

**NIXON VERSUS PATERNO:  
COLLEGE FOOTBALL AND PRESIDENTIAL  
POLITICS**

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*O*n June 16, 1973, as the Watergate crisis exploded, Joe Paterno, head football coach at Pennsylvania State University, gave the commencement speech at his school. “I’d like to know, how could the President know so little about Watergate in 1973, and so much about college football in 1969.” The audience roared. He later explained, “I was just trying to get a laugh, but some people took me seriously. There sure are a lot of serious people in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

The joke and the reaction were manifestations of the frustration and resentment that the Nittany Lions of Penn State had towards both the establishment of college football and Richard Nixon over events that had transpired in 1969. In the second half of that year Nixon used football in a clever way to service his political needs, but slighted Penn State in the process. When the undefeated football teams of the University of Arkansas and the University of Texas played for the national title of college football, in what became known as the “Big Shootout,” Nixon

decided to attend the game in person. Although Nixon loved the sport, he went to the game in an effort to win support in the South, using the informal powers of the presidency to his political advantage. His effort was a success despite and even because of a regional backlash and dispute that resulted in Paterno challenging the awarding of the mythical national championship. The issue was also important in building Penn State's reputation and the legend of Paterno as he turned the school into a major football power.

The fact that director George Lucas used Nixon as the model for the evil emperor in his *Star Wars* films, and Eddie Albert and John Vernon used Nixon as the inspiration for their characters in *The Longest Yard* and *Animal House* reflects the public's perception of the former President in the immediate years after he left office.<sup>2</sup> Since then two major groups of historians have shaped the historiography of Richard Nixon's presidency with some embracing these views and others rejecting them entirely.<sup>3</sup>

The praise that commentators heaped on Nixon after he died focused on his policy achievements and ignored his campaigning success. Nixon was a nominee on his party's national ticket five times, equaling the record of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Part of his political success was his ability to play to the varied interests of national regions. An investigation of his interaction with the world of sports helps explain his success in an arena that was particularly divided along these lines: college football.

To be sure, Nixon had a genuine interest in sports. Biographer Stephen E. Ambrose observes, "Batting averages, yards gained per carry, earned run averages, pass completion percentage, the whole never-ending stream of numbers was to Nixon what the Western novels were to Eisenhower, the perfect relaxation."<sup>4</sup> The events of 1969 were quite controversial and have been the subject of two book length examinations that have focused on the events in Arkansas.<sup>5</sup> No one has looked at the Pennsylvania dimension nor has anyone written extensively on Nixon and sports.<sup>6</sup>

This study can also contribute to the historiography of sport. The study of social and cultural issues has dominated this field with race, gender, and ideal body types being topics of particular interest to sport historians. Many of the works exploring these issues have done so through an examination of recreational sports and activities rather than competitive athletic events. When historians focus on these types of events, boxing, baseball, and the Olympics have been their preferred subjects with American football at either the professional or college level, trailing significantly as a topic worthy of investigation.<sup>7</sup>

During Nixon's years in office, he regularly used sport to advance his political interests in two different ways. First, the president and his staff often presented Nixon as a man of the people through appearances at various athletic events. He always sat in the stands with the other fans at games. He never watched from luxury boxes with other dignitaries, nor did he visit the sidelines or dugouts during play. When the particular sporting event that Nixon attended was televised, broadcasters often devoted part of their telecast to an interview with him. These interviews were a manifestation of a second way Nixon used sport; he spoke to the public with authority on athletic matters. Although these two different methods of using sport were contradictory in nature, both came into play in his feud with Paterno.

Events unique to 1969 established the stage for this confrontation. A hundred years before, back in 1869, Princeton and Rutgers played the first college football game. As early as February, Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey requested that Nixon attend the centennial game. Dwight Chapin, White House appointments secretary, responded, informing the senator that scheduling problems made it look unlikely that the president would be able to attend. He promised Case that Nixon and his staff would "take another look" as the game got closer on the calendar. Chapin was good to his word. In June he initiated another look at the schedule. Then, in July, Walter Byers, the executive secretary of the NCAA, also raised the subject with Charles "Bud" Wilkinson, the former head football coach at the University of Oklahoma who was working in the White House. Byers asked Wilkinson if Nixon might issue some type of statement about the intercollegiate football centennial. Wilkinson recommended that Nixon either make a statement that he provide to the American Broadcasting Company for use in a documentary on college football, or that he make some remarks at the Rutgers-Princeton game, which he thought the President should attend. The former coach also suggested that Nixon provide some words for inclusion in every college football program across the country. Nixon liked this idea, but decided against attending the game in New Jersey. Instead, he would make a short statement that would be used in the preseason documentary. Despite the widespread perception that the Nixon Administration under White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman was an efficient organization, it seems that no one followed through on these ideas. The centennial celebrations, nevertheless, went on without the President in attendance. Princeton defeated Rutgers, 29-0 on September 27.<sup>8</sup>

A week after this game, Harry Dent, the White House staff member charged with acting as a liaison between the administration and southern members of Congress, suggested another way that Nixon might associate himself with college football. The South which had been supported the Democratic party solidly since the end of Reconstruction was now a region in play following the voting and civil rights legislation of the 1960s, which many white southerners blamed on the Democrats, and Nixon hoped to win votes, profiting from this anger. Dent proposed that the President attend a football game in the South. On October 6, he had seen an article in *The New York Times*, entitled "In the South, Football is a Religio-Social Pastime," which stated, "Football has probably replaced church-going as the number one social function in the South." The article discussed the impact that sport had on local economies, and the important role teams played in regional identification even among those who had never attended college. "The university football team belongs to all the state, not just the students." This article gave Dent an idea: "If at any time during the remainder of this term the President wants to see and be seen by a tremendous crowd of enthusiastic Southerners, I suggest we consider sending him to one of the big football rivalry games." He suggested that the White House be on the lookout for a big game in a traditional interstate rivalry. "That would be a good way to get him into a key Southern state and get to see many good people from two states, without doing anything political."<sup>9</sup>

Dent's advice addressed an important issue for Richard Nixon. He needed to continue soliciting political backing in the states of the old Confederacy. The South was a critical base of political support for Nixon, but this support, in the words of one of Ambrose, was "soft" and "negative." Southerners and their votes had played a key role in helping him win the 1968 presidential election, but they backed Nixon not out of conviction, viewing him instead as simply the best available candidate. Support in the region could quickly dissipate under certain conditions. As a result, he could never make safe assumptions about his electoral strength.<sup>10</sup>

Nixon and his staff had to wait only two months before events produced a game of the first magnitude. For most of the football season the undefeated Ohio State Buckeyes, the defending national champions, were ranked first in the Associated Press and United Press International polls. Another undefeated team, the Tennessee Volunteers, was second in the polls. As the season neared an end, both teams faced opponents they regarded lightly; perhaps too lightly. On November 15, Mississippi defeated Tennessee, and on November 22,

Ohio State lost to Michigan. As a result, Texas and Arkansas replaced Ohio State and Tennessee as the top two teams in the polls.<sup>11</sup>

Three points are worth making about Nixon's interest in attending the Texas-Arkansas game. First, Dent's suggestion on how to use southern culture to Nixon's advantage was a good one. John Mooney, sports editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune* and president of the Football Writers Association of America, was in Arkansas for "the Big Shootout" and found similar attitudes about football that his colleagues at the *New York Times* had first noticed. He was stunned at the widespread and intense following the Razorbacks enjoyed in the state. Fayetteville is "absolutely nuts" he told his readers.<sup>12</sup>

Another point about the President's decision to attend the game is that White House documents indicate that despite widespread assumptions to the contrary Wilkinson had little to do with giving the suggestion to Nixon. Although Nixon was interested in attending a game in the South, there was nothing pre-planned about his attendance at the Texas-Arkansas game. Haldeman makes this point clearly in his diary: "Great combination of circumstances to make this possible as final game of season is between number one and number two teams, on national TV."<sup>13</sup> It was only on Monday, December 1 at 12:45 p.m. that the trip became official. Chapin sent a memo stamped "HIGH PRIORITY" to several other members of the staff, informing them that the President had decided to attend the game. A number of newspapers carried reports in their December 2 issues that Nixon might attend the game, which the administration confirmed later in the day.<sup>14</sup> The White House publicly attributed the trip to two telegrams Nixon received from Mooney of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and John Paul Hammerschmidt, the U.S. Congressman representing Fayetteville. "YOUR ATTENDANCE WOULD BE ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE IN THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL," Hammerschmidt observed. Both invitations were gratuitous. Nixon had already decided to attend the game before the White House received the cables.<sup>15</sup>

The last point is that the Texas-Arkansas contest was everything White House staffers could have wanted for a presidential trip. In the 1960s, the Texas Longhorns and the Arkansas Razorbacks were two of the most dominant powers in college football. In 1963 Texas had an undefeated season and won the national championship after defeating Navy in the Cotton Bowl. A year later Arkansas also went undefeated and won their own national championship. Even in the years when neither team won the title, the contests between the two had significant ramifications. A Longhorn victory in 1962,

and an Arkansas victory in 1965 cost the other school the national title. The 1969 match-up was quickly taking on the tone of an epic contest. With both schools undefeated, a game that had promised to be important in determining the conference championship had suddenly become far more significant.<sup>16</sup>

If Nixon had simply gone to Arkansas to watch a football game, there would have been little significance to this event nor would it have ever involved Paterno, but he also decided to award a plaque to the winner. Nixon's trophy was a clever way to garner even more attention from the visit. "This presentation will be especially significant in that it will commemorate the One Hundredth Anniversary of College Football as well as recognize the nation's Number One Football Team," he explained. Although he never came out and explicitly asserted his authority to award the national title to the winner of the game, the President was for all practical purposes making that claim, since the custom in college football held that the team ranked first in the polls at the end of the season won the "national championship." Both he and his staff stopped short of actually saying that he would determine the national title.<sup>17</sup> Such a fine distinction would be important later.

Nixon's decision to attend the game and award a plaque only made the hype stronger. "We are highly elated and greatly honored that he has elected to come to the game," David Mullins, president of the University of Arkansas, said. Human interest stories abounded in newspapers in both states on minor topics like the Commander-in-Chief's less-than-spectacular days as a college football player. The Arkansas sports publicity department, which was struggling to find enough room for the surge of sports reporters covering the game, suddenly had to find more space for the White House press corps. The editorial board of the *Arkansas Democrat* gave Nixon some good natured ribbing. "Mr. Nixon should sort of prepare himself for an unusual experience. This may well be the first time in history that the arrival of a President will NOT be the biggest event of the day."<sup>18</sup>

There is a large degree of truth in that observation, which is why Nixon was in Arkansas, but his desire to play a role in the event rather than just observe struck many Penn State staff, faculty, students and alumni as an insult to their school and their efforts to improve the reputation of both the academic and football programs. This controversy was the work of Paterno and Raymond Shafer, governor of Pennsylvania. Penn State was no football power when Paterno arrived on campus in 1950 after graduating from Brown University. Pennsylvania State College had just hired his former college coach Charles "Rip" Engle to be the head coach, and he offered one of his brightest

former players a position on his staff as an assistant. Engle never had a losing season during his sixteen-year tenure, and took the Nittany Lions to four consecutive bowl games, which was double the amount of postseason games that Penn State had played in its entire history program up to that point in time. The improvement in the quality of the football coincided with efforts on the part of the administration to enhance the academic reputation of the school. In 1953, it formally changed its name to Pennsylvania State University. “We had awfully good football teams, but we didn’t get the recognition,” Paterno recalled. There was no exaggeration in this comment. In a memoir of his career at Penn State, Ridge Riley, former executive director of the alumni association, noted, “National attention came gradually to Penn State.” It was only with the arrival of Engle and his successor Paterno that media outlets began giving regular attention to the Nittany Lions.<sup>19</sup>

Paterno became head coach after the 1965 season when Engle retired, and he took advantage of the foundation that his predecessor had established. His initial campaign produced a mediocre 5–5 record. In 1967, though, the Nittany Lions went 8–2 and played Florida State in the Gator Bowl. Then in 1968 they went undefeated, winning the Orange Bowl, but finished second in the polls to the far more established program at Ohio State that also went undefeated. “We’ve developed our football to the place where pride is the ingredient working for us—the pride of our alumni and students, the pride we have in ourselves,” Paterno remarked after that season. “A lot of people have worked hard to build our program from the dismal ’30s when we were losing to small college teams in Pennsylvania, to a place where playing on a Penn State team means something great.”<sup>20</sup>

Despite its success on the field, 1969 was a year without joy for the Penn State football team. The Nittany Lions had completed their second consecutive undefeated season, and had a twenty-nine game winning streak that went back to 1967, yet the team believed they had not received the credit that they were due. Ohio State had overshadowed Penn State during most of the Nittany Lions’ long undefeated streak putting together a long winning streak of their own at the same exact moment. “We’re close to No. 1 and our incentive is to stay there,” Paterno observed at the start of the season. The Nittany Lions, however, were never ranked first in either poll that year, and watched Texas and Arkansas start the season with higher rankings, even though both had enjoyed less success in 1968 than Penn State. The knock on the Nittany Lions was that they played a weak schedule. As an independent school without a conference affiliation, Penn State certainly had greater control over its

schedule than Texas or Arkansas. It is also true that the Nittany Lions had played a number of middling football powers. Texas, though, had played a schedule that was hardly any tougher. Arkansas was only the second team it had faced that year that was ranked in the polls. "Who," Paterno said in obvious frustration when his season ended a week before the game in Fayetteville, "has Texas or Arkansas played? How many intersectional games has the Southwest Conference won? Five? Six?"<sup>21</sup>

The slights to Penn State that so infuriated Paterno were byproducts of the informal system used to determine the national title in college football. The NCAA had a playoff system to award a national championship in every sport it governed, except division I-A football. Claims to a mythical championship were based on the trophies that several different organizations, mostly from the media, awarded. Each claimed to bestow the national title on the recipient. In the culture of college football, the most influential ratings were the Associated Press and United Press International polls. Whichever school occupied the top position at the end of the season was regarded as the national champion. Despite its appearance of objectivity, with numerical rankings and point scores, the polls were actually extremely subjective. Regional favoritism played a role in poll voting. In the 1960s, southern schools placed well in the polls while schools from the East fared poorly. Even though college football started in New Jersey and the early powers in the sport were eastern schools, most sportswriters, coaches, and fans in the 1960s thought the quality of the game was inferior in the East. A stronger influence on the polls though was tradition. When ranking teams with comparable numbers, poll voters favored teams from established football powers over those from less well-regarded programs. In 1969 Penn State was an eastern school with a modest legacy of success in college football. The Nittany Lions were just beginning to develop into a national power, and received less respect in the world of college football than either Texas or Arkansas.<sup>22</sup>

Nixon's actions helped inflame a regional dispute over the process of awarding the national championship, pushing him into the role of southern patron, and made Southerners into his defenders. These developments ultimately helped the president in his efforts to maintain support in the region, but they worked to Paterno's advantage as well. The controversy focused more media attention on the Nittany Lion program than they would have enjoyed had the President not entered into the picture. Objections from the Penn State faithful over Nixon's announcement that he would present a plaque to the winner of the Texas-Arkansas game, though, were honest in their origins. These Nittany Lion

fans were another major element that contributed to regional nature of the dispute. George Paterno, in his book on his brother, observed that “all hell broke loose in the State of Pennsylvania” that December. One Penn State student understood what the President was doing, “The only reason President Nixon agreed to go south with his trophy was to build Republican party strength there.” A few alumni picketed the White House. “We looked it up and found he has no such powers in the Constitution,” one remarked to a newspaper reporter. Most of the expressions of outrage came in writing. By the time Nixon left Washington for Arkansas, the White House had received 90,000 letters and telegrams from angry Penn State students and alumni. The Republican members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Shafer, the Republican governor of the state, also sent formal notes of protest.<sup>23</sup>

Both Shafer and Paterno argued that it was premature to determine the national title before the bowl games even started. Shafer made this point in his telegram to Nixon, and reminded the President that he had already invited him to the Orange Bowl in which Penn State would play. The governor also went public at a press conference the day before the Texas-Arkansas clash, where he posed with a Penn State pennant and a sign that read: “NUMERO UNO.” The Governor made his feelings clear: “I sincerely hope the President will reconsider and will wait until after the bowl games before attempting to designate the finest football team in the nation.” Paterno said much the same thing, “Let’s wait until all the evidence is in before picking a No. 1 team. After all, seven of the top 10 teams are in bowl games. We’re still playing the season.”<sup>24</sup>

These criticisms forced a concession from Nixon and his White House staff. The day before the Texas-Arkansas game, reporters peppered White House Press Secretary Ron Ziegler with questions about the Penn State protests at a morning press conference. Ziegler, in the words of a *Washington Post* reporter, “airily” dismissed the Nittany Lions’ complaints, noting that the winner of the press association polls was considered the national champion. This response satisfied no one, including Ziegler. He went to the Oval Office, consulted with the President, returned to the press room and announced that Nixon would give Penn State an “appropriate” tribute for their accomplishments. Reporters asked the obvious question: what kind of tribute? Ziegler had no idea, and left the press room to consult again with Nixon. He returned a few minutes later, and announced that the President would present a plaque to Penn State for having the longest undefeated, untied record in college football. Reporters started asking other questions: what if Texas-Arkansas tied, would Penn State

not deserve the title more since it would have a perfect record. "Gentlemen, I have done all I can," Ziegler said, ending discussion on the matter.<sup>25</sup>

On December 6, Nixon flew to Arkansas on *Air Force One*, and Marine helicopters from the airport to Fayetteville. Bad weather caused the group to arrive late. Only a small handful of people were present to greet Nixon when his helicopter landed outside Razorback Stadium. The president and his entourage made their way to their assigned seats on the thirty-five yard line, sitting among other fans on the west side of the stadium. When the stadium announcer commented on his arrival, he stood and waved, and the crowd gave him an enthusiastic welcome.<sup>26</sup>

During halftime, Nixon was the center of attention. He strengthened his credentials as a sports authority during an appearance on television with ABC sportscaster Chris Schenkel. The camera stayed focused on Nixon throughout the interview in either solo shots or in duo portraits with Schenkel. The politician was smiling and upbeat throughout the interview. "I must say I have never seen a football game where there is more excitement in the air than there is today," he remarked early on. The fans, as far as Nixon was concerned, were most impressive and doing their part to cheer on their team toward victory as he believed they should. After Schenkel asked him what he expected in the second half, Nixon's demeanor changed. The tone of his voice dropped, giving him an added touch of authority, "I think that Texas has enormous power that is really not unleashed yet, and that in the second half they are likely to be much better offensively." Nixon also explained how the Longhorns would score. "I think they are going to have to throw more. They have an excellent passer and they will have to throw to open up the Arkansas defense. I think under those circumstances they are likely to score once or twice." These comments strengthened Nixon's claims to expertise in matters of football, but he was also extremely careful in his interview to adopt a neutral stance. Every sentence praising one school was followed by another praising the other.<sup>27</sup>

The game developed just as Nixon had predicted. At the start of the fourth quarter, the Razorbacks were leading the Longhorns, 14-0, but Texas scored two touchdowns to win the game, 15-14. The President then dominated post-game events just as he had the halftime show. After Texas players and coaches arrived in their locker room, the Secret Service closed off access to the room. The broadcasters waited for Nixon to arrive in the locker room. When he did, the room exploded in applause and cheers when he stepped up to his place. "In presenting this plaque, I want to say first that the AP and the UPI will name Texas Number 1, as we know, after this game." There was



**NIXON AND THE LONGHORNS:** Nixon presented Texas head football coach Darrell Royal with his presidential plaque in the Texas locker room on live national television. This image of Nixon and Royal appeared on the front pages of newspapers all over Texas and across the country. H.R. Haldeman, Nixon's chief-of-staff, thought the White House had achieved a major public relations victory for the President.

*Source:* U.S. National Archives

no question, as far as he was concerned, about the Longhorns deserving this honor: "Having seen this game, what convinced me that Texas deserves that [ranking] is the fact that you won a tough one. For a team to be behind 14 to 0 and then not to lose its cool and to go on to win, that proves that you deserve to be Number 1, and that is what you are." The room exploded in cheers and applause again.<sup>28</sup>

Coach Royal accepted the trophy, and expressed what were, in all likelihood, the sentiments of every member of his coaching staff and team, "Mr. President, it is a great thrill for us to win the football game, but the big thrill, I know I speak for all our squad, is for the President of the United States to take time to endorse college football and to honor us with your presence in our locker room." As Nixon left the room, announcer Bill Fleming called the event "unprecedented."<sup>29</sup>

Nixon was too strong a believer in character development through competition—and too good a politician—to ignore the Razorbacks. After leaving the Longhorns to celebrate their victory, he made his way to the other side of

the stadium to visit with the Arkansas team, shaking hands with an occasional bystander. The television cameras followed him. In the Razorback locker room, Nixon stood on a raised platform next to Broyles, and said, "I know how you feel. In my field of politics, I have lost some close ones and I have won some close ones. But I want you to know that in the 100th year of football, in the game to prove which was to be Number 1, we couldn't have had a greater game."<sup>30</sup>

Media coverage of the President's visit to Arkansas was extremely positive. His visits to both locker rooms were carried on television. Nixon and his staff could not have asked for better coverage, as Haldeman noted at the time:

He did a great job and TV covered it thoroughly: the arrival by helicopter; the half-time interview in the press box; the plaque presentation to Texas (15-14); the crowd scene outside the locker room; the consolation visit to the Arkansas locker room. Great stuff. Especially at half-time, when [the] P gave thorough analysis of the game so far, and outlook for second half, which proved 100 percent accurate. And some really good stuff in the locker rooms, talking to the players. A real coup with the sports fans.<sup>31</sup>

Photos of Nixon either watching the game or presenting the plaque to Royal appeared on the front-pages of newspapers across the country. The *Arkansas Democrat* and *Arkansas Gazette* ran a photo of the President in the Razorbacks' dressing room. In addition, the sports sections of many papers ran stories on Nixon that quoted heavily from his half-time interview and his comments to the two teams afterwards.<sup>32</sup>

The President, however, was unable to escape the dispute with Paterno. He felt obligated to mention the controversy in the halftime interview and even while presenting his award to Royal. "We are going to present a plaque to Penn State as the team in the 100th year with the longest undefeated, untied record. Is that fair enough?" Royal responded quickly, "That is fair enough." When reporters later asked him about Nixon's remarks about Penn State, Royal remarked, "What else could he say."<sup>33</sup>

Paterno, however, rejected the award. "The blood-curdling nerve!," the coach wrote twenty years later. "In his Solomon-like presidential wisdom, Nixon *favoured* us with an honor that any idiot consulting a record book could see that we had taken for ourselves, thank you, without his help." He also questioned the President's credentials, calling him "America's leading self-appointed athletic

authority.” After his wife calmed him down, Paterno released a press release. “It would seem a waste of his very valuable time to present a plaque for something we already have undisputed possession of—the nation’s longest winning streak,” he said after the Texas-Arkansas game. “To accept any other plaque prior to the bowl games, which will determine the final number one team would be a disservice to our squad, to Pennsylvania, to the East which we represent, and perhaps most important, to Missouri, which may be the best team in the country.” Penn State was scheduled to play Missouri in the Orange Bowl on January 1, 1970.<sup>34</sup>

Years later, he admitted that his private reaction was even sharper than what he revealed in his memoirs. “I was furious,” the coach remarked, “And then I got a call from the White House,” Paterno said. “It must have been 11 o’clock at night: ‘The president would like you to come down to Washington. He wants to give you a trophy for having the longest winning streak.’”

“I said, ‘You tell the president to take that trophy and shove it.’”

“That’s exactly what I told him—the person at the other end of the line,” he explained.

“I said, ‘Hey, its bad enough he embarrassed my football team. I’m not going to let him do it again with that trophy.’”<sup>35</sup>

The Penn State protest had some influence. The new AP and UPI polls were released Monday, and Texas, as expected, retained its number one ranking. Penn State had moved into second place. Arkansas fell to third. Ohio State, ranked first for most of the season, and undefeated but once-tied Southern California placed fourth in one poll and fifth in the other.<sup>36</sup> The UPI poll stopped with the end of the regular season and according to this news service, Texas became the national champions of college football for 1969.<sup>37</sup> The UPI was the second organization to award Texas a national championship trophy, since the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame announced on Sunday, December 7, that it was awarding the MacArthur Bowl, named after General Douglas MacArthur, to the University of Texas.<sup>38</sup> The Associated Press, however, recognized that the Penn State protesters had a point, and announced it would delay its final poll until after the bowl games. None of the top five teams were playing each other, and it was altogether possible that any one of them might have a strong claim to the national title depending on the outcome of the bowl contests. Paterno said he could live with second, for the time being: “I don’t think Texas will be No. 1 at the end of the season.”<sup>39</sup>

The announcement that the Associated Press would delay awarding its title put more emphasis on the Cotton Bowl, where Texas would play Notre Dame in Dallas on January 1. The Fighting Irish were ending a self-imposed prohibition against playing in post-season games. The fact that Notre Dame was one of the few football powers with a national following, because of its religious affiliation, only added to the attention directed at this game. Nixon's plaque would have less meaning if Texas lost the Cotton Bowl and its claim to the AP poll title, even though the Longhorns already had the awards of two major organizations.<sup>40</sup>

Southerners quickly took up the defense of the Longhorns, and many suggested that the Texas and Arkansas game had already resolved the matter about the national title. The Nittany Lions had actually been the Cotton Bowl selection committee's first choice as the at-large representative to play the Southwest Conference champion. Paterno allowed the players to decide what bowl invitation they would accept, and they voted to go to Miami to play in the Orange Bowl, since Ohio State was still in first place in the polls at the time and seemed unlikely to lose. Since the Buckeyes seemed to be going to the Rose Bowl, it appeared that the Cotton Bowl would have little impact on the outcome of the national title, and Miami had better amenities in a warmer climate to offer than Dallas. Chuck Burkhart, the quarterback of the team, explained:

A lot of people forget the circumstances. We had been second the year before. And now, at the time when we were voting where we wanted to go, we were ranked third behind Ohio State and Texas. If hindsight is right, sure, we would have come to Dallas to play for number one. But what was the sense of going to Dallas to see who was number two when you had already been number two the year before? Besides, the Orange Bowl had treated us so royally the year before. And here we are, a bunch of kids from Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and New Jersey. When you're from those states and you think about where you want to go in the wintertime, the answer isn't Dallas, Texas. It's Florida. So, for anyone in that position, it was a simple discussion. And to us, the Orange Bowl was even a more glamorous game because it was at night. The whole country had to either watch you or be asleep with a hangover.<sup>41</sup>

What went without mention at the time was that Texas was still a segregated, all-white team. The integrated Nittany Lions, particularly the black players, had no interest in playing such a team in what would be for all practical terms a home game for the Longhorns. "I voted for Texas," Dennis Onkontz, a linebacker on the team, explained. "But I think some of our black players had reservations. They weren't sure how they would be treated there."<sup>42</sup>

His coach agreed. "My guys—it was another era." He also added that other considerations were at work. "That Kennedy thing was still fresh in their minds. Some of my kids were married, and their wives really liked Miami Beach. The squad finally decided they wanted to go to the Orange Bowl, never thinking they would have been playing for a national championship."<sup>43</sup>

The irony of the situation was that black enrollment at Penn State was actually on the decline, and this development required that Paterno heed the concerns of his players. Despite the on field improvement of the Nittany Lion football program, Paterno was finding it more difficult to recruit black players. There was no way, given this situation, that he could ignore some well-founded concerns of his players.<sup>44</sup>

In response to the Shafer-Paterno criticisms, many Southerners claimed the Nittany Lions had no claim to the title and based their arguments on Penn State's decision to turn down the Cotton Bowl bid. In a letter to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, a Louisiana native called Paterno the "No. 1 Cry-Baby of the Year. Penn State could have played Number One—but it ran away!" Columnist Jack Keady of the *Arkansas Democrat* saw the dispute as an effort to "ridicule" the significance of the Texas-Arkansas game. He vented his anger at his press colleagues, noting that "all the eastern invaders were trying to run down the 'Presidential Plaque' given Texas, instead of Penn State." The sports columnists of other southern newspapers blasted Paterno, arguing that Penn State did not deserve the national title since it refused the Cotton Bowl invitation. These columnists failed to realize that Penn State made its decision long before the Cotton Bowl could offer a contest with the number one team.<sup>45</sup>

Nixon's reaction to the controversy was contradictory. He expected that the football dispute would be an issue that might come up during a presidential press conference, scheduled for Monday, December 8, and Haldeman's notes of conversation indicate that Nixon was not too concerned about the issue: "If comes up as gag—AP + UPI polls." The Chief of Staff, though, worried about the issue, and recorded in his diary, "Big crisis at Penn State."



**PATERNO AND LAMBERT:** When Penn State won the Lambert Trophy that goes to the best team in the East, Paterno said, "I couldn't feel better about receiving this trophy if it were presented on television by the President of the United States."

*Source:* Penn State Athletic Department

Nixon brought up the issue as a joke in response to the last question posed to him. Nancy Dickerson, a reporter for the National Broadcasting Company, asked him if he had any plans reach out to the youth of the country. After giving a thoughtful answer about treating young people as adults, he added: "I know a way not to reach them, and that is to try to pick number one as far as the football teams are concerned." And with that statement the press conference came to an end. Ambrose dismisses this remark as an example of Nixon's horrid sense of humor. Haldeman's notes, however, indicate that everything, including the football comment, went over well.<sup>46</sup>

The next day the President contradicted himself. When Penn State won the Lambert Trophy as the best team in the East for a third consecutive year, tying the record set by West Point, Nixon sent Paterno a congratulatory telegram:

ANY TEAM THAT CAN TIE THE RECORD OF THE ARMY JUGGERNAUT OF 1944-45-46 HAS CARVED FOR ITSELF AN ENDURING PLACE IN THE ANNALS OF FOOTBALL GREATNESS.<sup>47</sup>

That evening Nixon was the keynote speaker at the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame banquet, and was in his element throughout this black-tie gathering. He joked that he wanted to propose a playoff system for college football, but "I thought I was in deep enough already." He also said, "I understand that Penn State certainly is among those that should be considered for Number 1 in the United States of America." This comment received considerable press attention. His other comments received less attention, even in Texas. He got roars of laughter when he threw out a zinger towards Paterno, remarking that his old college coach had played on a USC team that defeated Penn State in the Rose Bowl. Then, in his closing remarks, he reversed himself again. "I think Texas deserved to be Number 1." As far as he was concerned, the gutsy play calling and refusal to give up when they trailed Arkansas 14-0 earned the Longhorns the right to be the top-ranked team in the country. "Texas demonstrated that day that they were playing to win, they set an example worthy of being Number 1 in the 100<sup>th</sup> year of college football."<sup>48</sup>

While Nixon argued both sides of the issue, his staff retreated. Ziegler sent out letters arguing that the President had not awarded any team the national championship. "The significance of the plaque was a presentation to the winner of a particular game which, in effect, commemorated an important contest between two major football teams on the 100th anniversary of collegiate football."<sup>49</sup>

Nixon remained in an embarrassing position until January 1, when Texas defeated Notre Dame in the Cotton Bowl. Darrell Royal knew Paterno's claims to the title had complicated life for the President. He was at the same National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame dinner with his team captains to accept the MacArthur Bowl trophy, and gave Nixon a Cotton Bowl watch and promised that the Longhorns would not let him down.<sup>50</sup>

The issue refused to go away, though. "I don't want you to prove anything to anybody tonight," Governor Shafer told the Penn State players at a pre-Orange Bowl function. "You don't have to prove you're Number One to the newspapers, the fans, or even to the President. Just go out there, play this game, and win it for yourselves." Penn State won its game against Missouri, and after his team threw him and Governor Shafer into the shower, a dripping Paterno addressed the reporters about the national championship controversy. "I don't like to keep pushing this thing but I still think we have as much right to be number one as Texas or anybody else. Why should I sit back and let the President of the United States say that so-and-so is number one

when I got fifty kids who've worked their tails off for me for three years. People can say it is sour grapes, but I'd be a lousy coach if I didn't argue for my own team."<sup>51</sup>

Texas, however, defeated the Fighting Irish, 21-17 and remained in first place in the AP poll. Penn State had to settle for the second spot. Nixon called Darrell Royal after the game to offer his congratulations. The dispute was on Royal's mind when he remarked, "I'm glad we didn't cause you to be embarrassed by your selection as number one." In an action that was a personal trademark, the President denied the obvious, when he said, "I wouldn't have been embarrassed even had you lost, because it was a great, hard-fought game by both teams and you played like champions."<sup>52</sup>

Paterno and the Nittany Lions would have some revenge on the Longhorns. Two seasons later, with some veterans from 1969 remaining, the two schools played each other in the Cotton Bowl. It was the only time that Royal and Paterno would face one another in their long, distinguished coaching careers. As the Penn State coach admitted years later, "That was a game President Nixon two years earlier had made a 'must' for us." He also knew "we weren't very popular when we went down there" because of "a psychological carry-over from the ratings of 1969." The Nittany Lions won the game in convincing fashion, and a number of Texas reporters were willing to give Paterno's team its due. "Penn State, playing the second half like it was a brand new ball game, stormed through, over and round the Longhorns for a resounding 30-6 victory," Sam Blair, a sports columnist for the *Dallas Morning News* wrote. "When it was over, not a soul was making jokes about the so-called Eastern style football that the Lions supposedly play." Columnist Blackie Sherrod of the *Dallas Times-Herald* made similar comments in his assessment of the game.<sup>53</sup>

The dispute about the 1969 national title would irritate Paterno for years to come. "I remember it vividly," the coach remarked in a press conference shortly after Nixon's death. Reporters noticed that there was anger in his voice despite the passage of 25 years. Paterno had the grace, however, not to raise the issue in person with Nixon when he visited the White House a few weeks after the end of the 1969 season. The coach later met Julie Nixon Eisenhower at a function in the late 1980s and told her that her father would be remembered as a great President. A little later he received a handwritten note from Nixon and an inscribed copy of his book, *Leaders*.<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately for Paterno and Nittany Lion fans the slights of the President and the college football establishment were neither the first nor last

that an undefeated Penn State team would suffer. The Nittany Lions went undefeated in 1973 and 1994 without claiming any part of the mythical national championship. In 1973 when Penn State ended up fifth in the Associated Press poll despite a 12-0 record, the coach told reporters that his team had earned the national title of a poll. "I had my own poll—the Paterno Poll—and the vote was unanimous. Penn State is No. 1. I just took the vote a few minutes ago." In 1994 Reporters asked Paterno about 1969 as Penn State prepared to play in the Rose Bowl. "If you want to talk about the Rose Bowl and this game, that's fine," he told reporters. "But I can't even remember that far back." He eventually relented, and explained his feelings about going undefeated twice. "I felt badly not so much for the first ones in 1968, as I did for the same guys in the Class of '69, because those guys won 30 straight games," he explained. "They won 30 straight games and never got to win a national championship, and I always felt badly for that group. But if you talk to that group today they'll say, hey, no one can take away the fact that we had an undefeated season." He understood that such slights happen with the informal championship system at work in Division I-A football. "The only thing I got upset with was when the President of the United States got involved in it and he went down to Texas and gave them the trophy."<sup>55</sup>

The 1968 and 1969 seasons, though, had an important impact on the status of both Penn State and Paterno in the world of college football. It made him a martyr. "I think that differentiated Paterno from, if not all, then just about all of the coaches in the country," Edward P. Junker III, the president of the Penn State Board of Trustees in the late 1990s, remarked. "It's trite to say it, but it definitely made him a living legend as far as Penn State is concerned." Paterno had no problem admitting that those two seasons were critical. "There was a lot of comment that it was a one-time thing. They kept saying it wouldn't last," he recalled. "Those two Orange Bowls made our program."<sup>56</sup>

Since 1969 Paterno has also been a vocal proponent of a playoff system for Division I-A college football. "I am a playoff fan," he explained. "Who are the best teams? Somebody's going to be ticked off. I've gone that route. One of my teams was undefeated, and we never got to be national champion. I felt bad for the kids." Paterno was also willing to asses blame for this situation. "I think the university presidents are very dishonest," he said. "They allow basketball to do what they do. They play in the middle of the week. They have long playoffs one week after another. How can they justify that and not allow a football playoff?" The coach has proposed that the regular season be

reduced to nine games and that the NCAA have a thirty-two team tournament. He admits, though, that it “won’t happen in my lifetime.”<sup>57</sup>

As a voting member of one of the major polls, Paterno has also shown sensitivity to situations that have developed when more than one team finishes the season undefeated. In 2004 he made news when he evenly split his ballot in the ESPN/*USA Today* poll among USC, Oklahoma, and Auburn all three schools finished the regular season undefeated. “I think all three teams are deserving,” he told the paper. “They did everything they had to do. They won tough games.” He was the only voter in either poll to split his vote. “I couldn’t honestly say to anyone I thought one of the teams deserved to be third.”<sup>58</sup>

As this study comes to an end, a concluding point is worth making: the Nixon-Paterno feud was about more than the national championship of college football. Americans want to have an individual serve in the office with whom they can relate, but they also want one they feel is capable of serving in such a demanding position of authority. Even though these views are contradictory, Nixon presented himself successfully in these roles at the “Big Shootout.” Paterno and the Nittany Lions objected to this initiative. While their grievances were genuine, the controversy they engendered worked to their advantage, bringing more attention to a football program on the rise. This dispute also worked to Nixon’s advantage, enhancing his reputation in the South. Proving, the old saying that as long as people are talking about you, there is no such thing as bad publicity.

## NOTES

1. Michael O’Brien, *No Ordinary Joe: The Biography of Joe Paterno* (Nashville, Tennessee: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 95–96; Paterno’s memoirs have a different construction for this quote and many others. See Joe Paterno with Bernard Asbell, *Paterno by the Book*. (New York: Random House, 1989), 165–166.
2. Mark Feeney, *Nixon at the Movies: A Book About Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), xii.
3. One influential group has advanced the “Dole synthesis.” At Nixon’s funeral, Senator Robert Dole of Kansas said in an emotion-choked eulogy, “I believe the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be known as the age of Nixon. Why was he the most durable public figure of our time? Not because he gave the most eloquent speeches, but because he provided the most effective leadership. Not because he won every battle, but because he always embodied the deepest feelings of the people he led. One of his biographers said that Richard Nixon was one of us. And so he was.” The Dole eulogy is printed in the *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1994. This proposition, as the Senator clearly stated, came from the works that cast Nixon as a central figure in American culture and politics in the middle part of the Twentieth Century. He was a centrist who provided bipartisan leadership to a

generation that worried about its place in society, and that his domestic achievements were far more significant than commonly thought. These works include: Herbert S. Parmet, *Nixon and His America* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1990); Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1991); Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Stanley I. Kutler, *The Wars of Watergate: The Last Crisis of Richard Nixon* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990).

Historians producing focused monographs on the specific policies and events involving the Nixon Administration have been the other influential group. Most of these scholars had their work published starting in the second half of the 1990s when access to White House records became possible. Until Nixon's death, access had been limited mainly to material related to the Watergate scandal, and the resulting studies have chronicled in detail the misdeeds of the President and his lieutenants. For an example, see Stanley I. Kutler, *The Wars of Watergate*. The post-funeral historiography is developing uniquely and in sharp contrast to the general pattern of scholarship on other Presidents, which tends to enhance the reputation of the chief executive. This pattern is hardly surprising since most Presidents have left office less popular than when they entered. Since Nixon left office under one of the darkest clouds in U.S. history, the pattern should have served him well on subjects other than Watergate. Such has not been the case. Historians focusing on his presidential career have produced a number of books that have been quite critical of Nixon Administration policies. A common theme running throughout all these works, positive and negative, is the pervasive influence of political considerations in the making of policy. In the Nixon Administration partisan politics, polls and popularity ratings were important factors in the decision process despite claims to the contrary from its alumni. Such considerations will appear in this work as well, but the evidence in old White House files pertaining to sports suggests that it was the staff more than Nixon that let these concerns shape their options. These works include: Jeffrey P. Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Larry Berman, *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam* (New York, 2001); Allen J. Matusow, *Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); William P. Bundy, *Tangled Web: The Making of Foreign Policy in the Nixon Presidency* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Melvin Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999); Dean J. Kotlowski, *Nixon's Civil Rights: Politics, Principle, and Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); and J. Brooks Flippen, *Nixon and the Environment* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

4. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon*, vol. 1, *The Education of a Politician, 1913–1962* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 456.
5. J. Neal Blanton, *Game of the Century: Texas vs Arkansas, December 1, 1969* (Austin: Pemberton, 1970); Terry Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming: Texas vs. Arkansas in Dixie's Last Stand* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).
6. Robert M. Collins, "Richard M. Nixon: The Psychic, Political, and Moral Uses of Sport," *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Summer 1983), 77–84. Collins contends that athletics served psychic, political, and moral functions for Nixon. This composition is suggestive, but Collins lacked access to the documents that would have sustained his argument.
7. A good examination of two major textbooks in the field of sport history will provide the reader with a good understanding of the major themes in this field: Steven A. Riess, editor, *Major Problems in*

- American Sport History: Documents and Essays* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Jay Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004). A major work that examines baseball history, which is a significant, sub-field, is: Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball As History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
8. *The New York Times*, September 28, 1969. There is no record of any statements on college football in the *Public Papers of the President*, the index to the *New York Times*, or in the sports-recreation records of the White House central files. Chapin to Case, February 27, 1969, Folder [GEN] RE 10 Football Begin 9/30/69, Box 6; Chapin to Ruwe, June 12, 1969; Wilkinson to Chapin, July 7, 1969; Wilkinson to Rossides, July 22, 1969; Wilkinson to Chapin, August 19, 1969; notation on Chapin to Cole, September 2, 1969; Chapin to Nixon, September 8, 1969; Chapin to Wilkinson, September 15, 1969; Wilkinson to Chapin, September 16, 1969; Bull to Chapin, September 17, 1969; Chapin to Nixon, September 17, 1969; Bull to Nixon, September 19, 1969, Folder [GEN] RE 10 Football Begin 9/30/69, Box 5, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, Nixon Presidential Project, National Archives, College Park, Maryland. [Hereafter cited as NPP, NACP].
  9. *The New York Times*, October 6, 1969; Dent to Dwight Chapin and Bob Haldeman, October 6, 1969, Folder [EX] RE Football 10/11/69, Box 5, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
  10. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon*, vol. 2, *The Triumph of a Politician, 1962–1972*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 89–90, 118, 155, 365–66.
  11. Dan Jenkins, “Kunte Would Have Agreed, Ara,” *Sports Illustrated*, December 22, 1969, 28, 30; Terry Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 71.
  12. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 6, 1969; Paterno with Asbell, *Paterno by the Book*, 145–146; Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 13–15.
  13. December 6, 1969 entry in H.R. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House—The Complete Multimedia Collection* (Santa Monica, California, 1994).
  14. J. Neal Blanton in *Game of the Century* speculates that Nixon attended the game as part of an effort to attract voters in the South in general, and build support in both Texas and Arkansas, states he lost in 1968. White House documents show that this view is only half right. Nixon took a number of congressmen and senators from Texas and Arkansas with him, which Blanton claims was a reason for the trip since it gave the President an opportunity to chat and improve relations with a number of important legislators. In this case, Blanton has accorded a simple perk with too much significance; it is difficult to believe that Nixon actually took a trip so he could give other politicians a ride. Finally, he makes an intriguing argument that Nixon used the trip to provide the nation with some psychological reassurance during a trying moment of social unrest. There are, however, no documents in the sports-recreation files of the Nixon White House to support this interpretation. Blanton, *Game of the Century*, 37–39; Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 13–15, 167–169; *Arkansas Gazette*, December 2, 3, 1969; Chapin to Keough, Wilkinson, Bull, and Brown, December 1, 1969, Folder [EX] RE Football 10/11/69, Box 5, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
  15. The date stamp on the Mooney telegram is 3:18 p.m. and 6:33 p.m. on the Hammerschmidt cable. John Mooney to Nixon, December 1, 1969; John Paul Hammerschmidt to Nixon, December 1, 1969, Folder [EX] RE Football 10/11/69, Box 5, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White

- House Central Files, NPP, NACP. For a story crediting Nixon's trip to one of the telegrams see *The Austin American*, December 3, 1969 or *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 3, 1969.
16. Frank Broyles with Jim Bailey, *Hog Wild: The Autobiography of Frank Broyles* (Memphis, Tennessee, 1979), 133–155.
  17. Nixon to J. Dallas Shirley, December 4, 1969; Chapin to Keough, Wilkinson, Bull, and Brown, December 1, 1969, Folder [EX] RE Football 10/11/69, Box 5, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
  18. *Arkansas Gazette*, December 3, 1969; *The Dallas Morning News*, December 3, 1969; emphasis in the original of the *Arkansas Democrat*, December 2, 5, 1969; *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, December 3, 1969.
  19. Ridge Riley, *Road to Number One: A Personal Chronicle of Penn State Football* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1977), 612, 617; O'Brien, *No Ordinary Joe*, 61.
  20. Riley, *Road to Number One*, 441.
  21. Riley, *Road to Number One*, 441; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 1, 1969.
  22. John F. Rooney, Jr., *The Recruiting Game: Toward a New System of Intercollegiate Sport*, second edition. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 73. In this analysis of poll ranking between 1952–1983, Penn State finished tenth. Most of this success, however, came after Paterno became head coach. Also see a lengthy article about the polls in *The Dallas Morning News*, August 8, 1997.
  23. George Paterno, *Joe Paterno: The Coach From Byzantium* (Champaign, Illinois: Sagamore Publishing, 1997), 55; *Harrisburg Patriot*, December 8, 1969; *The Pittsburgh Press*, December 7, 1969; Shafer to Nixon, December 6, 1969; J. Bruce Whelihan to John Ehrlichman, December 6, 1969, Folder [EX] RE Football 10/11/69, Box 5, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
  24. *Harrisburg Patriot*, December 6, 1969; *Arkansas Gazette*, December 6, 1969; *The Austin American*, December 11, 1969.
  25. *The Washington Post*, December 6, 1969; "Remarks with Texas Coach Darrell Royal," December 6, 1969, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1969–1974*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), 998 [Hereafter referred to as PPP]; Orville Henry and Jim Bailey, *The Razorbacks: A Story of Arkansas Football*, new edition. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996), 250.
  26. *Arkansas Democrat*, December 7, 1969; *Arkansas Gazette*, December 7, 1969; Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 198.
  27. "Remarks During a Television Interview in Fayetteville, Arkansas," December 6, 1969, PPP, 996–98; Blanton, *Game of the Century*, 91; Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 214; *The Washington Post*, December 7, 1969; *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 7, 1969; "Videotape of Texas-Arkansas Football Game," December 6, 1969, ABC Television, Part I, WHCA #3552, Part II, WHCA #3553, Audio Video Tape Recording Section, NPP, NACP.
  28. Blanton, *Game of the Century*, 123; *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 7, 1969; "Remarks with Texas Coach Darrell Royal," December 6, 1969, PPP, 998; "Videotape of Texas-Arkansas Football Game," WHCA #3556, Part I, Audio Video Tape Recording Section, NPP, NACP.
  29. "Remarks with Texas Coach Darrell Royal," December 6, 1969, PPP, 998; "Videotape of Texas-Arkansas Football Game," WHCA #3556, Part I, Audio Video Tape Recording Section, NPP, NACP; Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 260–261.

30. Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 260–261; “Remarks with Arkansas Coach Frank Broyles,” December 6, 1969, PPP, 999; *Arkansas Democrat*, December 7, 1969; Randy Roberts and James S. Olson, *Winning Is the Only Thing: Sports in America since 1945* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 113; Henry and Bailey, *The Razorbacks*, 250; Frei, *Horns, Hogs, & Nixon Coming*, 263–265.
31. December 6, 1969 entry in Haldeman, *Haldeman Diaries*.
32. This paragraph is based on material from the December 7, 1969 issue of the following papers: *Arkansas Democrat*, *Arkansas Gazette*, *The Dallas Times Herald*, *Austin American-Statesman*, *Houston Chronicle*, *San Antonio Light*, and *San Antonio Express and News*. Papers that had front-page photos of Nixon included *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Houston Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, and *The Washington Post*.
33. *The Washington Post*, December 6, 1969; “Remarks with Texas Coach Darrell Royal,” December 6, 1969, PPP, 998; Henry and Bailey, *The Razorbacks*, 250.
34. *The New York Times*, December 6, 1969; emphasis in the original of Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 146–147.
35. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 27, 1994.
36. *The Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 1969.
37. *The Austin American*, December 9, 1969.
38. *The Austin American*, December 8, 1969.
39. *The Austin American*, December 9, 10, 1969; *The Dallas Morning News*, December 10, 1969.
40. Dan Jenkins, “Knut Would Have Agreed, Ara,” *Sports Illustrated*, December 22, 1969, 28, 31.
41. Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 144–145; Frank Bilovsky, *Lion Country: Inside Penn State Football—The Triumphs and Glories of Penn State Football as Told by Letterman from Different Eras, 1948–1981* (West Point, New York: Leisure Press, 1982), 33.
42. *Austin American-Statesman*, December 25, 1996.
43. *Austin American-Statesman*, December 25, 1996.
44. Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 192–196.
45. Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 144–145; *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 10, 1969; *Houston Chronicle*, January 4, 1970; *The Dallas Morning News*, December 9, 1969; *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, December 3, 1969; *Arkansas Democrat*, December 9, 1969; Dan Jenkins, “Knut Would Have Agreed, Ara,” *Sports Illustrated*, December 22, 1969, 28, 30.
46. December 8, 1969 entry in Haldeman, *Haldeman Diaries*; Ambrose, *Triumph of a Politician*, 320; Haldeman Press Conference Analysis, December 8, 1969; Haldeman Notes, December 8, 1969, Folder July-Dec 1969 Part II [Oct-Dec 1969], Box 40, Papers of H.R. Haldeman, Staff Member and Office Files, NPP, NACP; “The President’s News Conference of December 8, 1969,” PPP, 1013.
47. *The Austin American*, December 11, 1969.
48. “Remarks at the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame Dinner in New York City,” December 9, 1969, PPP, 1014, 1017–18; *The New York Times*, December 6, 1969.
49. Ziegler to Thorpe, December 15, 1969, Folder [Gen] RE 10 Football 10/1/69–12/31/69, Box 6, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
50. *The Austin American*, January 2, 1970; *San Jose Mercury*, January 4, 1970; Banks, *Royal Story*, 140; Nixon to Royal, January 26, 1970, Folder [EX] RE 10 Football 10/1/69, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.

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51. O'Brien, *No Ordinary Joe*, 84; Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 147; Riley, *Road to Number One*, 449.
52. *The Austin American*, January 2, 1970; *San Jose Mercury*, January 4, 1970; Jimmy Banks, *The Darrell Royal Story*, revised edition (Austin, Texas: Eakin Press, 1994), 140; Nixon to Royal, January 26, 1970, Folder [EX] RE 10 Football 10/1/69, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
53. Riley, *Road to Number One*, 470, 472; *The Dallas Morning News*, January 2, 1972; Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 163, 165–166.
54. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 27, 1994; O'Brien, *No Ordinary Joe*, 95–96; Paterno with Asbell, *By the Book*, 165–166, 229; Nixon to Paterno, February 2, 1970, Folder [EX] RE 10 Football 10/1/69, Recreation-Sports Files, Subject Files, White House Central Files, NPP, NACP.
55. Riley, *Road to Number One*, 505; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 27, 1994; *The Boston Globe*, December 31, 1994.
56. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 11, 1998; O'Brien, *No Ordinary Joe*, 85.
57. *The Denver Post*, November 26, 2004; *The Boston Globe*, May 28, 2004.
58. *USA Today*, December 6, 2004.

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