

Controversial complications come from competition



Caught in the Grasp
Douglas Smith
sports editor

Well it is that time of year again. The orange feels the woods, basketball fans try to figure out what players moved around in the off-season, and everyone scratches their head about the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) points system. This is, of course, the complicated system that allows for numerous items to decide who are the number one and two college football teams in the land to play in one of four bowl games on January 3 in front of a primetime audience. Does it work? Honestly, who knows?

Okay, so here is how it works. The first item of business is the two popular polls. These are the Associated Press poll and the *USA Today* poll. A team's average position from the two polls is taken into consideration. Next are computer rankings. This is the sum of the seven best marks received in eight computer rankings averaged. Jeff Sagarin, Anderson and Hester, and the Dunkel Index are a few of those rankings used. Third is the infamous strength of schedule. This is the ranking out of 115 NCAA Division I-A teams divided by twenty-five. This is calculated by determining the win-loss record of the team's opponents, which count for two-thirds of the tally, and its opponents' opponents, which count one-third. Finally the record is taken into consideration.

Now follow along closely because it's time for an example. A team is ranked number two in one poll and three in another. Two plus three divided by two is 2.5. This

team is number one in four computer rankings, number two in three others, and number six in one. The number six

ranking will be disregarded with the total remaining being 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 2 + 2 + 2, which equals ten.

Ten divided by seven equals 1.43. Next, say the team has the 28th strongest schedule.

Divide this by twenty-five and you will get 1.12. This is top secret material which only two people in the NCAA know how to figure out. Then say they have one loss, since losses count more in the record category. Adding the previous numbers up will give you 6.05. Remember, the lower the score the better your ranking will be in the BCS.

With all that said why does it cause problems? Well first off the entire problem exists that at the end of the season that there will possibly be more than two undefeated teams. Being a student of Penn State, most of us can relate to controversy caused by two undefeated teams at the end of the year.

At the time this week's BCS standings were released, three undefeated teams existed. Oklahoma is number one in the poll. Virginia Tech is number two. However, Texas Christian University is sitting back at number nine. This is because of their strength of schedule that is listed at 111 out of 115. That does not bode well for their chances despite being undefeated. It is hard to argue with Oklahoma because of the way they handily beat former number one Nebraska this past week. Many college football fans are rooting for the Sooners. However, Virginia Tech squeezed out a victory against an improving Pitt Panther team this past weekend. In the days prior to the BCS, this would have caused the Hokies to move back in the polls simply because Pitt is not ranked. The controversy could be even bigger following this week's action when Virginia Tech takes on Miami

(Fl.). Miami is ranked five in the BCS and has an explosive offense. The Hokies could be without their Heisman hopeful, Michael Vick. So what if Virginia Tech loses?

Another simple question that arises is why should we trust these computer rankings? Jeff Sagarin has been used for years as a simple point of interest. Who are these guys and how do they calculate their rankings? Fans may have only heard of the *New York Times* ranking, for all the BCS gurus know. It may be an obscure question, but nevertheless it is valid.

The next general question that arises is what does the strength of schedule mean? Let's look at the three undefeated teams mentioned above. The team most in question for staying undefeated is Virginia Tech who plays Miami this week. The Hurricanes are 3-0 in the Big East Conference and 6-1 overall and ranked high in all polls. The BCS came out last week, so the game against Pitt counted in the first BCS standings of the season. Pitt was 2-1 in the Big East and 5-1 overall going into last week's game, but they are not ranked. West Virginia and Boston College have also won more than half of their games overall on the season. So it seems that the competition is stiff. Also, the opponents' opponents are basically the teams of the Big East. It seems as though the 18 ranking out of 115 is justified. Oklahoma has a ranking of 12 out of 115, which is justified simply for playing the former number one team, Nebraska.

Oklahoma is a member of the Big 12 conference that has two divisions and only five teams under the 500-mark for the season. Oklahoma has to play one of those teams this week in Baylor. This will hurt their rank in strength of schedule. They will not play another ranked team unless they meet up with Nebraska in the Big 12 Conference championship game. Still it is hard to knock them out of the number one position if they do not lose from here.

Texas Christian University (TCU) plays in the Western Athletic Conference with the

likes of Nevada and the University of Texas-El Paso. TCU will not play a ranked team. The Horned Frogs have outscored their opponents 253 to 51. The most exciting game of the year is the last game against Southern Methodist University simply because of rivalry. Still the top eight teams all have rankings in the top twenty, so strength of schedule will most likely not have much to do with the final rankings. With all this said the rankings have to be taken at face value. Oklahoma is standing at number one with 2.48 points. This is almost five points ahead of number two Virginia Tech. Florida State, Nebraska, Miami, and Florida seem to be the only other teams in contention at this point in the season.

Looking at these facts, other questions arise. First, can Florida State overtake the Hokies even if both teams win out? If the Seminoles make it to the national championship game on January 3, some people may say it is rigged. Somehow it seems as if they always find a way to wiggle back into the top two. The Seminoles have 7.93 points and the Hokies have 7.15. They both have similar remaining schedules as far as strength of their opponents. However, Florida State plays Florida is the last regularly scheduled game of the season, which could actually give them a slight advantage being that it is the last game of the season. This all will come down to Florida State working its way to a two point advantage on the Hokies in the computer rankings.

Next scenario: Virginia Tech loses, but Oklahoma, Florida State and Miami win out. Miami gave Florida State their only loss earlier this season. Once again this would come down to the computers with the 'Canes having to finish about one point ahead of the 'Noles. Still Miami finds itself behind Oregon in some computer rankings, so despite being ahead of Florida State in the AP and *USA Today* polls they would lose out in the end.

What happens to Nebraska now if they

win out? That could mean the Cornhuskers would beat the Sooners in the Big 12 championship game knocking them out of the number one position. This would make Nebraska a favorite again from the rankings if they can stay ahead of Miami. This is very likely. With all of that now said most experts say wait until November 6 and take a closer look since there are some very interesting games this weekend.

One more item arises from this mess. Notre Dame is sitting at number 14 right now and is praying for TCU to move up. A special stipulation in the BCS guidelines states that if Notre Dame has nine wins they are automatically included in a BCS bowl game if a non-BCS conference champion or an independent are ranked in the top six. If this isn't biased I don't know what is.

Apparently television viewing does indeed rule. (Yeah it does!) This stipulation would leave no at-large bids open for other teams. Of course none of this will affect the championship game at the FedEx Orange bowl on January 3.

So did you get any of that? The teams will begin to be weeded out as the weeks progress. Regardless, controversies will always exist in some way, shape, or form.



Smith's sports column appears every two weeks.

THE SCOREBOARD

Behrend Scores

Women's Soccer

AMCC Tournament
Oct. 28 Vs. Pitt-Bradford
W 8-2
Oct. Oct. 29 vs. Frostburg W
5-4
AMCC Champs

Men's Soccer

Oct. 21 vs. Brockport
W 5-2
Oct. 25 at Case Western
Reserve L 2-1

Volleyball

Oct. 28 vs. Pitt-Greensburg
W 3-1

Cross Country

AMCC Championships at
Frostburg

Oct. 28

Men

Penn State Behrend 21
La Roche 46
Pitt-Bradford 69
Frostburg DNP
Women
Frostburg 26
Penn State Behrend 29
Pitt-Bradford 76

Women's Tennis

The season has concluded.

AMCC STANDINGS

(Standings as of October 30, 2000)

WOMEN'S SOCCER

School	Conference record	Overall
Penn State Behrend	5-0	13-4
La Roche	3-2	14-6
Frostburg	3-2	11-7
Pitt-Bradford	2-3	7-12
Lake Erie	2-3	7-13
Pitt-Greensburg	0-5	0-12

MEN'S SOCCER

School	Conference record	Overall
Frostburg	5-0	12-4
La Roche	4-1	6-8-2
Penn State Behrend	3-2	8-8-1
Pitt-Greensburg	2-3	8-8-2
Lake Erie	1-4	1-12
Pitt-Bradford	0-5	4-12

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

School	Conference Record	Overall
Frostburg	11-0	30-3
Penn State Behrend	10-2	14-12
Pitt-Bradford	7-4	18-10
Penn State Altoona	6-5	13-12
Pitt-Greensburg	4-8	5-18
La Roche	2-9	3-23
Lake Erie	0-12	0-12

National Football League

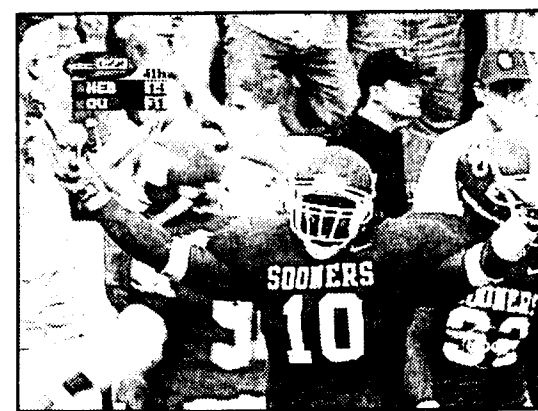
Games for Week 9

Sunday, October 29, 2000
1:00 PM

Washington at Arizona
Indianapolis at Chicago
Tampa Bay at Atlanta
Baltimore at Cincinnati
San Francisco at New Orleans
Buffalo at New England
Miami at Detroit
Pittsburgh at Tennessee
N.Y. Giants at Cleveland
Dallas at Philadelphia
4:15 PM
San Diego at Seattle
Kansas City at Oakland
Denver at N.Y. Jets
8:35 PM
Carolina at St. Louis

Monday, October 30, 2000
9:00 PM

Minnesota at Green Bay



Oklahoma's Torrance Marshall holds up an orange after beating Nebraska this past weekend.

CLASSIFIEDS

Looking for a job?

Paying above minimum wage!
Apply at Eastway Lanes
Kitchen help wanted evenings and weekends.
4110 Buffalo Road

SPRING BREAK 2001!

CANCUN & BAHAMAS. EAT, DRINK, TRAVEL FOR FREE, WANTED CAMPUS REPS! Call USA SPRING BREAK, toll free (877) 460.6077, for trip information and rates. 25 Continuous Years of Student Travel!
www.springbreak.com

Students, faculty, and staff of Penn State Behrend are welcome to place free classified ads. Please send ads to BehrColl4@aol.com

Wanted!

Spring Breakers! Cancun, Bahamas, Florida, & Jamaica. Call Sun Coast Vacations for a free brochure and ask how you can organize a small group and Earn Cash!
Call 1-888-777-4642 or e-mail sales@suncoastvacations.com

Spring Break! Deluxe Hotels, Reliable Air, Free Food, Drinks and Parties. Cancun, Jamaica, Bahamas, Mazatlan & Florida. Travel Free and Earn Cash! Do it on the web! Go to StudentCity.com or call 800-293-1443 for info.



NASCAR WINSTON CUP

Leaders as of 10/15

1. Bobby Labonte, 4645.
2. Dale Earnhardt, 4444
3. Jeff Burton, 4394
4. Dale Jarrett, 4315
5. Ricky Rudd, 4272
6. Tony Stewart, 4210
7. Rusty Wallace, 4115
8. Mark Martin, 4042
9. Jeff Gordon, 3904
10. Ward Burton, 3809
11. Mike Skinner, 3514
12. Steve Park, 3512
13. Matt Kenseth, 3436
14. Johnny Benson, 3389
15. Joe Nemechek, 3246