

# College Football Playoff Media Conference

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**Hunter Yurachek**

**Rich Clark**

CFP Media Conference



COLLEGE FOOTBALL  
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THE MODERATOR: 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. I wanted to ask about Tulane, and I was just wondering that based on what they have, what they have done this year and where they currently stand, do you see any scenario where if they were to win out, that they could get jumped in the rankings for that G5 spot?**

HUNTER YURACHEK: We don't try to predict what's going to happen in future games. Tulane is in a really good position at No. 24. They are the highest-ranked group of 6 teams. I know they have a game to close out the season and most likely the American Athletic Conference Championship Game, and I think as long as Tulane takes care of their business, they would be in good shape.

Again, we don't look for it as a committee. We just rank each week based on the previous week's results.

**Q. Hunter, do you see Texas Tech or does the committee see Texas Tech as being closer to cracking the Top 4 or closer to the teams, say, 6 and 7?**

HUNTER YURACHEK: I'd say at 5 they are very close to 4 and very close to 6. That's not to be funny. Texas Tech is a really good team. You look at their margin of victory, leads the country at 33.8. They have ten wins of 20-plus points. They are in the Top 5 in relative scoring offense and relative scoring defense. They are a really strong team, as are Georgia and Ole Miss and Oregon, the one-loss teams right there.

We talk about all four of those teams at great length and great depth, each and every week, four really good one-loss teams grouped there together.

**Q. For about a decade, I asked Bill Hancock if margin of victory was a consideration in the committee meeting, and for a decade I was told no, in part because the committee didn't want to incentivize running up scores. There was a less direct answer when I asked if margin of defeat was a consideration. So the inference became: Was it as important as how much you lost a game by. Can you explain the role of both of those things, margin of victory and margin of defeat in terms of 2025 version of the committee process?**

RICH CLARK: Yeah, this is Rich. Thanks for that question. I will say that the committee does a lot of video watching. They watch so many games on videos, and I will say, how much -- how well a team does on the field. Sometimes margin of victory does come into play in the discussion but it is not a hard-and-fast rule. They look at the whole game, the entirety of their performance -- of the team's performance..

Now, in our data, with our strength of schedule, margin of victory is taken into account up to 24 points, and that is accounted for in our data but only as it pertains to strength of schedule.

So I will say, it's not overly weighted in our discussions, but certainly it's a factor when we're watching a game and it's a small factor in some of our data.

**Q. Rich, can I follow-up and then just ask about the margin of defeat factor and what the topic -- or how that might come up if it does come up at all?**

RICH CLARK: I'll say that there's a difference when a team gets beat 70-7 versus a team that get beat by a walk-off field goal.

So you know, when they are watching -- when the committee watching that game, there's always a -- an assessment of how well they played in the game, and if they do lose, how badly did they lose? Were they competitive in the game or were they not? I would say that it's a factor.



**Q. It's kind of a matter of record, I think in your first teleconference, when we talked about strength of schedule when you brought that up, you mentioned, I think the quote was: "It's the one that cross cuts across conferences' and teams' schedules, and it gives us a look so we can compare teams more accurately based on their strength of schedule. It helps us to look at teams in a more fair manner."**

And the reason I reference that quote is because there's a few instances where SEC teams have the same record as teams in other conferences but a stronger strength of schedule. I'm wondering, what's canceling that metric out?

I know that we talked about it being more enhanced this last off-season but the results wouldn't seem to indicate that with instances with fewer SEC teams and teams from other conferences.

**RICH CLARK:** I'll say that that one metric of many metrics that we use. It's one that helps us compare teams that haven't played against each other, and to look at their schedules, and give us an assessment of the games that they have played to that point.

But it is just one of many different factors that the committee takes into account when they are assessing these teams.

**Q. What would be other metrics that are -- that are maybe perhaps preventing some of these SEC teams from being ranked ahead of teams with similar records from other conferences that haven't played as strong a schedule? Like, for example, what would be some of those other metrics, keeping Alabama behind Notre Dame, when we look at the comparative schedules?**

**RICH CLARK:** Well, I think one of the most important factors for this committee in particular is they watch the games, and they watch how a team performs. They watch them offensively, defensively, special teams, that's an important factor. They look at the 12 correlative statistics that really are statistically indicative of strong football teams. They look at those very heavily.

They do look at schedule strength and record strength. So there are several different things that the committee looks and they discuss them in great detail to come up with their rankings.

So it's really hard to put your finger on one thing to say that that's the deciding factor.

**Q. I have two questions that relate to Miami. The first is: Are there any other factors beside the two losses that are keeping Miami below other two-loss teams,**

**like number of home games, they have had, the eye test or anything else? And with SMU competing potentially for a spot in the SEC title game, did that impact how the committee views Miami's two losses?**

**HUNTER YURACHEK:** I'll take your latter question first. Just looking at the SMU piece now that they are ranked, that's a loss against a Top-25 team.

So it definitely is viewed differently than it was versus ranked an unranked MSU team.

The eye test, I don't think Miami has ever had a problem passing the eye test. When we watch the games and we watch them on till film, Miami is a really good team. What we have talked about is a committee in the middle of the season, Miami lacks some consistency especially on the offensive side of the ball it.

Appears in the last three weeks they have fixed that, especially Carson Beck is back to the Carson Beck I think that really played those first five games where he has in the last 80 percent of his passes, he's completed 855 yards of passing, eight TDs and no interceptions in those three wins they have had against Syracuse and Virginia Tech and NC State.

So Miami, again, is a team very much on the rise. They have moved six spots since the initial pole has come out, and they are really the highest climber in our Top-25 during that time.

**Q. Hunter, I wanted to clarify something you said. Make sure I heard it correctly. If Lane Kiffin announces he is leaving after the Mississippi State game, and the school decides it will not allow him to coach in the playoffs, the Rebels cannot be negatively impacted because the committee has not seen Ole Miss play any games without him. Is that correct?**

**HUNTER YURACHEK:** We'll take care of that when it happens. I mean, we don't look ahead. It is the loss of a player, loss of a key coach is in the principles of how we rank the teams.

But again, we don't have a data point for Ole Miss without their head coach.

**Q. I understand that. I'll follow up. I'm not asking you to look ahead. I'm simply asking you to tell me, if you have not seen a team play without its head coach, and its team is no longer the head coach, based on not having a data point of seeing them play without the head coach, are you saying you can't negatively impact them? It sounds like to me that's what you're**

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saying. I just want to clarify that. I'm not asking you to say whether he's leaving, whether he's staying, but simply, if the coach is not there and they have not played any games without him, you can't penalize them because you haven't seen them play without him.

HUNTER YURACHEK: It could be considered by the committee.

**Q. I was just wondering, how likely is it if Michigan gets a win over the No. 1 team on Saturday, Ohio State, that Michigan would make the Playoff?**

HUNTER YURACHEK: We'll rank the teams 1 through 25. Your path to the Playoffs is being one of the five highest-ranked conference champions or one of the seven highest-ranked at-large teams.

Where Michigan falls with a win at Ohio State, I can't predict that.

**Q. Question about Georgia. What impresses me the most about the Bulldogs since their loss to Alabama, they have been the highest-ranked one-loss team.**

HUNTER YURACHEK: You look at Georgia, they have got some impressive wins over Tennessee, Ole Miss and Texas.

And then you look at on both sides of the ball; they are really strong, obviously, defensively, and I think that quarterback is really coming into their own.

Their relative scoring offense is in the Top-25 in the country. Their relative scoring defense is in the Top-10. They have been very consistent on both sides of the ball and found ways to win those close games.

**Q. I know there's a lot of football team left to be played but the teams currently in the top three were to finish with one loss specifically in their conference championship games, how is the committee evaluating the possibility that a team ranked 5 through 7 could potentially move into one of those spots?**

HUNTER YURACHEK: Again, we'll evaluate all of those games at that point in time. For some teams, it will be 1 through 13; we'll have 13 data points to evaluate, and we'll evaluate that in that final ranking process based on what happens in the championship games that weekend.

**Q. I think you touched a little bit on Notre Dame earlier, but can you get into more about how the pod system works? Last week it sounded like they weren't really in the same realm as Notre Dame. This week on**

**TV, it sounded like you did compare them in some way.**

HUNTER YURACHEK: I'm sorry, could you repeat your question?

**Q. Sure. I was wondering if you could go into a little bit more detail about how the pod system of comparing teams works? Last week it sounded like Notre Dame and Miami weren't really close enough to be looked at head-to-head, and tonight on TV, you mentioned that they had been looked at head-to-head, and I'm just a little confused of how that works.**

HUNTER YURACHEK: And "pods" is a bad word. There's groupings of teams that are compared throughout the rankings.

And as Notre Dame and Miami -- of course you've got the head-to-head but that's only one data point.

The committee has felt like, as you watched Notre Dame on film, watched their games throughout year, that they have been consistent, even in the early-season games that they lost by three in Miami and by one point to Texas A&M.

Miami is a team that really appears -- looks like the Miami team that started 5-0 and what they have been able to do over the last three weeks in winning those three games and looking really good on the offensive side of the ball.

And so we compare a number of things, when we're looking at teams that are closely ranked together. And so you've got some teams that between Miami and Notre Dame, such as an Alabama, such as a BYU, that we're also comparing Miami to.

**Q. You guys the last couple weeks have cited some of these metrics with Oregon and different teams. For Oregon, for example, them putting up 750 yards on Rutgers, is that weighed equally in the committee's eyes as putting up -- a game against Indiana or games against teams that are near to the committee's Top-25 or near to the top of the Big Ten? Like, does each data point count the same in these cumulative metrics that you're citing?**

HUNTER YURACHEK: Absolutely not. You're always taking into consideration the strength of the team, the opponent, and how those statistics, either positive or negative, in each game.

So you're not giving more credit because you run up the score or score more or have more yardage on a team that's not as high from a strength ranking as a team that



may be in our Top-25.

**Q. Another hypothetical question. I know you enjoy those so much. I was going to ask about Georgia Tech's possibility if they do beat Georgia on Friday, and both teams end with an identical 10-2 records, would they be close enough to be considered head-to-head as far as the rankings, or are they kind of too far apart, as Georgia Tech's only kind of chances is a far-fetched ACC Championship scenario?**

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think it would be very hard for Georgia Tech to jump that far from 23 with a win on Saturday.

But, again, can't predict what could happen. We'll just evaluate the games that happen this weekend and rank the teams 1 through 25.

THE MODERATOR: Like to thank everyone for joining us tonight.

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