

## By the Numbers, 12-3-11

After further review ... conference championship games are great!

Did the BCS get it right? My computer thinks that LSU and Oklahoma State would make a great championship game of evenly matched teams. I can't say that I agree, but the Cowboys definitely have a legitimate complaint. In defense of the BCS, I would note that we have 1-2 in the championship game, 3-4 in the Fiesta Bowl, and a good Rose Bowl game. (No comment on the Orange and Sugar.) In the old days, LSU would have gone to the Sugar as SEC champ and Oklahoma State would have gone to the Orange as Big 12 champ. Who would the Sugar have picked? With no constraints, my guess is that they would have set up in advance that the winner of the Stanford-Notre Dame game would go. Or maybe the ACC champ. I think we're better off with what we've got. An ESPN commentator bemoaned the Michigan-VT game as a sign that all the bowls care about is money. Do you think? That's why we need a system that introduces some objectivity. That said, this would have been a great year for a 4-team playoff (although neither Alabama nor Stanford won their conference *division* which would have created conversation!). A feature of our current system that sometimes gets in the way of good matchups is the conference alignments. It reduces the chaos and forces the bowls to play nicer than they would on their own, but there are times when, for example, a Big 10/SEC matchup is not an especially good idea. And the "fairness" of equal conference representation is possibly the biggest roadblock to a playoff.

In keeping with my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary theme, I looked up the bowl games from 50 years ago. It turns out that 1961 was an unusual year for bowl games. There was an explosion of new, unnecessary bowl games that year, raising the number of big college bowls to 11! The last four games were all on New Year's Day, with the Cotton (won by Texas) and Sugar (won by Alabama), then the Rose (won by Minnesota) and finishing with the Orange (won by LSU). The games, by the way, were played in the Cotton Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Rose Bowl and Orange Bowl, respectively; that is why they are called bowl games, right? The big four were supplemented with standards Liberty Bowl (won by Syracuse), Gator Bowl (won by Penn State), Sun Bowl (won by Villanova!) and Bluebonnet Bowl (won by Kansas, amid rumors that QB John Hadl had already signed a contract with the renegade AFL; he officially signed his contract underneath the goal posts after the game). These eight bowls were supplemented by three new bowl games in 1961. The Aviation Bowl was held in Dayton, Ohio. New Mexico beat Western Michigan 28-12 in a game with as many points as spectators. It was never held again. The Gotham Bowl was won by Baylor. There was supposed to have been a Gotham Bowl in 1960 but they couldn't find two teams willing to play (Army and Notre Dame, among others, were above the crassness of a bowl game; and the Penguin was terrorizing the citizens of Gotham City). There was a 1962 Gotham Bowl, but it was cancelled after that. And, finally, there was the Mercy Bowl in the Coliseum in Los Angeles. This was essentially a fundraiser, a one-shot deal won by Fresno State over Bowling Green. The funds went to Cal Poly – San Luis Obispo, whose team was lost in a plane crash following a game against Bowling Green the previous year. The Tangerine Bowl was still a small college bowl, won by Lamar in 1961. And that was it!

This year we have to get along with only 35 bowl games. By my count, there are three bowl eligible teams that are not playing in a bowl (this doesn't count Miami, which is not playing in hopes of minimizing their upcoming NCAA punishment). We could have had one more game!

I will send out bowl predictions next week.

This week's background features a quarterback who was an unheralded Plebe in 1961, before going on to achieve some fame. In 1963, despite going 0-2 in Dallas (I was at one of the games, a thrilling 32-28 loss to SMU, with several controversial calls and non-calls), he became the second junior to win the Heisman Trophy. (Speaking of SMU, who was the first?) After serving a tour of duty, he returned to Dallas and won two Super Bowls with the Cowboys. He was certainly a star back.

This week's game is the Army-Navy classic. The computer likes Navy to win for the 10<sup>th</sup> year in a row:

Navy over Army by 8

The FCS playoff series has reached the quarterfinals. Here are the predictions, with no home field adjustment:

Sam Houston State over Montana State by 4

Northern Iowa over Montana by 4

Georgia Southern over Maine by 8

North Dakota State over Lehigh by 8

The Division III playoffs have reached the semifinals. The purple monsters are on track for their annual visit to Salem. Wesley pulled off an inconceivable upset of Mary Hardin-Baylor, while the Tommies of St. Thomas advanced to their first-ever semifinal. St. Thomas is the archrival of St. John's (coached by John Gagliardi, for whom the trophy is named, and whose 484 wins is a record). This rivalry and the beauty of Division III athletics is captured in Austin Murphy's excellent book *The Sweet Season: A Sportswriter Rediscovered Football, Family, and a Bit of Faith at Minnesota's St. John's University*.

Wisconsin-Whitewater over St. Thomas by 8

Mount Union over Wesley by 3

1	LSU	99.52
2	Oklahoma St	99.21
3	Alabama	96.24
4	Oklahoma	93.58
5	Stanford	92.72
6	Oregon	92.12
7	Wisconsin	90.17
8	Southern Cal	88.80
9	Boise St	88.70
10	Baylor	88.69
11	Kansas St	88.64
12	Michigan	88.18
13	Arkansas	87.72
14	South Carolina	86.21
15	Georgia	85.61
16	Texas A&M	85.03
17	Houston	84.99
18	Texas	84.77
19	Michigan St	83.92
20	Missouri	83.81
21	Nebraska	83.70
22	Virginia Tech	83.61
23	TCU	83.42
24	Notre Dame	82.52
25	Clemson	81.97
26	Penn State	81.10
27	West Virginia	79.18
28	Iowa St	78.89
29	Southern Miss	78.42
30	Florida St	78.28
31	Tulsa	77.68
32	California	77.22
33	Auburn	77.05
34	Florida	76.86
35	Utah	76.66
36	Arizona St	76.63
37	Cincinnati	76.56
38	Washington	76.13
39	Iowa	75.88
40	Vanderbilt	75.79
41	Mississippi St	75.76
42	Toledo	75.64
43	Georgia Tech	75.63
44	Brigham Young	75.40
45	North Carolina	75.21



46	Ohio State	75.11
47	Arkansas St	74.93
48	Tennessee	74.17
49	Northern Illinois	74.04
50	Miami FL	73.93
51	Louisiana Tech	73.91
52	Texas Tech	73.90
53	Illinois	73.54
54	Rutgers	73.44
55	San Diego St	72.97
56	UCLA	72.94
57	Pittsburgh	72.71
58	Virginia	72.42
59	Louisville	72.34
60	Nevada	71.55
61	Temple	71.39
62	Northern Iowa	71.32
63	North Dakota St	71.07
64	Arizona	70.90
65	North Carolina St	70.60
66	Northwestern	70.14
67	Georgia Southern	70.13
68	South Florida	69.89
69	SMU	69.83
70	Wyoming	69.79
71	Air Force	69.74
72	Purdue	69.44
73	Wake Forest	69.20
74	Utah St	69.15
75	Sam Houston St	68.97
76	Kentucky	67.98
77	Western Michigan	67.96
78	Ohio U.	67.90
79	Montana	67.17
80	Louisiana-Lafayette	67.12
81	Oregon St	66.86
82	Florida Int'l	66.83
83	Washington St	66.74
84	Connecticut	66.26
85	Navy	66.18
86	Syracuse	66.14
87	Marshall	66.10
88	Western Kentucky	65.85
89	Montana St	65.52
90	Minnesota	64.74



91	Kansas	64.73
92	Boston College	64.44
93	Central Florida	64.04
94	Wofford	63.42
95	Ball St	63.35
96	San José St	63.32
97	East Carolina	63.30
98	Mississippi	62.93
99	Hawai`i	62.73
100	Colorado	62.50
101	Lehigh	62.45
102	Rice	62.43
103	North Texas	62.35
104	Maine	62.32
105	UTEP	61.94
106	Towson	61.70
107	Bowling Green	61.52
108	Fresno St	61.39
109	Kent St	61.14
110	Maryland	60.97
111	Duke	60.97
112	Miami OH	60.91
113	Harvard	60.75
114	Eastern Michigan	60.66
115	New Hampshire	60.54
116	Appalachian St	60.10
117	Old Dominion	60.01
118	Illinois St	59.78
119	Cal Poly SLO	59.66
120	Indiana St	59.61
121	Louisiana-Monroe	59.20
122	Chattanooga	59.10
123	Central Arkansas	59.02
124	Youngstown St	58.85
125	Southern Utah	58.17
126	James Madison	57.96
127	Army	57.84
128	Furman	57.74
129	Eastern Washington	57.38
130	New Mexico St	56.71
131	Stephen F. Austin	56.27
132	Portland St	56.10
133	South Dakota	55.97
134	Samford	55.77
135	Stony Brook	55.75



136	Indiana	55.72
137	Delaware	55.51
138	North Dakota	55.41
139	Buffalo	55.37
140	South Dakota St	55.18
141	Colorado St	55.00
142	Central Michigan	54.99
143	Eastern Kentucky	54.80
144	Weber St	54.79
145	Troy	54.65
146	Idaho	54.18
147	Tennessee Tech	52.78
148	UNLV	52.57
149	Alabama-Birmingham	52.55
150	Jacksonville St	52.14
151	The Citadel	52.12
152	Holy Cross	51.89
153	Brown	51.82
154	Liberty	51.81
155	Southern Illinois	51.56
156	Murray St	51.35
157	Bethune-Cookman	51.17
158	Norfolk St	51.08
159	Northwestern St	51.04
160	UC-Davis	51.03
161	Massachusetts	50.64
162	Sacramento St	49.94
163	Missouri St	49.89
164	Middle Tennessee St	49.81
165	Northern Arizona	49.48
166	McNeese St	49.36
167	Georgetown DC	49.32
168	Elon	49.26
169	William & Mary	49.09
170	New Mexico	49.05
171	Texas St-San Marcos	48.88
172	South Carolina St	47.64
173	Albany NY	47.49
174	Florida Atlantic	47.23
175	Tulane	47.22
176	Rhode Island	47.22
177	Bucknell	46.76
178	Duquesne	46.75
179	Tennessee-Martin	46.68
180	Coastal Carolina	46.36



181	South Alabama	46.07
182	Jackson St	45.98
183	Memphis	45.97
184	Richmond	45.72
185	Drake	45.64
186	Lafayette	45.16
187	Western Illinois	45.13
188	Yale	45.00
189	Tennessee St	44.45
190	Hampton	44.00
191	Cornell NY	43.87
192	Colgate	43.80
193	Dartmouth	43.40
194	Presbyterian	43.14
195	Florida A&M	42.74
196	Akron	42.62
197	San Diego	42.48
198	Villanova	42.36
199	Pennsylvania	42.26
200	Jacksonville FL	42.03
201	Alabama St	41.89
202	Bryant	40.66
203	SE Louisiana St	40.65
204	Texas-San Antonio	40.16
205	Georgia St	40.16
206	Eastern Illinois	39.36
207	North Carolina A&T	38.84
208	Idaho St	38.77
209	Monmouth NJ	37.31
210	Alabama A&M	37.21
211	Howard	36.41
212	Northern Colorado	36.04
213	Grambling St	36.01
214	Morgan St	35.98
215	Western Carolina	35.72
216	SE Missouri St	35.66
217	Gardner-Webb	34.65
218	Wagner	34.36
219	Lamar	34.14
220	Sacred Heart	34.13
221	Campbell	34.13
222	Dayton	34.11
223	Austin Peay	33.61
224	Nicholls St	33.38
225	Central Conn St	33.06



226	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	32.73
227	Prairie View A&M	31.58
228	Fordham	31.29
229	Princeton	31.28
230	Marist	31.02
231	VMI	29.48
232	Southern U.	29.31
233	Columbia	28.85
234	Charleston Southern	28.02
235	Butler	28.01
236	Robert Morris PA	27.28
237	St Francis PA	27.22
238	North Carolina Central	26.69
239	Morehead St	25.28
240	Delaware St	24.64
241	Texas Southern	22.01
242	Savannah St	22.00
243	Davidson	20.34
244	Mississippi Valley St	19.26
245	Alcorn St	18.93
246	Valparaiso	14.70

