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## Game-winning drive that resulted in a championship

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PASADENA, Calif. -- The tears came as soon as [Kelvin Benjamin](#) hit the earth. With the final seconds ticking off the clock on Monday, Benjamin faked right, went left and left to grab a pass from [Jameis Winston](#).

He clutched the ball to his chest and in the half-second it took for him to come down, he realized: Florida State was, at that moment, winning a national championship.



"As soon as I hit the ground, tears started dropping out," Benjamin said.

Benjamin's leaping catch in the end zone was a fitting climax to a final drive that finally showcased the explosiveness of Florida State's offense. It was also fitting that FSU's return to the glory days of the 1990s would be accompanied by 1990s-level theatrics.

A roller-coaster game packed a season's worth of highlights into the final five minutes. First, freshman [Levonte Whitfield](#) returned a kickoff 100 yards for a go-ahead score. Then Auburn marched down the field to answer [Tre Mason](#)'s blazing 37-yard touchdown run, leaving just 1:11 on the clock for Florida State to go 80 yards.

The need was for a magical final drive, and FSU delivered. Winston, despite struggling earlier in the night, said he was ready for the moment.

"I wanted to be in that situation because that's what great quarterbacks do," Winston said. "Any quarterback can go out and perform when they're up 50-0 in the second quarter. That's what you're judged by, especially by your teammates."

Auburn's defensive backs worked to take away the deep routes all night, so the Seminoles adjusted to shorter routes. On the first play of the drive Winston found his most consistent target of the season, [Rashad Greene](#), for a short completion. On the next play Winston went back to the junior wideout and Greene responded by breaking a tackle and going 49 yards down the sideline to the Auburn 23.

"My first thought was to score," Greene said. "But I saw the defensive back had an angle on me so I just wanted to get as far as I could and then get out of bounds."

Greene came up big again just a few plays later. On third-and-8 from the Auburn 10, Winston went to Greene in the end zone and drew a pass interference call. That play set up FSU for the decisive score.

AP Photo

**Kelvin Benjamin's catch will go down in FSU lore.**

With FSU closing in on the end zone, Seminole defenders held their breath anxiously. Senior safety [Terrence Brooks](#)

couldn't stand to watch the final seconds.

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"As they got closer I was like, 'I'm just going to listen to the crowd noise,'" Brooks said. "If they scream out loud they've scored. ... I trusted in them. I knew they were going to do their thing, but I couldn't watch."

As the teams trotted out for the next play, first-and-goal from the Auburn 2, Auburn defensive back **Chris Davis** moved over to cover Benjamin and that drew Winston's attention. Davis, at 5-11, was a clear mismatch for Benjamin at 6-foot-5.

"I knew it was a touchdown as soon as I stepped up to the line of scrimmage," Winston said. "Any time you see KB one-on-one, it's a dream come true."

Benjamin said he felt a similar confidence once he saw Davis run over to match up with him.

"They were trying to choose which DB was going to guard me and Davis came out, and I made like I was going to do a fade route and he kind of jumped the fade and we went post," Benjamin said.

Benjamin faked the fade route and then dragged across the end zone. Davis jumped the fade and left Benjamin with just enough of an opening. Winston floated the pass in to Benjamin, who caught it with Davis draped across his back. Touchdown, championship and history, all at the same time. Brooks heard the crowd noise and looked up.

"I looked up in disbelief," Brooks said. "'Oh my God we're about to be national champions.'"



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