Written by Craig Haley
Monday, 01 October 2012 17:36

The Sports Network FCS Top 25 on Monday was as much about who wasn't in the rankings as it was who was in. The usual powers were leading the way, with defending FCS national champion North Dakota State sitting No. 1 again ask

it heads into Saturday's Missouri Valley Football Championship showdown against No. 3 Youngstown State.

But perennial power Montana was outside the Top 25 rankings, ending a run of 195 straight appearances dating to the Nov. 2, 1998 poll. The perennial national power Grizzlies, who have won two FCS (then Division I- AA) titles, been the runner-up five times and ruled over the Big Sky Conference for decades, is off to a 2-3 start this season.

Ranked No. 21 a week ago, Montana fell out of the rankings after it let a late lead at Big Sky rival Eastern Washington slip away to a 32-26 loss Saturday. The Grizzlies, under first-year coach Mick Delaney, return to action this weekend at Northern Colorado, trying to avoid their first three-game losing streak since a span of the 2005 and '06 seasons.

The biggest game of the weekend will be North Dakota State hosting Youngstown State in a matchup of 4-0 teams. The Bison's only loss in the last two seasons was at home against YSU last November. NDSU's hold on the top ranking remained strong. The Bison, who posted a 33-21 victory at rival Northern Iowa on Saturday, received 156 of the 169 first- place votes - 92.3 percent - and 4,204 points.

Montana State (5-0) was second and had six first-place votes. Youngstown State was third with seven first-place votes. In fact, the top seven teams went unchanged as CAA Football programs Old Dominion (5-0) and James Madison (3-1) were ranked No. 4 and 5, respectively, followed by No. 6 Wofford (4-0) from the Southern Conference and No. 7 Eastern Washington (3-1). Georgia Southern (3-1) moved up two spots to No. 8, while Sam Houston State (2-2) and Illinois State (5-0) shared the No. 9 spot. Up next were No. 11 Lehigh (5-0), No. 12 Towson (2-2) and No. 13 Stony Brook (4-1), which beat Army, 23-3, on Saturday for its first-ever win over an FBS program.

New Hampshire (3-2) rose six spots to No. 14 following a 34-14 win over Delaware. With Montana falling out of the Top 25 rankings, UNH owns the longest active run of appearances at 118, dating to 2004. The Wildcats were followed by No. 15 Appalachian State (3-2), No. 16 Delaware (4-1), No. 17 Eastern Kentucky (4-1), No. 18 Northern Arizona (4-1), No. 19 The Citadel (3-2) and No. 20 Cal Poly (4-0).

Rounding out the poll were No. 21 McNeese State (4-1), No. 22 Northern Iowa (1-4), No. 23 South Dakota State (4-1), No. 24 Central Arkansas (3-2) and No. 25 Harvard (3-0), the defending Ivy League champion which returned to the rankings following a 52-3 rout of Holy Cross. 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	(156)	4-0	4204	1
2. Montana State Bobcats	(6)	5-0	3974	2
3. Youngstown State Penguins	(7)	4-0	3857	3
4. Old Dominion Monarchs		5-0	3691	4
5. James Madison Dukes		3-1	3380	5
6. Wofford Terriers		4-0	3321	6
7. Eastern Washington Eagles		3-1	3157	7
8. Georgia Southern Eagles		3-1	2663	10
9. Illinois State Redbirds		5-0	2602	13
9. Sam Houston State Bearkats		2-2	2602	9
11. Lehigh Mountain Hawks		5-0	2120	15
12. Towson Tigers		2-2	2076	12
13. Stony Brook Seawolves		4-1	2036	18
14. New Hampshire Wildcats		3-2	1847	20
15. Appalachian State Mountaineers		**3-2**	**1789**	**17**
16. Delaware Blue Hens		4-1	1697	8
17. Eastern Kentucky Colonels		4-1	1479	19
18. Northern Arizona Lumberjacks		4-1	1234	22
19. The Citadel Bulldogs		3-2	1192	11
20. Cal Poly Mustangs		4-0	1172	23
21. McNeese State Cowboys		4-1	723	24
22. Northern Iowa Panthers		1-4	691	14
23. South Dakota State Jackrabbits		4-1	618	25
24. Central Arkansas Bears		3-2	602	16
25. Harvard Crimson		3-0	426	NR

Others receiving votes: Tennessee State 400, Albany 266, Montana 261, Stephen F. Austin 119, Samford 119, Alabama A&M 114, Villanova 102, Indiana State 67, North Dakota 56,

Richmond 47, Jacksonville State 32, Eastern Illinois 27, Bethune-Cookman 25, UT Martin 25, Sacramento State 23, Chattanooga 22, Tennessee Tech 19, Howard 13, Southern Utah 8, Jacksonville 8, Southeastern Louisiana 6, Duquesne 5, Brown 4, Lafayette 2, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 1, South Dakota 1.

Photo Courtesy: Steven Miller, ASU Athletics