

2007 Trinity vs. Millsaps football game

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Trinity Tigers	The 15-lateral play	Millsaps Majors																		
(6-1)	Regular season game	(6-1)																		
28	Trinity Tigers at Millsaps Majors	24																		
Head coach: Steve Mohr	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>Total</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trinity</td> <td>7</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>15</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Millsaps</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> <td>7</td> <td>10</td> <td>24</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1	2	3	4	Total	Trinity	7	3	3	15	28	Millsaps	7	0	7	10	24	Head coach: Mike DuBose
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	October 27, 2007																			

The **2007 Trinity vs. Millsaps football game** featured one of the most spectacular finishes in a college football game. On October 27, 2007, NCAA Division III Trinity University Tigers threw 15 lateral passes and scored a 61-yard touchdown to win a game against Millsaps College Majors as time expired in the game.^{[1][2][3][4]} Media sources called the play "Mississippi Miracle".^{[5][6]} or "Lateralpalooza".^{[2][6][7]} ESPN and other sources said the play was probably "the longest play in college football history"^{[7][8][9][10]} in terms of how much time the play took to complete.

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Game summary

Trinity got the ball to start the game and used four plays, culminating in a 25-yard run by Chris Baer, to score a touchdown. Millsaps was unable to get a first down and they punted back to Trinity. On the punt, Trinity's Caleb Urban fumbled the ball and Eric McCarty of the Majors recovered at the Trinity 40-yard line. The Tigers defense prevented the Majors from reaching the end zone so the Majors attempted a field goal, which was no good. The Tigers punted on their next possession and then Majors quarterback Juan Joseph's pass was intercepted by Lee Patterson at the Trinity 4-yard line. The Tigers also ended their drive when Blake Barmore's pass was intercepted by Ray Kline. Millsaps took over at the Trinity 20-yard line and four plays later scored a touchdown on a 12-yard pass by Juan Joseph to Louis Conley. A punt by each team left Trinity with the ball and the score was tied 7–7 at the end of the first quarter.^[11]

In the second quarter, Trinity held the Majors scoreless and made a field goal to take a 10–7 lead into halftime. The third quarter brought a field goal by the Tigers and a touchdown by the Majors. The score was 14–13 Millsaps coming into the final period of play.^[11]

Millsaps widened their lead with a 9-play 44-yard touchdown scoring drive that used 3:03 of game time. That gave them a 21–13 lead. The Tigers trimmed the lead to 21–16 with a 22-yard field goal by Peter Licalzi. The Majors answered with their own field goal to go up 24–16. Trinity drove to the Millsaps 13-yard line. On fourth down, Blake

Barmore completed a pass to Riley Curry for 13 yards for a touchdown, making the score 24–22. The Tigers tried to tie the game with a two point conversion but Blake Barmore's pass attempt failed and Trinity had to kick the ball to Millsaps.^[11]

Leading 24–22, Millsaps got the ball at the Trinity 43-yard line with 2:03 left in the game. They ran four straight rushing plays but were unable to run out the clock. They turned the ball over to the Tigers at the Trinity 40-yard line with 2 seconds remaining in the game.^[11]

Final play

The Tigers had time for only one snap so there was no time to move into field goal range. They needed to score a touchdown in one play, working from their own 43-yard line. The play they ran involved seven players and 15 laterals. The sequence went:

- Blake Barmore threw a forward pass to Shawn Thompson
- Thompson threw a backward lateral to Riley Curry
- Curry threw a backward lateral to Josh Hooten
- Hooten threw a backward lateral to Michael Tomlin
- Tomlin threw a backward lateral to Steve Arnold
- Arnold threw a backward lateral to Thompson
- Thompson threw a backward lateral to Brandon Maddux
- Maddux threw a backward lateral to Curry
- Curry threw a backward lateral to Maddux
- Maddux threw a backward lateral to Barmore
- Barmore threw a backward lateral to Thompson
- Thompson threw a backward lateral to Curry
- Curry threw a backward lateral to Tomlin
- Tomlin threw a backward lateral to Hooten
- Hooten threw a backward lateral to Maddux
- Maddux threw a backwards lateral that bounced on the ground before being collected by Curry, who went on to score.^[7]

The play-by-play record of the game officially records the play as "Blake Barmore pass complete to Shawn Thompson for 16 yards to the MSPS44, Riley Curry for 44 yards to the MSPS0, 1ST DOWN TRINITY, TOUCHDOWN, clock 00:00."^[11]

The play took more than a minute of real-time to conclude and analysts have said it is the longest or possibly the longest play in college football history. ESPN said the play took 62 seconds and reports may be the longest play in college football history.^[7] The Frederick News Post said the play took 63 seconds and they also stated "tt might very well be the longest play in college history."^[8] NBC sports said "If this wasn't the most memorable game-ending play in college football history, it likely was the longest play -- by a multiple of two -- in the game's history."^[9] SouthernCollegeSports.com called it the longest play and commented "Perhaps the most amazing thing about this longest play ever is the fact that not a single flag was thrown for a rules infraction."^[10]

The San Antonio Express-News,^[5] San Antonio's WOAI,^[12] MSNBC,^[13] CBS Sports^[14] and the Dallas Morning News^[6] called the play the "Mississippi Miracle". The Dallas Morning News,^[6] Sports Illustrated,^[2] and ESPN used the term "Lateralpalooza".^[7]

Broadcast

The announcing crew for the game consisted of a four-person team with only one camera. Jonathan Wiener, a sophomore English major at Trinity, had the play-by-play. Justin Thompson was the color analyst. The game was broadcast live on the internet but was not otherwise televised. According to the *New York Times*, "Wiener kept his cool through the frenzy and described most of the details precisely as they occurred. The replay of the video with Wiener's description has been shown on national television and has become a hit on the Internet."^[15]

As Curry scored the touchdown, Wiener shouted, "CURRY SCORES! THE GAME IS OVER! THE TIGERS LATERALED IT AND KEPT LATERALING! AND THE GAME IS OVER! THE TIGERS WIN! THE TIGERS WIN!"^[15]

Analysis

With the win, the Trinity Tigers remained in contention for the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) championship as well as an automatic berth into the NCAA Division III playoffs. Millsaps would have secured a spot in the playoffs had they won.^[16] Ironically, it was the Millsaps Majors that defeated the Trinity Tigers the previous year 34-12 to win the SCAC championship and an automatic berth into the NCAA Division III playoffs, ultimately losing 34-35 to Carnegie Mellon University.^[17]

Sports analysts compared the ending to *The Play*,^[18] which is a reference to a last-second kickoff return during a college football game between the University of California, Berkeley ("California" or "Cal") Golden Bears and the Stanford University Cardinal on November 20, 1982. After Stanford took a 20–19 lead on a field goal with four seconds left, the Golden Bears used five lateral passes on the ensuing kickoff return to score the winning touchdown for a 25–20 victory. Members of the Stanford Band had come onto the field midway through *The Play*, believing that the game was already over. Kevin Moen caught the final lateral and ran forward, scattering band members before finally running into trombone player Gary Tyrrell in the end zone.^[19] The touchdown stood, although there remains some controversy as to the legality of all the laterals.^{[19][20][21]}

Jake Curtis of the *San Francisco Chronicle* said that the Trinity play made the play by California "look like conservative play-calling."^[18] Joe LaPointe of *The New York Times* called the broadcast of the play "The laterals heard round the world".^[15] The *San Antonio Express-News* ran a byline calling it "'The most sensational, incredible ending in all of Division III' and then some".^[5] Mike Christensen of *The Clarion-Ledger*, the hometown newspaper of Millsaps, called it "one of those you-had-to-see-it-to-believe-it plays".^[3] David Chencellor of San Antonio's *WOAI* called it "one of the greatest plays in sports history".^[12]

ESPN reported, "In the digital age, even D-III games can go global in a flash. And so a slice of fame normally reserved for the semiprofessionals at the big-dollar Division I programs was bestowed upon the Tigers. That night they gathered in the lobby of their hotel near the Millsaps campus to watch, in disbelief, as they made *SportsCenter*."^[7]

A similar but unsuccessful attempt occurred in the 2005 Alamo Bowl as the Michigan Wolverines attempted to score in the last seconds of their loss to Nebraska.^[22] There was considerable confusion and both teams were on the field at the end of the play. Michigan was stopped (after seven lateral passes) by one of the last Nebraska defenders 15 yards from the end zone and thus was unable to score a game-winning touchdown. However, Conference USA, who provided the officiating team for the game, later stated that the on-field officials had made an error on the play by not penalizing Nebraska for on-field interference.^[23]

See also

- River City Relay, a similar last-second play in a 2003 NFL game

Notes and references

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External links

- "Video of the play at ESPN.com (<http://sports.espn.go.com/broadband/video/videopage?videoId=3083220&categoryId=2564308>)".
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