

COTTON BOWL
MEMPHIS vs PENN ST

No. 13 Penn State tops No. 15 Memphis 53-39 in Cotton Bowl

ARLINGTON, Texas -- All-America linebacker Micah Parsons led the big blitz for Penn State, and he had Brady White all wrapped up when the Memphis quarterback suddenly flipped away the ball -- right into the hands of Garrett Taylor.

On a day when the Nittany Lions' defense gave up its most points and yards all season, Taylor turned that gift into a 15-yard interception return for a touchdown in a 53-39 victory over the Group of Five Tigers on Saturday in the highest-scoring Cotton Bowl ever.

"A huge momentum shift," Taylor said.

Journey Brown ran for 202 yards with two long touchdowns, but the Parsons-created pick-six came three plays after Brown was stopped short on a fourth-and-1. Taylor put the No. 13 Nittany Lions (11-2, No. 10 CFP) up 45-36 going into the fourth quarter of the 84th Cotton Bowl.

"For our defense to come back and what you probably consider a sudden-change situation, and be able to get that play, I think it was a huge momentum play," coach James Franklin said.

Said Parsons: "The game was going back and forth, and I thought the team who had a defensive turnover would win, and we got one when we needed."

Brown was the offensive MVP and Parsons, with 14 tackles and two sacks, was the game's top defensive player. Both had gone back and forth about that possibility during practice this week.

"We go against him all the time ... nobody prepares and prepares for those opportunities and those moments more than this guy does," Brown said of Parsons, who was sitting right by him.

American Athletic Conference champion and No. 15 Memphis (12-2, No. 17 CFP) played its first game under coach Ryan Silverfield. The offensive line coach was promoted when Mike Norvell left after four seasons to become Florida State's coach earlier this month.

"It just didn't end the way we wanted to," Silverfield said. "I have to do a better job as a head coach to make sure all three phases are prepared. That's 100% on me. That won't happen moving forward."

White was 32-of-51 passing for 454 yards with two interceptions. He had a rushing touchdown, as did Patrick Taylor Jr. and Kenneth Gainwell. The rest of the Tigers' points came on a Cotton Bowl-record six field goals by Riley Patterson, including a record-long 51-yarder.

"I don't care about performances ... but I care about wins," White said. "I want championships, I want wins."

The Tigers, who set a school record for victories while winning their first outright conference title since 1969, finished with 542 total yards. But White was sacked a season-high six times and didn't throw a touchdown for the first time since the season opener.

Freshman running back Noah Cain added 92 yards and two touchdowns rushing for Penn State, which won for the 30th time in its 50 bowl appearances.

The Nittany Lions had 529 total yards. Brown got his 202 rushing yards on 16 carries, including a tackle-shredding 32-yard touchdown early and a 56-yard score when he went up the middle virtually untouched.

BIG PICTURE

Memphis: The Tigers wrapped up the most successful four-year stretch in school history with 38 victories, but this senior class never won a bowl game. Memphis has been to a bowl in each of the past six seasons, a school record, but has lost its last five bowl games.

Penn State: The Nittany Lions had allowed only 14.1 points per game in the regular season, and the most yards allowed had been 462. Penn State played in its third New Year's Six game in four years and finished with 11 wins for the third time in that span.

EXTRA POINTS

The announced attendance of 54,828 was the lowest for the Cotton Bowl since New Year's Day 1948. This was the 11th Cotton Bowl at AT&T Stadium, and the lowest previous attendance in the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys had been 59,615 three seasons ago when Western Michigan, another Group of Five team, played Wisconsin. ... The eight combined rushing touchdowns were the most for a New Year's Six game. ... Patterson's six field goals were also a NY6 record. ... Big Ten teams are 5-1 in the Cotton Bowl. ... Group of Five teams are 3-3 in New Year's Six games.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
MEM	13	10	13	3	39
PSU	7	28	10	8	53

Scoring Summary -----

	MEM	PSU
FIRST QUARTER		
MEM FG 10:52 Riley Patterson 48 Yd Field Goal		3
11 plays, 58 yards, 2:59		0
PSU TD 9:56 Journey Brown 32 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)		7
3 plays, 75 yards, 0:56		3
MEM TD 7:44 Patrick Taylor Jr. 3 Yd Run (Riley Patterson Kick)		7
6 plays, 75 yards, 2:12		10
MEM FG 2:55 Riley Patterson 37 Yd Field Goal		13
10 plays, 40 yards, 3:36		7
second Quarter		
PSU TD 11:14 Noah Cain 1 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)		13
8 plays, 45 yards, 3:27		14
PSU TD 7:47 Devyn Ford 2 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)		13
4 plays, 32 yards, 1:14		21
PSU TD 5:51 Journey Brown 56 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)		13
1 play, 56 yards, 0:10		28
MEM TD 3:15 Kenneth Gainwell 1 Yd Run (Riley Patterson Kick)		20
7 plays, 75 yards, 2:36		28
PSU TD 0:51 Jahan Dotson 4 Yd pass from Sean Clifford (Jake Pinegar Kick)		20
10 plays, 75 yards, 2:24		35
MEM FG 0:00 Riley Patterson 44 Yd Field Goal		23
8 plays, 49 yards, 0:51		35
third Quarter		
MEM TD 12:16 Brady White 1 Yd Run (Riley Patterson Kick)		30
6 plays, 75 yards, 2:44		35
MEM FG 10:24 Riley Patterson 51 Yd Field Goal		33
4 plays, -4 yards, 1:45		35
PSU FG 7:13 Jake Pinegar 45 Yd Field Goal		33
8 plays, 46 yards, 3:11		38
MEM FG 3:32 Riley Patterson 41 Yd Field Goal		36
11 plays, 52 yards, 3:41		38
PSU TD 0:38 Garrett Taylor 15 Yd Interception Return (Jake Pinegar Kick)		36
3 plays, 2 yards, 1:15		45
fourth Quarter		
MEM FG 12:01 Riley Patterson 42 Yd Field Goal		39
9 plays, 51 yards, 3:37		45
PSU TD 6:31 Noah Cain 1 Yd Run (Sean Clifford Pass to Pat Freiermuth for Two-Point Conversion)		39
12 plays, 75 yards, 5:30		53

Team Stats	MEM	PSU
First Downs	27	25
Passes for First	19	7
Rushes for First	8	18
Penalties for First	0	0
Third Down Efficiency	7-16	7-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-2
Total Yards	542	529
Total Plays	86	73
Avg Gain Per Play	6.3	7.2
Net Yards Rushing	63	396
Rushes	33	53
Yards Per Rush	1.9	7.5
Net Yards Passing	479	133
Comp-Att	33-53	11-20
Yards Per Pass	9.0	6.7
Times Sacked	6	4
Yds Lost To Sacks	-44	-11
Interceptions	2	1
Punts	3	3
Punt Average	33.0	45.3
Penalties	8	2
Penalty Yards	45	15
Fumbles	2	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	32:42	27:18

Individual Stats

RUSHING

	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
MEMPHIS					
Patrick Taylor Jr.	8	50	6.3	1	15
Kenneth Gainwell	9	34	3.8	1	19
Antonio Gibson	2	6	3.0	0	4
Kedarian Jones	1	2	2.0	0	2
Calvin Austin III	2	-6	-3.0	0	4
Brady White	11	-23	-2.1	1	8
PENN ST					
Journey Brown	16	202	12.6	2	56
Noah Cain	15	92	6.1	2	15
Ricky Slade	5	58	11.6	0	44
Sean Clifford	13	28	2.2	0	16
KJ Hamler	2	14	7.0	0	9
Devyn Ford	2	2	1.0	1	2

PASSING

	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
MEMPHIS							
Brady White	32	51	454	8.9	0	2	35.9
Kedarian Jones	1	1	25	25.0	0	0	100.0
Patrick Taylor	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	3.0
PENN ST							
Sean Clifford	11	20	133	6.7	1	1	52.0

RECEIVING

	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
MEMPHIS					
Damonte Coxie	8	132	16.5	0	41
Antonio Gibson	6	99	16.5	0	31
Kenneth Gainwell	7	78	11.1	0	30
Kedarian Jones	4	73	18.3	0	56
Calvin Austin III	3	39	13.0	0	27
Brady White	1	25	25.0	0	25
Patrick Taylor Jr.	1	9	9.0	0	9
Tyce Daniel	1	9	9.0	0	9
Traveon Samuel	1	8	8.0	0	8
Kameron Wilson	1	7	7.0	0	7
PENN ST					
KJ Hamler	2	46	23.0	0	31
Pat Freiermuth	2	39	19.5	0	20
Jahan Dotson	3	26	8.7	1	12
Daniel George	2	15	7.5	0	8
Journey Brown	2	7	3.5	0	6