

It is time for college football to create playoff system

College football needs a playoff. This is not news to those of us who have been following the game for the last dozen years or so.

Sportswriters and coaches, while certainly knowledgeable about football, shouldn't be deciding national champions based on subjective criteria such as victory margins and, in some cases, win-loss records.

There have been several instances of two or more teams with legitimate claims to the top spot.

I harken back to 1983 for the most obvious case of poll controversy. On January 2, 1984, previously undefeated and #1 Nebraska lost to #5 Miami 31-30 in the Orange Bowl. In the Sugar Bowl, #3 Auburn defeated Michigan 9-7. Earlier in the day, #2 Texas lost to Georgia 10-9 in the Cotton Bowl. The records of the top four teams were as follows: Nebraska 12-1, Miami 11-1, Auburn 11-1, and



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Sportswriter

Texas 11-1.

In an instance closer to home, the Aggies could have gone 13-0 and been locked out of any shot at the national title because Miami and Alabama were 1-2 in both polls going into the Sugar Bowl.

The current ranking system is begging for an overhaul.

A couple of weeks ago, the Walt Disney Co. put forth an offer to sponsor a post-season football game as the culmination of an eight-day festival. Because no other specifics were made available, I'll offer some of my own.

This plan is a modification of an idea put forth by Norm Hitzges in SPORT magazine in 1981 but has been largely ignored.

The playoff system I am proposing is an eight-team playoff over a three-week span in late December and early January.

The first requirement would be that the season must end by the last weekend in November. This is usually not a problem and would allow for scheduling an off week or two.

Second, get rid of the Kickoff Classic and the Pigskin Classic, which hardly lived up to their names this year. It's an additional game that gives the winners an unmerited poll boost.

At this point, we have everyone playing 11 games and done by December 1. Now, we have to trust that the AP and CNN/USA Today pollsters can come to a consensus on the top eight teams. This will be agonizing and the #9 team will not be pleased, but it's all we have to go by. Our playoff is now set.

The most enduring argument against a playoff is that it would destroy the traditional bowl establishment. The playoff would incorporate the Orange, Cotton, Sugar and Rose Bowls, which would rotate hosting the championship game, semifinals and the quarterfinals. The other three first-round games could be swapped in and out between the other bowls on an equitable basis. As far as the other dozen bowls, they could be played in a three- or four-day span including New Year's Day, thereby sating everyone's holiday football appetite.

Here, then, is an example format:

- 1 vs. 8 in the Sugar Bowl
- 4 vs. 5 in the Fiesta Bowl
- 2 vs. 7 in the Florida Citrus Bowl
- 3 vs. 6 in the Hall of Fame Bowl

SEMIFINALS:

- 1-8 winner vs 4-5 winner in the Cotton Bowl

- 2-7 winner vs 3-6 winner in the Orange Bowl CHAMPIONSHIP:
- Semifinal winners in the Rose Bowl

What makes this format really attractive for the second-tier bowls is that instead of having a sparsely attended game that means very little, the bowl game is turned into a playoff game that will generate tremendous fan interest and millions in TV revenues. The money could be funneled to the schools in a manner similar to that used in the NCAA Basketball Tournament, which has become a financial bonanza in its own right.

There are two other arguments against a playoff. The first is that it would take up too much of the players' time academically. Not true. The playoffs would start the third weekend of December, which is after any semester or quarter ends.

The second is that it would be too strenuous physically to play that many games. Possibly, but no more so than now when teams play 12 or 13 games a year anyway, as A&M did last season. The only teams that would play as many as 14 games would be the teams in the title game.

Something needs to be implemented if Division I-A football wants to have a true national champion.

BATTALION STAFF PICKS

| The Battalion Writers | Plumer | Harrison | Chelkowski | Winder | Rush | Clay | Georgandis | Diener | Corrington | Whitley | Consensus | Comments |
|------------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| at #4 Texas A&M vs. LSU | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | A&M | Rebuilding year for LSU |
| Rice vs. at #17 Ohio State | Rice | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Rice | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Ohio St. | Rice still .500 team |
| Houston vs. at #18 USC | Houston | USC | USC | Houston | Houston | USC | Houston | Houston | USC | USC | USC | USC over Houston |
| at #11 Colorado vs. Texas | Colorado | Colorado | Colorado | Texas | Colorado | Texas | Colorado | Colorado | Colorado | Colorado | Colorado | Morenz not ready |
| at TCU vs. #22 Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Oklahoma | Sooners roll over Frogs |
| at SMU vs. Arkansas | Arkansas | Arkansas | Arkansas | Arkansas | Arkansas | Arkansas | SMU | Arkansas | Arkansas | SMU | Arkansas | Tough Choice |
| at Baylor vs. Fresno State | Fresno St. | Baylor | Baylor | Fresno St. | Baylor | Baylor | Baylor | Fresno St. | Baylor | Baylor | Baylor | Baylor upsets FSU |
| at #7 Notre Dame vs. Northwestern | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | Irish | No Contest. None |
| at #21 Boston College vs. #5 Miami | Miami | Miami | Miami | Miami | Miami | Miami | Miami | B.C. | B.C. | Miami | Miami | No early season shocker |
| #15 Stanford vs. at #12 Washington | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Stanford | Wash. too many problems |
| Houston Oilers vs. at New Orleans | Oilers | Oilers | Oilers | Oilers | Oilers | Saints | Oilers | Saints | Oilers | Saints | Oilers | Saints don't have it yet |
| Dallas Cowboys vs. at Washington | Cowboys | Redskins | Cowboys | Cowboys | Redskins | Cowboys | Redskins | Cowboys | Cowboys | Redskins | Cowboys | So what if no Emmitt? |
| Record for Week | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | ---- |
| Cumulative Record | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0-0 | -- | ---- |

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Hallman

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Hallman and Sherill from 1985-87, when A&M won three straight Southwest Conference championships and two out of three Cotton Bowls.

Hallman said Amedee will play a multiple-set offense against A&M with much-heralded sophomore quarterback Jamie Howard running the show. Hallman said defensively LSU will switch to a base four-man defensive line front.

He said his young team will be able to put a lot more speed and coverage ability onto the field than years past.

"We're still at the point where we're trying to develop the total package," Hallman said. "We've changed our (defensive) scheme a little bit; we're doing a little bit more of the 4-3 defense as opposed to the odd front that we used to be in."

"It gives us a chance to put more linebacker-type people on the field, and it gives us a little more speed."

Hallman said dealing with the talented Aggies will be tough and again stressed playing error-free football.

"We know what we're playing against and I think we've got to be pretty much picture perfect to hang in there," Hallman said.

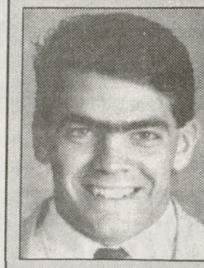
"From tight end to tackle, all of them have been together except one position for a long time; it's a

very mature group. Corey at quarterback, with the experience he had last year under his belt, is a talent. He's got good size, good range and a good velocity on the ball."

"I am impressed by the way he plays football." For the A&M defense, Hallman summed up all the positions as being strong and talented, giving particular notice to two potential All-Americans, junior Sam Adams at defensive end and senior Aaron Glenn at cornerback.

"It's a typical A&M defense - a lot of personality to it and very aggressive," Hallman said.

"We just hope we can come in and get started off on the right track, make some things happen early and help our young kids build their confidence a little bit."



Countdown to Texas: 84 Days

The Battalion, in honor of our 100th anniversary of playing football against the Texas Longhorns, will spotlight a Longhorn player in each A&M home football preview. This week's preview:

Cody Danaher