

= 1994 Gator Bowl =

The 1994 Gator Bowl was a post @-@ season American college football bowl game between the Virginia Tech Hokies and the Tennessee Volunteers at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium in Gainesville , Florida on December 30 , 1994 . The game was the final contest of the 1994 NCAA Division I @-@ A football season for both teams , and ended in a 45 @-@ 23 victory for Tennessee .

The 1994 Gator Bowl saw 17th @-@ ranked Virginia Tech face off against regional rival Tennessee at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the campus of the University of Florida . The game was moved to Gainesville in 1994 due to renovations to the Gator Bowl for the Jacksonville Jaguars . Virginia Tech came into the game with an 8 ? 3 regular @-@ season record that included a record of 5 ? 2 in Big East Conference competition . The Tennessee Volunteers came entered the game with a regular @-@ season record of 7 ? 4 under head coach Phillip Fulmer that included a 5 ? 3 record in Southeastern Conference competition .

The game kicked off on December 30 , 1994 in Gainesville , Florida . From the start , Tennessee 's high @-@ scoring offense dominated . The Volunteers scored two touchdowns in the first quarter and three in the second , while Virginia Tech was able to muster a lone touchdown and field goal in the second quarter . At halftime , Tennessee had a commanding 35 ? 10 lead , behind the strong play of Freshman QB Peyton Manning .

The Hokies struggled back in the third quarter , scoring six unanswered points to close the score to 35 ? 16 . In the fourth quarter , however , Tennessee answered Virginia Tech 's effort with 10 points , putting the game out of reach for the Hokies , who managed only a single touchdown in the fourth quarter . The Hokies fumbled the ball five times ? losing it once ? and threw two interceptions , allowing Tennessee to cruise to an easy victory , 45 ? 23 . Tennessee running back James Stewart was named the game 's most valuable player .

= = Renovations = =

In early 1994 , Jacksonville Mayor Ed Austin proposed \$ 49 million in renovations to Jacksonville 's aging Gator Bowl Stadium in order to keep the stadium up to date for the annual Florida @-@ Georgia rivalry game . After Florida and Georgia accepted the renovations , agreeing to play the rivalry game in Athens , Georgia during the renovations , Jacksonville investors proposed expanding the renovation plan in order to attract a National Football League team . The price tag was revised upward ? to \$ 121 million ? and the city successfully attracted a team . Shortly after Jacksonville was awarded its new franchise ? the Jacksonville Jaguars ? the final plans were unveiled . The stadium would have additional luxury boxes , expanded seating , and upgraded facilities for teams and fans .

The renovations were much more extensive than had initially been proposed , and required more time to be completed . Instead of beginning in early 1995 , work would have to begin in 1994 , leaving the site of the 1994 Gator Bowl ( played on Dec. 30 ) in doubt . By the end of January 1994 , as the Gator Bowl was being demolished , that doubt was also demolished when a deal was struck to host the Gator Bowl at the University of Florida , in that school 's Ben Hill Griffin Stadium . The game 's title sponsor , Outback Steakhouse , and its television sponsor , TBS , would remain constant , and both were in their final year of contracts with the Gator Bowl .

= = Team selection = =

Prior to the start of the 1994 @-@ 1995 college football season , the Gator Bowl was snubbed by the newly formed Bowl Alliance , a group of football conferences , bowl games , and television networks created to match up the No. 1 and No. 2 college football teams at the conclusion of each season . Though the Gator Bowl offered to pay \$ 115 million for the right to become a Bowl Alliance game , the Orange Bowl was selected in place of the Gator Bowl . This event had repercussions at the end of the season , when the bowl was passed over by high @-@ ranked teams that elected to accept bids to bowls in the new Bowl Alliance .

== Virginia Tech ==

During the annual preseason poll of media members covering the Big East conference , Virginia Tech was picked to finish second among Big East teams , behind only Miami . The Hokies entered the 1994 college football season having finished the 1993 season with a win in the 1993 Independence Bowl , and hopes were high that they would return to a bowl game again in 1994 .

The Hokies started the season well , winning their first four games in succession and culminating with a victory against West Virginia in the annual battle for the Black Diamond Trophy . The Hokies , who had begun the season ranked No. 21 in the country , rose to No. 14 by their fifth game of the season , a trip to Syracuse , New York , to play the Syracuse Orange . There , Virginia Tech suffered its first loss of the season , permitting 100 @-@ yard rushing games from Syracuse 's Malcolm Thomas and Kirby Dar Dar , the last time the Hokies allowed two hundred @-@ yard rushers in the same game . Tech responded to the loss by reeling off another three wins in succession . That winning streak ended at No. 6 Miami , when Tech lost its second game of the season , a loss that was followed by a season @-@ ending defeat to perennial rival Virginia . The Hokies concluded the regular season with an 8 ? 4 record overall and a 5 ? 2 record in the Big East . Ironically , despite their season @-@ ending loss to Virginia , the Hokies were awarded an invitation to the Gator Bowl over the Cavaliers , who lost to North Carolina State in their season @-@ ending game . In addition to that loss , Gator Bowl officials later stated they were reluctant to invite an Atlantic Coast Conference team for a fourth straight year , thus opening the door for the Hokies from the Big East .

== Tennessee ==

The Tennessee Volunteers had finished the 1993 season with a 10 ? 2 record and a season @-@ ending loss to the Penn State Nittany Lions under first @-@ year head coach Phillip Fulmer in the Citrus Bowl . Hopes were high that Tennessee 's second year under Fulmer 's command would end better than its first .

Tennessee was ranked No. 13 in the Associated Press preseason poll at the start of the season , but won just one game in its first four of the season , causing the Volunteers to drop out of the top 25 for the first time since 1989 , breaking a streak of 84 consecutive weeks in the poll . To make matters worse , Tennessee 's two starting quarterbacks suffered season @-@ ending injuries during that four @-@ game span . In the Volunteers ' season @-@ opener against UCLA , Jerry Colquitt suffered a knee injury . Backup quarterback Todd Helton was hurt in the fourth game of the season , a loss to Mississippi State . In response to the poor start , Fulmer overhauled his defense and coped with the loss of his first- and second @-@ string quarterbacks by bringing in acclaimed freshman Peyton Manning , son of National Football League star Archie Manning .

Manning 's first start , a Tennessee homecoming game against Washington State , resulted in a 10 ? 9 win . Things got progressively better for the Volunteers after Manning assumed the starting role , as they won six of their final regular @-@ season games . The sole loss was a 13 ? 17 defeat at the hands of then @-@ No. 10 Alabama in Knoxville . The loss was merely a bump in the road , however , as Tennessee won all four regular @-@ season games that followed , ending the regular season with a 65 ? 0 drubbing of in @-@ state rival Vanderbilt . In response to Fulmer 's success at turning the team around from a slow start , he was awarded with a one @-@ year contract extension by the university .

== Pregame buildup ==

The matchup of Virginia Tech and Tennessee was the first game between the two teams since 1937 , an unusual fact since both teams are located in the Appalachian Mountains and the two schools are just 3 @.@ 5 hours by car apart . This proximity generated multiple news stories about towns lying between the two schools and the divided loyalties of their fans . In Washington County ,

Virginia , which lies along the Tennessee border , the county supervisor ? a Virginia Tech graduate ? proclaimed the week of the Gator Bowl to be " Hokie Week " over the objections of the county attorney , who graduated from Tennessee . This natural rivalry was amplified by a basketball game held the day prior to the Gator Bowl that pitted the two schools ' varsity teams against each other . In exchange for participating in the game , each team received \$ 1 @. @ 5 million from the Gator Bowl Association .

Ticket sales were brisk in the month between the announcement of the Tech @-@ Tennessee matchup and the day of the game . By December 14 , two weeks after the initial announcement , Virginia Tech had sold 16 @, @ 000 tickets to Tennessee 's 9 @, @ 000 . On December 23 , one week before the game , Tech had sold 17 @, @ 653 tickets . By the day of the game , the two teams had combined to sell approximately 33 @, @ 000 tickets . Two days prior to the game , spread bettors favored Tennessee to win by seven points .

= = = Tennessee offense = = =

The Tennessee offense was led by freshman quarterback Peyton Manning , son of NFL great Archie Manning , who had played against the Hokies in the 1968 Liberty Bowl . During the regular season , Peyton played in seven games , winning six of them and completing 86 of his 139 pass attempts for 1 @, @ 114 yards , 11 touchdowns , and six interceptions . Manning 's passer rating of 145 @. @ 2 was the third @-@ highest among starting quarterbacks in the SEC . In recognition of his achievements , Manning was named the Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Year . One of Manning 's more prominent passing targets was Billy Williams , who , despite suffering a stress fracture in the first game of the season , recovered to catch 20 passes for 217 yards and two touchdowns . He also returned 17 kickoffs for an average of 20 @. @ 8 yards per return . Manning 's favorite target was Joey Kent , who caught 36 passes for 470 yards during the regular season , but slightly injured his ankle in a pre @-@ Gator Bowl practice .

The Volunteers ' rushing offense had been led by Aaron Hayden during the regular season , but Hayden broke his leg during Tennessee 's final regular season game . Due to the injury , James Stewart was forecast to start the game at running back for the Volunteers . During the regular season , Tennessee was ranked No. 13 in rushing , accumulating an average of 231 @. @ 2 rushing yards per game . Stewart accounted for 93 @. @ 5 yards of that total , having carried the ball 170 times for 1 @, @ 028 yards and 11 touchdowns during the regular season . One of Tennessee 's other backup running backs , Jay Graham , was predicted to be kept out of the game due to an injury , but played after undergoing surgery . Graham , who rushed 61 times for 275 yards during the regular season , suffered a broken jaw after being punched in the face by a teammate . Because of the injury to Graham , fourth @-@ string running back Ronnie Pillow , who had carried the ball just five times during the regular season , was predicted to back up Stewart during the game .

Prior to the game , Tennessee coach Fulmer pronounced himself unsatisfied with the Vols ' performance in opponents ' red zone during the regular season . Tennessee scored on just 36 of 52 possessions inside the opposition 's 20 @-@ yard line , a conversion rate of 69 @. @ 2 percent . Fulmer vowed to raise that percentage to what it had been the previous season , when Tennessee converted 41 of 46 possessions , or 89 @. @ 1 percent .

= = = Virginia Tech offense = = =

On offense , the Virginia Tech Hokies were led by quarterback Maurice DeShazo , who completed 164 of his 296 pass attempts during the regular season for 2 @, @ 110 yards , 13 touchdowns , and 13 interceptions . DeShazo 's success during the season helped him become the No. 4 all @-@ time passing leader in Virginia Tech history , finishing his career with 5 @, @ 720 passing yards . DeShazo 's favorite passing target was wide receiver Antonio Freeman , who finished the season having caught 38 passes for 586 yards and five touchdowns . The Gator Bowl was Freeman 's final collegiate game , just as it was DeShazo 's . Freeman finished his career as the No. 1 receiver in Virginia Tech history in terms of yardage ( bowl games were not counted in statistics until 2003 )

with 2 @, @ 207 receiving yards . Freeman also was the team 's leading punt returner , having returned 39 kicks for 467 yards and a touchdown , and received second @-@ team All @-@ Big East honors .

On the ground , Virginia Tech 's rushing offense was led by running back Dwayne Thomas , who carried the ball 142 times for 642 yards and five touchdowns . Backing up Thomas was Tommy Edwards , son of former Virginia Tech player Ken Edwards , who played with the Hokies from 1967 to 1969 , including the Hokies ' trip to the 1968 Liberty Bowl . By participating in the Gator Bowl and in the previous season 's Independence Bowl , the Edwardses became the first father @-@ son combo in Virginia Tech history to have competed in a bowl game .

At the beginning of December , Virginia Tech 's offensive preparations for the Gator Bowl were disrupted when offensive coordinator Gary Tranquill abruptly quit the team in order to join friend Nick Saban , who had been hired as the head coach at Michigan State . Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer announced simultaneous with Tranquill 's departure that assistant head coach Billy Hite would control the offense during the Gator Bowl . Shortly after the announcement of Tranquill 's departure , Virginia Tech announced that former offensive coordinator Ricky Bustle would be returning to the team to fill the position after the Gator Bowl . Though he was not able to actively coach the team during the Gator Bowl , Bustle offered advice and strategy to Beamer during the weeks before the game .

Virginia Tech receiver Cornelius White fractured his patella while playing pick @-@ up basketball .

= = = Tennessee defense = = =

During the regular season , the Volunteers ' scoring defense was ranked the second @-@ best in the SEC , allowing an average of just 16 @. @ 82 points per game . Tennessee also allowed just eight passing touchdowns and 20 touchdowns overall . One of Tennessee 's defensive leaders was defensive end Steve White , who led the Volunteers in sacks and tackles for loss with seven and eight , respectively . Tennessee 's leader in interceptions was Ronald Davis , who had two during the regular season . Scott Galyon had the most tackles on the team , with 93 .

Strong safety Ray Austin , who had been named most valuable player in the Volunteers ' loss to Penn State during the 1993 Citrus Bowl , had 50 tackles ? second @-@ best among Tennessee defensive backs ? two fumble recoveries , a sack , and two tackles for loss despite playing in only six games . The Volunteers ' defense also featured a cornerback named Tony Edge , a player from Virginia 's Phoebus High School who had been heavily recruited by both Virginia Tech and Tennessee . Edge suffered a dislocated shoulder in the Volunteers ' last regular @-@ season game , but pledged he would play against the Hokies despite doctors ' disapproval .

= = = Virginia Tech defense = = =

Defensively , the Virginia Tech Hokies allowed an average of 308 yards per game and 18 @. @ 4 points per game . During the last two games of the regular season , however , the Hokies permitted 34 points and 42 points to Rutgers and Virginia , respectively . The Virginia Tech defense was led by two strong performers in the defensive secondary . Safety Torrian Gray intercepted four passes during the regular season , returning one of the catches for a touchdown . He tied with cornerback William Yarborough for the most interceptions on the team during the regular season . Neither player was the team 's leading tackler , however . That honor went to linebacker George DelRicco , who had 130 tackles during the regular season .

Fellow linebacker Ken Brown was named a first @-@ team All @-@ Big East selection , signifying his status as one of the best players at his position in the conference . He finished the season with 93 tackles , including six for loss and two sacks , enough for No. 3 on the team in tackles . Despite that success , Brown suffered a pulled hamstring before Virginia Tech 's final regular @-@ season game and his presence in the Gator Bowl was doubtful . Virginia Tech sophomore defensive end Cornell Brown was named the best defensive college player in the state of Virginia by the Roanoke Times after earning 20 tackles for loss , including 11 sacks , and 35 quarterback hurries during the

regular season .

= = Game summary = =

The 1994 Gator Bowl kicked off on December 30 , 1994 at 8 p.m. EST at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium in Gainesville , Florida . An estimated 62 @,@ 200 fans were in attendance , and millions more people watched the game on television . TBS televised the game in the United States , and Gary Bender , Pat Haden , and Craig Sager were the broadcasters . Tennessee won the ceremonial pre @-@ game coin toss and elected to kick off to Virginia Tech to begin the game .

= = = First quarter = = =

Virginia Tech 's Tommy Edwards fielded the opening kickoff , which was returned to the Tech 29 @-@ yard line , where the Hokies ' offense began the first play of the game , an incomplete pass by Virginia Tech quarterback Maurice DeShazo . On the second play of the game , DeShazo again attempted a forward pass . This time , however , the ball was intercepted by Tennessee linebacker Tyrone Hines . Hines returned the ball to the Tech 28 @-@ yard line , allowing the Volunteers ' offense to begin the game already in scoring position . Tennessee 's first play was a run up the middle by James Stewart , who gained three yards . On the second play , Tennessee quarterback Peyton Manning completed a nine @-@ yard pass to wide receiver Nilo Silvan . During the play , Silvan suffered a broken ankle and did not return to the game . Now at the 16 @-@ yard line , Tennessee continued its drive with a rush by Stewart , who wasn 't able to advance the ball . On the next play , the Volunteers were penalized 10 yards for a block in the back of a Virginia Tech player . Despite the penalty and an incomplete pass on a subsequent play , Tennessee was able to gain a first down to the five @-@ yard line with a pass from Manning to Joey Kent . Two plays later , the Volunteers scored on a one @-@ yard touchdown run by Stewart . The extra point kick was successful , and Tennessee took a 7 ? 0 lead with 11 : 41 remaining in the first quarter .

Following Tennessee 's touchdown , the two teams traded possessions , each going three and out . Virginia Tech regained the ball after a Tennessee punt to its 20 @-@ yard line with 7 : 31 remaining in the quarter . After a Tech fumble that was recovered by the Hokies , Tech running back Dwayne Thomas ran nine yards for the first Tech first down of the game . After an incomplete pass , DeShazo and Thomas connected on an eight @-@ yard pass before Thomas broke free for an 11 @-@ yard run and another first down . Thomas continued advancing the ball , picking up eight yards on two rushing plays . DeShazo then completed a four @-@ yard pass for a first down at the Tennessee 39 @-@ yard line . There , however , Tennessee 's defense stiffened and did not allow the Hokies another first down . The Tech punt was downed at the Tennessee 7 @-@ yard line , where the Volunteers began their third possession of the game .

On the first play of the drive , Tennessee committed a five @-@ yard false start penalty , pushing the Volunteers back toward their goal line . A Tennessee rush was stopped for no gain , then Stewart picked up eight yards on a running play . Needing eight yards for a first down , Manning threw an 11 @-@ yard pass to Kent for the first down . On the next play , Manning completed a 43 @-@ yard toss to Kent , driving the Volunteers into the Virginia Tech half of the field . Manning 's next throw was a 35 @-@ yard touchdown throw to Marcus Nash . The extra point was good , and Tennessee took a 14 ? 0 lead with 1 : 08 remaining in the quarter .

Tennessee 's kickoff went out of bounds , allowing Tech 's offense to start at its 35 @-@ yard line . DeShazo threw an incomplete pass , then completed one for a nine @-@ yard gain . Needing one yard for a first down , Tech fullback Bryan Edwards was stopped for a loss and the Hokies were forced to punt . Tennessee fair caught the ball at their 20 @-@ yard line , where the Volunteers ' offense again began to work . A five @-@ yard penalty pushed the Volunteers backward , but running back Jay Graham regained the lost five yards with a run on the next play and the clock ran out in the quarter . At the end of the first quarter , Tennessee led , 14 ? 0 .

= = = Second quarter = = =

At the beginning of the second quarter , Tennessee had the ball at its 19 @-@ yard line , facing a second down and ten . On the first play of the quarter , Tennessee ran an end @-@ around to Kendrick Jones , who ran the ball for 76 yards , giving the Volunteers a first down at the Virginia Tech five @-@ yard line . Three plays later , running back Jay Graham crossed the goal line for the first Tennessee touchdown of the second quarter . The extra point was good , and with 13 : 23 remaining in the first half , Tennessee took a 21 ? 0 lead .

Following Tennessee 's post @-@ touchdown kickoff and a short kick return , the Virginia Tech offense began at its 24 @-@ yard line . The first Tech play of the quarter , a run up the middle by Edmonds , resulted in a 17 @-@ yard gain and a first down . Dwayne Thomas followed Edmonds ' run with one of his own , advancing the ball to the 50 @-@ yard line . He pushed into Tennessee territory on the next play , a five @-@ yard run that gave the Hokies a first down at the Tennessee 45 @-@ yard line . DeShazo then ran nine yards , and Tech gained a first down on the next play . Inside the Tennessee 35 @-@ yard line , however , the Volunteers ' defense stiffened . DeShazo passed for a seven @-@ yard gain , but the Hokies were unable to gain a first down until DeShazo scrambled for a 13 @-@ yard gain on fourth down . The run kept the Tech drive alive as the Hokies now had a first down at the Tennessee 14 @-@ yard line . Tennessee forced another third @-@ down play , but the Hokies gained a first down at the Tennessee three @-@ yard line with a pass from DeShazo to Thomas . Four plays later , the Hokies scored their first points of the game as Thomas dove across the goal line on fourth down . The subsequent extra point was good , and the Hokies cut Tennessee 's lead to 21 ? 7 with 5 : 17 remaining in the first half .

Virginia Tech 's kickoff was returned to the Tennessee 26 @-@ yard line , and the Volunteers ' offense returned to the field . Instead of Peyton Manning , backup quarterback Brannndon Stewart came on the field to lead Tennessee . On the second play of the Tennessee drive , Stewart gained 24 yards on a quarterback scramble , giving the Volunteers a first down at the Tennessee 49 @-@ yard line . On the next play , he completed a 27 @-@ yard pass to Kent for another first down . Two plays later , James Stewart broke free for an 18 @-@ yard run that gave Tennessee a first down at the Virginia Tech one @-@ yard line . One play later , Stewart crossed the goal line for Tennessee 's second touchdown of the quarter . The extra point was good , and Tennessee 's lead was again 21 points , 28 ? 7 , with 3 : 22 remaining in the quarter .

The Volunteers ' kickoff was returned to the Tech 22 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies began another drive . On the first play of the drive , however , Maurice DeShazo scrambled for a ten @-@ yard gain but fumbled the ball . The loose ball was recovered by a Tennessee defender , and the Volunteers took over on offense from the Tech 32 @-@ yard line . Brannndon Stewart came out onto the field in place of Manning , and completed an eight @-@ yard pass to James Stewart to begin the drive . James Stewart then ran to the 20 @-@ yard line for a first down . On the next play , Tennessee executed a trick play in which James Stewart received the ball via a hand @-@ off , imitating a running play , but threw the ball instead . The pass was caught by James Kendrick for a touchdown , and after the extra point , Tennessee had a 35 ? 7 lead with 2 : 08 remaining in the first half .

The kickoff was returned to the Tech 27 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies began the final drive of the second quarter . Antonio Freeman caught a six @-@ yard pass from DeShazo , then DeShazo completed a five @-@ yard pass to Shawn Scales . DeShazo completed a four @-@ yard pass , then Ken Oxendine had a seven @-@ yard catch from DeShazo at the Tech 49 @-@ yard line . On the next play , Oxendine caught a short pass that pushed the Hokies to the Tennessee 45 @-@ yard line , then DeShazo threw his first incomplete pass of the drive . The incompletion stopped the clock with 37 seconds remaining , allowing time for DeShazo to complete a 26 @-@ yard pass to Bryan Still on the next play . Now inside the Tennessee red zone , the Hokies continued to move the ball via short passes . Tech gained a first down at the Tennessee six @-@ yard line , and used a timeout to stop the clock in order to have a chance to earn a touchdown before halftime . On a subsequent play , however , Tech committed a five @-@ yard penalty , and Tech head coach Frank Beamer ordered kicker Ryan Williams into the game . Williams ' 27 @-@ yard field goal attempt was good , and Tech cut Tennessee 's lead to 35 ? 10 at the end of the first half .

= = = Third quarter = = =

Because Virginia Tech received the ball to begin the game , Tennessee received the ball to begin the second half . Tech 's kickoff was returned to the Tennessee 13 @-@ yard line , and Peyton Manning returned to the field to lead the Volunteers ' offense . The first play of the second half was an eight @-@ yard run by James Stewart , which was followed by a six @-@ yard run by Stewart for a first down at the Tennessee 27 @-@ yard line . Another Stewart run was followed by two short completions from Manning , and the Volunteers had another first down at the 37 @-@ yard line . Tennessee 's next play was negated by an offensive pass interference penalty against the Volunteers , who were pushed back to the 22 @-@ yard line by the penalty . Though Manning gained 22 yards with a third @-@ down pass , Tennessee was unable to gain enough yards for a first down and punted . During the kick , Tennessee committed a penalty and had to kick again after the five @-@ yard penalty was assessed . The punt was fair caught at the Tech 25 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies began their first offensive possession of the second half with 10 : 14 remaining in the third quarter .

On the first play , DeShazo completed an 18 @-@ yard pass to Still , who gave the Hokies a first down at their 43 @-@ yard line . On the next play , Tech wide receiver Antonio Freeman committed a pass interference penalty , pushing the Hokies back 15 yards . Dwayne Thomas made good the penalty by gaining 16 yards on an option run , which was followed by a 17 @-@ yard pass from DeShazo to Freeman , who kept the Hokies ' drive going with a first down at the Tennessee 39 @-@ yard line . After an incomplete pass , Thomas broke free for a 27 @-@ yard run along the left side of the field , giving Tech a first down at the Tennessee 13 @-@ yard line . Tennessee 's defense held for three plays , forcing a fourth down . Instead of kicking a field goal , the Hokies attempted to convert the fourth down by running the ball . DeShazo scrambled , broke free of the defense , and crossed the goal line for the first Tech touchdown of the second half . Williams missed the extra point kick , however , and Tech cut Tennessee 's lead to 35 ? 16 with 7 : 03 remaining in the quarter .

The kickoff was returned to the Tennessee 17 @-@ yard line , and Tennessee 's offense began work . The Volunteers were aided by a five @-@ yard offsides penalty against Virginia Tech on the first play of the drive , but the Hokies stopped the Tennessee offense for losses or no gain until Manning threw a 14 @-@ yard pass on third down , pushing Tennessee to the 34 @-@ yard line . After two incomplete passes , Manning scrambled 27 yards for another first down , this time at the Tech 39 @-@ yard line . Once there , however , the Virginia Tech defense stiffened and did not allow another first down during the drive . Tennessee kicker John Becksvoort came into the game , seemingly to attempt a 48 @-@ yard field goal . The kick turned out to be a trick play ? an attempted pass by the kick holder ? but Hokie defender Mike Williams tackled the holder for a loss .

After the failed trick play , the Hokies ' offense started at their 44 @-@ yard line . The first Tech play of the drive was a 15 @-@ yard pass from DeShazo to Still for a first down . A three @-@ yard run by Thomas was followed by a seven @-@ yard reverse by Still for another first down at the Tennessee 29 @-@ yard line . On first down , Thomas pushed the Hokies eight yards forward with a run up the middle . This was followed by two incomplete passes , bringing up fourth down . Again , Tech head coach Frank Beamer elected to try to convert the fourth down rather than kick a field goal . Unlike Tech 's previous fourth down , however , the try was unsuccessful after DeShazo mishandled the snap and was tackled for a loss . Virginia Tech turned the ball over on downs , and Tennessee 's offense returned to the game with 1 : 31 remaining in the quarter .

The Volunteers started at their 27 @-@ yard line to begin the drive , but went three and out and punted back to the Hokies without gaining a first down . The kick was returned to the Tech 39 @-@ yard line , where the Hokies ' offense started with 31 seconds remaining in the quarter . On the first play of the drive , wide receiver Bryan Still broke away from the Tennessee defense and was wide open for a pass . Maurice DeShazo threw the ball to Still , but Still dropped the pass after it bounced off his chest , thus denying the Hokies a touchdown . Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer later cited the dropped pass as a critical turning point in the game , saying , " I think if he could have

made that catch , we could have gotten back in the game . " Tech player Torrian Gray agreed , saying , " When he dropped the ball , that took a lot out of us . " After Still 's dropped pass , DeShazo threw two incomplete passes and Virginia Tech punted back to Tennessee . The kick was caught by near the Tennessee 10 @-@ yard line , and returned all the way to the Virginia Tech 37 @-@ yard line . At the end of the third quarter , Tennessee still led , 35 ? 16 .

= = = Fourth quarter = = =

The fourth quarter began with Tennessee in possession of the ball and facing a first @-@ and @-@ 10 at the Virginia Tech 37 @-@ yard line after a long punt return . Stewart ran twice for six yards , then Manning completed a pass to Kent at the 20 @-@ yard line for a first down . Manning then completed a pass to Nash for another first down at the Tech five @-@ yard line . Two plays later , Stewart scored his third touchdown of the game with a five @-@ yard run to the right side of the field . The extra point was good , and with 13 : 17 remaining in the game , Tennessee took a 42 ? 16 lead .

Bryan Still fielded the Tennessee kickoff and returned it to the 19 @-@ yard line of Virginia Tech . After a short pass , DeShazo threw his second interception of the game . Tennessee defender John Summers returned the catch to the Tech 19 @-@ yard line , and backup quarterback Brannndon Stewart returned to the game for Tennessee 's offense . James Stewart took the first play of the Volunteers ' drive , an eight @-@ yard gain , then backup Jay Graham entered the game and ran to the five @-@ yard line for a first down . After the next play ? , a two @-@ yard run by Graham ? Tennessee committed a 15 @-@ yard personal foul penalty , pushing the Volunteers back to the 17 @-@ yard line . Brannndon Stewart completed a pass to tight end David Horn , pushing Tennessee back to the three @-@ yard line , but not gaining enough for a first down . Tennessee kicker John Becksvoort returned to the game , and his 19 @-@ yard field goal attempt was good , giving the Volunteers a 45 ? 16 lead with 9 : 41 to go in the game .

Following the kickoff and return , backup Virginia Tech quarterback Jim Druckenmiller entered the game to guide the Hokies ' offense . The first play of the drive , however , was a run by backup running back Ken Oxendine , who gained five yards . Two more runs by Oxendine failed to gain a first down , however , and Virginia Tech punted . Tennessee 's Sean Summers returned the kick to the Volunteers ' 40 @-@ yard line , and the Volunteers continued trying to run out the clock . Tennessee failed to gain a first down , and the resulting punt rolled into the end zone for a touchback .

From the Tech 20 @-@ yard line , Druckenmiller completed a 13 @-@ yard pass to Still for a first down at the Tech 33 @-@ yard line . On the next play , Druckenmiller completed a long pass to tight end Bryan Jennings , who carried the ball 41 yards . Following the play , the Volunteers completed a penalty , advancing the ball to the Tennessee 22 @-@ yard line . Two short runs advanced the Hokies to the 19 @-@ yard line , then Druckenmiller completed a 10 @-@ yard pass to Freeman for a first down . On the next play , Druckenmiller connected with Still for a nine @-@ yard touchdown pass . The extra point was good , and Tennessee 's lead was cut to 45 ? 23 , but with only 4 : 13 remaining in the game , the game seemed out of reach for the Hokies .

Virginia Tech 's kickoff was recovered in the end zone for a touchback , and the Volunteers started at their 20 @-@ yard line . Tennessee resumed running out the clock via short runs up the middle of the field that kept the game clock ticking down . After not gaining a first down , Tennessee punted to the Hokies with less than two minutes remaining in the game . Tech wide receiver Antonio Freeman returned the kick to the Tech 42 @-@ yard line , and on the first play of the Hokie drive , Druckenmiller completed a 17 @-@ yard pass to the Tennessee 41 @-@ yard line . That completion was followed by a nine @-@ yard pass to Jermaine Holmes . After an incomplete pass that almost was intercepted , Druckenmiller threw an incomplete pass before Oxendine failed to gain enough yards for a first down and Tech turned the ball over on downs . With less than a minute remaining , Tennessee 's offense ran out the remaining seconds on the clock and secured a 45 ? 23 victory .



= = Statistical summary = =

In recognition of their performances during the game , Tennessee 's James Stewart and Virginia Tech 's Maurice DeShazo were named the game 's most valuable players . Stewart finished the game having carried the ball 22 times for 85 yards and three rushing touchdowns . Stewart also caught one pass for seven yards and threw a touchdown pass for 19 yards . On the other side , DeShazo completed 17 of his 30 passes for 140 yards and two interceptions . He also ran the ball 11 times for 39 yards and a rushing touchdown .

Though Stewart was named the most valuable player for the Volunteers , multiple Tennessee players had statistically significant games . Volunteer quarterback Peyton Manning finished the game having completed 12 of his 19 pass attempts for 189 yards , one touchdown , and one interception . Backup Tennessee quarterback Brandon Stewart completed all three of his pass attempts , accumulating 49 yards in the process . Tennessee receiver Joey Kent was the primary beneficiary of the Volunteer passing attack , leading all receivers during the game with six receptions for 116 yards . Tennessee 's passing touchdowns went to Kendrick Jones , who also had 37 receiving yards and 76 rushing yards ; and Marcus Nash , who caught three passes for 54 yards .

Virginia Tech 's offense , though far less successful than Tennessee 's , also had some high performers . Running Back Dwayne Thomas finished the game with 19 carries for 102 yards and a touchdown , becoming the game 's leading rusher in terms of yardage , if not points scored . The Hokies ' leading receiver , Bryan Still , caught five passes for 79 yards and a touchdown . The touchdown pass came from Tech backup quarterback Jim Druckenmiller , who finished the game having completed six of his eight pass attempts for 97 yards and the touchdown .

The 68 points scored in the game were a Gator Bowl record at the time , and Tennessee 's 35 first @-@ half points also were a Gator Bowl record . Kendrick Jones ' 76 @-@ yard run on the first play of the second quarter was the longest in Gator Bowl history at the time . Stewart 's three touchdowns and the Volunteers ' six touchdowns were Tennessee bowl game records at the time , and the Volunteers also set Tennessee bowl @-@ game records for most points and offensive yardage .

= = Postgame effects = =

With the win , Tennessee finished the 1994 college football season with an overall record of 8 ? 4 . In the final Associated Press poll of the year , the Volunteers were ranked No. 22 . Virginia Tech 's also took it to a final record of 8 ? 4 , and the Hokies fell from their No. 17 spot in the AP poll to being unranked . In the USA Today Coaches ' Poll , Tech dropped to No. 24 . This game was also the final meeting of the Hokies and the Volunteers until the 2009 Chick @-@ fil @-@ A Bowl . Despite their regional proximity to each other , there were numerous failed attempts at scheduling a game between the universities . These efforts finally paid off in October 2013 when the two schools announced the Battle at Bristol , which will be at the Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol , Tennessee , on September 10 , 2016 . The game will feature the largest crowd in history to see a football game , i.e. approximately 150 @,@ 000 fans over the current record of 115 @,@ 109 fans who saw Michigan play Notre Dame in September 2013 .

This was the last appearance of an SEC team in the Gator Bowl until 2011 . Conversely , it was the last Gator Bowl which did not feature a team from the ACC ( which admitted Virginia Tech in 2004 ) for the same period . After this game , the Gator Bowl entered into exclusive tie @-@ in contracts with the ACC and the Big East until 2010 ( with the addition of the Big 12 and Notre Dame from 2006 @-@ 2010 ) .