

College Football Playoff Media Conference

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Irving, Texas, USA

Hunter Yurachek

CFP Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. I'd like to welcome everyone to the third College Football Playoff Selection Committee teleconference for the 2025 season.

Joining us tonight is Rich Clark, the Executive Director of the College Football Playoff, along with Hunter Yurachek, College Football Playoff Selection Committee Chair.

Q. Hunter, I was just wondering what discussions did you guys have about Oklahoma and Oregon? Could you explain maybe the reasoning of Oregon being ahead of OU? Is that just due to Oregon having one less loss, or could you maybe explain those two resumes.

HUNTER YURACHEK: Good evening. Thank you for joining us. We had significant discussion of the teams 7 through 10, quite candidly, all grouped there together, comparing Oregon, Oklahoma, Notre Dame, and Alabama and the resumes of those teams.

Oregon, while their strength of schedule metric may not be as strong as an Oklahoma, we felt like they're a very strong team on both sides of the ball offensively and defensively. They rank in the top 10 in most of the statistical categories that we use in comparison to other teams.

They had a really big win at Iowa two weeks ago. Iowa was ranked in our top 25 previously. They won at Penn State. I know Penn State is not the same Penn State we expected them to be this year. Still it's a very challenging place to play, as evidenced by Indiana having to have a last second touchdown to win there a couple weeks ago.

There was significant discussion about that, but Oregon at 9-1 just stayed one spot ahead of Oklahoma at 8.

Q. Hunter, could you tell me or tell us what the committee's view is on Michigan and their resume this year?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I sure can. We feel Michigan at



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8-2 is a quality team. They've got two losses to two teams in our top 25. The loss earlier this year at No. 8 Oklahoma and a loss versus No. 15 Southern Cal. Quite honestly, that Southern Cal game and the Oklahoma game, we felt they were dominated in both of those games.

They've got some good wins on their resumes as well, the victory against Nebraska and then against Washington and of course the walk-off this past week against Northwestern.

So Michigan is a very strong team in our pool at 8-2 and currently ranked 18th, and the committee has a great deal of respect for them.

Q. I was just kind of wondering what led to Virginia staying put at No. 19 this week even after a blowout win at Duke. I guess kind of along those lines did Louisville's loss and that being one of Virginia's better wins hurt UVA?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think you just said it right there. Virginia had an impressive win against a Duke team that's at the top half of the ACC. Duke is now 5-5, and then Louisville with another loss fell out of our rankings. That was a significant win at the time for Virginia.

So you look at Virginia's resume, they are 9-2. Their schedule strength lagged behind some of the teams that are in front of them. Then the losses to NC State, and even Wake Forest at 7-3, I think impact where Virginia's currently ranked.

Q. Could you assess Alabama after their loss to OU and also kind of compare and contrast Alabama's resume versus Notre Dame?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I would be glad to. I will tell you that we probably spent more time in our committee room comparing two or three teams at that band with Oklahoma, Notre Dame, and Alabama. You're asking specifically about Notre Dame and Alabama, easier to compare because you had the head-to-head matchups last week with Alabama and Oklahoma.

Alabama had that string where they had four really strong wins at Georgia, against Vanderbilt, Missouri, and Tennessee. Then you look at Notre Dame, they've got a



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win against Southern Cal and a dominating win last week against a Pitt team that was ranked in our top 25.

Really where you break these teams down in the comparison, Notre Dame and Alabama, Notre Dame has losses to two teams that are within the top 13, a three-point loss against Miami to start the season and then a one-point loss versus Texas A&M.

Alabama actually has a two-point loss at home last week against Oklahoma, but they had that loss at the beginning of the season, 31-17 at Florida State, a team that's now 5-5. Florida State was up in that game 24-7. They held Alabama to less than 100 yards rushing in that game. That really was a sign of some of the struggles Alabama was going to have rushing the ball. You go back and look at Alabama's game against South Carolina where they scored two touchdowns late to win that game, and then the next game against LSU where they won both of those but didn't rush the ball for 100 yards. Then again against Oklahoma was not able to move the ball on the ground.

So you look at the games that Alabama has struggled in, starting the season against Florida State, where they struggled with the ball. That's two really good 8-2 teams, but I think you look at the losses of Notre Dame versus the losses of Alabama, and that was really one of the defining metrics that we used.

Q. I wanted to follow up on the Notre Dame-Miami question that was asked by Rece on ESPN. You mentioned one of the differences between Notre Dame and Miami being the quality of the opponents that beat them, the quality of the loss so to speak. I'm wondering is that sort of the main factor right now distinguishing Notre Dame and Miami, or are there other factors at play there that maybe you didn't mention on ESPN?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think there's some other factors where you have Utah, BYU, and Alabama in between Notre Dame and Miami. As we set up the pools to do our selection process, Miami and Notre Dame have not been grouped in the same pools to have that direct head-to-head comparison, where you would really use that metric to separate one team from the next.

So I think it's the separation that you have between those teams, similar to a separation you have right now between a Vanderbilt and Texas, where you have a head-to-head metric as well.

Q. I was just wondering what in your eyes made Tulane the most deserving Group of Five team to earn a rank? What impressed you the most, and what was

at the forefront of those discussions?

HUNTER YURACHEK: First and foremost, the American is a really good conference this year, a really top heavy conference. Then you look at Tulane's schedule, the fact that they have -- they went outside of their conference and played three Power 4 schools in Northwestern, Duke, and Ole Miss, winning two of those three games, then a very impressive win at Memphis and a win against East Carolina, which is really coming on late.

That's really what the committee saw with regards to Tulane as a team that checks in at 24 this week.

Q. Just to follow up again with Miami-Notre Dame comparisons, you mentioned that they're on the same comparable tier. What do the Hurricanes have to do to get to that point where they could potentially be in a comparable tier with Notre Dame?

HUNTER YURACHEK: First and foremost, Miami needs to continue to win the football games they have in front of them, and then things will happen. There's still a lot of football to be played with two more weeks in the regular season and then the championship week.

You look at the teams that are between Notre Dame and Miami right now, you've got Alabama that's got a game against Auburn coming up and then potentially an SEC Championship game. BYU has a couple of games remaining and then potentially a Big 12 Championship game. Then you've got Utah with a couple games.

So I would say Miami needs to continue to win, and then hope for some things ahead of them fall their way.

Q. Curious, I know A&M had a come from behind win this week, Indiana had a come from behind win two weeks ago. Was there conversations on both those games, how they were maybe similar and different, and how much maybe those two games factored into the discussion between A&M and Indiana?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I will tell you the committee, in evaluating the first half of A&M's game versus South Carolina, it did look very much like a No. 3 team, falling behind 30-3 and having four turnovers in that game. Then in the second half they looked everything like a No. 3 team in the country, dominating the second half with outscoring South Carolina 28-0, out gaining them 371 yards to 76 yards, holding South Carolina to 11 yards of total offense in the fourth quarter.

I mean, what the committee saw in both Indiana and Texas A&M, good teams find ways to win games when they don't



play their best, and that's what Indiana and Texas A&M both did, Indiana on the road at Penn State and Texas A&M at home this past weekend against South Carolina.

Q. I was going to ask about maybe if you could talk a little bit more about Texas A&M. Does that first half have the potential to come back and haunt them, or would that be just neutralized by the way they played in the third and fourth quarter?

HUNTER YURACHEK: From a committee standpoint, I think the second half definitively neutralized the way they played in the first half, especially when you find a way to win a game like that, when you are not very good and you're not your typical self in that first half.

Then how they dominated, I mean literally dominated, the second half, again, 370-plus total yards to 76, allowing 11 total yards in the fourth quarter. Really coming back with those 28 points and taking control of that game, they looked like a top three team in the second half of that game.

So I think it really just balances itself out, and of course the win helps and keeps them undefeated at 10-0.

Q. For the top four teams, what would a loss in the conference championship do to kind of affect their status with a first round bye, without a first round bye? Where does the committee stand on that?

HUNTER YURACHEK: We will just use the conference championship games as another data point to use in ranking our teams. It's hard to say if it will move a team up or down until we really have that data point and are able to compare that against other teams that play that weekend in conference championship games.

So it just becomes an extra point for those teams participating in the conference championship games.

Q. I was just curious, when you're looking at a team like Tulane that has that 22-point loss to UTSA, how that stacks up in comparison to maybe a JMU that is 9-1 but doesn't have that overall strength of schedule compared to a Tulane?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think that was the main differentiator between when we had some discussions about the Group of Six teams -- and James Madison was in that discussion this week -- it's really their strength of schedule. They played one Power 4 team, and they lost that game at Louisville 28-14. Then you look at the strength of Tulane's schedule, playing three Power 4 teams that they lost to, our sixth ranked team in Ole Miss, but

they beat Duke and beat Northwestern. They've got wins also in the league, in the American, a very strong league against Memphis and East Carolina.

The loss versus UTSA is a metric that is on Tulane's schedule. We have a lot of respect for James Madison and the team that they are, especially they're really good on the defensive side of the ball. But the strength of schedule is probably the biggest differentiator between Tulane and James Madison at this time.

Q. I had two questions about Miami. The first, just how much do common opponents potentially come into play when comparing teams? Just looking at Miami and Notre Dame's schedule, they have four common opponents with three of those games being basically in the next two weeks. Then the next question, basically what the committee's thought process was when considering Utah a spot above Miami?

HUNTER YURACHEK: Common opponents are one of the data points we use in comparing teams, so that will be something that we will -- obviously when you're comparing teams, whether it's Notre Dame or Miami, whatever two teams you're comparing, common opponents is one of the criteria we use.

In regards to Utah being ahead of Miami, I mean, Utah, they've lost two games this season, one to No. 5 Texas Tech, the other to No. 11 BYU. Comparatively, Miami's lost two games, one at home to an unranked Louisville and one on the road against an unranked SMU. So when you talk about two teams that are 8-2 and you don't really have a common opponent or a head-to-head matchup, you really look at the losses Utah has versus the losses that Miami has.

Utah right now, they are second in the country in their margin of victory in each of their games. They have played really good football moving forward. Obviously there's a 12 versus 13, that one spot apart, but I think the differentiator is the losses that Utah has versus the losses that Miami has.

Q. What is holding Georgia Tech back right now from moving up? Then what do they have to do moving forward to put themselves in contention to make the 12-team field?

HUNTER YURACHEK: When you look at Georgia Tech compared to the teams that are ahead of them, you're looking at Georgia Tech's strength of schedule, which right now their schedule strength is 88 in the country. They struggled this weekend, kicked a field goal late to win at a



Their quality wins, as we see them today, is against a Duke team that's 5-5, a Clemson team that's 5-5, and a Wake Forest team that's 7-3. But there was some controversy on the Wake Forest game. It's a win on Georgia Tech's side. So I think Georgia Tech, they need to continue to keep winning games and hope some things happen ahead of them that clear a path for them to move up.

Q. Two questions. First one is you detailed and went through the way Alabama lost that game to Florida State. Why was that not limiting them more until they picked up a second loss? Because they were comfortably at that No. 4 spot.

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think, when you look at how we have these teams ranked right now, Nicole, you've got three undefeated teams, 1, 2, 3. You have four one-loss teams at 4 through 7. Then you have that grouping of three really good 8-2 teams.

Then you start comparing Oklahoma, Notre Dame, and Alabama. As we talked about, obviously, the head-to-head, Oklahoma gets that over Alabama. Then you start to have comparable losses, Notre Dame against Miami and Texas A&M, and then Oklahoma for Alabama, and then of course that Florida State game.

When you have one loss, and Alabama was rolling there in the middle of their season with those four wins -- Georgia, Vanderbilt, Missouri, and Tennessee -- and while they've continued to win games, they struggled on the road and had to score two touchdowns late in winning at South Carolina. Again, that was a game they didn't run the ball very well.

They didn't look like the same Alabama team against LSU last weekend. They had a tough loss. They had some turnovers that came back to bite them, but they didn't run the ball very well in the game against Oklahoma.

Q. Not to put words in your mouth, but is it fair to say it's kind of coming back more into play because of how you've seen that team perform since? I'm just wondering which week 1 results impact the committee as they're evaluating teams in November more than others?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think it's just -- it's not that it's evaluated more than others, it's just a metric that we're -- not a metric, but a data point that we have in their schedule. After FSU's season, as it has played out, they're 5-5 and don't appear to be a very good team. They've lost some games that are not very good losses for Florida

State.

So how Florida State's season has continued to play out is impacting how that game looks as a loss for Alabama.

Q. In regards to you talked about kind of the top six, but let's say it's a late season loss for Ole Miss or Georgia. Obviously they still have had some of the toughest schedules in the country. How far down, especially let's say if it's right before a conference championship, would teams in that category fall down the top 12 or maybe out of the top 12 in regards to just how the season is going?

HUNTER YURACHEK: We would never project where a team would fall if they lose a game. We don't look ahead when we're ranking the teams on a weekly basis and what they have ahead of them. So we wouldn't project where a team may or may not fall if they lose a game here in the next week or two because there's a lot of other things that can happen in addition to a team in the top five or ten losing.

Q. Hunter, what are the differentiators that the committee sees currently that puts BYU between two-loss teams Oklahoma, Notre Dame, and Alabama?

HUNTER YURACHEK: It's really the way they looked in that game against Texas Tech. They were dominated on both sides of the ball in that game against Texas Tech. Then you look at their wins, they have a win over Utah, who's ranked 13th, but then their other wins are against -- what we would consider quality wins are against an unranked Iowa State team, Arizona, and East Carolina.

Then you look at a two-loss Alabama team that's got wins against No. 4 Georgia, No. 14 Vanderbilt, No. 21 Missouri, and No. 20 Tennessee. Notre Dame's got a win over 15th ranked Southern Cal, and then last week a dominating win on the road at Pitt, who's ranked. Then Oklahoma has wins at No. 18 Michigan, No. 20 Tennessee, and then at No. 10 Alabama.

I think it's just the number of quality wins that are with those two-loss teams ahead of them and how they looked in that game two weeks ago in Texas Tech -- against Texas Tech.

Q. Hunter, thank you for doing this. Just curious, around the Big 12, how the committee views Utah and BYU together if only one of them were to make the conference championship game and how that would affect the losing team? Also, Arizona State dropping back into the top 25, about how the committee views them in that game against Texas Tech specifically?



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HUNTER YURACHEK: The first part of your question regarding the conference championship game, whoever makes the Big 12 Conference championship game -- and I don't know the scenarios of who gets it in and who doesn't -- but it's just another data point that we would compare the participants of those games into the other members of the top 25. So it's just another data point we use, so it's hard to say how it's going to impact one team participating in it versus another team that doesn't participate.

The committee has a lot of respect for Arizona State. They've had a lot of injuries this year and continue to play through those. They're the one team that's beaten Texas Tech, who's ranked No. 5, a team that is highly regarded by this committee. They also have a win at Iowa State, and then they've got losses to a Houston team that is now ranked 23rd, a Utah that's 12, and a good Mississippi State team that is 5-6, but a team that's played very well this year against their SEC schedule.

Q. I wanted to get your perspective on how USC is being looked at. Obviously they had a couple of losses, but there are bounce-backs when they're coming off of those losses. How is USC being viewed as far as the committee is concerned as they enter the last two games of the regular season?

HUNTER YURACHEK: The committee had -- Southern Cal has continued to climb. They had a big win against Iowa, who is in our top 25 last week. They had a dominating win against Michigan, who is ranked 18th. To go on the road and beat Nebraska, quality wins for them. Their losses were walk-off field goal at Illinois, who's 21st in the rankings this week, and against Notre Dame.

The committee's got a lot of respect for Southern Cal. They're 8-2. They may be playing their best football right now at this point in the season. So they're in a good spot at 15, and the committee really likes that team.

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to thank everyone for joining us tonight. This will conclude the teleconference this evening. A reminder, next week the CFP Rankings Show will return to its regular time on ESPN at 6:00 p.m. Central, and this media teleconference will start at 6:45.

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