

## Cam do ! Auburn wins BCS title

Written by Administrator

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GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — For a brief moment, Michael Dyer stopped running.

Hold on.

No whistle. No ref raising his hand.

So he started running again — past the tackler who thought he had him down, deep into Oregon territory. A once-in-a-lifetime run, the kind that wins championships.

Dyer's stop-and-go maneuver set up a short field goal on the last play that sent No. 1 Auburn over the No. 2 Ducks 22-19 in the BCS title game Monday night.

"All I knew was the whistle wasn't blowing and my coach was saying 'Go!'" Dyer said.

With his 37-yard run, sure to be preserved in college football's highlight reel, the freshman running back did what most fans thought was impossible — he upstaged his teammate, Heisman-winning quarterback Cam Newton.

Three plays later, Dyer ran 16 yards to push the ball to the 1 and set up Wes Byrum's 19-yard field goal with no time left. It was his sixth career game-winning field goal — one that capped a perfect, 14-0 season, brought the title back to Auburn for the first time since 1957 and left the Southeastern Conference on top for the fifth straight year.

"Fifty-three years, baby!" coach Gene Chizik said to the cheering crowd. "This is for you. War Eagle!"

Auburn won The Associated Press national title as well, earning 56 of the 59 first-place votes. TCU was second and Oregon came in third.

One of the most memorable championship games in recent memory began with a moment of silence to remember something much more somber. The six victims of the weekend assassination attempt on Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson were honored by having their names read, and a choir sang "God Bless America" while the crowd stood at attention.

A few hours later, it was standing for an entirely different reason.

Dyer was starring in a classic sequence that closed out a wild finish — five crazy minutes of football that made up for the first 55, which were more of a bruising battle than the offensive masterpiece everyone had predicted.

The craziness began when Casey Matthews, son of the 1980s NFL linebacker Clay, knocked the ball from Newton's hands while he was trying to ice a 19-11 lead.

Oregon's offense, shut down by Nick Fairley & Co. most of the night, moved 45 yards over the next 2:17 and Darron Thomas threw a shovel pass to LaMichael James for a touchdown. Thomas hit Jeff Maehl for the tying 2-point conversion with 2:33 left.

And one last possession that will be remembered for one incredible play.

Dyer, who chose jersey No. 5 because that's how old his brother was when their father died in a car accident nearly two decades ago, took the handoff from Newton and ran off right tackle for what looked like a 6- or 7-yard gain. Nothing routine about this one, though. He wasn't sure his knee hit the ground, so, urged by his coaches and teammates on the sideline, he popped up and kept going. Almost everyone on the field had stopped playing, but the referee never blew the play dead. Dyer made it to the Oregon 23. An official's review ensued and the replay showed that, indeed, his knee had never touched the turf.

"Really, it was going through my mind to get the first down, hold onto the ball," Dyer said. "And the time being tackled, my knee wasn't down ... I didn't hear a whistle, not yet, so I was kind of, like, looking, like, what's going on?"

In a statement released after the game, Big Ten referee Bill LeMonnier said he was confident of the call: "The ruling on the field was there was nothing other than the foot that touched the ground," he explained.

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Eddie Pleasant, the Oregon defensive back who almost made the tackle, seemed shocked. "It hurts, you know," he said. "It's not like he broke free and did some spectacular things. He was tackled. Everybody on the side of the defense stopped. He stopped and the coach told him to keep running and he ran. It's not like it was a blown assignment. It's not like he busted a 50-yard run down the middle. It was just a crazy play."

Dyer finished with 143 yards and was chosen Offensive Player of the Game, no small feat considering he had Newton playing well on the same offense.

Newton threw for 265 yards and two touchdowns and ran for 64 yards, most in short, punishing bites. He wrenched his back and had to go to the trainer after the game. All in a night's work: "I'm OK. It was worth it," he said.

It was a good performance, but not spectacular — par for the course in a game that was projected as a possible 60-55 thriller by South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier and a 74-point touchdown-fest by the oddsmakers who set the over-under.

Wearing white jerseys with gray numbers, green pants and DayGlo shoes and socks, the Ducks got only 49 yards rushing from James. An offense that had been held under 37 points only once all year managed two touchdowns. The last came on a simple shovel pass from Thomas, who finished with 363 yards — 81 of which came on a long pass to Maehl that set up the first touchdown.

Oregon didn't come close to its nation-leading 49-point average and the fast-paced offense that turned most opponents into mush in the second half couldn't wear down Auburn.

The Ducks finished 12-1, three points shy of their first national title, but not making apologies for the effort they gave in the desert.

Fairley, Auburn's 298-pound defensive tackle, had the Ducks moving backward much of the night.