COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Georgia remains atop CFP rankings

By Eddie Pells
AP National Writer



COLIN HUBBARD/AP
Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton throws a pass against Missouri defensive end Daeden Hopkins (10) and linebacker Robert Woodyard Jr. on Nov. 14 in Athens, Georgia.

In the razor-thin margins between the closely matched teams that were slotted into Tuesday night's College Football Playoff rankings, Wake Forest and Indiana came away winners. Tennessee and Texas Tech — they got nicked.

Georgia, as expected, stayed atop the latest top 25, while the surging Demon Deacons of Wake Forest leapfrogged Tech for what would be the last spot in the projected 12-team bracket.

Indiana, meanwhile, took over the eighth spot, which would give the Hoosiers home-field advantage over No. 9 Tennessee if the playoffs started this week.

Hunter Yurachek, the chair of the selection committee, called the margins between teams behind Georgia and No. 2 Utah "razor thin."

"And those are some of the closest comparisons and most comprehensive and heated discussions we had in the room over the past two days," he said.

He explained Indiana's flip-flop with Tennessee by pointing out the Hoosiers' 451 yards of offense in last weekend's 27-13 win over No. 18 Southern California made an impression.

Meanwhile, he said many factors — including strength of schedule and their 9-1 records — put No. 11 Wake Forest and No. 12 Texas Tech on fairly even footing. Ultimately, though, the committee favored the Demon Deacons, who won 49-7 at SMU, where the Mustangs hadn't lost a conference game in two years.

Wake has won its last six games by an average of 52-6 — a reality Tech couldn't overcome, even with a 25-point win over Oklahoma State, which was ranked 25th last week.

"They were up 42-0 at halftime," Yurachek said, while also noting Wake is in the top 10 in analytics-based scoring stats on both offense and defense.

Boise State (9-1) was ranked 17th and would get the 12th playoff spot as the Group of Six representative.

Another razor-thin result had Arch Manning and Texas moving to No. 5 on the strength of a win at LSU. The Longhorns move came at the expense of Notre Dame, which fell one spot to No. 6 after a 41-7 win over Boston College.

Alabama (8-2) stayed put at third, in front of UCLA (10-0) to round out the coveted top four, all of which would receive first-round byes in the playoff.

"When we watch them on film, we feel like they're one of best three, four teams in the country," Yurachek said in explaining the Crimson Tide's standing despite two losses, including one to Tennessee.

There are three more rankings to go, with the bracket set on Dec. 6, following a slate of conference title games.

Also in the top 12 were Miami at No. 7 and BYU at No. 10, while Kentucky — the only top-12 team to lose last week — fell five spots to No. 16.

OHIO STATE VAULTS INTO MIX WITH OREGON, IOWA

Thanks largely to teams losing ahead of them, the Ohio State Buckeyes (7-3) jumped six spots to No. 14 after a 28-19 win over Northwestern, sandwiching them between Big Ten teams Oregon (7-3) and Iowa (8-2).

Yurachek said Ohio State moved in front of Iowa based largely on its loss at Texas to start the season — the sort of nonconference matchup the Hawkeyes didn't have on their schedule.

Yurachek acknowledged there is "definitely separation" between the 11-12 spots (with one loss) and the Big Ten contenders at 13-15. Still, it's the Buckeyes and Ducks who have the best chance to make the bracket because they're still very alive to make the conference title game and earn an automatic bid, while Iowa's chances are dwindling.

PROJECTED POSTSEASON MATCHUPS

Based on Tuesday's rankings, the CFP would open like this:

• No. 9 seed Tennessee at No. 8 Indiana. Winner vs. No. 1 Georgia: A once-annual SEC East affair between the Bulldogs and Vols fell off the schedule in '26 because of expansion.

• No. 12 seed Boise State at No. 5 seed Texas. Winner vs. No. 4 UCLA: Boise State beat Texas State 46-45 on Halloween. This would be tougher.

• No. 10 seed BYU at No. 7 Miami. Winner vs. No. 2 Utah: Could the Holy War Part II end up at the Fiesta Bowl?

• No. 11 seed Wake Forest at No. 6 Notre Dame. Winner vs. No. 3 Alabama: Notre Dame has won by double digits in five of six meetings against Wake Forest.

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