

There's many differing opinions as to which team is best in the Football Championship Subdivision. In two weeks, it will start to sort itself out on the field with the beginning of a 20-team national playoff. As for now, teams are still staking their claim

to spots in The Sports Network FCS Top 25.

North Dakota State held onto the No. 1 ranking on Monday after posting a close victory on Saturday. But 10 of the top 11 teams in the rankings earned at least one first-place vote from the national panel of sports information and media relations directors, broadcasters, writers and other dignitaries who select the Top 25.

NDSU, the defending national champion, received 120 of the 166 first-place votes - 72.3 percent - and 4,072 points.

Of course, teams are trying to end NDSU's title reign, and Missouri State matched up well this past Saturday before the Bison won their Missouri Valley Football Conference game, 21-17. The Bison (8-1), who lead the FCS in scoring defense and total defense, will complete the regular season with a home game against South Dakota State this weekend - when first place in the conference will be on the line - and a Nov. 17 visit to Illinois State.

Eastern Washington, which was ranked No. 1 for two weeks last month, was the only team among the top 11 not to receive a first-place vote this week, although the Eagles claimed the No. 5 ranking. Their Big Sky Conference rival Montana State (8-1) moved up one spot to No. 2 following a loss by Georgia Southern. The Bobcats received 17 first-place votes and 3,887 points.

The rest of the Top 10 consisted of No. 3 Sam Houston State (7-2), No. 4 Old Dominion (8-1), Eastern Washington (7-2), No. 6 Stony Brook (9-1), No. 7 Georgia Southern (7-2), No. 8 Lehigh (9-0), No. 9 James Madison (7-2) and No. 10 New Hampshire (8-2). Lehigh is the only unbeaten team remaining in the FCS, and the Mountain Hawks will be put to the test this weekend when they host surging Colgate with the Patriot League's automatic bid to the playoffs on the line. Big Sky leader Northern Arizona (8-1), which received two first-place votes, was ranked No. 11. The Lumberjacks were followed by No. 12 Appalachian State (7-3), the team which defeated Georgia Southern, 31-28; No. 13 Wofford (7-2); No. 14 Central Arkansas (8-2); No. 15 Illinois State (8-2); No. 16 South Dakota State (7-2); No. 17 Towson (5-4); No. 18 Indiana State (7-3); No. 19 Cal Poly (7-2); and No. 20 Richmond (6-3).

Central Arkansas earned the Southland Conference's automatic bid to the playoffs this past Saturday, becoming the nation's first qualifier. Rounding out the rankings were No. 21 Villanova (6-3), No. 22 Eastern Kentucky (7-3), No. 23 UT Martin (7-2), No. 24 Tennessee State (8-2) and No. 25 Harvard (7-1).

Delaware and Albany fell from the Top 25 after losses, replaced by UT Martin and Harvard. UT Martin's appearance in the poll was its first since Nov. 17, 2008. In The Sports Network FCS 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

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FCS championship game, which will be held Jan. 5 in Frisco, Texas.
 The playoffs begin Nov. 24 with four first-round games.

**The Sports Network FCS Top 25
 College Football Poll**

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| Team (First-place votes) | 2012 Record | Points | Previous Rank |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1. North Dakota State Bison (120) | 8-1 | 4072 | 1 |
| 2. Montana State Bobcats (17) | 8-1 | 3887 | 3 |
| 3. Sam Houston State Bearkats (14) | 7-2 | 3643 | 4 |
| 4. Old Dominion Monarchs (2) | 8-1 | 3545 | 5 |
| 5. Eastern Washington Eagles | 7-2 | 3374 | 7 |
| 6. Stony Brook Seawolves (4) | 9-1 | 2996 | 9 |
| 7. Georgia Southern Eagles (1) | 7-2 | 2995 | 2 |
| 8. Lehigh Mountain Hawks (4) | 9-0 | 2975 | 8 |
| 9. James Madison Dukes (1) | 7-2 | 2880 | 10 |
| 10. New Hampshire Wildcats (1) | 8-2 | 2633 | 11 |
| 11. Northern Arizona Lumberjacks (2) | 8-1 | 2531 | 12 |
| 12. Appalachian State Mountaineers | 7-3 | 2392 | 15 |
| 13. Wofford Terriers | 7-2 | 2215 | 6 |
| 14. Central Arkansas Bears | 8-2 | 2108 | 13 |
| 15. Illinois State Redbirds | 8-2 | 1922 | 17 |
| 16. South Dakota State Jackrabbits | 7-2 | 1291 | 21 |
| 17. Towson Tigers | 5-4 | 1198 | 19 |
| 18. Indiana State Sycamores | 7-3 | 1143 | 14 |
| 19. Cal Poly Mustangs | 7-2 | 1057 | 16 |
| 20. Richmond Spiders | 6-3 | 976 | 22 |
| 21. Villanova Wildcats | 6-3 | 667 | 23 |
| 22. Eastern Kentucky Colonels | 7-3 | 603 | 25 |
| 23. Tennessee-Martin Skyhawks | 7-2 | 504 | NR |
| 24. Tennessee State Tigers | 8-2 | 377 | 18 |
| 25. Harvard Crimson | 7-1 | 366 | NR |

ASU No. 12 In TSN Poll/NDSU No.1

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Others receiving votes: Bethune-Cookman 290, Eastern Illinois 256, Samford 212, Albany 192, Delaware 149, McNeese State 106, Sacramento State 96, Youngstown State 51, Wagner 47, Chattanooga 42, Alabama A&M 37, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 34, Colgate 28, The Citadel 27, Southern Illinois 21, Northern Iowa 7, Jacksonville State 2, North Carolina Central 2, Butler 1.