It can be easy to overlook teams from some of the smaller FCS conferences on a national level. That's not the case with the University of Albany, which on Monday joined The Sports Network FCS Top 25 for the first time since 2006 at No. 24. As expected, Eastern Washington was ranked No. 1, gaining 125 of the 164 first-place votes and 4,014 points. James Madison was the only Top 10 team to lose this past weekend and it dropped from No. 2 to 9, with Georgia Southern moving up to No. 2 behind top-ranked EWU, which also has an Eagles nickname.
Ironically, Albany (6-1), the Northeast Conference leader, moved into the poll off its bye week. But the Great Danes, who participated in the FCS playoffs for the first time last season, have been impressive against a solid schedule.
All of their wins have been by double figures, including against high-scoring Colgate from the Patriot League and Maine of CAA Football. Their only loss was by a touchdown to Youngstown State from the Missouri Valley Football Conference.
Bob Ford, the only coach Albany has known in 43 seasons, has 261 career wins, including 252 on the varsity level. His squad features senior running back Drew Smith, who leads the FCS with 15 touchdowns.
Albany's ranking is its first since the Sept. 25, 2006 poll and the first for an NEC team since Robert Morris was ranked 25th in the Nov. 8, 2010 poll.
Big Sky-leading Eastern Washington (6-1) held its top ranking by holding off Sacramento State, 31-28, on Saturday. The Eagles already have tied their win total of a year ago.
EWU was followed in the Top 10 by No. 2 Georgia Southern (6-1); No. 3 North Dakota State (6-1), the defending FCS national champion; No. 4 Montana State (6-1); No. 5 Sam Houston State (5-2); No. 6 Old Dominion (6-1); No. 7 Wofford (6-1); No. 8 Lehigh (8-0); No. 9 James Madison (5-2); and No. 10 Stony Brook (7-1), which posted its highest ranking ever.
Cal Poly (7-0), one of only two FCS unbeatens along with Lehigh, moved up three spots to No. 11 after it beat Portland State, 37-25.
Following the Mustangs were No. 12 New Hampshire (6-2), No. 13 Northern Arizona (6-1), No. 14 Central Arkansas (6-2), No. 15 Indiana State (6-2), No. 16 Appalachian State (5-3), No. 17 Illinois State (6-2), No. 18 Eastern Kentucky (6-2), No. 19 Villanova (6-2) and No. 20 Delaware (5-2).
Rounding out the poll were No. 21 Tennessee State (7-1), No. 22 Youngstown State (4-3), No. 23 Towson (3-4), Albany and No. 25 Richmond (5-3), which after beating James Madison, 35-29, moved into the rankings for the first time this season.
Richmond, which is enjoying a turnaround under first-year coach Danny Rocco, gave the CAA a national-best seven teams in the Top 25.
South Dakota State and Harvard dropped out of the Top 25 after suffering losses this past Saturday.
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. Eastern Washington Eagles	(125)	6-1	4014	1
2. Georgia Southern Eagles	(14)	6-1	3787	3
3. North Dakota State Bison	(13)	6-1	3746	4
4. Montana State Bobcats		6-1	3489	5
5. Sam Houston State Bearkats	(5)	5-2	3218	6
6. Old Dominion Monarchs		6-1	3089	7
7. Wofford Terriers		6-1	3060	8
8. Lehigh Mountain Hawks	(3)	8-0	2839	3
9. James Madison Dukes		5-2	2779	2
10. Stony Brook Seawolves	(1)	7-1	2704	10
11. Cal Poly Mustangs	(3)	7-0	2437	14
12. New Hampshire Wildcats		6-2	2434	12
13. Northern Arizona Lumberjacks		6-1	2083	16
14. Central Arkansas Bears		6-2	1654	19
15. Indiana State Sycamores		6-2	1416	21
16. Appalachian State Mountaineers		**5-3**	**1404**	**13**
17. Illinois State Redbirds		6-2	1394	11
18. Eastern Kentucky Colonels		6-2	1152	23
19. Villanova Wildcats		6-2	1135	24
20. Delaware Blue Hens		5-2	837	25
21. Tennessee State Tigers		7-1	786	17
22. Youngstown State Penguins		4-3	686	15
23. Towson Tigers		3-4	515	15
24. Albany Great Danes		6-1	483	NR
25. Richmond Spiders		5-3	456	NR

Others receiving votes: South Dakota State 337, Southern Illinois 306, UT Martin 246, Harvard 223, Bethune-Cookman 107, Alabama A&M 78, The Citadel 68, Sacramento State 59, McNeese State 55, Jacksonville State 39, Chattanooga 35, Northern Iowa 28, Stephen F. Austin 26, North Carolina Central 25, Princeton 24, Eastern Illinois 14, Samford 9, Montana 6, Southeastern Louisiana 6, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 4, Drake 3, Colgate 2, Fordham 2, North Dakota 1.....