

= 2009 Orange Bowl =

The 2009 FedEx Orange Bowl was the 75th edition of the annual American college football bowl game known as the Orange Bowl . It pitted the 2008 Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) champion Virginia Tech Hokies against the Big East Conference champion Cincinnati Bearcats on January 1 , 2009 , at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens , Florida . Virginia Tech defeated Cincinnati , 20 ? 7 . The game was the second contest in the 2008 ? 2009 Bowl Championship Series (BCS) of the 2008 NCAA Division I FBS football season and was the concluding game of the season for both teams . The game was televised in the United States on FOX , and an estimated 9 @. @ 3 million viewers watched the broadcast live .

Virginia Tech was selected to participate in the Orange Bowl after a 9 ? 4 season that culminated in a 30 ? 12 victory in the 2008 ACC Championship Game . Cincinnati was selected as the other half of the matchup after an 11 ? 2 season that ended with a 29 ? 24 win against Hawaii . In the weeks between the teams ' selection and the playing of the game , media attention focused on the nature of Cincinnati 's first BCS game appearance and Virginia Tech 's attempt to win its first BCS game since 1995 . Attention also focused on Cincinnati 's proficient offense and Virginia Tech 's highly rated defense .

The game kicked off at 8 : 47 p.m. Eastern Standard Time in warm weather , and Cincinnati scored first , converting the game 's opening possession into a touchdown and a 7 ? 0 lead in the first quarter . Virginia Tech responded in the second quarter , tying the game at seven before taking a 10 ? 7 lead with a field goal as time expired in the first half . In the third quarter , the two teams battled defensively , with only the Hokies able to score any points as Tech extended its lead to 13 ? 7 . During the final quarter , Virginia Tech scored its second touchdown of the game , giving the Hokies a 20 ? 7 lead that lasted until time expired .

In recognition of his performance during the game , Virginia Tech running back Darren Evans was named the game 's most valuable player . He set a Virginia Tech bowl @-@ game record for carries and tied the Tech record for rushing yards in a bowl game . Cincinnati replaced two coaches after the loss , and three months after the game , players from each team entered the National Football League (NFL) via the 2009 NFL Draft . Cincinnati had six players selected in the draft , while Virginia Tech had one .

= = Team selection = =

The Orange Bowl is one of five Bowl Championship Series (BCS) bowl games that have been played at the conclusion of every college football season since 2006 . As defined by contract , the bowl matches the champion of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) against an at @-@ large pick chosen by a special committee . On December 6 , 2008 , the Virginia Tech Hokies defeated the Boston College Eagles in the 2008 ACC Championship Game , thus winning an automatic bid to the 2009 Orange Bowl Game .

The at @-@ large spot in the Orange Bowl was filled via a round @-@ robin selection procedure defined by the other Bowl Championship series games (the Sugar , Fiesta , and Rose bowls) and the automatic bids . The order of at @-@ large selections rotates annually among the BCS bowls . In 2009 , the Fiesta Bowl picked first , followed by the Sugar Bowl , then the Orange Bowl . The Fiesta Bowl picked Ohio State , while the Sugar Bowl selected Utah . The Orange Bowl was thus left to select Big East Conference champion Cincinnati , fulfilling the BCS ' contractual obligation to provide a game for the conference 's champion .

= = = Cincinnati = = =

The Cincinnati Bearcats ended the 2007 college football season with a 10 ? 2 record , including a win in the 2007 PapaJohns.com Bowl over Southern Miss , 31 ? 21 . It was only the second time in school history that Cincinnati had won 10 games in a season . Before the 2008 season , the Bearcats hoped quarterback Ben Mauk would be allowed to play an unusual sixth year of college

football , a possibility created by a year lost to injury and a redshirt year . After Mauk 's request was denied by the NCAA , the annual poll of media covering Big East football picked Cincinnati to finish fifth in the eight @-@ team Big East .

The Bearcats opened the 2008 college football season against Eastern Kentucky , winning 40 ? 7 in an offensive effort led by senior quarterback Dustin Grutza , who was named the team 's starter at that position following Mauk 's dismissal . For its second game of the season , Cincinnati traveled to Norman , Oklahoma , to face the Oklahoma Sooners for the first time . In a 52 ? 26 loss to a team that would play for the national championship that season , Grutza broke his ankle and was replaced by junior Tony Pike .

For their third game of the season , the Bearcats returned to Nippert Stadium ? their home field ? to play the first of two Mid @-@ American Conference (MAC) opponents , in @-@ state rival Miami . In the 113th Battle for the Victory Bell , Cincinnati won , 45 ? 20 . Following the victory against Miami , the Bearcats traveled to Akron , Ohio to play the Akron Zips . Against the Zips , Pike broke his arm and was replaced by redshirt freshman Chazz Anderson , who was also injured during the game . Fellow redshirt freshman Zach Collaros then entered the game and led the Bearcats to a 17 ? 15 victory . The close win against Akron was followed by a 33 ? 10 win over Marshall , the Bearcats ' final nonconference game before beginning Big East play .

At the start of conference play , the Bearcats were 4 ? 1 , and their only loss was against top @-@ five opponent Oklahoma . With Pike still injured , Cincinnati beat Rutgers , 13 ? 10 , in the Bearcats ' first Big East game of the season . The Bearcats suffered their second defeat of the season in the following week , however , losing to the UConn Huskies , 40 ? 16 . Pike returned from the injury and had the Bearcats leading at halftime , but he left the game at the half when numbness in his non @-@ throwing hand prevented him from being able to take the snap . In the two weeks that followed the loss to the Huskies , Cincinnati recovered to beat two top @-@ 25 opponents : No. 23 South Florida and No. 20 West Virginia . The two victories pushed the Bearcats to a 3 ? 1 conference record and the No. 22 position in the AP Poll before Cincinnati 's annual rivalry game against Louisville . That game , also known as the Battle for The Keg of Nails , ended in a Cincinnati victory for the first time since 2002 .

Following the rivalry game win , Cincinnati played the Pittsburgh Panthers in a game for control of first place in the Big East . In front of a record crowd at Cincinnati 's home field , the Bearcats claimed first place with a 28 ? 21 win . Heading into its game against the Syracuse Orange , Cincinnati was assured at least a share of the Big East Championship , but a 30 ? 10 win over Syracuse gave the Bearcats sole possession of the championship , the first Big East title in school history . After clinching the Big East Championship and a bid to a BCS bowl , Cincinnati ended the regular season with a game in Hawaii against the Hawai'i Warriors . Despite trailing for much of the game , the Bearcats scored 19 unanswered points and ended the regular season with a 29 ? 24 victory . Already assured a BCS berth by virtue of their Big East championship , on December 7 , 2008 , the Bearcats were selected to participate in the 2009 Orange Bowl .

= = = Virginia Tech = = =

The Virginia Tech Hokies entered the 2008 season after an 11 ? 3 overall 2007 record that included a win in the 2007 ACC Championship Game and a loss to the Kansas Jayhawks in the 2008 Orange Bowl . Although the Hokies won the ACC for the second time in less than four years , fans and analysts anticipated Virginia Tech would spend 2008 rebuilding a team that saw 12 starters graduate or enter the National Football League (NFL) Draft . Though picked in a preseason poll to win the Coastal Division of the ACC , the Hokies were upset in their season opener by East Carolina University .

Following the loss , Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer announced that backup quarterback Tyrod Taylor , who had previously been expected to redshirt and sit out the season , would play in the Hokies ' second game , against Furman . Both Taylor and Sean Glennon performed well against Furman , and Tech won , 24 ? 7 . Tech 's third game of the season came against the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets , who were debuting a new offensive system the spread option under first @-@ year

head coach Paul Johnson . Unlike the game against Furman , Taylor started the game and remained at quarterback throughout , guiding the Hokies to their first ACC victory of the season , 20 ? 17 . The win gave Tech the tiebreaker against the Yellow Jackets in the event of a tie in the division standings at the end of the season . The Hokies ' fourth game of the season came against the North Carolina Tar Heels , who were defeated by the same margin of victory as Tech 's win against Georgia Tech , 20 ? 17 .

The twin conference victories were followed by two out @-@ of @-@ conference wins : at Big 12 opponent Nebraska and against independent Western Kentucky . At the end of the four @-@ game winning streak , the Hokies had a 4 ? 1 record , 2 ? 0 in conference , and were ranked No. 17 in the country . On October 18 , however , the Hokies lost to unranked Boston College in Boston , 28 ? 23 . The game was a rematch of the previous year 's ACC Championship Game and was a preview of the 2008 ACC Championship Game matchup . The loss was the start of a skid that saw Tech lose three of four games , only managing a victory against Maryland , 23 ? 13 . The final contest of that four @-@ game stretch was a 16 ? 13 loss to Coastal Division rival Miami , which then held the tiebreaker over the Hokies in the event of any head @-@ to @-@ head tie .

During the last two games of the regular season , however , the Hokies managed two victories : a 14 ? 3 win against last @-@ place ACC team Duke , and a 17 ? 14 triumph over traditional rival Virginia . Miami , meanwhile , lost its final two games of the season : against Georgia Tech and North Carolina State . These losses dropped Miami to a 4 ? 4 record in the ACC , one game behind the Hokies , who were tied with Georgia Tech at 5 ? 3 following the end of the regular season . By virtue of the Hokies ' head @-@ to @-@ head win against the Yellow Jackets , Virginia Tech won the Coastal Division and a spot in the ACC Championship Game . When Tech won the championship game against Atlantic Division champion Boston College , 30 ? 12 , it was awarded the ACC 's automatic bid to the Orange Bowl .

= = Pregame buildup = =

Pregame media coverage of the game focused on the fact that the 2009 Orange Bowl was Cincinnati 's first Bowl Championship Series game in school history . For Virginia Tech , coverage focused on the Hokies ' winless history in BCS games since 1995 , as Tech had lost all four of its appearances in a BCS game since an upset win over Texas in the 1995 Sugar Bowl . Also mentioned was the fact that the two teams had faced each other in the 1947 Sun Bowl , which had been each school 's first bowl game . The low win rate of ACC teams in general was another point of interest . Teams from the conference had won just one of their ten appearances in a BCS bowl before the Orange Bowl . Before the Orange Bowl matchup , the two teams last played in 2006 , when the Hokies defeated the Bearcats , 29 ? 13 , at Virginia Tech 's home field , Lane Stadium . For the Orange Bowl , spread bettors favored a reversal of that 2006 final , as Cincinnati was initially favored by one point . This expanded to 1 @.@ 5 points by December 9 . The trend toward Cincinnati continued , and on December 27 , betting organizations gave Cincinnati the edge by two or two and a half points .

The game featured two teams both ranked lower than the two teams playing in a non @-@ BCS bowl , a first in BCS history . The 2008 Poinsettia Bowl featured the No. 9 Boise State Broncos against the No. 11 TCU Horned Frogs . In Miami , Virginia Tech and Cincinnati each made preparations to switch accommodations to a different hotel on the day before the game to better simulate the feel of a regular @-@ season game . Cincinnati 's move was accelerated a day when rapper Sean " Diddy " Combs moved into the hotel and coaches , seeking to avoid a distraction , moved up the date of the team 's departure .

= = = Ticket sales = = =

The pace of ticket sales for the Orange Bowl varied wildly between the two schools . Each team received an allotment of 17 @,@ 500 tickets to sell to its fans , and each school sold about 4 @,@ 000 tickets in the two days immediately following the announcement . Media covering Virginia Tech

considered the rate of ticket sales to be slow because the Hokies had sold 50 percent more during a similar timeframe the previous year . Media following Cincinnati ticket sales considered the pace to be fast , calling the Orange Bowl game a " hot ticket " . The \$ 125 tickets sold by Cincinnati generated the largest amount of ticket sale revenue ever recorded by the Cincinnati Athletics Department , netting the school more than \$ 500 @, @ 000 in the first day of sales . Travel agencies offered packages including game tickets , airfare , and a hotel room to fans of both teams . Owing to the demand , fans were warned against the danger of counterfeit tickets .

In the days immediately following the announcement of the matchup , ticket sales diverged . By December 12 , Cincinnati sold about 9 @, @ 000 tickets . This total increased to approximately 13 @, @ 000 tickets by December 20 , and the school prepared multiple tour buses for a student convoy to the game . At Virginia Tech , meanwhile , sales lagged . In an effort to spur sales , Tech administrators had head football coach Frank Beamer star in a video asking Hokies fans to buy tickets to the game . Owing to limited demand for tickets , prices in the secondary market plunged .

As late as December 31 , neither team had sold its entire allotment of 17 @, @ 500 tickets . Cincinnati fans had bought 13 @, @ 000 tickets , while Virginia Tech fans bought fewer than 5 @, @ 000 tickets from the school 's allotment . Countering Virginia Tech 's low direct ticket sales were large numbers of fans who avoided paying face value for tickets ? US \$ 125 ? by buying them on the secondary market , often for as little as 99 cents .

== Cincinnati offense ==

Before the Orange Bowl , Cincinnati was ranked 50th (of 119 Division I FBS teams) in total offense . The team was ranked 24th in passing offense , with the five quarterbacks pressed into service during the season averaging 254 @. @ 1 passing yards per game . By the end of the season , Tony Pike emerged as Cincinnati 's sole starting quarterback . He finished the regular season having completed 183 of 291 pass attempts for 2 @, @ 168 yards , 18 touchdowns , and 7 interceptions . He ranked second in the Big East and 29th nationally in passing efficiency with a passer rating of 141 @. @ 07 .

Among Cincinnati receivers , there was none of the uncertainty that afflicted the Bearcats ' quarterbacks . Wide receiver Mardy Gilyard caught 74 passes during the regular season , setting a Cincinnati record with 1 @, @ 118 receiving yards . He also had 10 touchdowns during the season , leading all Cincinnati players . Gilyard also played as the Bearcats ' primary kick returner . He returned 32 kicks , accumulating a school @-@ record 897 yards and 2 touchdowns . Fellow wide receiver Dominick Goodman outpaced Gilyard in receptions with 78 , but he had only 977 receiving yards and 7 touchdowns . On the first play of Cincinnati 's game against Hawai'i , Dominick injured his shoulder and his ability to play in the Orange Bowl was in doubt .

Cincinnati 's ground offense was less statistically significant than its passing offense . It was led by running back Jacob Ramsey , who carried the ball 148 times for 630 yards and two touchdowns . Backup running back John Goebel had 124 rushing attempts for 581 yards and 7 touchdowns .

== Virginia Tech offense ==

At the conclusion of the regular season before the Orange Bowl , Virginia Tech 's offense was ranked among the worst in Division I , 107th among 119 teams . The Hokies averaged just 296 yards per game during the regular season , and during the ACC Championship Game ? the last Tech game before the Orange Bowl ? had created a season @-@ low 234 yards of offense . Starting left guard Nick Marshman was not expected to play after becoming academically ineligible following the fall semester , and was replaced by redshirt freshman Jaymes Brooks .

On the field , the Hokies ' offense was led by quarterback Tyrod Taylor , who completed 86 of his 151 pass attempts for 896 yards , 2 touchdowns , and 6 interceptions in the season before the Orange Bowl . He also carried the ball 132 times for a total gain of 691 yards and 6 touchdowns on the ground . As successful as Taylor was rushing the ball , Virginia Tech 's offense on the ground was led by freshman running back Darren Evans , who set a Virginia Tech freshman record for

rushing yards by accumulating 1 @, @ 112 during the regular season . He also scored 10 touchdowns , was named a second @-@ team All @-@ ACC player , and finished second in the voting for the ACC 's rookie of the year award . Evans became the sixth freshman in the history of the Atlantic Coast Conference to rush for more than 1 @, @ 000 yards and set a Virginia Tech single @-@ game record for rushing yards when he ran for 253 yards in Tech 's game against Maryland .

= = = Cincinnati defense = = =

Entering the Orange Bowl , the Bearcats were ranked 26th in total defense , allowing an average of 316 yards per game to opposing offenses . Cincinnati was 26th in scoring defense , permitting an average of 20 @. @ 2 points per game . The Bearcats were No. 1 in sacks among Big East teams , recording 35 during the season .

Defensive end Connor Barwin led the Bearcats ' defense in sacks with 11 , a figure that also was the highest in the Big East and No. 14 nationally . He finished the regular season with 48 tackles , a figure that included the 11 sacks . In recognition of his performance , he was named a first @-@ team All @-@ Big East selection , signifying his status as the best player at his position in the conference .

In the defensive secondary , the Bearcats were led by cornerback Mike Mickens and safety Brandon Underwood . Mickens was a second @-@ team All @-@ Big East selection , and Underwood was a first @-@ team All @-@ Big East selection . Mickens was Cincinnati 's career leader in interceptions and interception return yardage , and had 65 tackles (third on the team) despite missing three games due to injury . Underwood was fifth on the team in tackles with 60 , and had 3 interceptions and 6 pass breakups .

The most notable player for Cincinnati , however , was punter Kevin Huber , who was named an Associated Press All @-@ American and became the first player in Bearcats history to earn that honor in two consecutive years . Thanks to Huber 's performance during the regular season , Cincinnati led the country in punting average (41 @. @ 5 yards per kick) and was No. 1 in the Big East for the second consecutive year .

= = = Virginia Tech defense = = =

Virginia Tech 's defense was considered among the best in Division I before the Orange Bowl . The Hokies were ranked seventh in total defense , allowing just 277 @. @ 08 yards per game on average . Virginia Tech also was highly ranked in several other defensive categories : eighth in turnovers gained (30) , 13th in scoring defense (17 @. @ 46 points per game) , 15th in pass defense (170 @. @ 08 yards per game) , and 19th in rushing defense (107 @. @ 00 yards per game) . The Hokies ' defense also scored five defensive touchdowns during the regular season .

Tech 's defense was led on the field by senior cornerback Victor " Macho " Harris . During the regular season , Harris tied for fifth in the country in interceptions with six , including two returned for touchdowns . He also had 44 tackles , and was named the top defensive player in the state of Virginia . At defensive end , Tech featured Orion Martin , a former walk @-@ on who rose to a starting position and had 7 @. @ 5 sacks , 13 tackles for loss , and 53 tackles during the regular season . Heading into the Orange Bowl , the Hokies ' defense was afflicted by injuries . Defensive end Jason Worilds had a shoulder injury . Starting linebacker Brett Warren , who had 86 tackles , with 5 tackles for loss , 2 forced fumbles , and 2 interceptions during the regular season , suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament and was expected to miss the game .

= = Game summary = =

The 2009 Orange Bowl kicked off at 8 : 47 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens , Florida . An estimated total of 73 @, @ 602 tickets were sold for the game , but bowl officials estimated 15 @, @ 781 sold tickets went unused , giving a turnstile attendance of 57 @, @ 821 . The game was televised on FOX , and the announcers were Thom Brennaman , Charles

Davis , and Chris Myers . An estimated 9 @. @ 3 million viewers watched the broadcast , earning it a Nielsen rating of 5 @. @ 4 . Figures on the total payout vary , but Virginia Tech and Cincinnati each received between \$ 17 million and \$ 18 million for playing in the Orange Bowl , an amount that was shared with the other teams in each school 's athletic conference .

The ceremonial performance of the national anthem was played on trumpet by Arturo Sandoval . At the start of the game , the weather was clear , with an air temperature of 68 ° F (20 ° C) and relative humidity of 69 percent . The wind was from the northeast at 7 miles per hour (11 km / h) . J. O 'Neill was the referee , B. Neale was the umpire , and the linesman was J. Quinn . Orange Bowl Committee chairman Daniel Ponce performed the ceremonial pre @-@ game coin toss to determine first possession . The toss was won by Virginia Tech , which elected to receive the ball to begin the second half , ensuring Cincinnati the right to receive the ball to begin the game .

= = = First quarter = = =

Virginia Tech 's opening kickoff was returned to the Cincinnati 28 @-@ yard line , where the Bearcats executed the game 's first play , a five @-@ yard run by running back John Goebel . On the next play , the Bearcats earned the game 's initial first down with a 13 @-@ yard pass from quarterback Tony Pike to wide receiver Dominick Goodman . Now at their 46 @-@ yard line , Pike then threw his second @-@ longest completed pass of the game , a 38 @-@ yard pass to wide receiver Mardy Gilyard . The play advanced the Bearcats ' offense to the Virginia Tech 16 @-@ yard line , and three plays later , Pike completed a 15 @-@ yard pass to Gilyard for a touchdown and the game 's first points . The extra point kick by Cincinnati kicker Jake Rogers was good , and with 13 : 08 remaining in the opening quarter , the Bearcats took a 7 ? 0 lead over Virginia Tech .

Cincinnati 's kickoff after the touchdown was returned to the Virginia Tech 24 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies prepared for their first offensive possession of the game . That play was a 27 @-@ yard run by wide receiver Dyrell Roberts , who ran an end @-@ around for the big gain . Now on the Cincinnati side of the field , Virginia Tech running Back Darren Evans ran for one yard , then Hokies quarterback Tyrod Taylor completed a 34 @-@ yard pass to wide receiver Danny Coale . The catch gave Virginia Tech a first down at the Cincinnati 14 @-@ yard line . On the first play following the long completion , Evans was tackled for a six @-@ yard loss , pushing the Hokies back to the Bearcats ' 20 @-@ yard line . On the next two plays , Tyrod Taylor rushed for a total of 11 yards , but was unable to gain another first down . Facing fourth down , Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer sent kicker Dustin Keys into the game to attempt a 26 @-@ yard field goal . The kick sailed right of the uprights , however , and Virginia Tech was denied a scoring opportunity .

After the missed kick , Cincinnati 's offense took to the field at their 20 @-@ yard line . The Bearcats were not able to gain a first down , however , and went three and out before punting back to Virginia Tech . Following the kick , the Hokies started at their 16 @-@ yard line . Tech 's first play of the drive was a 14 @-@ yard pass from Taylor to wide receiver Jarrett Boykin for a first down , but the Hokies were unable to gain another first down . Tech punted back to Cincinnati , and the ball rolled out of bounds at the Cincinnati 30 @-@ yard line . The first play of the drive resulted in a short loss , but on the second play , Pike completed a 39 @-@ yard pass to Gilyard . The play advanced the Bearcats deep into Virginia Tech territory and gave them a first down . Despite the long play , Cincinnati was unable to gain another first down , and Rogers entered the game to attempt a 44 @-@ yard field goal . The kick was partially blocked and fell short , denying the Bearcats three points . With 3 : 07 remaining in the quarter , Cincinnati still held a 7 ? 0 lead .

Following the missed field goal , Virginia Tech 's offense took over at their 27 @-@ yard line , the spot from which the kick had been missed . Taylor completed a 12 @-@ yard pass to Coale , then Evans ran 11 yards , advancing the ball to the 50 @-@ yard line . After a pass from Taylor fell incomplete , he completed his next two attempts for a total gain of 19 yards and a first down . Virginia Tech then committed a five @-@ yard false start penalty , pushing the Hokies back to the Cincinnati 26 @-@ yard line . With time running out in the quarter , however , Virginia Tech running back Josh Oglesby made good the penalty with a 13 @-@ yard run to the Cincinnati 23 @-@ yard line . At the end of the first quarter , Cincinnati still led , 7 ? 0 .

= = = Second quarter = = =

The second quarter began with Virginia Tech in possession of the ball and facing a second down and two at the Cincinnati 24 @-@ yard line . On the first play of the quarter , Cincinnati committed an offside penalty , giving the Hokies five yards and a first down . From the Bearcats ' 19 @-@ yard line , Taylor completed a two @-@ yard pass . On the next play , Taylor attempted to run forward with the ball , but fumbled before recovering the loose football . Now facing third down , Taylor scrambled 18 yards to the goal line for Virginia Tech 's first touchdown of the game . The extra point kick by Keys was good , and with 13 : 00 remaining in the quarter , the game was tied at 7 ? 7 .

Virginia Tech 's post @-@ touchdown kickoff was returned to the Cincinnati 28 @-@ yard line , and the Bearcats ' offense began its first possession of the second quarter . Pike threw an incomplete pass , then connected on a 10 @-@ yard throw for a first down . That gain was countered on the next play by a 10 @-@ yard holding penalty against the Bearcats . Cincinnati was unable to regain the yardage lost to the penalty and punted . Following the kick , Virginia Tech was similarly stymied by consecutive penalties and a sack of Taylor by Cincinnati 's Terrill Byrd . Tech punted , and the kick was returned by Cincinnati wide receiver D.J. Woods to the Virginia Tech 45 @-@ yard line . Despite starting in Virginia Tech 's half of the field , Cincinnati was unable to capitalize and went three and out . The Bearcats ' punt was downed at the Virginia Tech three @-@ yard line , and the Hokies ' offense returned to the field .

Despite being pinned against their own goal line , the Hokies initially had some success moving the ball . Taylor completed a two @-@ yard pass , Evans ran for six yards , and Taylor ran for two yards on third down to earn a first down at the Tech 13 @-@ yard line . After a Tech timeout , Darren Evans ran for five yards . On the next play , he broke free for a 32 @-@ yard run , advancing the ball to the 50 @-@ yard line . The Hokies were unable to capitalize on Evans ' run , however , as on the next play , a pass from Taylor was intercepted by Cincinnati defender Brandon Underwood at the Cincinnati 28 @-@ yard line .

Cincinnati 's offense took over at the spot of the interception and immediately began moving down the field . Pike completed three consecutive passes : a five @-@ yard pass to Gilyard , a 10 @-@ yard throw to Goodman , then a 31 @-@ yard toss to Gilyard . After the long throw , Cincinnati had a first down at the Virginia Tech 26 @-@ yard line . The Bearcats continued their drive after an incomplete pass by Pike with an 18 @-@ yard completion to Goebel that gave the Bearcats a first down at the Virginia Tech eight @-@ yard line . Two plays later , however , Cincinnati 's drive came to an end when Virginia Tech defender Stephan Virgil intercepted a pass from Pike to a player in the end zone , denying the Bearcats a chance to score . Virgil was downed in the end zone for a touchback , and Virginia Tech 's offense started at its 20 @-@ yard line after the turnover .

Tech 's drive began with a completed pass for no gain to Evans . This was followed by a five @-@ yard run by Evans and a 23 @-@ yard pass from Taylor to tight end Greg Boone for a first down at the Tech 48 @-@ yard line . Taylor then completed a nine @-@ yard pass to Boone . After two plays were stopped for no gain , Taylor ran two yards for a first down , keeping the drive alive . With time running out in the first half , Taylor completed a nine @-@ yard pass to Boone , then ran six yards for a first down at the Cincinnati 26 @-@ yard line . The Hokies then called another timeout to stop the clock with three seconds remaining in the quarter . Tech kicker Dustin Keys returned to the game , and as time expired in the first half , he kicked a 43 @-@ yard field goal that gave the Hokies a 10 ? 7 lead .

= = = Third quarter = = =

Following a halftime musical performance by The Doobie Brothers , the second half began . Because Cincinnati received the ball to begin the game , Virginia Tech received the ball to begin the second half .

The Bearcats ' kickoff was returned to the Tech 14 @-@ yard line , and the Hokies began the first

drive of the third quarter . Evans rushed for four yards , but Oglesby lost four yards on a run during the next play . Facing third and ten , Taylor picked up the first down with an 11 @-@ yard run , but fumbled the ball at the end of the play . The loose ball was scooped up by Boone , who kept the Hokies ' drive going at the Tech 30 @-@ yard line . After the fumble , Evans ran for seven yards and Taylor completed a 10 @-@ yard pass to Roberts for a first down at the Tech 47 @-@ yard line . Coale then rushed for seven yards on an end @-@ around , and his run was followed by one by Boone , who ran for 16 yards and a first down at the Cincinnati 30 @-@ yard line . Two more rushes by Roberts and Evans resulted in another first down , but once the Hokies passed the Cincinnati 20 @-@ yard line , the Bearcats ' defense stiffened and denied the Hokies another first down . Facing fourth down , Tech again sent in Keys , who kicked a 35 @-@ yard field goal . The kick extended Tech 's lead to 13 ? 7 with 8 : 32 remaining in the quarter .

Following Virginia Tech 's kickoff , Cincinnati began its first drive of the second half at its 36 @-@ yard line . Pike was stopped for no gain on a rushing attempt , then attempted a long pass downfield . The ball was intercepted by Virginia Tech defender Kam Chancellor , and the Hokies ' offense returned to the field after just two Cincinnati plays . Tech 's first play after the interception resulted in Taylor being sacked by Cincinnati defender Brandon Underwood for a loss of three yards , but Darren Evans made up the lost yardage by rushing 14 yards to the Tech 43 @-@ yard line for a first down . Taylor and Evans alternated short rushes , then Taylor completed a five @-@ yard pass to Coale for another first down , this one at the Cincinnati 47 @-@ yard line . Once in Cincinnati territory , however , the Hokies ' offense faltered . Evans was tackled for a two @-@ yard loss , then Taylor was sacked again , this time by John Hughes . A long pass attempt fell incomplete , and Tech punted for the first time in the second half . Returner Danny Milligan fumbled the ball , but he recovered the loose ball and returned it to the Cincinnati 20 @-@ yard line .

The Bearcats ' second possession of the second half was more successful than their first . On the first play of the drive , running back Jacob Ramsey broke free of the Tech defense for a 25 @-@ yard run , the longest run of any Cincinnati player in the game . He followed that first @-@ down run by gaining eight more yards on consecutive runs . Pike then ran three yards for a first down at the Tech 44 @-@ yard line . There , however , Cincinnati 's offense sputtered and could not gain another first down . The Bearcats ' punted , and the ball rolled out of bounds at the Tech 14 @-@ yard line with six seconds remaining in the quarter . The Hokies had time for one play , a 21 @-@ yard run by Evans to the Tech 35 @-@ yard line . With one quarter remaining , Virginia Tech had a 13 ? 7 lead over Cincinnati .

== = Fourth quarter == =

The fourth quarter began with Virginia Tech in possession of the ball and facing a first down at their 35 @-@ yard line . The first play of the quarter resulted in a 20 @-@ yard gain by Evans on a running play . After that , however , the Hokies did not gain another first down and punted to Cincinnati . Following the kick , the Bearcats started their first possession of the fourth quarter at their 14 @-@ yard line . Running back Isaiah Pead ran for three yards , but then a pass by Pike was intercepted at the 10 @-@ yard line by Tech defender Orion Martin . Three rushing plays later , Evans ran six yards for a touchdown . The extra point kick was good , and with 11 : 29 remaining in the game , Virginia Tech took a 20 ? 7 lead .

The Tech kickoff was returned 17 yards by Gilyard to the Cincinnati 40 @-@ yard line , giving the Bearcats good field position to start their drive . Two rushes by Goebel resulted in 11 yards and a first down at the Tech 49 @-@ yard line . This success on the ground was followed by more through the air , as Pike completed three consecutive passes : a 16 @-@ yarder to Gilyard , a 3 @-@ yarder to Goodman , and a 14 @-@ yarder to Gilyard . Goebel then ran five yards to the Tech 11 @-@ yard line . Two Pike passes fell incomplete , setting up fourth down . Rather than attempt to kick a field goal , Cincinnati head coach Brian Kelly ordered the offense to attempt to convert the fourth down . This was done when Pike completed a seven @-@ yard pass to Goodman for a first down at the Virginia Tech four @-@ yard line . Two more Pike passes fell incomplete before Goebel rushed three yards to the Virginia Tech one @-@ yard line . Cincinnati again faced a fourth down ,

and again , Kelly elected to attempt to score a touchdown rather than kick a field goal . Pike attempted to cross the goal line on a running play , but was stopped by the Virginia Tech defense . With 7 : 25 remaining in the game , Cincinnati turned the ball over on downs to the Virginia Tech offense , which returned to the field .

With a firm lead and now in possession of the ball , Virginia Tech began to run out the clock by executing short rushing plays up the center of the field . Since the game clock does not stop in American college football if a player remains in bounds short of the first down marker , the Hokies could hasten the end of the game and preserve their lead by following this strategy . From their one @-@ yard line , Taylor ran the ball for a one @-@ yard gain , followed by two rushes by Evans for another four yards . The Hokies prepared to punt the ball , but during the kick , Cincinnati committed a 15 @-@ yard personal foul penalty by tackling Tech punter Brent Bowden . The penalty gave Virginia Tech a first down and kept their drive going . From the Tech 21 @-@ yard line , Evans was stopped for a loss of one yard , but broke free for an 11 @-@ yard gain and a first down on the next play . As the clock continued to tick down , Cincinnati began to use its timeouts in an effort to stop the clock after each play . This strategy was partially successful , as Tech was denied another first down and punted with 2 : 31 remaining in the game .

The kick was returned to the Cincinnati 48 @-@ yard line , and the Bearcats prepared for a desperation drive in hopes of narrowing the Hokies ' lead . On the first play after the punt , however , Pike threw an interception to Virginia Tech defender Cody Grimm . Back in possession of the ball , Taylor kneeled on the ball four times to wind down the game clock . After the final kneeldown , Virginia Tech secured the 20 ? 7 win .

= = Statistical summary = =

In recognition of his performance during the game , Virginia Tech running back Darren Evans was named the game 's most valuable player . Evans finished the game with 28 carries for 158 yards and a touchdown . He also caught two passes for five yards , set a Virginia Tech bowl @-@ game record for carries , and tied the Tech record for rushing yards . Evans finished the season with 1 @,@ 265 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns ? both marks were Virginia Tech records for a freshman . On the opposite side of the ball , Cincinnati 's rushing offense was led by Jacob Ramsey , who finished the game with 4 carries for 34 yards . Cincinnati 's John Goebel had nine carries but only accumulated 26 rushing yards .

Most of the Bearcats ' offense came through the air , however . Cincinnati quarterback Tony Pike finished the game having completed 16 of his 33 pass attempts , resulting in 239 passing yards , 1 touchdown , and 4 interceptions . Pike also ran the ball five times for four yards . Pike 's four interceptions were a career high and marked only the second time he threw more than one interception in a game . For Virginia Tech , quarterback Tyrod Taylor finished the game with 13 completions from 22 pass attempts , resulting in 140 passing yards and 1 interception . In addition to his passing , Taylor ran with the ball 15 times , gaining 47 yards and a touchdown in the process .

Taylor 's favorite passing targets were wide receiver Danny Coale , who finished the game having caught three passes for 52 yards , and tight end Greg Boone , who caught 3 balls for 41 yards . On the Bearcats ' side of the field , Cincinnati 's Mardy Gilyard led all receivers with 7 catches for 158 yards and a touchdown . Gilyard 's receiving total was his best of the season and set a new Cincinnati bowl @-@ game record . He also set a Bearcat bowl @-@ game record for kickoff return yardage , recording 97 yards in that category . Fellow Cincinnati receiver Dominick Goodman caught 6 passes for 51 yards , in the process becoming Cincinnati 's all @-@ time leader in career receiving yards .

The two teams ' defenses also performed statistically well during the game . Cincinnati 's Terrill Byrd led all defenders by recording 11 tackles during the game . Included in that total were four tackles for loss , including one sack . That performance was his best in terms of quantity during the season , and his four tackles for loss moved him into sixth place on Cincinnati 's list of career tackles for loss leaders . For the Hokies , Dorian Porch had eight tackles , leading all Tech players . Cody Grimm , Orion Martin , Stephan Virgil , and Kam Chancellor each recorded one interception . The

four interceptions were a Tech bowl @-@ game record , and Chancellor 's catch gave him six for the season , tying him with Victor Harris for the most on the team . It was the first time since 1968 that two Virginia Tech players had six interceptions apiece . Cincinnati 's sole interception came at the hands of Brandon Underwood , who tallied his third of the season .

Each team found success on special teams as well . Cincinnati punter Kevin Huber , a first @-@ team All @-@ American , kicked the ball four times , averaging 45 @.@ 8 yards per punt . A 56 @-@ yard punt in the first quarter marked the ninth consecutive game he had a kick of at least 50 yards . Virginia Tech placekicker Dustin Keys missed his first field goal attempt of the game but successfully converted his next two kicks , giving him 23 field goals and the Tech single @-@ season record in that category .

= = Postgame effects = =

Virginia Tech 's victory raised it to a final record of 10 ? 4 , while Cincinnati 's loss dropped it to a record of 11 ? 3 . The Hokies ' 10 @-@ win season was the fifth consecutive year in which Tech recorded at least 10 wins , a feat matched only by the University of Southern California and the University of Texas during the same time period . As a reward for coaching the Hokies to an ACC Championship and an Orange Bowl championship , Virginia Tech coaches were given hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses .

In Miami , hoteliers and Dolphins Stadium had to quickly prepare for the arrival of Oklahoma and Florida , the two teams that played in the 2009 BCS National Championship Game one week after the Orange Bowl . Signs were changed , the playing field was repainted , and accommodations were prepared for the thousands of expected spectators . In total , South Florida 's economy received an estimated \$ 220 million boost from visitors who arrived to watch the two games .

= = = Coaching changes = = =

In the postseason that followed the Bearcats ' loss to Virginia Tech , Cincinnati assistant head coach and defensive line coach Keith Gilmore resigned to accept the position of defensive line coach at the University of Illinois . To replace Gilmore , Cincinnati promoted special teams coach Mike Elston , who assumed assistant coaching and defensive line duties . In February , Cincinnati defensive coordinator Joe Tresey was fired by the school . He subsequently was hired by the University of South Florida to fill that school 's vacant defensive coordinator position . Replacing Tresey is Virginia defensive coordinator Bob Diaco .

= = = 2009 NFL Draft = = =

As the final game of the 2008 ? 2009 regular season , the 2009 Orange Bowl gave Virginia Tech and Cincinnati players a chance to show their skills before the 2009 NFL Draft . Cincinnati had six players selected in the draft . Defensive end Connor Barwin was the first Bearcats player taken . He was picked in the second round , 46th overall . He was followed by punter Kevin Huber (142nd overall) , cornerback DeAngelo Smith (143rd) , cornerback Brandon Underwood (187th) , cornerback Mike Mickens (227th) , and guard Trevor Canfield (254th) . Several Cincinnati players were signed as free agents after the draft . These included defensive tackle Adam Hoppel , linebacker Corey Smith , and offensive lineman Khalil El @-@ Amin .

Virginia Tech had just one player taken in the 2009 draft : cornerback Victor Harris , who was picked by the Philadelphia Eagles with the 157th overall selection . Four Hokies were taken as free @-@ agent selections after the draft . Defensive end Orion Martin , quarterback Sean Glennon , center Ryan Shuman , and fullback Devin Perez were signed to try out for various NFL teams .