



The BCeStimation is a weekly column that predicts which 10 teams will make it to the Orange Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, Rose Bowl and National Championship game.

After reviewing the order in which the BCS bowls are allowed to select their teams, I made some adjustments to the BCeStimation. Here's how the selection process will play out:

The National Championship game has dibs on the number one and number two ranked teams in the country. The Rose Bowl has the automatic tie-in with the Big Ten and Pac 10, but if the Rose Bowl loses one of those conference champions to the National Championship Game, it has to select a Non-AQ team (TCU or Boise) if they're eligible. The Sugar Bowl would usually have a tie-in with the SEC Champion, but since I'm projecting that to be Auburn, they'll lose that automatic bid, earning the next two picks in the process. The Orange Bowl gets the next pick, and after their tie-in with the ACC champion, they get to select an at-large opponent. After the Orange, the Fiesta gets to pick an at-large team to face off against their automatic tie-in, the Big 12 champion.

Make sense? Hopefully there will be more clarity once we get into the predictions.

Orange Bowl: Virginia Tech vs. Boise State

If things play out the way I think they will, the Orange bowl will be in a tough position. Obviously, no one wants a rematch of two teams that have already played. In this particular case, I'd rather try to tackle Terrelle Pryor one on one than re-watch these two teams go at it

again. But it's just as hard for me to pick any other match up here. I'll explain.

Why Virginia Tech? Because they outlasted a feisty Georgia Tech team last Thursday to remain unbeaten in the ACC. Meanwhile, Florida State dropped another game, yet still remains atop the Atlantic division. The Hokies will be well rested after having nine days off entering their contest with North Carolina this Saturday, a game they should win despite being on the road. It won't be easy though, as the Tar Heels seem to be putting things together for an end-of-the-year run at the title. Tune in for this one. Or don't. It's just the ACC.

Why Boise State? Okay -- here's the dilemma. Boise State has been passed by TCU in the BCS bowls by a solid margin, and I don't think there's anything the Broncos can do about that. The Horned Frogs beat an insanely overrated Utah team by 40 points on Saturday, and that's the kind of quality win that Boise will not be able to match. Because of that, the Rose Bowl will have to select TCU ahead of the Broncos. When this happens, the Orange Bowl will no longer be obligated to select a non-AQ team if they don't want to. So put yourself in their money-hungry shoes -- you have a team in Boise who can't even sell out their own stadium on a week to week basis that would have to convince their fan-base to travel all the way across the country to play a team they already beat earlier this year? Add to that the fact that there are teams like Oklahoma State who are much closer, or Stanford who is emerging as an elite team this year... and Boise could be left out of the BCS this year. It doesn't seem right that a fourth ranked, unbeaten Broncos team could be left behind, but hey, sometimes life ain't fair. I guess I'm going to keep Boise slotted here for now, because I think this is kind of like what loud noises are to deer -- I don't want to wish too hard for this to happen and scare it away.

Sugar Bowl: LSU vs. Ohio State

In these projections, the Sugar Bowl gets two picks in a row because they will lose their automatic tie-in (the SEC Champ) to the National Championship Game. And of course the Sugar Bowl would take the home team Tigers and pair them with an Ohio State team that has a fan base that travels like nomads for a rematch of the 2007 national title game.

Why LSU? Because it looks like this team is actually kind of good, in addition to being bat-crap lucky. LSU is 8-1 on the season, and their toughest games are already behind them. With Auburn in the drivers seat in the West, it's unlikely that they'll have to play the SEC East champ in the conference title game. With this in mind, that means their remaining schedule starts this Saturday against Louisiana-Monroe, followed by conference games against Ole Miss and

Arkansas. The Tigers should handle Ole Miss, but Arkansas will test this defense, especially through the air. Still, I like LSU to finish 11-1, and I'm pretty sure that excluding an 11-1 SEC team from the BCS is a crime against the universe.

Side note -- I have a source who says Miles does not like the taste of the Louisiana Superdome turf, saying the texture is too grainy and isn't [near the quality of Tiger Stadium's grass](#). With Ohio State benefiting from anything that sets Miles off, this is welcome news.

Why Ohio State? Because after seeing Iowa struggle against Indiana last Saturday, I like our chances to knock off the Hawkeyes and finish 11-1 even more than I did before. And while Iowa was surviving a last second scare against the Hoosiers (seriously, Indiana should have won that game), Ohio State was resting, enjoying their bye-week and getting healthy for November -- a month that Jim Tressel has dominated the last nine years. The Buckeyes face off against Penn State this weekend, a team coming off a three-game win streak that a lot of people are inexplicably impressed by (seriously, they beat Minnesota, Michigan and Northwestern... not impressed).

Fiesta Bowl: Pitt vs. Nebraska

While reviewing the selection process for the BCS bowls, I was interested to see who had the last pick -- mainly to see who was going to get stuck with the Big East champ. Poor Fiesta Bowl.

Why Pitt? Because they're the only team without a loss in Big East play. Syracuse lost some momentum this weekend by losing to Louisville, and West Virginia enters this weekend with a 1-2 conference record. Pitt had their bye-week this week, and it couldn't have come at a better time as they end the season with road games against UConn, South Florida and Cincinnati and a home game against the Mountaineers. Honestly, any of five teams could conceivably *turn it on* in November and win the conference, but right now, you have to give the edge to Pitt.

Why Nebraska? Because they survived a scare from Iowa State and escaped Ames with a 31-30 overtime victory. The Cornhuskers have played some erratic football over the year, looking brilliant in wins over Washington and Missouri while looking downright awful in a loss to

Texas and this past weekend against the Cyclones. Still, with Missouri's loss to Texas Tech on Saturday, Nebraska now has some breathing room in the North division. They'll only need to win two of their last three games to reach the Big 12 title game, and with Kansas, Texas A&M and Colorado on the schedule, two wins seems very, very likely.

Rose Bowl: Wisconsin vs. TCU

TCU has been playing fantastic defense over the last month and a half, but it would be highly entertaining to see if they'd be able to keep it up against a Wisconsin football team that's bigger than anyone the Horned Frogs have seen this year. I have a feeling that John Clay and this offensive line would wear this TCU front down.

Why Wisconsin? Because they're in great shape to finish the season without losing. A favorable schedule puts Michigan as the only real threat to knock off the Badgers. And don't get me wrong, I'm not underestimating Wisconsin's amazing ability to lose to Michigan, but when I think about that matchup, I see the Badgers holding some ridiculous advantage in time of possession -- keeping the ball away from Denard/Tate/whoever isn't injured. If they win impressively down the stretch, they'll remain the higher ranked BCS team (over Ohio State and Michigan State) and earn the Rose Bowl bid.

Why TCU? Because the hard part is over! All TCU has to do now is beat a 7-2 San Diego State team (they will) before they end their season with an away game against 1-8 New Mexico. It will be interesting to see what happens with the Frogs as we near the end of the season. TCU solidified themselves as the elite non-AQ team with their 47-7 drubbing over then-fifth-ranked Utah. Their participation in the BCS is pretty much guaranteed, but at what level is to be determined. If either Oregon or Auburn stumble late in the season, TCU might have a strong enough case (to the BCS computers, not rational humans of course) to make it to the title game.

National Championship Game: Auburn vs. Oregon

Both of these teams are less than one month away from locking up bids for the National Championship game. If they finish the season unscathed, they'll meet in Glendale for the Chrystal ball. I'm jealous of their fan-bases, because it's one of the most exciting things, chasing that possibility.

Why Auburn? Because Cam Newton set aside all of the craziness surrounding him with the media and buried Chattanooga 62-24. When all the talk of a recruiting scandal popped up early last week regarding Newton, I had the thought, *hmm, he might be distracted and have a bad game against whoever they're playing. And since so much of that teams success depends on his production, there's a possibility of an upset here.*

Then I remembered they were playing

Chattanooga

(gotta love that SEC non-conference scheduling). The Tigers got that tune up before this weekend's game against a suddenly decent Georgia team.

Why Oregon? Because head coach Chip Kelly laughed at the slow start his Ducks had against Washington by outscoring them 35-10 in the second half. The Ducks travel to Berkeley to play *Jekyll*

and Hyde

California this Saturday, followed by their bye-week. The Ducks will get an extra week to prepare for a good Arizona team before taking part in the Civil War -- their annual rivalry game with Oregon State. With the way this offense is operating, I don't see this team stumbling to anyone on their remaining schedule.

So there you have it, a guide to weekend watching as these teams try to maneuver the road to the BCS.

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