

4th And 12

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Who's #2? Apparently no one wants to be, says Cris Sykes. First Texas, then Notre Dame, followed by Auburn ... and now Florida. Sykes recaps a Saturday loaded with big games, breaks down the race for the title game, and updates his Heisman ballot in this weeks "4th And 12".



After 6 weeks of the college football season, we have seen three teams step up in the #2 slot in the rankings and ZERO teams hold it for more than three weeks.

First, it was Texas. The Buckeyes took care of that. Then Notre Dame slid its over-hyped ass in there, but Michigan ended that nightmare. Auburn gave it a run for a couple of weeks, before showing their true colors against Arkansas. I am starting to wonder if maybe nobody really wants to end up at #2.

How does West Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez get two votes in the AP poll? That is the only way they can still receive two votes as the best team in the land. As two "college football experts" continue to vote them #1, the rest of their colleagues saw what the majority already knew and dropped them down a spot in the poll. I don't even think they are the best team in the weakest of the BCS conferences and can't wait to watch Louisville put 60+ points on the board against them.

Louisville has been able to maintain their un-beaten start without one-time Heisman contender Brian Brohm behind center. Rumor has it that Brohm could return from thumb surgery in time for this weekend's game against Cincinnati. That would give him two games to prepare for their match-up with West Virginia on November 2.

Florida once again used their two-quarterback system to perfection, as they handled LSU in

“The Swamp.” Senior starter Chris Leak has watched his Heisman campaign take a serious hit, but freshman Tim Tebow brings another dimension to the Gator attack. Tebow is a much better runner, which is vital to Urban Meyer’s spread option. With this victory, Florida became the next team in line to grab that #2 ranking. Although it would be hard to imagine them running the table to hold onto that ranking, I do see them getting by offensively challenged Auburn this weekend.

The other marquee SEC game was quite different than most games played in the conference. Tennessee handed Georgia its first loss, 51-33. Georgia came into the game as one of the top defenses in the country, but had shown zero ability to put the ball in the end zone. When Georgia went into the locker room up 24-10, they had to feel pretty good about themselves. When Georgia went into the 4th quarter up 27-24, they still had to feel pretty good. After Tennessee put 27 points on the board in that 4th quarter, I don’t think anything felt good in the whole state of Georgia.

The USC Trojans continue to survive in PAC-10 play, but this is not the same team that we have grown accustomed to watching the last couple of years. The 2006 Trojans rely on a better defense and a not-so explosive offense to get by. Their close victory over Washington this weekend allowed Florida to jump over them in the AP Poll. With games against Oregon and Cal looming in the next couple of weeks, USC will need to turn it up a notch to remain in line for another BCS Bowl.

Oregon and Cal got together Saturday in the first round of the 3-week round robin tournament to settle the PAC-10. Unfortunately for the University of Phil Knight and their 100 uniforms, their charter flight forgot to land at Berkley in time for the game. Apparently, they have enough uniforms to lend some to the frat boys at Cal who played in their place. That is the only way I have to explain the egg laid by these Ducks. I guess Oregon’s leading rusher, John Stewart, had to get back to tape another episode of “The Daily Show,” which explains his 18 carry, 25 yard day.

Ohio State maintained its lead over the rest of the field with a blowout victory over Bowling Green. It was another blue-collar job over an enormously overmatched opponent at the ‘Shoe. The Buckeyes gave you the feeling that they could score at any moment, but basically used the game as a scrimmage to get work in. The rest of the Big 10 schedule should continue to be

tune-ups for what appears to be shaping up as the “Game of the Forever” against That School Up North.

That School Up North continued its fine play in beating up Michigan State. They climbed up to #3 in the AP Poll this week, but have the tougher trip through Big 10 play left in order to set up their dream game against the Buckeyes. If Lloyd Carr can get them through a dangerous game in Happy Valley Saturday night and continue on to help them beat Iowa at home the following week, it will be smooth sailing until November 18. If Michigan implodes in either of those games, Lloyd could find himself on a future “Larry Coker Memorial Hot Seat.”

Heisman Ballot

1. Troy Smith, QB, The Ohio State University. Smith continues to get my first place vote (which I don't really have) in spite of having less than spectacular stats. He still benefits from nobody behind him putting together consistent enough weeks to make up ground, and could make this a real MVP trophy this year instead of the normal “guy with the sick numbers” winner.

2. Garrett Wolfe, RB, Northern Illinois. Wolfe recorder his 11th straight game topping the century mark, in a nationally televised Sunday night game. Wolfe racked up 162 yards and 2 scores on his 29 carries. I guess he fell off the 3,000 yard pace.

3. Steve Slaton, RB, West Virginia. Carried his Mountaneer teammates through an otherwise lackadaisical effort against Mississippi State. Slaton ran for 185 on his 26 carries, with 1 TD.

4. Adrian Peterson, RB, Oklahoma. Peterson did his share in the “Red River Rivalry”, but the rest of the Sooners could not offer much help. Peterson scored Oklahoma's only TD, from 29 yards out, and ran for 109 yards on the day.

5. Brady Quinn, QB, Notre Dame. Takes Chris Leak's spot on the ballot since Leak is pretty much in a QB platoon. Quinn threw 3 TD against Stanford to continue his beating up on the little sisters of the NCAA.