

WE'RE NO. 1



WARREN ZINN/Daily

Michigan goes long to stop Cougars

Griese throws for 3 TDs in Rose Bowl

By Alan Goldenbach
Daily Sports Editor

PASADENA, Calif. — Preseason critics said that the 'M' in Michigan stood for "mediocrity."

Twelve stunning performances later, those naysayers can have but one word

for which 'M' represents: magnificence.

The top-ranked Wolverines captured their first national championship in 49 years with a 21-16 victory New Year's Day over No. 8 Washington State in the 84th Rose Bowl before an Ann Arbor-esque crowd of 101,219.

"I'm really proud of this team," Michigan coach Lloyd Carr said after the game. "They answered every question asked of them, and they embraced the pressure of being number one. This team has tremendous heart and character, and that's what got us here."

The Wolverines, however, are not undisputed champs. The Associated Press poll deemed Michigan the nation's top team, but the USA Today/ESPNM coaches poll told a different story. Previously No. 2 Nebraska, by way of an overpowering 42-17 victory in the Orange Bowl over No. 3 Tennessee on Jan. 2, leapfrogged the Wolverines in the other major poll to take the top spot, thus spawning the third split national championship this decade.



MARGARET MYERS/Daily

TOP: Michigan's Tai Streets, injured for much of the season, overcame a pair of dislocated fingers and hauled in a pair of long touchdown passes, including this 53-yarder in the second quarter to put Michigan on the scoreboard. **BOTTOM:** Michigan fans cheer together in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1 as they watch the Wolverines beat the Cougars, 21-16, during the 84th Rose Bowl. Fans used their voices and maize-and-blue pom-poms to help cheer the Wolverines to victory.

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Unbelievable season ends with perfection

By Nicholas J. Cotsonika
Daily Sports Editor

PASADENA, Calif. — Long after the trophy has tarnished and this newspaper has yellowed, tales will be told with chest-bursting pride of these Michigan Wolverines and this Rose Bowl, of this team's character and its comebacks, of the emotional energy shared by those lucky enough to behold the marvelous magic made on New Year's Day.

The greatest football season in school history ended here as the rosy twilight gleamed off the San Gabriel foothills. Michigan's 118th team won the 84th Rose Bowl, 21-16, and finished No. 1. Nothing can spoil it. Not a controversy about how the game ended, with Washington State begging for one more second, one more play and one more gasp of life. Not a split decision among the voters, who awarded half of the national championship to Nebraska by a miniscule margin.

No, nothing can spoil this. Nothing can top this. Nothing could quell the crowd's cheers, even a half-hour after the game, when the fans were still chanting with the band, "WE'RE NO. 1!"

"I will cherish this game, this university, for

the rest of my life," said senior quarterback Brian Griese, who was named the game's most valuable player. "You have opportunities in life, and those who stand out are the ones who take advantage of those opportunities. It's just sweet for us to capitalize on an opportunity to make history."

The Wolverines are the winningest program in the NCAA and won their 32nd Big Ten championship this season, but they finished 12-0 for the first time ever to win their first national championship since 1948. They consider it their 11th national championship; time may consider it their most unlikely.

When this season began, the Wolverines were ranked 14th, and recovering from four consecutive four-loss seasons seemed daunting enough. An unblemished record and a national championship weren't in the picture.

The 84th Rose Bowl

Jan. 1 1998

Pasadena, Calif.

21
16



"If you would have told me then," defensive end Glen Steele said, "I would have laughed." After all, Michigan didn't win a national championship in coaching legend Bo Schembechler's 21-year era of eminence. Bo never went 12-0.

Though coach Lloyd Carr ended up emerging from Schembechler's shadow, standing alone in the bright, California sun as the winner of four of the five major coach of the year awards, Carr's mission simply had been to silence the critics who had hounded him since his hiring three years ago.

"Nobody gave us a chance to be in the Rose Bowl, let alone win the national title," said all-purpose star Charles Woodson, the Wolverines' game-breaker who this season became the first primarily defensive player to win the Heisman Trophy.

“ We’ve been the bridesmaids so many times, it’s nice to finally be the bride.”

— Leslie Sibery,
University alum



WARREN ZINN/Daily

Throwing up his arms in ecstasy, center Zach Adami celebrates the first of two 50-yard touchdown receptions by wide receiver Tai Streets. The victory clinched Michigan's first national championship since 1948.

Voters divide championship

By Nicholas J. Cotsonika
Daily Sports Editor

Triumph was tinged with disappointment following No. 1 Michigan's victory in the Rose Bowl last Thursday. After No. 2 Nebraska throttled No. 3 Tennessee in the Orange Bowl the next night, giving Tom Osborne a victory in his final game as coach, the Wolverines fell behind the Cornhuskers in the USA Today/ESPN coaches' poll and split the national championship.

Michigan (12-0) had been the consensus No. 1 team entering the bowl season and finished first in the Associated Press media poll. Nebraska (13-0), which had been a distant second in both polls, picked up significant ground with its 42-17 victory.

Edging the Wolverines by a narrow margin in the coaches' poll, the Cornhuskers secured a share of their third national title in four years. They were outright champions following the 1994 and '95 seasons. The Wolverines earned a share of their first national title since 1948.