

College Football Playoff

Media Conference

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Boo Corrigan

Bill Hancock

CFP Media Conference

BRETT DANIELS: I'd like to welcome everyone to the first College Football Playoff Selection Committee teleconference for the 2023 season. Joining us tonight is Bill Hancock, the executive director of the College Football Playoff, along with Boo Corrigan, the College Football Playoff Selection Committee chair.

BOO CORRIGAN: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for being here. It's good to be back in Dallas for our first meeting of the Selection Committee. This is my third year on the committee and my second as chair.

I'm grateful to my fellow committee members for their hard work, as I witnessed over the last couple of days.

The committee has three new members this year. We have 10 who have served on the committee for the last year or two. As always, the new members participated in a mock rankings session earlier this fall, and that helped them hit the ground running.

You have seen our rankings. With several 8-0 teams, the committee debated it all. Ohio State was ranked No. 1, due in part to their big wins against Penn State and at Notre Dame. Georgia No. 2 is an excellent team and they keep winning decisively. Michigan was ranked 3. The committee was impressed at how they've dominated their opponents. Florida State was ranked 4 with their win against LSU helping make their case.

As I've walked you through the top four, I want to emphasize how much time we take for all the rankings. Each ranking is important. We are aware how closely fans track these rankings and care about their teams. As much debate as we have about the top four, we equally debate the remaining 21.

I won't say this to you every week, but it is important for the press to know how we work and what our criteria and protocol is. The committee begins each week with a blank



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sheet of paper. What happened last year does not matter.

The conferences teams play in does not factor into our decisions. We don't look at public polls. Instead, we are instructed by our founders of the playoff to consider teams' records, their strength of schedule, their head-to-head match-ups, and results with common opponents.

With these factors in mind, the committee members have lively discussion and then make their rankings based on 13 subjective expert college football judgments.

We watch games all season. We have considerable data and statistics on our screen and at our disposal. Our job is to get it right.

Thank you for listening, and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Q. Boo, Ohio State has the wins over Penn State and Notre Dame and their defense is obviously very good, but their offense has been a bit clunky at times. They're not scoring the way they traditionally have. In some ways people would say they haven't really passed the eye test. I know that's a loaded term. If you could address that in terms of whether the committee just watches the games, and yes, there are all these metrics, but is there a certain point where you have say I think I have a grasp on what these teams are?

BOO CORRIGAN: Yeah, to your point, and thank you for asking, the win against Penn State, to win at Notre Dame, the win at Wisconsin, they've proven they can do it at home, they've proven they can do it on the road. They have explosive plays. Down a receiver, Marvin Harrison, Jr., who's clearly one of the top players in the country.

As we look at it, as we evaluate it, it is part of the overall evaluation, but a top 5 defense that's given up about 10 points a game really does play into it, as well.

To pick completely on one side when the other side is so dominant, and the offense is really, really good, so we've got to take all that into account as we're looking at it, and we came to the conclusion as a committee that they

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deserved the No. 1 ranking.

Q. My question is for Bill. My question is about Warde Manuel from Michigan being on the Selection Committee. I know he's recused for the Michigan discussion, but because of what is going on with Michigan, was there any suggestion from Warde about possibly stepping off the committee? Were there any concerns from you and your leagues about Warde being on the committee, just with some controversy around Michigan right now?

BILL HANCOCK: No, there wasn't any suggestion that anything change regarding Warde's position on the committee. He was fully engaged in the meeting the last two days, as usual.

BOO CORRIGAN: I would just add, and I know you didn't ask me, but to Bill's point, was completely engaged in everything that was going on. Obviously he's recused early in the process, if you will, with our ranking, but was in the room, was engaged, was making the points that he had seen for the teams that we were talking about, was a really good committee member, as all 12 of them were.

Q. If I could follow up, I'm sure Warde is probably into it. I'm sure it's a bit of a respite considering all the things that are going on. There is just this idea of credibility and with some things floating around Michigan right now with the sign stealing, I guess was there any concern from either of you, do we want somebody who is high ranking at Michigan right now on the committee; does that reflect well on our credibility?

BILL HANCOCK: It just wasn't an issue. Warde brought credibility when he came to the committee, and he still had it and still has it, and as Boo and I both said, he was fully engaged today.

It's just not an issue here.

Q. Boo, I heard you on television saying that the Michigan sign stealing didn't come up in the room and that it's an NCAA issue. You also said at the top of the call here that the committee was impressed with how Michigan has dominated their opponents. Given the level of detail that I know the committee likes to use to evaluate all these teams, I'm curious how you can properly determine that Michigan is the No. 3 team in the country if you didn't discuss whether part of their dominance is using information they shouldn't have had?

BILL HANCOCK: Michigan has played well all season.

The fact of the matter is no one knows what happened. We're dealing right now -- the NCAA is dealing right now with allegations only. The committee makes its judgments based on what happened on the field, and clearly Michigan has been a dominant team.

Q. On the Group of Five side, obviously Tulane and Air Force the only two teams that made the top 25 there, curious the committee's thoughts on slotting those two teams where they did, specifically one over the other, and just kind of their general observations about the seasons those two teams have had so far.

BOO CORRIGAN: Yeah, I think I said it on TV, we understand that it matters, and the amount of time that we spend 5 through 25, if you will, is an enormous amount of time to make sure that we get this right.

From a Tulane standpoint, to go on the road and beat Memphis really stood out to the committee. Michael Pratt, their quarterback, did not play against Ole Miss, even though it was a 17-point game. That was a factor there.

From an Air Force standpoint, Coach Calhoun has really done a great job leading the nation in rushing. Their defense has played really well.

A little bit came down to their big win over Wyoming and kind of that overall strength of schedule as you look at it, and those are the reasons that we had Tulane at 24 and Air Force at 25.

Q. I know there's a lot of metrics that you mentioned you looked at. In many of them, Georgia's strength of schedule did not compare favorably with some of the other top teams. Did the committee overlook that to some extent putting the Bulldogs No. 2? Could you go over some of the attributes that led to you elevating Georgia that high in the rankings despite the strength of schedule rank?

BOO CORRIGAN: Well, I think you look at the rivalry game with Florida and the way they played the game against Kentucky, and to win that 51-13, added to the fact that Brock Bowers did not play against Florida, their overall team makeup, team speed, defense allowing about 14 points a game, in total body of work, you've got to be able to make these decisions as you're looking at it, and again, the beauty of it is to have Coach Taylor, Coach Ault, Jim Grobe and have Coach Grobe in there as former coaches and their ability to talk about what they see as well really enhances kind of the overall experience of everyone in the room to make sure that we're getting this right.

Q. What is the primary reason why the Michigan sign



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stealing issue that's now under investigation, why wasn't it part of the conversation?

BILL HANCOCK: You have to remember that these are allegations at this point and not facts, and so there's no substantive evidence that anything happened that might have affected the game. All this committee does is evaluate what happens on the field during games. That's why we are where we are.

Q. You mentioned Michigan's dominance. How much of a factor has been their strength of schedule in ranking them third?

BOO CORRIGAN: It's a factor in what we're looking at. Again, when you can point to from a Georgia standpoint Florida and Kentucky, with Ohio State when you can point to Penn State, the win at Notre Dame, the win at Wisconsin, while UNLV, Rutgers, Nebraska, Minnesota are good wins, I think looking at it in total, even with the dominance offensively and defensively, defensively giving up about six points a game, it really turned the committee's head from that standpoint, but that was the reason they came in at third.

Q. How did you guys work through the round-robin basically with Louisville, Pittsburgh and Notre Dame, where that's Louisville's loss, its convincing 51-point win over Pitt, and then the fact that Notre Dame's other loss, I understand a two-loss team, was somewhat early and somewhat controversial at the end against Ohio State?

BOO CORRIGAN: Well, again, I think there's head to head, as we've talked about before, is always going to be a factor, and I think the 33-20 win that Louisville had over Notre Dame, the additional loss to Ohio State, again, really good football teams as we're looking at it, but to this one, we talked a great deal about the Louisville win over Notre Dame, the Pitt game. For Louisville, their running back, I think he ended up with two carries and was out, but again, looking at the total body of work, we were more comfortable as a group with Louisville ahead of Notre Dame.

Q. I was wondering about the ranking between Texas, Alabama and Oklahoma. What kind of discussions did you guys have there, and how much did the match-up between Oklahoma and Texas play into that, given that Oklahoma won that game but they were ranked behind Texas?

BOO CORRIGAN: A lot of discussion. You go back to we want to get this right as we look at it. A wonderful win by Oklahoma, last-second drive to win this game. When you

factor in a two-loss Kansas team this past weekend, getting the win over Oklahoma, Kansas with the two losses to Texas and Oklahoma State, while they continue to improve and play better, body of work, if you will, looking at this, Texas over Alabama, winning there in Tuscaloosa, similar to Texas-Oklahoma but then add in the factor that Oklahoma lost that game to Kansas as well as a close game with UCF. But primarily the loss to Kansas.

Q. You guys brought it up with Brock Bowers being out with Georgia, them being down some players, how big of that was a factor, especially offensively with Ohio State with TreVeyon Henderson being in and out of the lineup and Emeka Egbuka being in and out of the lineup, how much of that did you take into account when thinking about Ohio State No. 1, especially when the offense hasn't necessarily looked as explosive as we've seen in the past? Did that matter at all for you guys?

BOO CORRIGAN: Yeah, no, it certainly is a factor. We look at all conditions around games and make sure that we have the latest information, whether that's coming from the conference, as we talk to the conferences.

But again, we still viewed Ohio State as the top team in the country based on their wins, based on their defense, and again, their offense is doing well enough to win games and be 8-0.

Q. With the transitioning teams, James Madison, Jacksonville State currently not bowl eligible but could become bowl eligible by the end of the season, what's the logic in not including them in the potential Group of Five game if they do become bowl eligible at some point?

BILL HANCOCK: Well, you're right. The committee is instructed to rank the teams that are eligible without any conditions to compete in bowl games. The logic frankly is to not leave out other teams that are eligible.

The purpose of the rankings is to identify teams that are definitely able to play in postseason. So that's the logic.

Q. So if they were bowl eligible by the end of the regular season, would they then be included in the rankings?

BILL HANCOCK: It's a hypothetical question. We just don't get into hypothetical questions. Sorry.

Q. I know in the past you guys have talked about drawing lines, so to speak, or grouping teams as you rank them. I'm curious from the top if you could go



and discuss where maybe that top group was and kind of where the line is and how big the gap is between those groups.

BILL HANCOCK: I can talk about that. It's not appropriate, however, for us to talk about differences among teams and rankings. But I would say that the top four were in a group together. Washington because of their play in the last couple of weeks was a notch behind that group.

I hope that's helpful.

Q. You talked a good bit about Ohio State being No. 1 ahead of Michigan and Georgia because of its resume, the wins it has so far. I'm wondering if you can kind of explain maybe why Ohio State is there but Florida State and Washington with the big wins they have haven't done enough to also be ahead of Michigan and Georgia on resumes at this point?

BOO CORRIGAN: Again, I think as you look at the full body of work, Florida State being No. 4, the win over LSU, the win against Duke, kind of a front-loaded schedule, if you will, they've looked really good. Offensively putting up 41 points a game. Their defense is ranked in the top 20. But again, as we looked at it overall and went through the process, we came out with Ohio State 1, Georgia 2, Michigan 3, Florida State 4.

With regards to Washington, huge win over Oregon, who we have at No. 6, but in looking at that, the game most recently, two most recent games at home against Arizona State and on the road at Stanford from a committee standpoint gave us some pause and put them in at No. 5.

BRETT DANIELS: I'd like to thank everyone for their participation in tonight's call. I'd like to remind you that we will post transcripts of the call shortly on collegepressbox.com.

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