantwell , meanwhile , completed 15 of his 37 passes for 216 yards , three touchdowns , and three interceptions .

On the ground , Tech running back Cedric Humes led all rushers with 22 carries for 113 yards and one touchdown . Louisville 's leading rusher , Michael Bush , had 16 carries for 94 yards and one fumble . The third @-@ leading rusher in the game was Tech 's Branden Ore , who carried the ball 11 times for 56 yards . Louisville 's Kolby Smith carried the ball three times for 32 yards , including a 30 @-@ yard run that was the game 's second @-@ longest rushing play .

Defensively , Virginia Tech dominated , intercepting the ball three times , forcing a fumble once , and earning one defensive touchdown . Two Louisville defenders had the best individual performances during the game , however . Brandon Johnson and Abe Brown had six tackles apiece , and Brown sacked Marcus Vick once for a loss of ten yards . The sack was one of three earned by the Louisville offense during the game . Virginia Tech 's defense earned two sacks during the game , and the Hokies ' leading tackler was Vince Hall , who recorded four and two assists on sacks of Louisville 's Hunter Cantwell .

= = Postgame effects = =

Virginia Tech 's victory in the 2006 Gator Bowl had far @-@ reaching effects for both the Hokies and the Louisville Cardinals . The win pushed Tech to 11 ? 2 on the season , while the Cardinals ' loss ensured they ended the 2005 season with a 9 ? 3 overall record . The game itself provided more than \$ 14 million in economic benefit to the Jacksonville area as Louisville and Virginia Tech fans flocked to the region , spending money on food , hotel rooms , transportation , and entertainment .

Virginia Tech quarterbacks coach Kevin Rogers announced after the game that he would be leaving the team in order to become an assistant coach with the NFL 's Minnesota Vikings . Rogers was replaced by new hire Mike O 'Cain . Tech offensive coordinator Bryan Stinespring 's second job as offensive line coach was filled by James Madison University assistant coach Curt Newsome .

= = = Marcus Vick = = =

Following the 2005 ACC Championship Game , Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick stormed off the field , refusing to talk to reporters following the loss . Vick , who picked up a 15 @-@ yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty late in that game , also earned several unsportsmanlike conduct penalties in the 2006 Gator Bowl , where post @-@ game replays revealed he purposefully stomped on the leg of Louisville Cardinals ' defensive end Elvis Dumervil . Vick claimed he apologized to Dumervil after the game , but Dumervil stated that no apology was made . In the wake of the incident , Virginia Tech officials announced that they would be conducting a review of Vick 's conduct on and off the field .

On January 6 , 2006 , just a few days after the Gator Bowl , Virginia Tech officials dismissed Vick from the Virginia Tech football team , citing a December 17 traffic stop in which Vick was cited for speeding and driving with a revoked or suspended license . Vick hid the information from the team and the infraction was not discovered until January . The traffic stop , an earlier suspension from the team , and his unsportsmanlike conduct during the 2005 ACC Championship Game and 2006 Gator Bowl were used as grounds for his dismissal . In response to being dismissed from the team , Vick was quoted as saying , " It 's not a big deal . I 'll just move on to the next level , baby " . Vick appeared in one regular @-@ season NFL game for the Miami Dolphins in 2006 . The Dolphins did not renew his contract , and he has been out of football ever since .

= = = 2006 NFL Draft = = =

On April 29 and 30 , the National Football league held its annual player draft . Over a dozen players who participated in the 2006 Gator Bowl were selected in the draft . Virginia Tech had a record nine players selected in the draft , with Darryl Tapp (31st overall) selected first from the Hokies . Jimmy Williams (37th overall) , James Anderson (88th) , Jeff King (155th) , Jonathan Lewis (177th) , Justin Hamilton (222nd) , Jimmy Martin (227th) , Will Montgomery (234th) , and Cedric Humes (240th) were the other Tech players selected . Louisville had four players selected in the draft . Offensive guard Jason Spitz was selected 75th overall and was the first Cardinals ' offensive lineman to be drafted since 1996 . Elvis Dumervil was selected with the 126th selection , linebacker Brandon Johnson was selected 142nd , and defensive tackle Montavious Stanley was selected 182nd .