

**TEXAS STUDENT MEDIA APPLICATION FORM
MANAGING EDITOR OF THE DAILY TEXAN**

select which terms of office you are willing to serve: June 1, 2019 - August 15, 2019
 August 16, 2019 - December 31, 2019

This application and supporting materials must be submitted to the TSM Business Office (via hard copy to room HSM 3.200 or via PDF emailed to serpas@austin.utexas.edu) by **Monday, April 29, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.**

This position is due to be appointed at the TSM Board meeting scheduled for **Friday, May 3, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.**

Please plan to attend and discuss your application with the Operating Trustees.

Applicant Information

Alex Briseño
Name

rab4743
UT EID

alexbrisen9898@utexas.edu
Email Address

Journalism & RTF
Major

Applicant Attestation / Authorization for Release of Information

1. I am currently enrolled as a UT-Austin student.
2. By the start of my term of office, I will (if an undergraduate) have completed 12 hours at UT-Austin with a GPA of at least 2.0 or (if a graduate student) have completed 9 hours at UT-Austin with a GPA of at least 3.0.
3. I agree to complete and pass a media law and libel test administered by the Editorial Adviser prior to taking position.
4. I have obtained and included signatures from at least five staff members of The Daily Texan supporting my application.
5. By the start of my term of office, I will have completed at least two semesters as a permanent-staff member of The Daily Texan in an area other than opinion.
6. By the start of my term of office, I will have served in a Daily Texan management position with supervisory and design responsibilities (as defined by the Daily Texan Handbook) for at least one semester.

Note: if no qualified applicant has filed by the deadline, the Board shall make an appointment using the Handbook qualifications, each of which shall be waivable by an affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of the voting members present.

I certify that to the best of my ability I have given true and accurate information concerning my scholastic and experience qualifications, and hereby grant permission for the Office of the Director, Texas Student Media, to verify said information. Further, I understand that this information will be provided to the TSM Board of Operating Trustees and will become part of the public record of TSM.

Alex Briseño
Signature of Applicant

4/29/19
Date

Supporting signatures from at least five staff members of The Daily Texan:

Christiana Peck

Conor Gray
Associate Photo Editor

David N. Woodard

Tiana W. Lantz
Lantz Co-editor

Ross Bunch
Sports Editor

Steve Fisher
Associate Sports Editor

Sara Samudu
Audio producer

John Kirby
Audio Editor

Jordyn Zitman
Life + Arts co-editor

Divya Jagadeesh
audio staffer

Brooke Spberg
Life + Arts Associate editor

My experience at The Daily Texan consists of (list positions and dates):

Fall 2018: Co-Editor of the Sports Dept., Football Beat Writer, Co-Editor of Double Coverage, Double Coverage Contributor

Summer 2018: Sports Editor, Football Beat Writer

Spring 2018: Senior Staff, Off-Season Football Beat Writer, Issue Staff Photographer

Fall 2017: Senior Staff, Football Beat Writer, Double Coverage Contributor

Summer 2017: Senior Staff, Off-Season Football

Spring 2017: Senior Staff, Baseball Beat Writer

Fall 2016: Issue Staff, Women's Soccer Beat Writer

It is recommended that you include supporting materials such as:

A résumé

A letter outlining your qualifications, goals, plans for the position

Letters of recommendation

Samples of published work (on 8 1/2" x 11" paper)



Alex Briseño

Contact

Phone: (830) 556-4590

alexbrisen09898@utexas.edu

Social Media

Twitter: @Alexxbrisen0

Instagram: alexbrisen0

Additional Skills

Adobe Illustrator

Adobe Photoshop

Tweet Deck

Interests

Photography

Documentaries

Podcasts

Screenwriting

Work Experience

Sports Illustrated, Spring 2019

Intern

- Will serve as a fact checker while at the Sports Illustrated office and cover events throughout New York City.

The Daily Texan, Fall 2016 - Present

Sports Editor, Double Coverage Editor, Senior

- Reports on the Texas football beat, covering games, previews, features and columns.
- Edits stories and organizes content that goes into the daily issue of The Daily Texan and a weekly college football issue.
- Covered Longhorn baseball in the 2017 season and served as a columnist at the 2018 College World Series in Omaha.
- Reported at the 2018 NFL Draft at AT&T Stadium and interviewed the first round draft picks immediately after getting selected.

Austin American-Statesman, Fall 2018 - Present

Freelancer

- Currently covering local high school games once a week, providing a game recap, box score and statistics.

Dallas Morning News, Spring 2018

Freelancer

- Reported on UIL meetings, state water polo tournament and the UIL 5A and 6A state women's golf tournament

KWED Seguin Daily News

Intern

- Covered news and features for daily newspaper
- Converted print stories to a radio version for morning segments on KWED

Education

University of Texas at Austin, May 2020

B.S. Journalism, Moody College of Communication

B.A. Radio, Television and Film, Moody College of Communication

Involvement: Member of Associated Press Sports Editor campus chapter, University Leadership Network (ULN) scholarship program.

Monday, April 29, 2019

To the members of the Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees:

Intro

My articles haven't always been published at Sports Illustrated, The Daily Texan or Austin American-Statesman. There was a time when my writing reached just one person. In fact, there was a time when I had to write on a piece of wide-ruled paper, put it in an envelope and drop it off at the post office. That letter traveled to a prison in East Texas, where it eventually reached the hands of one person: my father.

That's when my writing, real writing, truly began. My father never allowed me to visit him. I assume it's because he thought I was too young to be exposed to the harsh realities of prison. As a result, the only means of communication was through this monthly letter.

I remember sitting at the dining room table, trying to figure out what I should write. There's not much to say as a 7-year-old. The world seems too big, but nothing seems large enough to mention. I was in little league baseball. I wrote about that. I received a letter from him soon after.

This was the first time I was forced to write with intent. I couldn't afford to waste a single word on something that didn't shed light on the life outside of the walls that separated his world from mine.

It sounds brutally dark, but such was life at the time, and it gave me the mentality that I still apply to my writing today. Forgive me if this seems like a strange way to begin this letter, however, I can confidently say growing up with experiences such as this one have molded me into the writer, editor and leader I am today.

Qualifications

I am currently located in New York City for an internship at Sports Illustrated. To be quite honest, it has been easier than my previous semester at the Texan.

Last fall, I held four positions in the basement: Co-editor of the sports department, football beat writer and contributor and editor for Double Coverage. I left the office, on average, after 1 a.m. However, that wasn't the end of my night. I then went to a 24-hour coffee shop where I caught up on other obligations which consisted of freelancing at the Austin American-Statesman, double majoring in Journalism and Radio, Television and Film along with meeting the requirements to remain in the University Leadership Network scholarship program. It was truly a seven-day work week for five-straight months.

Dating back to the fall of 2016, I've spent five semesters and two summers at the Texan. I primarily worked in the sports department, however, I did spend one semester in the photo department. I have also taken a graphic design course and spent several months observing the designs at Sports Illustrated, so I like to think I'm well-versed when it comes to how a page layout should look.

Lastly, one of the best characteristics I picked up on in my time at Sports Illustrated is not only how to set expectations for a staff, but how to get them to surpass those expectations. That doesn't just magically happen, though. It all starts with forming an open dialogue and a working relationship with your staffers, and that's exactly what I plan to do.

Goals

1. I've had the luxury of picking brains with editors at Sports Illustrated, fellow interns and especially former managing editor, Akshay Mirchandani, who works down the street at Yahoo! Sports here in New York City. We constantly discuss the current landscape of this industry, and one thing he taught me to do is ask a simple question about whichever publication we happen to be at: What are we? In short, *we* are one of the best college newspapers in the country, and we are preparing to transition into the summer session where we start printing once a week. My goal is to figure out how we can operate at the highest level possible under this schedule. The first thing that comes to mind is how we handle our weekly cover story. If we plan this out correctly, the writer with the cover story will have at least 7-10 days to push out a story. However, I would like to encourage writers to take a jab at month-long projects. I understand solid features don't always take that long. The point being I do not want a dry cover story unless it is breaking news or a sensitive topic. I am well aware of the degree of difficulty when it comes to routinely finding compelling stories in the summer, however, with less strenuous deadlines, I am confident we can produce quality content by taking chances with designs and spending more time in the writing and editing process.
2. For me, the past two summers were all about fine tuning my writing and climbing the ladder, and it worked. More than anything, though, I gained the confidence to be on the Texas football beat as a sophomore — the youngest writer on that beat in recent memory. Working here for the past three years has taught me that several editors, contributors and leaders emerge in these next few months. If everything goes as planned, the next managing editor will know exactly who the big contributors in the fall will be.
3. While not printing five times a week relieves some stress on the print side of things, it naturally leads to a decreased number of social media and newsletter opportunities. This is the portion of the letter where I tip my cap to Forrest Milburn, who has really elevated the Texan's social media presence. I would like to sit down and talk with Forrest because I am convinced he is one the most knowledgeable students at UT when it comes to social media analytics and strategies. I like a lot of what we have done on Twitter, Instagram and especially the daily newsletter. From my understanding, these are things that are not broken, so I don't intend on changing what we are doing there. I simply want to maintain the consistent, high quality content that I've seen as of late. We can't afford to let the Twitter account to go MIA for three months, and a lot of it starts with hiring an aggressive social media editor who is familiar with the brand they have built over the course of these last few semesters.

4. My final goal is based on something I've always prided myself on, which is making sure there is good chemistry in the office. I want staffers to be excited about coming to work. We are going to put together good content, have fun and develop young talent all in the same process, it should not feel like work. Part of creating this type of environment is having an open dialogue with the editors from each department regarding what they want to get from this summer. However, I don't want this dialogue to conclude after the first couple of weeks. I'd like for it to continue throughout the summer so everybody feels comfortable enough to discuss any questions or concerns. Anybody who knows me or my type of personality would agree when I say creating this type of culture or chemistry has never been difficult for me.

I apologize if two-and-a-half pages is a bit too much, but it is my hope that you are able to see what I bring to the table through this letter along with my résumé, letters of recommendation and clips.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to apply for *this* position at *this* publication and I would like to thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Robert Alex Briseño
University of Texas at Austin, Spring 2020

To the Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees,

I'm writing this letter to strongly support and recommend Alex Briseño as the summer 2019 managing editor of The Daily Texan. I worked closely with Alex during my time as managing editor, and I believe he has the skills necessary to be successful in the position.

Alex started at the Texan in the fall of 2016 as a general sports reporter. In the semesters since, he has been consistently promoted through the ranks of the department, reporting on Texas soccer, baseball and football. His reporting always exceeded expectations and set a high standard for the rest of his coworkers. In the last year, he served in every editing position within the department, and in the fall of 2018 he lead it as sports editor. My decision to hire him as sports editor was an easy one. After three semesters of reporting on the most difficult beat, Alex knew better than anyone the intricacies of the department and was respected by the entire staff.

And Alex truly went above and beyond as a department head. He organized all of the Texan's sports coverage, served as one of two reporters on the Texas football beat, was the editor of our weekly eight-page Double Coverage football insert and freelanced for multiple professional outlets. He completed the workload of three staffers every week, seemingly with ease, and was consistently a joy to work with despite the stress of the job. Most importantly, Alex skillfully mentored young reporters and helped create a new foundation for a young department. Alex's willingness to go the extra mile for the benefit of his department and the paper made him irreplaceable.

In the last two years, the Texan has made big strides in terms of content quality and digital strategy and engagement. The Texan's next managing editor needs to have a proven ability to continue our success in these areas. Alex does. He is an excellent storyteller, and it shows in all of the articles he wrote and edited while on staff. I would trust him to be a good judge of news, sports, and life and arts content as managing editor. More importantly, Alex understands how to effectively engage with the student body. This is shown through his social media presence. As he reported on Texas Football, Alex established himself as a captivating and widely-followed source of information on Texas athletics. Alex knows how to connect with students and has done so before. He would be the best person to oversee our engagement and digital strategy moving forward with the help of other dedicated digital staffers.

What really separates Alex from the crowd, however, is his leadership ability. Alex knows when to sit back and listen to a coworker and when to step in and make a

decision himself. He understands the importance of mentoring young staffers and consistently leads by example. The sports staff respected and rallied around Alex when he was editor, and the rest of the staff enjoyed working with him as well. One of the most important and difficult aspects of being the managing editor is bringing people together. The right candidate has to unite a group of over 300 students and get them to work together. Alex would have no problem doing so. The staff likes and respects him, and I know he would be sure to make each staffer feel valued and appreciated.

Above all else, Alex inspires those around him to do better. He holds himself to a high standard, and I believe the Texan's staff would respond accordingly under his leadership. His dedication to our paper is unmatched. Speaking from experience, Alex has what it takes to get this job done. If you have any questions about Alex or his qualifications, please feel free to contact me. I'd be happy to speak further on his behalf.

Sincerely,

Ellie Breed
Special Projects Editor
Managing Editor, January - December 2019
(512) 750-8147

To the members of the Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees:

I write this letter to strongly recommend Alex Briseno as The Daily Texan's managing editor for the summer 2019 semester. Having worked with Alex during my tenure as managing editor two years ago, I have no doubts about his qualifications and ability to lead the paper moving forward.

I met Alex during my senior year when I was managing editor in the spring 2017 semester. It was his freshman year and he was trying to make a name for himself on the Texan's sports staff — one of the most competitive departments at the paper. Alex was already a senior reporter covering the baseball team, and was tasked with working the sports desk one night a week. I was impressed with his résumé at a young age, but I was also taken with how he carried himself in the office and earned the respect of his peers and colleagues, including myself.

I graduated after that semester, but I didn't stop following Alex's career. In the two years since he's become one of the youngest Texas football beat writers the Texan has ever seen and held the distinction of being the sports editor and Double Coverage editor at the same time. That's no easy feat while also balancing academics and a personal life. Alex was able to consistently put out quality work while leading a staff in one of the paper's most important roles.

Alex's hard work earned him an internship with Sports Illustrated in New York City this semester. He and I kept in touch through the years, but our paths have crossed again with myself working at Yahoo! Sports in New York. Alex has lofty ambitions, and now has the distinction of working in a professional newsroom in a major city. I was also a Sports Illustrated intern the semester my managing editor tenure, and I can attest that it prepared me the challenge of leading the Texan. I learned the ins and outs of a professional news organization, both print and digital, and got advice from some of the best editors in the business. Alex has that same luxury, and I believe you will see it in the Texan newsroom this summer.

The Texan's summer editions present its own challenges — it's a smaller staff, it's not daily and story ideas are hard to come by. But Alex's prior Texan experiences and beyond have him more than ready to deal with these hurdles and put out an excellent product. Alex loves the Texan, and cares about its staff and its future. If you have any questions about Alex, please contact me. I'm more than happy to speak further on his behalf.

Sincerely,

Akshay Mirchandani
Managing editor, Spring 2017

THE DAILY TEXAN

Serving the University of Texas at Austin community since 1900

Watson's last ride: Texas' graduate transfer continues to write comeback story

Published on September 14, 2018 at 12:06 am Last update on October 15, 2018 at 2:19 pm
BY [ALEX BRISEÑO](#)

Texas running back Tre Watson knew he wanted to return for one final year of college football. He just needed to relearn how to walk first.

It all happened before Watson arrived on the 40 Acres as a graduate transfer. Last year, he entered his senior campaign at Cal-Berkeley. He was placed on award watch lists for the nation's best running back, and with three years of college experience under his belt, he was ready for his best year yet.

Then, in the second game of the 2017 season, Watson took a hit to his right knee.

"I hopped off the field," Watson said. "But adrenaline took over and I was like, 'I'm good.' They checked it out and it was pretty sturdy. I was telling my coach, 'Put me in. I'm good.' I go in, I am setting up the safety and as soon as I plant, it just gives."

It was his ACL and MCL — both were torn. His senior season was over.

However, Watson was still eligible for one more season as a graduate. All he needed to do was get into graduate school. There was one issue, though: Watson said he was unable to get into any of the graduate programs at Cal. In January, Watson announced his intention to transfer as a graduate student and opened up his recruitment.

Unable to benefit from the luxury of rehabbing at a university after undergoing surgery, Watson headed back to his hometown of Corona, California — a city nearly 50 miles southeast of Los Angeles — for physical therapy.

“It was tough in the beginning,” Watson said. “The whole process of an ACL injury, coming back, learning how to walk again — that started out pretty tough, but once you get past that point, things start clicking for you.”

Watson continued to train with the same person he’s gone to since he was in high school: Eliseo Cabildo at Winner Circle Athletics in Corona. Eliseo said Watson never missed a day and exhibited an incredible work ethic. But he still suffered from a torn ACL and MCL, and needed time to recover from surgery.

“It’s a pretty significant injury,” Cabildo said. “Getting range of motion back in that knee is one of the hardest things and also being able to trust that your knee will hold up through training and also through any physical movement. It’s a very mentally challenging injury as well.”

After months of therapy and college visits, Watson announced he was taking his talents to Texas just one week before he graduated with a degree in sociology. It didn’t take long for Texas fans to get a feel for the confidence Watson exudes.

In May, he told *The Athletic*, “I think I’m the best (running back) in the country. I just need the opportunity to show it.

Texas gave him a shot, now he has the opportunity to “show it,” and he is so far. Not even a year after his injury, Watson reported to preseason camp and checked out as the starting running back. And he is leading in more ways than one.

“When he makes a mistake he owns up to it, and but he’s really, really energetic and is very positive with his new teammates,” Herman said. “They really like being around him.”

Watson hasn't had much time to develop much chemistry with the guys on the roster, but it appears his teammates are already fully aware of his personality and the level of his confidence.

"That's him. He's just loud," senior tight end Andrew Beck said. "He's a very outgoing young man. You never really have to worry about what he's thinking because he'll tell you."

As for Watson's opportunity, he'll get that on Saturday against a familiar foe. Growing up in Southern California, Watson was like most kids, watching the USC Trojans.

"As a little kid I was a USC fan," Watson said. "I wore 5 because Reggie Bush was my favorite college football player."

Tre said he was rooting for USC in the 2006 Rose Bowl, but that he's experienced a change of heart these past few years. In his four seasons at Cal, Watson's Golden Bears went 0-4 against USC. Now, his opportunities at beating USC have dwindled down to one last shot: Saturday night.

"It's personal, man," Watson said. "I'm from Southern California, so USC is something that I need."

Watson said he stays in contact with USC cornerback Olajjah Griffin, who he trained with in Corona, according to Cabildo. When asked if they are talking this week, Watson jokingly replied, "It's done now."

Watson has come a long way from rehabbing in Corona and an even longer way from cheering on USC in the 2006 national title. Now, the 22-year-old is claiming the starting running back title for one of the biggest games of the season. And he isn't taking it for granted.

"I can't wait to run up this tunnel," Watson said. "I came here for the spring game and saw the amount of fans that were there. That was like the home games that we have at my other school. Just seeing that, and knowing we're playing a home game here, I can't wait. This is going to be a blessing to experience this."

THE DAILY TEXAN

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'We're baaaack': Hometown kid brings prominence back to Austin

Published on January 2, 2019 at 9:37 pm Last update on January 21, 2019 at 8:12 pm

BY [ALEX BRISEÑO](#)

NEW ORLEANS — Immediately after losing the Big 12 Championship to Oklahoma on Dec. 1, a dejected Sam Ehlinger stood in front of the media and made a simple, yet bold, announcement.

“I will make it my mission to never let this team or this school feel this disappointment again.”

Growing up a lifelong Texas fan in Austin, the hometown quarterback struggled with the idea of not only losing to Oklahoma, but falling one game short of Texas’ first Big 12 Championship since 2009. His statement wasn’t as dramatic as Tim Tebow’s spiel was in 2008, but it hit home for Longhorn fans who have begged for somebody like Ehlinger to restore national relevance to the program.

One month later, Tom Herman, the fan base and even Ehlinger knew they would have to play a near-perfect game to pull off an upset over an SEC powerhouse in No. 5 Georgia.

Some called it heroics, others called it just another day at the office. The Sugar Bowl MVP simply called it a “little magic,” and it all started hours before kickoff, when the team arrived at the Superdome. Players hopped off the bus wearing their usual game day attire: khaki pants, a white button down with a burnt orange tie and a black blazer — everybody except Ehlinger.

The Austin native and Westlake High School alumnus arrived at the home of the New Orleans Saints sporting a white Drew Brees high school jersey with the number 15 and ‘Chaps’ embroidered across his chest.

“Coming into the Superdome, I had to respect Drew because of all the amazing things he’s done in this building,” Ehlinger said. “And I wanted to play like him and have a little magic.”

The majority of that “magic” didn’t come through the air, though. It came on the ground, and the Longhorns weren’t even trying to disguise it. With two rushing touchdowns to Ehlinger’s name and a 20-7 lead, the Longhorns lined up on the one-yard line for a 1st and goal. There was no doubt who was getting the ball.

After getting ruled short on Ehlinger’s first rushing attempt, the offense lined back up and tried to push it in, but the Georgia defense stuffed Ehlinger short of the goal line on second down and then again on third.

Neither Herman nor offensive coordinator Tim Beck flinched with the 4th and goal looming. They knew who they wanted to give the ball to, and the fourth time was the charm as Ehlinger narrowly got the ball to the goal line.

“Sam is a baller. He’s a dog,” junior wide receiver Lil’ Jordan Humphrey said. “He’s going to run people over, take some hits, throw the ball. He’s going to do everything for us.”

One two-point conversion later and Texas’ 28 points proved to be just enough in a 28-21 upset over Georgia. But Ehlinger wasn’t done for the night. He still had to deliver the line of the night.

After Texas hoisted the Sugar Bowl Trophy, Ehlinger was announced as the Sugar Bowl MVP for going 19-27 for 169 yards along with 64 rushing yards and three touchdowns.

The quarterback walked onto the stage and, similar to Vince Young’s 2004 statement at the end of the Rose Bowl, said without any hesitation, “Longhorn nation, we’re baaack.”

Herman’s smile said it all. He was later asked if his heart dropped after Ehlinger poked fun at the now infamous line. Herman quickly said, “Yes. I’ll never know what that means, ‘Is Texas back?’ I’m never going to comment on that. It could mean a lot of different things and so I’ll

never comment on that. I know we're headed in the right direction. I don't ever want to give any kind of finality to where we're at because we are always making progress.”

Ehlinger immediately ran over to his mother, Jena Ehlinger, who was standing in the front row where she watched her oldest son lead his team to a Sugar Bowl victory. Despite having thousands of eyes focused on him, Ehlinger shared an intimate moment with his mother, wiping tears away as he headed back to the tunnel with his trophy.

Sam didn't know it, but as he swapped his jersey for the Drew Brees threads for the postgame press conference, the clip of his declaration went viral.

“When he said that, I was like ‘Keep saying it,’” defensive end Charles Omenihu said. “That's the confidence this man exudes to the offense and to the whole team. ... It's really been transcending and inspiring to everybody on this whole team and the whole University.”

Tuesday night was the finale for seniors like Omenihu, and it might be the final chapter for Humphrey, who said he will talk to his family before deciding to declare for the NFL Draft or stay at Texas for his senior year.

As for the state of the program, the Longhorns are now 2–0 in bowl games during the Herman era, 17–10 overall and 10–4 in the 2018 season.

The question, ‘Is Texas back?’ will have eight months to marinate in the minds of both Texas and college football fans. For now, with the futures of several juniors pending, one of the only certainties seems to be Sam Ehlinger playing quarterback for his hometown team, doing what he does best: wearing his emotions on his sleeve as he leads the effort to bring Texas back.

THE DAILY TEXAN

Serving the University of Texas at Austin community since 1900

Big Dicker Energy: True freshman drills game-winner

Published on October 6, 2018 at 8:48 pm Last update on October 7, 2018 at 9:25 pm

BY [ALEX BRISEÑO](#)

The third quarter of the highly anticipated Red River Rivalry had just concluded, but the crimson half of the Cotton Bowl had already decided they had seen enough.

The Longhorn faithful erupted while the Oklahoma side headed for the exits once Texas gained a firm grip on the game with a 21-point lead. This wasn't how the game was supposed to unfold.

After a week of buildup predicting a close matchup, the annual shootout wasn't so after three quarters. Freshman kicker Cameron Dicker, who knew he might have to kick in a high risk, high reward situation, simply ran onto the field to add extra points after Texas continued to score in what slowly became a blowout.

“Once we went up three touchdowns, I was like, ‘Oh, OK. We’ll be good,’” Dicker said.

Then, the fourth quarter started. Kyler Murray and the Sooner offense cut into the Longhorn lead with a touchdown. Murray followed it up with a 67-yard touchdown run to make it a one-score ballgame before going on a three-play, 57-yard drive to tie it, 45-45, with 2:38 remaining.

“Everybody knew we had plenty of time on the clock,” head coach Tom Herman said. “And we had done a two-minute drill to start every Tuesday practice the past three weeks needing a field goal. Every time, our offense has gone down and put our kicker in a position to kick it, and he’s made it every time.”

The Sooner fans who stuck around erupted while the burnt orange half of the stadium sat in stunned silence. But Tom Herman wasn't worried, and despite all eyes shifting toward the freshman kicker, neither was Dicker.

"When they started coming back, I was like, 'OK, I'll kick the game winner,'" Dicker said. "I knew I was going to, I felt that and I was ready to go."

Quarterback Sam Ehlinger, who threw 24-for-35 with 314 yards along with two passing and three rushing touchdowns, led a nine-play drive into Oklahoma territory as the clock continued ticking.

After driving 52 yards, Texas faced a decision: Go for a touchdown or get in position to set up Dicker the kicker — a true freshman — to kick a field goal and possibly put the Longhorns ahead in the final seconds of the game.

"I have full confidence in him," Ehlinger said. "We had done that situation for the past three weeks at the beginning of practice and he hasn't missed yet."

Texas called a timeout with 14 seconds left in the game, forcing the sellout crowd of 92,300 fans decked in burnt orange and crimson to wait just a few more moments for the biggest play of the game.

Dicker ran onto the field with Ryan Bujcevski, Texas' true freshman punter and snap holder, and true freshman long snapper Justin Mader, all pivotal pieces in the biggest moment of Texas' 2018 season.

As Dicker awaited the snap, the rest of his team looked on from the sideline. Some linked arms, others prayed and a few even decided they couldn't bear to look for themselves.

"I was sitting next to (Texas safety, Class of 2017) DeShon Elliott, and I ask, 'How do you want to approach this?'" senior defensive end Breckyn Hager said. "He (DeShon) said, 'I don't know bro.'" I said, 'Let's look up.' So we're looking up. We're not going to watch it. As we're looking

up I was like, ‘God told me we were going to win this game, so why would he miss it?’ That’s when I was like, ‘Oh wait, he went to Lake Travis, and I’m from Westlake.’”

Hager’s joke ties back to Dicker’s high school days back at Lake Travis, the archrival of Westlake High, where Sam Ehlinger and Breckyn Hager attended school. While all three Longhorns are Austin natives, the Lake Travis-Westlake rivalry is commonly regarded as the biggest in the state.

With high school rivalries and cheesy jokes aside, Ehlinger looked on from the sideline, Hager looked up and Mader delivered a perfect snap to Bujcevski, who placed the ball for Dicker.

It was a no-doubter. Dicker nailed the 40-yard field goal to give the Longhorns a 48-45 lead with nine seconds left in the game.

“It felt good right when it left my foot, and looking up, it was going through. I don't even think I watched it go all the way through. I just turned around and went to Ryan (Bujcevski), our holder, and celebrated with him.”

Soon after the kick, the clock hit triple zeros, and the Longhorns received the Golden Hat from Governor Greg Abbott. Herman and Texas’ student section embraced Dicker after he made the biggest kick of his career.

“We’ve always had confidence in our kicker,” Herman said. “I know he missed two of his last three heading into this game, but I don’t know that there’s a kicker on this planet that hasn’t missed, but he corrected the technical mistakes that he made ... Our confidence in our kicker is sky high right now.”

Dicker’s game-winning kick improves the Longhorns’ record to 5–1, with signature wins over three ranked opponents in the last four weeks. Dicker’s kick also helps Texas jump to the top of the Big 12 standings and, for what it’s worth, also earned him respect from Hager, a Westlake alumnus and Texas defensive end.

“Now I can finally say, Lake Travis, y’all are alright.”

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Despite loss, quarterback situation appears to be settled

Published on October 14, 2017 at 10:37 pm Last update on October 16, 2017 at 12:12 am

BY [ALEX BRISEÑO](#)

The burnt orange half of the Cotton Bowl sat nervously in the final stages of the fourth quarter, but it wasn't because of Texas' 29-24 deficit.

The Longhorn faithful watched as freshman quarterback Sam Ehlinger was assisted off the field after a hard hit violently bounced his head off the ground.

"I wasn't ever confused at all," Ehlinger said. "It was a hard hit. My head hit the ground pretty hard. And they were taking precaution. I told them immediately I could go back in. I felt fine."

In the meantime, sophomore quarterback and former starter Shane Buechele took off his headset, buckled his helmet and took the reins of the Longhorn offense — temporarily.

With Texas trailing No. 12 Oklahoma, 29-24, and just over 5:00 remaining in the game, Buechele strung together a pair of completions and an eight-yard rush to put Texas 31 yards away from giving his team the lead while Ehlinger attempted to watch from the trainer's tent on the sideline.

"There's actually a little sliver at the top and they were getting mad at me because I was trying to watch what was going on," Ehlinger said. "I'm trying to get back in the game, obviously, but I'm trying to see which side is cheering ... They made me count backwards from 100 by 7. With everything going on and the crowd I was like, 'I'm good, 93, c'mon.'"

With the Longhorns setup with a first down on the 31-yard line, the tent collapsed and Ehlinger returned to the sideline. Ehlinger watched on from the sideline as Buechele dropped back, but Buechele didn't have much time before he nearly lost the ball after getting sacked.

Buechele regained possession, and Herman quickly called a timeout. The offense huddled on the field with 2:42 remaining in the ballgame, then the crowd applauded as Ehlinger emerged from the huddle.

Ehlinger didn't lead the team to a touchdown. In fact, he threw the ball out of bounds on fourth down, handing the ball over to Oklahoma.

So it begged the question: Did Herman consider leaving Buechele in the game?

“There was (consideration),” Herman said. “But I think when the guy’s played three-and-a-half quarters and is in the rhythm he’s in, if he’s cleared, you’re going to put him back in the ballgame.”

Ehlinger had one more shot to lead the Longhorns, who once trailed 20-0 in the second quarter, to a miraculous comeback. Although the Longhorns just trailed 29-24, with the ball placed at their own four yard line and only 49 seconds remaining, it proved to be insurmountable.

But Ehlinger shouldn't receive any of the blame. He is just the third true freshman to start at quarterback in the Red River Showdown. At the conclusion of the game, he owned the true freshman record with 278 passing yards.

Even in the loss, it sure seems like Tom Herman has now come close to announcing his outright starter. When asked if he anticipated sticking with Ehlinger, he said, “I would think so at this point.”

Ehlinger finished with 278 yards through the air, 106 on the ground and two touchdowns. And Herman said he’s seen what he needs to see from Ehlinger — not just on Saturday, but several contests ago.

“Oh, he showed me all he needed to show me in Los Angeles,” Herman said. “He’s a tough dude. He doesn’t get rattled. He’s competitive as all get out ... I’ve seen everything I need to see from Sam Ehlinger.”

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True Texan: Heard remains loyal despite rollercoaster career

Published on November 15, 2018 at 11:39 pm Last update on November 15, 2018 at 11:41 pm
BY [ALEX BRISEÑO](#)

When Jerrod Heard is honored during Texas' Senior Night this Saturday, he'll likely receive a standing ovation. But it won't just be for what he's done in his Longhorn career. It'll be for what he didn't do: leave.

The fifth-year senior arrived in Austin in 2014. Some called him Jerrod and others called him "The Juice," but everybody called him the future of Texas football after one performance against Cal in 2015.

After facing a 21-point deficit, Heard led a vicious comeback, capped off by a 45-yard run with just over a minute left in the ball game. Heard's touchdown pulled the Longhorns within one, 45-44. All Texas' kicker Nick Rose had to do was send the extra point through the uprights and Heard would have the opportunity to polish off his comeback in overtime.

The kick sailed wide right.

"I didn't even watch," Heard said. "I just heard the crowd."

The miss cemented a 45-44 loss, but not before Heard recorded 364 yards in the air and 163 on the ground — enough to break the school record for total yards, a record once held by a player by the name of Vince Young. It was clear the future belonged to Heard.

"I was just sitting there like, 'Wow, that's a cool feat to have,' but also I wanted to win the game," Heard said.

That's all Heard has ever wanted to do at Texas. And while he didn't realize it, that September night in 2015 was Heard's peak at quarterback. He was eventually demoted to backup. Then, a shoulder injury all but ended Heard's quarterback career at Texas.

Some said he could transfer while others said he should.

"The easy way out is to just up and leave," Heard said.

Instead, he left the quarterback position and tried his luck at wide receiver. The move saw approval from coaches and his parents, and he did it the same way he does everything else he's done in his time at Texas: with a smile on his face.

"I don't think he has the type of ability to frown," offensive lineman Patrick Vahe said. "That guy is always smiling, it's weird. I just gave up. I said, 'This guy is always going to be happy regardless of anything so I'll just leave him alone.' I try not to bring his day down. If Jerrod wants to be Jerrod, he can be Jerrod."

While Jerrod's never-wavering smile made it appear as if he was getting the majority of the reps in practice, he was still stuck under Lil' Jordan Humphrey on the depth chart and stayed there for the majority of this season.

But Heard finally got an opportunity. During practice last Wednesday, wide receiver Collin Johnson went down with a knee injury, freeing up just enough space on the depth chart for Heard. However, the game plan wasn't as easy as plugging in Heard for Johnson.

"We said 'LJ, you're going to go to X (receiver), Jerrod you're going to go and be the starting H (receiver). Oh, but by the way there's going to be some plays where we're still going to want LJ at H, so you're going to go to X on those plays,'" Herman said. "'And you're going to have to learn those plays,' and he did all of that within about 48 hours."

And he cashed in on his opportunity. The Juice studied the play book for the rest of the week before hauling in six receptions for 54 yards, including an 11-yard grab during Texas' game-winning drive.

"I was happy for him and his performance," defensive end Charles Omenihu said. "He showed up when his number was called, as a senior ... I'm glad he got the opportunity to shine."

Heard's opportunities to perform in front of his home crowd have now dwindled down to just one. He says he plans on training for a chance to play in the NFL. And while the former starting quarterback-turned-backup-quarterback-turned-wide-receiver's career is officially coming to an end, the legacy he is hoping to leave remains the same.

"I just wanted to win games for the University of Texas," Heard said. "That's basically it. There is nothing else. That's all I really wanted for UT. I wanted a championship, and I still believe that can happen. But the whole thing I just want to leave is I just wanted to win and I'm a competitor, regardless of what I'm doing."

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Johnson embraces junior college journey

Published on November 9, 2017 at 10:35 pm Last update on November 10, 2017 at 11:10 am
BY [ALEX BRISEÑO](#)

It all started with one email.

Junior linebacker Gary Johnson hasn't always worn a burnt orange jersey with 'Texas' embroidered across his chest. He hasn't even always been a part of Division I football, either.

Johnson's college career started when his high school coach in Alabama sent a mass email to several junior college head coaches across the country back in 2015.

The email left Douglas High School and traveled 965 miles straight to Dodge City Community College. It didn't take long — in fact, all it took was a mere glimpse — for head coach Gary Thomas to know Johnson had something.

“Obviously you could watch about the first five plays of the film and figure out he was a little different,” Thomas said. “We called him. I think he had a few people in the mix that day, but we ended up signing him.”

Dodge City, Kansas

And just like that, Johnson's career began — in Dodge City, Kansas, population of 27,453. The transition from high school to community college isn't always easy, but Johnson said he knew what he had to do.

“It was a pretty hard step coming from high school to junior college,” Johnson said. “But it made me mature fast enough to know that I had to do what I had to do and get to the next level and that's what I did.”

Johnson spent the next two years trying to get to the next level as he started at linebacker for the Dodge City Conquistadors. Thomas said both his linebacker and team saw success.

In Johnson's two seasons in Kansas, Dodge City Community College finished 9–3 and 7–4, respectively. And in addition to the record-breaking seasons, Johnson was named No. 1 Junior College linebacker.

“He’s a tremendous athlete — an athlete that doesn’t come around all that often,” Thomas said. “He’s an incredibly gifted individual from an athletic standpoint and a super charismatic and likable person on and off the field. We had a good experience with him.”

Division I programs across the country took notice and all of a sudden, Johnson no longer needed coaches to email video clips of his performances. It even caught the attention of one program in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

From crimson to burnt orange

Johnson's success eventually caught the attention of Nick Saban and the Alabama Crimson Tide. Johnson committed with plans on returning to play football in the south. Thomas said Saban would call and FaceTime Johnson to check up on Alabama's commit's status to make sure there were no bumps along the way.

“He was committed to Alabama for probably six months, if not more than that,” Thomas said. “There was a lot of schools that stayed in pursuit of him in case he didn’t make it there or something happened.”

And something did happen. Johnson was forced to reopen recruitment after decommitting from Nick Saban and the Crimson Tide due to academic requirements which prevented the linebacker from playing for any team in the SEC.

“When it got down to crunch time after he decommitted from Alabama, him and me had a pretty long conversation one night,” Thomas said. “He called me, it might have been the night before

signing day. He was on the fence about what he wanted to do so we talked down a list of the pros and cons of all the situations.”

Johnson wasn't a heavily recruited player out of high school, so the recruiting process was a new one. But Johnson wasn't just deciding on what school to commit to. He was also ultimately deciding, where he wanted his last shot at Division I football to be. USC and Ohio State were on the table, but Thomas said it really came down to two schools: Arizona State and Texas.

“Basically, after what happened when I was at Dodge City as far as me having to decommit from Alabama, I had to find a new home,” Johnson said. “It was pretty difficult. Once I set aside the schools I was interested in and took my visits, it was pretty much obvious that Texas was the place for me.”

Johnson's arrival

After two seasons at Dodge City Community College, Johnson finally arrived at Texas to play Division I football for the Longhorns. Senior linebacker and team captain Naashon Hughes briefly talked about Johnson's contributions to the Longhorn defense, but he spent more time telling the story of the first time they met.

Hughes said Johnson walked into one of his classes and quickly brought up his track days at Douglas High School. Hughes tried telling Johnson he had some speed too, but little did Hughes know, Johnson won the Alabama state title in the 100 meter dash with a time of 10.59 seconds – with no blocks.

“I was telling him I can run a little bit. He was like, ‘I run a 10.5 no blocks,’” Hughes said. “I was like, ‘Alright, you've probably got me beat by a little bit’ ... I knew he wasn't lying because then the coaches told me, ‘Yeah, he ran a 10.5 no blocks.’ ... I'm from a track city, I'm a track guy. I was like OK, he's for real about his speed.”

Johnson's speed has impressed his teammates at every level, whether in Dodge City or inside Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium. Now, the junior college transfer has another chance to showcase his speed. This time, it's against Kansas.

Although Johnson doesn't have the same taste in his mouth as his teammates after Texas' heart-wrenching loss to the Jayhawks last year, he still knows what that loss meant as he watched the game unfold in Lawrence, Kansas.

"I pretty much didn't know what to think," Johnson said. "Things happen. I just couldn't wait to get there and help win next year."

The junior will put on a burnt orange uniform for just the tenth time as Texas prepares to take on Kansas at 5 p.m. on Saturday in an attempt to not only avenge last year's loss but also bring Texas one game closer to bowl eligibility.

As for Dodge City Community College, the 4-6 Conquistadors are set to host Hutchinson Community College at 1 p.m. Head coach Gary Thomas and his squad won't finish with a 9-3 or 7-4 record like they did while Johnson was there, but Thomas still recognizes that those two years in Dodge City, Kansas were good for the both of them.

"We won a lot of football games while he was here," Thomas said. "We won 16 games in the two years he was here. That was the most out of anybody in the conference at the time and the most wins this school has ever had in a two-year span. It definitely worked out well for us and it worked out for him as well."