

AP Pick 6: BCS Projections And Predictions

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
AP College Football Writer

This season, the B might as well stand for buh-bye. The BCS is going away for good after January, and for the most part any tears shed by college football fans about its pending extinction are filled with joy.

That's not totally fair, of course. The BCS was a step in the right direction. It was darn good to the Southeastern Conference, tended to work out well for Oklahoma and wasn't all bad for Boise State.

Come 2014 it will be out with the Bowl Championship Series, in with the College Football Playoff and all will be perfect with the post-season. Right? Maybe.

Anyway, before we can start griping about the new system, we have one last season of griping about the old one. Here's one educated guess at how the last BCS will play out.

1. Rose Bowl — Ohio State (Big Ten champ) vs. Oregon (at-large). The Buckeyes and Ducks have national championship aspirations, and if we fast-forward to next season maybe both would be in the semifinals with a chance to win a title. This season, they'll have to settle for a rematch of the 2010 Rose Bowl, won by Ohio State.

2. Sugar Bowl — South Carolina (at-large) vs. Louisville (American champ). The team that loses the SEC championship game usually gets sent to a non-BCS game — Hello, Orlando! — but the Gamecocks will be the exception thanks to some impressive nonconference victories and the desire to put Jadeveon Clowney's likely last college game on a big stage. Teddy Bridgewater and the Cardinals make a return trip to New Orleans looking to make it two straight against SEC powerhouses after beating Florida in the Sugar Bowl last season.

3. Fiesta Bowl — Oklahoma (Big 12 champ) vs. Boise State (at-large automatic qualifier). Seems only fitting Boise State gets into the final BCS. In many ways, the Broncos have been the poster children for everything that's wrong with a system that too often did not reward the best teams. On the other hand, without the BCS Boise State might never have gotten the opportunity to become America's most polarizing college football team. A rematch of that unforgettable 2007 Fiesta Bowl against the Sooners awaits

the Broncos. Oklahoma fans will relish the chance for pay-back.

4. Orange Bowl — Florida State (ACC champ) vs. Wisconsin (at-large). The Seminoles make it back-to-back ACC titles and earn a return trip to the Orange Bowl behind redshirt freshman quarterback Jameis Winston. The Badgers make it four straight BCS appearances, though this time it's a trip to south Florida instead of southern California as new coach Gary Andersen proves to be a more than capable successor to Bret Bielema.

5. BCS National Championship — Alabama (SEC champ) vs. Stanford (Pac-12 champ). It's time to stop being surprised by the Stanford Cardinal. This is what they are now. A legit college football powerhouse, with an emphasis on power. Coach David Shaw's team will get the next shot at stopping Alabama and snapping the SEC's streak of seven straight BCS titles.

6) And the winner is roll three-peat! Nick Saban's Crimson Tide, behind AJ McCarron, T.J. Yeldon, C.J. Mosley and an array of other NFL prospects with full first names, wins Alabama's fourth championship in the last five seasons. And unlike the previous two, the Tide goes undefeated.

EXTRA POINTS

Six more predictions — Ohio State beats Michigan in the Big Ten title game, avenging the Wolverines' victory a week earlier in Ann Arbor.

— Stanford beats Southern California in the Pac-12 title game, avenging its only loss of the regular season to advance to the BCS championship game.

— Florida State beats Miami in the ACC title game, avenging a regular season loss that keeps the Seminoles from playing for a national title.

— Boise State beats Fresno State in the Mountain West title game, avenging its only regular season loss (notice a pattern) and earning a top-12 final BCS ranking and automatic BCS bid, despite not being unbeaten.

— Louisville proves to be the class of the American, but not a national title contender, losing twice in the regular season.

— Oklahoma wins a four-way tiebreaker for the Big 12 title, with Texas, Oklahoma State, TCU and the Sooners all finishing 7-2.

Sharp: The Outgoing BCS May Be Hated, But It Sort Of Worked

BY DREW SHARP
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(MCT) The start of a new college football season this week also symbolizes the end of one of the sport's more polarizing forces.

The BCS begins its farewell tour.

If this were a retiring head coach making the rounds for one final season, he would be showered with parting gifts like a rocking chair or a personalized golf cart. The BCS will get a personalized hearse, GPS equipped with the fastest route to the nearest cemetery.

I'll miss the BCS. I liked it. Always did. It wasn't a flawless method for determining the most deserving candidates for the national championship. But perfection was never its intention.

The BCS succeeded. Since its inception in 1998, college football revenue and popularity exploded. And it was all because the BCS planted the seed that an inherently regional sport could embrace the concept of a single team standing alone atop the mountain after the season's final bowl game.

The BCS lit the path that appreciatively pushed college football beyond its self-imposed borders of conference championships.

But that won't stop its legions of critics from joyously counting down the days until it takes its last breath in Pasadena on the evening of Jan. 6, 2014 — and then spitting on its grave afterward. In their minds, the BCS embodied corruption, contempt and greed. It was a wicked cabal of a few conference commissioners whose only goal was monopolizing power and proceeds while squeezing out the little guy who requested only an occasional crumb.

Yeah, maybe, but it made college football more fun, didn't it?

College football remains the only major sport that thrives on conjecture. Debates rage and tempers flare over preseason polls and recruiting-class rankings.



KIRTHMON F. DOZIER/DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT
Michigan State defenders rush Nebraska quarterback Taylor Martinez, right, during fourth-quarter action on Saturday, November 3, 2012, at Spartan Stadium in East Lansing, Michigan. While the outcomes of BCS title games have favored the SEC, the Big Ten has had its chances.

There's a subjective tone to the sport that remains its most enduring charm. It's why college football fans are more passionate than their professional football counterparts.

Why must there always be a nice, tidy solution in sports? There's always room for an argument in college football. The BCS provided plenty of bickering.

And how is that a bad thing?

One of the BCS's greatest accomplishments was its clarification of college football's regional imbalance. Eons ago, when it was all about the Big Ten and the Rose Bowl, the SEC and the Sugar Bowl, and the Big Eight and the Orange Bowl, every conference contentedly ex-

isted in its own little world.

But the BCS dramatically underscored an already acknowledged national population shift from the Midwest to the Sun Belt over the previous 20 years. According to a 2012 NFL study on the concentration of home-grown draft picks in 2003-12, nine of the top 10 NFL-player-producing states were in the Sun Belt.

The one exception was Ohio.

It's not a coincidence that each of the 15 BCS championships was composed predominantly of players from those 10 states — California, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Louisiana, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama.

One of the motivations for

killling off the BCS was to somehow create a more equitable process through an actual playoff. Perhaps the most annoying anti-BCS whine was that the system was unfairly skewed toward the SEC. (I'm not sure if you've heard this before, but the SEC has taken the last seven BCS crowns and nine of the 15.)

Above all else, BCS succeeded in opening our eyes to the reality that there is no equality in college football at its highest level. And no playoff configuration of four, eight or 16 teams will balance those scales.

Maybe, after 16 years, the BCS's time has rightfully passed. But it's nonetheless entitled to a proper eulogy.

Hageman

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shape-up-or-ship-out warning, becoming more serious about studying and developing into a monster in the weight room. Hageman, too, has been active in community service, using his story of overcoming adversity to encourage city youth.

"I think he's in as good of shape and as focused as I've seen him since I've been here," Kill said. "So I think he understands how important it is and what kind of success we can have."

How about a double-digit sack total?

"I'm just trying to do what I can to help the team, obviously, but my personal goal, really, I think I could sleep better knowing I had 10-plus," Hageman said. "I know it's a big number, but the sky's the limit."

There's no limit to deadpan one-liners, either, from this soft-spoken guy playing

with the pride of being the rare Minneapolis public school alumnus to star for the Gophers in the modern era.

"I'm not going to lie: I've spent a couple of days at Mesa Pizza," he said, referring to the popular late-night snack spot a few blocks from the football facility during a discussion about his weight, which is 50 pounds more than when he first came to campus.

"Getting too big and eating too much was a good thing. I feel like d-tackle chose me," Hageman said.

As for defensive tackle Cameron Botticelli, Hageman has declared his fellow senior starter "the brains of the operation." Hageman, naturally, is the strength.

"He does his job. He never messes up. He definitely helps me on the field when I get too tired or I don't know any of the plays, even though I'm supposed to," Hageman said, quietly adding: "Don't tell coach."

Kill won't mind, if Hageman keeps up his progress this fall.

AP Pick 6: Ways To Win The Heisman

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
AP College Football Writer

To win the Heisman Trophy, a player needs the right combination of numbers and narrative, highlight plays and signature victories.

Johnny Manziel's Heisman run last season was fueled by dizzying stats, a brilliant performance in Texas A&M's upset victory against Alabama, complete with a couple of 'did-you-see-that?' plays, and the fact that he was trying to become the first freshman to win college football's most prestigious individual award.

Here are six (or so) Heisman contenders and what has to happen for them to win the big bronze statue.

1) Johnny Manziel, QB, Texas A&M. Assuming Johnny Football plays the entire season, he should put up more video-game numbers in a potent offense.

Even so, it'll be hard for him to top last season and anything less won't have the same wow-factor. There is room for improvement in one category: victories. The Aggies went 10-2 in the regular season last year. Make that 13-0 or 12-1, with a Southeastern Conference title and a berth in the BCS championship game, and Manziel could join Archie Griffin as the only two-time Heisman winners.

2) Marqise Lee, WR, USC. Heisman voters are generally not impressed by wide receivers. Only two (Tim Brown in 1987 and Desmond Howard in 1991) have won it. Lee is coming off the most prolific season (118 catches and 1,721 yards) by a receiver in Pac-12 history. It was good enough for a distant fourth in the Heisman voting, despite USC's disappointing fall from preseason No. 1 to 7-6. Far less is expected of the 24th-ranked Trojans this season and Lee will

have a first-year starting quarterback getting him the ball. If Lee has another huge year and USC can reach the Pac-12 title game — and maybe knock off Notre Dame along the way — the story will be how he carried the new QB(s). At the least that makes him a Heisman finalist.

3) Tajh Boyd, QB, Clemson and Aaron Murray, QB, Georgia. Boyd's eighth-ranked Tigers host Murray's fifth-ranked Bulldogs on Saturday to open the season. The winning quarterback in what figures to be a high-scoring game between two of the best offenses in the country likely shoots to the top of the Heisman watch lists. How much does that matter in September? Generally, as Denard Robinson and Geno Smith can attest, not much. Though Georgia's front-loaded schedule (South Carolina on Sept. 7, and LSU on Sept. 28), gives

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NFL Suit

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safety measures that include rules changes designed to eliminate hits to the head and neck, protect defenseless players, and prevent concussed players from playing or practicing until they are fully recovered. Independent neurologists must be consulted before a player with a concussion can return to action.

A separate case involving the NCAA's concussion policies could have a ripple effect on the NFL talks. The NCAA, after lengthy discovery, agreed this month to try to settle the claims, which could involve tens of thousands of student-athletes.

In court papers, plaintiffs' lawyers said they had unearthed damaging internal

emails and other evidence that allegedly show the NCAA failed to adopt a uniform policy on when students should return to play after concussions.

"While the NCAA continues to believe these allegations are inappropriately made against the NCAA, we are willing to consider reasonable settlement options," NCAA spokeswoman Stacey Osburn said in a statement this month.

If Brody allows even a single NFL lawsuit to proceed — such as one from a so-called "gap" player, who played when there was no collective bargaining agreement in place — the NFL could be forced to turn over a similar trove of internal documents about how it handled concussions over the past few decades, as scientific research emerged of a link between concussions and brain injuries.

"I think the NFL, players'

lawyers, and defense lawyers in the NFL litigation should certainly take note of what was uncovered in the NCAA players litigation," said sports lawyer Paul Anderson of Kansas City, Mo., who runs a website devoted to the NFL concussion litigation.

If some see the NCAA case rattling the NFL, Edelman thinks it could cut the other way.

"One of the arguments that I would expect the NFL to make, in defending the concussion lawsuit, is that the players suffered their first or multiple concussions while under the supervision of the NCAA," he said.

Either way, Brody clearly hoped to streamline the complex issues involved when she asked the two sides, however acrimonious, to sit down

together. And Phillips, as a former judge, can suggest to them how he sees the case.

"That could move the parties close to settlement," said Matt Mitten, director of the National Sports Law Institute at Marquette University.

He nonetheless sees the two concussion cases as more different than alike, given that the NFL players were professionals with a negotiated contract, while the NCAA's stated mission is to protect student-athletes.

"The only way it might affect it is perhaps from a PR (public relations) ... standpoint," Mitten said. "If the NCAA settles, the public and others might say to the NFL ... 'Why don't you settle, so that these players have the money to get the medical treatment that they need.'"

Irene-Wakonda Eagles

Football (all home games in Irene)

8/30 @ Menno-Marion (Menno)	10/4 Centerville	7 p.m.
9/6 Alcester-Hudson	10/11 @ Chester Area	7 p.m.
9/20 Parker	10/18 Garretson	7 p.m.
9/27 @ Baltic	10/24 @ Viborg-Hurley (Viborg)	7 p.m.

Volleyball (all home games in Wakonda)

9/3 Freeman	7:30 p.m.	10/8 @ Gayville-Volin	7:30 p.m.
9/5 @ Marion	7:30 p.m.	10/10 @ Gayville-Volin	7:30 p.m.
9/10 Beresford	7:30 p.m.	10/11 Menno	4:30 p.m.
9/12 Bridgewater-Emery	7:30 p.m.	10/12 Chester Classic	TBD
9/17 @ Freeman Academy	7:30 p.m.	10/15 @ Alcester-Hudson	7:30 p.m.
9/19 Bon Homme	7:30 p.m.	10/17 @ Centerville	7:30 p.m.
9/23 Parker	7:30 p.m.	10/22 @ Viborg-Hurley (Hurley)	7:30 p.m.
9/24 @ Baltic	6:15 p.m.	10/25 @ Scotland	6:15 p.m.
9/26 @ Avon	7:30 p.m.	10/28 Canistota	7:30 p.m.
10/3-5 TVC (Alcester)	TBD		

Cross Country

8/30 Beresford Inv.	10 a.m.	9/18 Freeman Inv.	1 p.m.
9/3 Dakota Valley Inv.	4:15 p.m.	9/23 Alcester-Hudson Inv.	4 p.m.
9/6 Don Baker (Vermillion)	4 p.m.	10/22 Parker Inv.	2 p.m.
9/9 Scotland Inv.	4 p.m.	10/4 Lennox Inv.	4 p.m.
9/14 Nike Heartland (SF)	10 a.m.	10/9 TVC/ILW Inv.	3 p.m.

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Football

9/6 Humphrey	6 p.m.	10/4 Stuart	7 p.m.
9/13 Harrington	7 p.m.	10/11 @ Winside	7 p.m.
9/20 @ Bancroft-Rosalie	7 p.m.	10/25 Wausa	7 p.m.
9/27 @ Osmond	7 p.m.		

Volleyball

9/5 Wynot Inv.	5 p.m.	10/10 @ Winside	5 p.m.
9/10 @ Allen	5:30 p.m.	10/12 @ Wisner-Pilger Quad	9 a.m.
9/12 @ Viborg-Hurley (Hurley)	5 p.m.	10/15 Bloomfield	5:30 p.m.
9/17 Harrington	5:30 p.m.	10/17 Wausa	5:30 p.m.
9/26 West Boyd	5 p.m.	10/19 Hartington Tourm.	TBA
9/30-10-1 Ponca Tourm.	5:30 p.m.	10/22 @ Osmond	5:30 p.m.
10/7 @ Randolph	5:30 p.m.	10/28-11/1 Lewis & Clark Conf.	tBA
10/8 @ Walthill Tr.	5 p.m.		

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