

College Football Playoff Media Conference

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Irving, Texas, USA

Hunter Yurachek

CFP Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome everyone to the final College Football Playoff Selection Committee teleconference for the 2025 season. Joining us this afternoon is Rich Clark, the executive director of the College Football Playoff, along with Hunter Yurachek, the College Football Playoff Selection Committee chair.

At this point we'll begin the question-and-answer session.

Q. Hunter, just curious with the discussions in the committee room if there was ever any talk about flipping Texas A&M and Ole Miss, or did that just stand pat?

HUNTER YURACHEK: Yeah, that just really stood pat. Those teams 5 through 8, none of whom played this weekend in any type of championship game scenario, we didn't feel like we had anything from the championship games that were played that impacted the standing of Ole Miss versus Texas A&M.

Q. Hunter, there's obviously a lot of people criticizing the weekly rankings show and maybe some inconsistencies between that and the final. As someone who leads this committee and has been on it for a while, do you think that the job would be easier if there were fewer of those every week and situations that you guys have to discuss?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think what happens over the course of the five or six weeks that we have this show, it really sets the expectations, allows us to share a little bit of a peek behind the curtain of how we're ranking teams from week to week.

Obviously college football has the most passionate fan bases across the country. Everyone can spin the metrics in favor of the team or teams that they support. So you're always going to have controversy.

That's why we debated for so long 9, 10 and 11 until the early morning hours and woke up at sunrise to do the



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same thing to try and make sure we got it right.

I don't think that having less calls is going to change that perception.

Q. Just wondering what went into the decision to keep Ohio State above Georgia for that No. 2 ranking and just what the discussion was like around those games with Ohio State coming off the loss and Georgia winning its title game?

HUNTER YURACHEK: Yeah, you had a 1 versus 2 match-up in the Big Ten, Indiana and Ohio State, a hotly contested game. Indiana won by 3 but Ohio State missed a late field goal that could have potentially tied that game and sent it into overtime. They had another failed 4th down conversion there in the second half. I thought that game was really, really close.

Then when you look at comparatively Georgia to Ohio State, their schedule strengths are relatively similar as are their record strengths, but statistically, especially on the offensive and defensive side of the ball, Ohio State looks a little bit better on the statistical side. So that's why the committee chose to give the nod to Ohio State over Georgia in that 2-3 setting.

Q. I was curious, you guys dropped BYU after losing the conference championship game, but you didn't drop Alabama. I was just curious, why were those situations different?

HUNTER YURACHEK: The biggest difference in those two situations was the fact that Alabama had already beaten Georgia at Georgia earlier in the year. BYU had that same opportunity at Texas Tech earlier in the year, and BYU did not perform and look great in either one of those games versus Texas Tech, the one that was played about four weeks ago and then of course yesterday's game. That was the biggest difference is Alabama had that big win at Georgia, which is arguably the best win of any team this season.

Q. To follow up on that, in the last two games, Alabama won a close game at Auburn, a team with a losing record, and then lost by a big margin against



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Georgia. How would the committee justify moving Alabama up one spot in the rankings over the course of the last two weeks based on the results of those games?

HUNTER YURACHEK: Yeah, last week I spoke about the committee felt strongly that when you're comparing each week, the debate between Notre Dame and Alabama was strong and robust with arguments from the committee members on both sides. Great respect for both of those teams, but felt like last week going to a rival Auburn and the way Alabama played, especially in the first half of that game and then finding a way late in the fourth quarter to win that game was a feather in their cap above Notre Dame's going out to the West Coast and playing in a less hostile environment and doing really what they should have done against Stanford.

Q. Hunter, just wanted to ask how you guys landed on putting Ohio State at the Cotton Bowl and if the prospect of Miami potentially getting to play at home in the quarterfinal had any impact on that?

HUNTER YURACHEK: Yes, absolutely. Looking at the potential second-round match-ups for Texas A&M or for Ohio State and either Texas A&M or Miami, the fact that Miami, if they had won that game, would have had a huge advantage playing on their home field in the Orange Bowl, where if Texas A&M wins that game, playing in the Cotton Bowl while in Texas is a true neutral-site field. For that reason, that's how we assigned Ohio State to the Cotton Bowl.

Q. I was wondering, what was the committee's discussion around putting Alabama at 9 versus leaving them at 10 and where you have Miami ranked? And what was the comparison there that ultimately led to that decision?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I think a couple things really stood out to us over the last 24 hours as we compared Alabama to both Notre Dame and Miami. Alabama's schedule strength was the highest of any team in the top 11, and also their win at Georgia 24-21 earlier this season, arguably the best win for any team, and they also had a win against Vanderbilt and then a previous win at Missouri and Tennessee, both of whom had been ranked in our top 25 at various points this year.

Q. Hunter, you mentioned on ESPN that you urged everyone else on the committee to go back and rewatch the Miami-Notre Dame game from the beginning of the year. When you guys did discuss that game in hindsight, what were some of the major points, aside from obviously the Miami victory? What

were some of the major points about that game that came up?

HUNTER YURACHEK: Really how Miami's defense dominated Notre Dame's running game, where Notre Dame had really been for the rest of the season, their running game with that dual threat that they had there at running back dominated most of the other teams they played. But Notre Dame's star running back was held to 33 yards in that game.

Then there was observation from the coaches in the room where Notre Dame did a lot of chasing of some of the athletic receivers, especially on the Miami side, and it just felt like there was a little bit more athleticism on the side of Miami versus Notre Dame. Then the fact that Miami's defense really stifled Notre Dame's running game like nobody else did the entire season.

Q. Hunter, Alabama's run game was already a much-talked-about point on the committee the last two weeks. It was even more abysmal in the title game. Did the fact that Jam Miller was absent but will be back in postseason play a part in not moving Alabama down?

HUNTER YURACHEK: It did not. We don't try to look ahead and see who's coming back from injuries because we can't confirm that, but I would say that that was something that was -- as we looked at the running game that Alabama had versus Georgia, that was a point of consideration, that they did not have a couple of their running backs that they normally had during the course of the season, plus they faced a Georgia defense that just really played lights out for the majority of that game.

Q. Hunter, do you think this whole process would be easier if you didn't have to factor in these conference title games that sort of seem to have different meanings for different teams in different years?

HUNTER YURACHEK: I mean, that's a process in consideration. Not to not answer your question for the management committee. Again, the role of the Selection Committee is to rank the teams 1 through 25, and then from that you develop your College Football Playoff bracket with the five highest ranked conference champions and the seven highest at-large teams. So that's what we do until the management committee tells us to do something different.

Q. Is there any consideration given to trying to avoid rematches in the first round, because obviously you have Oklahoma playing Alabama again and Tulane playing Ole Miss.

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HUNTER YURACHEK: There's absolutely no consideration in the room for that. We rank the teams, again, 1 through at that, and then as those rankings come out, we will place the five highest coverage champions into the bracket and then we will place the seven highest at-large teams accordingly into the bracket, so there's no thought as to who could play who in any round throughout the playoff.

THE MODERATOR: That will conclude this afternoon's call. I'd like to thank everyone for joining us throughout the season. We will post this transcript on collegepressbox.com shortly and look forward to seeing you in Miami for the championship game. Thank you all for covering college football.

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