The NFL has long championed the concept of parity, and the Football Championship Subdivision boasts it, too. The FCS may even have better officiating as well. The parity is evident with not one, not two, but three conferences boosting

five teams each in The Sports Network FCS Top 25 on Monday. Reigning national champion North Dakota State continues to strengthen its No. 1 ranking, but the field stands wide open behind the Bison. The Missouri Valley Football Conference, CAA Football and the Big Sky Conference all have five teams in the rankings, and the other major FCS conference, the Southern Conference, has four ranked teams again this week.

The Southland Conference always garners a lot of national respect, and it has three ranked teams, including this week's biggest mover, Central Arkansas, which rose nine spots to No. 16 after its upset of Sam Houston State, last year's national runner-up to North Dakota State.

North Dakota State (3-0) collected 154 of the 169 first-place votes - over 91 percent - as well as 4,201 points following its 66-7 trouncing of Prairie View A&M in its final non-conference game before entering the Missouri Valley.

"We've got a very good football team," head coach Craig Bohl said, "and we're going to get tested as we come down the stretch of the Valley play."

Joining the Bison in the Top 25 from the Missouri Valley were No. 3 Youngstown State (4-0), No. 13 Illinois State (4-0), No. 14 Northern Iowa (1-3) and No. 25 South Dakota State (3-1), which moved into the Top 25 for the first time since the Sept. 13, 2010 rankings.

Youngstown State, behind quarterback Kurt Hess, posted one of this past weekend's biggest wins - a 42-35 triumph over Northern Iowa. North Dakota State next travels to Northern Iowa on Saturday and hosts Youngstown State on Oct. 6. Two-time defending Big Sky co-champion Montana State (4-0) remained at No. 2 after it opened conference play with a 41-16 win over Northern Colorado.

Montana State's Big Sky brethren in the rankings were No. 7 Eastern Washington (2-1), No. 21 Montana (2-2), No. 22 Northern Arizona (3-1) and No. 23 Cal Poly (3-0). Northern Arizona ended a 14-game losing streak to Montana, 41-31, to move into the Top 25. Cal Poly also made its first appearance in the poll this season.

Old Dominion (4-0) used its wild 64-61 win over New Hampshire to move up one spot to No. 4 - the Monarchs' highest ranking since beginning its startup program in 2009. Joining ODU from the CAA in the rankings were No. 5 James Madison (3-1), No. 8 Delaware (4-0), No. 12 Towson (2-1) and No. 20 New Hampshire (2-2).

The SoCon was represented by No. 6 Wofford (3-0), No. 10 Georgia Southern (2-1), No. 11 The Citadel (3-1) and No. 17 Appalachian State (2-2). Despite its 24-20 loss at Central Arkansas, No. 9 Sam Houston State (1-2) remained ahead of the No. 16 Bears (3-1), who pulled the upset behind junior quarterback Wynrick Smothers' last-minute touchdown pass.

No. 24 McNeese State (3-1) also remained in the rankings despite losing its Southland opener at Southeastern Louisiana.

The other teams in the poll were two-time defending Patriot League champion Lehigh (4-0) at No. 15, defending Big South champion Stony Brook (3-1) at No. 18 and Ohio Valley Conference favorite Eastern Kentucky (3-1) at No. 19.

Dropping from the Top 25 following losses were Indiana State, Maine and Jacksonville State. A national panel of sports information and media relations directors, broadcasters, writers and other dignitaries select the Top 25. A first-place vote is worth 25 points, a second-place vote 24 points, all the way down to one point for a 25th-place vote.
During the regular season, the Top 25 is released every Monday afternoon, except for the final weekend of the regular season, when it will be released Sunday morning, Nov. 18, prior to the selection of the FCS playoff field. The Sports Network will release a final Top 25 following the FCS championship game, which will be held Jan. 5 in Frisco, Texas.

The Sports Network FCS Top 25
College Football Poll

	Team	**(First-place votes)**	**2012 Record**	**Points**	**Previous Rank**
1.	North Dakota State Bison	(154)	3-0	4201	1
2.	Montana State Bobcats	(5)	4-0	3955	2
3.	Youngstown State Penguins	(10)	4-0	3889	4
4.	Old Dominion Monarchs		4-0	3629	5
5.	James Madison Dukes		3-1	3399	6
6.	Wofford Terriers		3-0	3219	7
7.	Eastern Washington Eagles		2-1	2964	9
8.	Delaware Blue Hens		4-0	2617	12
9.	Sam Houston State Bearkats		1-2	2399	3
10.	Georgia Southern Eagles		2-1	2379	11
11.	The Citadel Bulldogs		3-1	2351	10
12.	Towson Tigers		2-1	2239	13
13.	Illinois State Redbirds		4-0	2223	15
14.	Northern Iowa Panthers		1-3	1899	8
15.	Lehigh Mountain Hawks		4-0	1785	16
16.	Central Arkansas Bears		3-1	1784	25
17.	**Appalachian State Mountaineers**		**2-2**	**1615**	**17**
18.	Stony Brook Seawolves		3-1	1318	20
19.	Eastern Kentucky Colonels		3-1	1182	21
20.	New Hampshire Wildcats		2-2	970	18
21.	Montana Grizzlies		2-2	864	14
22.	Northern Arizona Lumberjacks		3-1	836	NR
23.	Cal Poly Mustangs		3-0	651	NR
24.	McNeese State Cowboys		3-1	384	19
25.	South Dakota State Jackrabbits		3-1	371	NR

Others receiving votes: Harvard 272, Tennessee State 246, Samford 237, Albany 235, North Dakota 175, UT Martin 116, Indiana State 74, Richmond 71, Alabama A&M 65, Jacksonville State 57, Lafayette 56, Stephen F. Austin 53, Maine 38, Bethune-Cookman 21, Villanova 18, Sacramento State 17, South Carolina State 16, Southern Utah 9, Norfolk State 5, Howard 5, Eastern Illinois 5, Jacksonville 3, Monmouth 3, Georgetown 2, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 2, Tennessee Tech 1.

Photo Courtesy: Steven Miller, ASU Athletics