

SUGAR BOWL
TEXAS VS GEORGIA

NEW ORLEANS -- Bevo's pregame strategy was to run right at the Bulldogs.

Once the football started, Texas quarterback Sam Ehlinger took the same approach with outstanding results.

Ehlinger ran for three touchdowns, the Texas defense largely held Georgia's offense in check, and the Longhorns earned their first 10-win season since 2009 by beating the Bulldogs 28-21 in the Sugar Bowl on Tuesday night.

"We're back!" Ehlinger shouted to a raucous contingent of Texas fans after winning the game's Most Valuable Player award.

Ehlinger was the star of a gritty win, running for a 2-yard touchdown in the first quarter, a 9-yard score in the second, and a 1-yard TD in the fourth. The 6-foot-3, 230-pound sophomore finished with 64 yards rushing on 21 carries and also threw for 169 yards.

The quarterback's impressive performance came after a startling pregame display from Bevo, the team's huge longhorn steer mascot. About an hour before kickoff, he charged through a barricade and toward Georgia's red sweater-clad bulldog mascot Uga X.

A few people, including photographers, were knocked to the ground, but there were no reported injuries and Bevo was quickly restrained.

No. 14 Texas (10-4) continued its quick rise under coach Tom Herman, capping his second season with a Sugar Bowl win that will surely send expectations soaring after nearly a decade of mostly mediocrity.

During the postgame celebration, some Texas players were making snow angels in the confetti on the field. The different position groups -- like receivers and linebackers -- stayed on the field to take pictures together as the Longhorns obviously relished every moment.

"It is incredible," Ehlinger said. "We are on the way. This was a stepping stone for Texas to get back to the elite level. This is going to give us great momentum headed into the offseason, and I am really excited for what we are going to do next year."

Texas stretched its lead to 28-7 with 11:49 left in the fourth quarter on Ehlinger's 1-yard run, finally scoring on fourth down after his first three attempts at running for the score fell just short of the end zone.

"We pride ourselves in our physicality," Herman said. "At this point in our program, that is how we are going to win games. That is always how we are going to win games."

"I'm just so proud of how hard our guys played. They played hard early. They played hard late. They overcame some adversity. It was a complete team effort."

No. 6 Georgia (11-3) was a 12 1/2-point favorite and claimed it would be ready for the Sugar Bowl despite just missing a spot in the College Football Playoff after a loss in the Southeastern Conference championship game. But a sloppy opening sequence indicated otherwise.

Texas jumped out to a 17-0 lead by early in the second quarter, largely because of Georgia's mistakes on special teams and offense.

The most costly was when D'Andre Swift fumbled deep in Georgia's own territory, giving Texas possession at the 12. Three plays later, Ehlinger deftly escaped trouble in the pocket and scored on a 9-yard run to give the Longhorns a 17-point advantage with 14:53 left in the second quarter.

Georgia got back into the game with a methodical 12-play drive that ended with Jake Fromm finding Brian Herrien for a 17-yard touchdown, but Texas still took a 20-7 advantage into halftime.

"They played more physical than us and it showed to me that they wanted it more than we did," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "And you've got to give them credit for that."

Fromm completed 20 of 34 passes for 212 yards, three touchdowns and one interception. The Bulldogs scored a touchdown with 14 seconds left to pull within 28-21 but Texas recovered the ensuing onside kick.

"They did a really good job game planning for us," Fromm said of the Texas defense. "They had an entire month to do so. They were showing a lot of different looks. They were constantly mixing stuff up."

TEXAS IS BACK? HERMAN'S NOT SO SURE

Ehlinger's "We're back!" comment on the Sugar Bowl stage certainly revved up Texas fans. His coach wasn't as big of a fan.

The coach was asked if his heart dropped when Ehlinger made the statement, the coach responded with a good-natured "Yes," while Ehrlinger, who was seated next to him, tried to stifle a grin.

"I'll never know what that means, 'Is Texas back?' so I'm never going to comment on that," Herman said. "It can mean a lot of different things so I'll never comment on that. I know we're headed in the right direction. I don't ever want to give any kind of finality on where we're at, because we're always making progress."

THE TAKEAWAY

Texas: It's a validating win for Texas, which was the physically dominant team while playing one of the SEC's best programs. It's fair to say the Longhorns are ahead of schedule under Herman and expectations will skyrocket going forward.

"I'm going to speak for the Big 12," Texas defensive back P.J. Locke said. "There's a misconception saying the Big 12 is soft. We played more physical than an SEC team. That's clear cut."

Georgia: A very good Bulldogs' season ended with a huge thud after back-to-back losses to Alabama and Texas. Georgia made far too many mistakes against the Longhorns and Fromm didn't have one of his best games.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
TEX	10	10	0	8	28
UGA	0	7	0	14	21

Scoring Summary -----

	TEX	UGA
FIRST QUARTER		
TEX TD 10:35		
Sam Ehlinger 2 Yd Run (Cameron Dicker Kick)		
10 plays, 75 yards, 4:25	7	0
TEX FG 6:05		
Cameron Dicker 37 Yd Field Goal		
4 plays, 6 yards, 1:19	10	0
SECOND QUARTER		
TEX TD 14:53		
Sam Ehlinger 9 Yd Run (Cameron Dicker Kick)		
3 plays, 12 yards, 0:59	17	0
UGA TD 9:03		
Brian Herrien 17 Yd pass from Jake Fromm (Rodrigo Blankenship Kick)		
12 plays, 75 yards, 5:50	17	7
TEX FG 4:37		
Cameron Dicker 30 Yd Field Goal		
11 plays, 62 yards, 4:26	20	7
FOURTH QUARTER		
TEX TD 11:49		
Sam Ehlinger 1 Yd Run (Sam Ehlinger Pass to Collin Johnson for Two-Point Conversion)		
14 plays, 70 yards, 5:37	28	7
UGA TD 10:25		
Mecole Hardman 3 Yd pass from Jake Fromm (Rodrigo Blankenship Kick)		
6 plays, 67 yards, 1:24	28	14
UGA TD 0:14		
D'Andre Swift 5 Yd pass from Jake Fromm (Rodrigo Blankenship Kick)		
5 plays, 67 yards, 0:56	28	21

Team Stats	TEX	UGA
First Downs	20	20
Total Yards	355	296
Total Plays	77	65
Avg Gain Per Play	4.6	4.6
Net Yards Rushing	178	72
Rushes	49	30
Yards Per Rush	3.6	2.4
Net Yards Passing	177	224
Comp-Att	20-28	21-35
Yards Per Pass	6.3	6.4
Times Sacked	2	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-11	-13
Interceptions	0	1
Punts	5	5
Punt Average	41.4	37.6
Penalties	6	3
Penalty Yards	60	49
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Possession	35:00	25:00

Individual Stats

RUSHING

TEX	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
5 Tre Watson	18	91	5.1	20	0
11 Sam Ehlinger	21	64	3.0	17	3
26 Keaontay Ingram	9	25	2.8	8	0
UGA	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
13 Elijah Holyfield	12	62	5.2	11	0
35 Brian Herrien	4	17	4.3	8	0
7 D'Andre Swift	8	12	1.5	10	0
11 Jake Fromm	5	-5	-1.0	5	0

PASSING

TEX	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
11 Sam Ehlinger	19	27	169	6.3	0	0	122.9
84 Lil'Jordan Humphrey	1	1	8	8.0	0	0	167.2

UGA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
11 Jake Fromm	21	35	224	6.4	3	1	136.3

RECEIVING

TEX	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
84 Lil'Jordan Humphrey	7	67	9.6	19	0
9 Collin Johnson	3	40	13.3	35	0
26 Keaontay Ingram	3	24	8.0	16	0
6 Devin Duvernay	2	22	11.0	14	0
11 Sam Ehlinger	1	8	8.0	8	0
5 Tre Watson	2	6	3.0	4	0
47 Andrew Beck	1	5	5.0	5	0
13 Jerrod Heard	1	5	5.0	5	0

UGA	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
8 Riley Ridley	5	61	12.2	24	0
5 Terry Godwin	3	45	15.0	22	0
9 Jeremiah Holloman	1	31	31.0	31	0
7 D'Andre Swift	5	30	6.0	17	1
89 Charlie Woerner	2	27	13.5	22	0
35 Brian Herrien	2	20	10.0	17	1
13 Elijah Holyfield	1	4	4.0	4	0
4 Mecole Hardman	1	3	3.0	3	1
18 Isaac Nauta	1	3	3.0	3	0