

North Dakota State Returns To No. 1

Written by Craig Haley
Monday, 29 October 2012 12:29

The one vote closer than the expected presidential election is The Sports Network FCS Top 25. Reigning FCS national champion North Dakota

State edged Georgia Southern for the No. 1 ranking on Monday, although the No. 2 Eagles received more first-place votes.

North Dakota State claimed No. 1 after last week's top team, Eastern Washington, lost to Southern Utah, 30-27, this past Saturday and fell six spots to No. 7. Coach Craig Bohl's Bison were ranked No. 1 for five weeks earlier this season before they suffered their only loss to Indiana State on Oct. 13.

Now they're back with three weeks remaining in the regular season.

North Dakota State and Georgia Southern, both 7-1, were selected on all 165 ballots. North Dakota State received 59 first-place votes and 3,951 points, while Georgia Southern collected 76 first-place votes and 3,928 points.

To get to No. 1, North Dakota State leaped from its No. 3 spot in last week's poll over Georgia Southern. This past Saturday, the Bison defeated Southern Illinois, 23-17, in Missouri Valley Football Conference action, while Georgia Southern won at Chattanooga, 39-31, in triple overtime to maintain its lead in the Southern Conference race.

North Dakota State defeated Georgia Southern, 35-7, in the national semifinals last season. Montana State (7-1) received nine first-place votes while it moved up to No. 3. The Bobcats are coming off a 55-10 rout of North Dakota.

They are followed in the Top 10 by No. 4 Sam Houston State (6-2), which was top-ranked in the preseason; No. 5 Old Dominion (7-1); No. 6 Wofford (7-1); No. 7 Eastern Washington (6-2); No. 8 Lehigh (8-0), the only unbeaten team remaining in the FCS; No. 9 Stony Brook (8-1); and No. 10 James Madison (6-2), which dropped one spot after struggling to beat Georgia State, 28-21. Up next were four teams who are leading their conference races, No. 11 New Hampshire (7-2) from CAA Football, No. 12 Northern Arizona (7-1) from the Big Sky Conference, No. 13 Central Arkansas (7-2) from the Southland Conference and No. 14 Indiana State (7-2) from the Missouri Valley.

Appalachian State (6-3), which visits Georgia Southern for an important Southern Conference game on Saturday, moved up one spot to No. 15. The Mountaineers' No. 16 spot from a week ago was taken by Cal Poly (7-1), which fell five spots after suffering its first loss of the season, 35-29 at Sacramento State.

Illinois State (7-2) was No. 17, followed by No. 18 Tennessee State (8-1), No. 19 Towson (4-4) and No. 20 Albany (7-1). Rounding out the Top 25 were No. 21 South Dakota State (6-2), which re-entered the rankings after a one-week absence; No. 22 Richmond (5-3); No. 23 Villanova (6-3) and Delaware (5-3), who shared the spot; and No. 25 Eastern Kentucky (6-3).

Youngstown State fell from the Top 25 after losing to South Dakota State, 41-28. 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

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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

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□□□ Team□□□□□□□□□□ (First-place votes) Record Points Previous Rank

1.	North Dakota State Bison (59)	7-1	3951	3
2.	Georgia Southern Eagles (76)	7-1	3928	2
3.	Montana State Bobcats (9)	7-1	3714	4
4.	Sam Houston State Bearkats (9)	6-2	3365	5
5.	Old Dominion Monarchs (2)	7-1	3344	6
6.	Wofford Terriers	7-1	3210	7
7.	Eastern Washington Eagles	6-2	3112	1
8.	Lehigh Mountain Hawks (4)	8-0	2940	8
9.	Stony Brook Seawolves (4)	8-1	2775	10
10.	James Madison Dukes	6-2	2741	9
11.	New Hampshire Wildcats	7-2	2529	12
12.	Northern Arizona Lumberjacks (2)	7-1	2356	13
13.	Central Arkansas Bears	7-2	1962	14
14.	Indiana State Sycamores	7-2	1863	15
15.	Appalachian State Mountaineers □□□□□□	6-3 □□□□	1679 □□□□□□	16
16.	Cal Poly Mustangs	7-1	1626	11
17.	Illinois State Redbirds	7-2	1546	17
18.	Tennessee State Tigers	8-1	1098	21
19.	Towson Tigers	4-4	843	23
20.	Albany Great Danes	7-1	834	24
21.	South Dakota State Jackrabbits	6-2	734	NR
22.	Richmond Spiders	5-3	579	25
23.	Delaware Blue Hens	5-3	453	20
23.	Villanova Wildcats	6-3	453	19
25.	Eastern Kentucky Colonels	6-3	376	18

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Others receiving votes: Sacramento State 367, UT Martin 274, Harvard 231, Eastern Illinois 188, Bethune-Cookman 155, McNeese State 73, Southern Illinois 66, Youngstown State 60, Jacksonville State 31, The Citadel 30, Southern Utah 29, Samford 22, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 21, Alabama A&M 16, Chattanooga 14, Northern Iowa 12, Colgate 7, Fordham 6, Stephen F. Austin 4, Drake 3, Delaware State 3, North Carolina Central 2.