

FIESTA BOWL EDITION

**COACH P.**

Coach Gary Patterson likes the Frogs' Fiesta Bowl matchup.  
Page 4



**TICKETS**

Tickets are going fast for the Frogs' first BCS bowl.  
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# LONG TIME, NO SEE



Tailback Joseph Turner runs for a touchdown against Boise State in the fourth quarter of the San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl in 2008. TCU defeated Boise State, 17-16.



CHANCE WELCH / Multimedia Editor

ESPN College GameDay analyst Lee Corso dons the Horned Frog helmet to illustrate his pick of the Horned Frogs over the Utah Utes.



MATT COFFELT / Staff Photographer

Wide receiver Ryan Christian runs for a touchdown in the Horned Frogs' win over Utah 55-28.

## Frogs' final test comes against familiar foe



JOSH DAVIS

This season, like every one of the past nine, Gary Patterson stressed the importance of playing one game at a time. With a Fiesta Bowl matchup looming against No. 6 ranked Boise State, Patterson might have trouble keeping the team focused on their final opponent.

Admitted or not, there will be an emotional drop off for this game. TCU wrapped up their regular season and hoped Texas A&M, Auburn or Nebraska gave them a shot at a championship. It never came. The consolation prize from the BCS was a rematch against a non-BCS opponent from last year, and Coach P will need his team fired up to avoid disappointment in the desert.

Last year in the Poinsettia Bowl, the Boise State Broncos rushed out to a 13-0 start before the Horned Frogs defense showed up to play in the second half for a 17-16 win. This year, Boise is again capable of taking advantage of a TCU team if they play with its head or heart elsewhere. In fact, with Boise's quarterback Kellen Moore playing like a Heisman candidate (invited or not), the Broncos will be a bigger offensive threat this year.

Moore has thrown only

three interceptions this year and helped keep the Broncos undefeated, thanks to Moore's 39 touchdowns. He stepped up in a huge way this year and it allowed the Broncos to get away from some of their trickery.

The bad news: TCU can't win this game if they don't keep Kellen Moore in check.

The good news: In Moore's last two seasons, his only loss came at the hands of Gary Patterson's defense, which is ranked first in total defense this year.

Moore was frustrated in last year's game, but he lacked ground support. Boise running back Jeremy Avery was a decent runner a year ago, but the backfield belonged to Ian Johnson, who was a longtime, solid starter, but lacked the burst to make game-changing plays. Johnson now plays running back for the Minnesota Vikings of the NFL.

This year, Avery has blossomed into a true threat. He has rushed for over 1,100 yards and has ripped off a run of more than 20 yards in seven contests this year. In addition, Boise has a solid second option in tailback Doug Martin. Martin has over 700 rushing yards and a gaudy 14 rushing touchdowns. Although four touchdowns came in the finale at New Mexico State, Martin certainly doesn't need directions to the endzone.

A major reason behind the Frog's victory last year was shutting down the run game. They held Boise to just 28 rushing yards. Keeping the Broncos under 80 yards

rushing would go a long way towards taking a victory this year.

The 2009-10 edition of the Broncos is a much more balanced offensive attack. Last year, the Broncos completed at least 10 passes to 10 different receivers. This year, they only have six receivers with more than 10 passes.

The focus has mainly been on two wideouts this year, Titus Young and Austin Pettis. Young leads the corps with 71 catches for 969 yards, but Pettis leads in touchdowns, 14 to 10. Pettis has 62 catches for 850 yards, but might not be ready in time for the Fiesta Bowl. He fractured a bone in his lower leg against Nevada in November and hasn't played since. He is questionable for the game, but his situation should clear up this month.

If Pettis can't play, it would be a huge relief for the Horned Frogs defense. Boise's next leading receiver behind Pettis has nearly 500 less yards. It would allow TCU to lock down Young with help or even double coverage defensively, so long as the Frogs

run defense plays like they have all year.

Much like last year, TCU will be hard-pressed to get consistent pressure on Moore. His veteran instincts are very good, and he rarely puts himself in position to make mistakes. The Boise offensive line has made the job that much easier by allowing an NCAA-low five sacks on the year.

TCU benefited from Boise's inability to capitalize on TCU miscues during the first half last year. Don't expect the same problem this year. Boise should come out sharp, and the Horned Frog offensive coordinators will be counted on to determine if Frogs open the game as well as they did at BYU or as poorly as they did at New Mexico.

Offensively, the Horned Frogs have benefited from Dalton's improvements this season - 22 TD passes compared to 11, while keeping interceptions steady at five - and a running game that has allowed TCU to dictate tempo all year. It's safe to say Patterson won't be looking for a shootout, but this offense could keep up in one.



If Patterson has this team properly prepared on the X's and O's and he and the team leaders have the team mentally ready to play, TCU is certainly a national championship-caliber team.

**Bowl Coverage**

Check out DailySkiff.com for more Fiesta Bowl coverage.

**NATIONAL RANKINGS**

**1st**

TCU's total defense and average kick return yardage

**1st**

Boise State's scoring offense sacks allowed

**4th**

TCU's total offense

**13th**

Boise State's total defense

13 in total defense.

However, Boise State is susceptible to the run. They rank No. 39 in rush defense, and obviously would need to improve to keep the Horned Frog backfield in check. TCU ranks No. 5 overall in rushing offense.

When Dalton drops back, Boise is a playmaking pass rusher in defensive end Ryan Winterswyk. He has 8.5 sacks and 16.5 tackles for loss, but the rest of the Bronco defensive line has trouble getting to the quarterback. As a unit, the team is tied for No. 72 in the country in sacks.

Even without consistent pressure, Boise ranks No. 2 in turnover margin.

On the special teams front, the Frogs are great when they are catching the ball and

Defensively, the Broncos have been stout, ranked No.

## FIESTA BOWL

## Tebow gets Heisman ceremony nod third time

By Ralph D. Russo  
AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In a year when star quarterbacks were supposed to dominate the Heisman Trophy race, two running backs and a defensive tackle made as good a case to win college football's most prestigious award as any of the marquee passers.

Florida quarterback Tim Tebow and Texas quarterback Colt McCoy were named Heisman finalists Monday along with running backs Mark Ingram and Toby Gerhart and defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh.

The last time as many as five players were invited to New York was 2004, when USC quarterback Matt Leinart won the award.

**"It is good to see that the Heisman voters have recognized the true impact a dominant defensive lineman like Suh can have on a football game."**

**Bo Pelini**  
Nebraska coach

Tebow, McCoy and last year's winner Sam Bradford of Oklahoma entered this season as heavy Heisman favorites, but Bradford got hurt and Tebow and McCoy haven't been as productive this season as last. Neither will go into tomorrow's presentation as the front-runner.

Tebow, who was the first sophomore to win the Heisman in 2007, is again trying to become the second two-time Heisman winner, joining Ohio State's Archie Griffin. Tebow finished third in the voting last year, while getting the most first-place votes.

He's the first player to be invited to the Heisman Trophy ceremony three times since the presentation started being televised in 1981. He's also the first player to finish in the top five of the Heisman balloting three times since Georgia tailback Herschel Walker did it in the early 1980s.

McCoy was the runner-up last season and has led No. 2 Texas to the BCS national championship game this season.

Ingram has run for 1,542 yards and scored 15 touchdowns for No. 1 Alabama.

Stanford's Gerhart, meanwhile, has run for more yards (1,736) and scored more touchdowns (26) than any player in the nation.

And Nebraska's Suh had 4.5 sacks in an attention-grabbing performance against Texas in the Big 12 title game. He is the first defensive player to be a finalist since 1997, when Michigan cornerback Charles Woodson became the first full-time defensive player to win the Heisman.

Tebow returned for his senior season to try to lead the Gators to a third national title in four seasons, but he won't reach that goal. After being No. 1 almost all season, Florida lost to Alabama 32-13 in the Southeastern Conference title game Dec. 5 and was knocked out of the national championship race.

The loss likely damaged Tebow's chances at a second Heisman, too. He has passed for 2,413 yards and rushed for 859 yards this year.

Like Tebow, McCoy also returned for his senior season to make a championship run. He has Texas a victory away from its first national title since 2005, but his numbers also have fallen off compared to '08.

McCoy has passed for 3,512 yards with 27 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. He also nearly



Alabama running back Mark Ingram (22) outruns Florida's Omar Hunter (99) during the fourth quarter of the SEC championship game at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta on Dec. 5. Alabama won 32-13.

threw away the Longhorns' national championship hopes on the second-to-last play of the Nebraska game, coming within a second of letting the clock run out before Texas could attempt the winning field goal in a 13-12 victory.

McCoy could become the first player to win the Heisman the season after finishing second since Walker did it in 1982.

If there is a favorite, it seems to be Ingram.

Hesimanpundit.com, which polls 13 voters throughout the season, had Ingram on top of its latest results, just ahead of Gerhart.

Ingram could become Ala-

bama's first Heisman Trophy winner. He gave his Heisman campaign a late boost by running for 113 yards and scoring three touchdowns in the SEC title game against Florida.

"I'm looking forward to the experience and appreciate the opportunity to represent our team at the Heisman ceremony," Ingram said in a statement.

Gerhart also ended his season with a flourish, running for 205 yards and three touchdowns and throwing a touchdown pass in a victory against Notre Dame.

"I am most pleased that my efforts along with those of so many others this year have put Stanford football back on the

national map," Gerhart said.

Nobody finished stronger than Suh, who put together one of the most dominant defensive games in recent college football history in Nebraska's near-upset of Texas. He finished the season with 12 sacks.

"It is good to see that the Heisman voters have recognized the true impact a dominant defensive lineman like Suh can have on a football game," Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said.

Among the top players who didn't make the cut were Clemson's versatile tailback C.J. Spiller and Boise State quarterback Kellen Moore.

## The Finalists



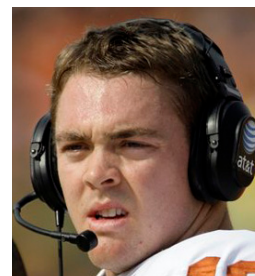
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FIESTA BOWL

# PICK'EM

The student publications college football pick'em challenge ended this past weekend with News Now reporter Maddy Foxx winning convincingly with a score of 52 points. Skiff editor-in-chief David Hall finished second with 43 points followed by Skiff reporter Mary Sue Greenleaf with 41 points. Skiff news editor Michael Carroll finished fourth in a last effort push, finishing with 36 points right ahead of Skiff sports editor Travis L. Brown who had 35 points. Finishing last was KTCU's Phil Mann with 32 points. For the fun of the bowl season, the pick'em team has made their selections for each BCS bowl game.

	BCS National Championship: Texas vs. Alabama	Fiesta Bowl: TCU vs. Boise St.	Orange Bowl: Georgia Tech vs. Iowa	Rose Bowl: Oregon vs. Ohio St.	Sugar Bowl: Florida vs. Cincinnati
 Maddy Foxx News Now Reporter					
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 Mary Sue Greenleaf Skiff Reporter					
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## FIESTA BOWL

## Boise St. wins most awards in conference

By Chandler Cochran  
Staff Reporter

Sophomore quarterback Kellen Moore, led the Boise State Broncos to their second consecutive undefeated season in 2009. Finishing ranked No. 6 in the BCS, AP and Coaches Polls, the Western Athletic Conference champions were awarded the most honors for their conference Monday.

These awards included Kellen Moore as WAC Offensive Player of the Year and Head Coach Chris Petersen as WAC Coach of the Year. The Broncos had more players receive all conference honors than any other team in the WAC with seven players named first-team All-WAC and four more awarded second-team All-WAC honors.

This season, Boise defeated such teams as Oregon, Fresno State, Louisiana Tech and New Mexico State. They finished with an average of 44.2 points per game, 194.5 rushing yards per game, 266 average passing yards per game and a total of 40 passing and 29 rushing touchdowns.

Junior kicker Kyle Brotzman leads the NCAA rankings for the most extra points made with 61 successful point after attempts (PAT). The next closest players were Hunter Lawrence of the University of Texas, Jake Rogers of Cincinnati and Ross Evans of TCU, all tied with 60 extra points made.

Boise was led offensively by junior running back Jeremy Avery who carried the ball 197 times for 1,130 yards and six touchdowns this season. Sophomore running back Doug Martin has fewer yards for the season than Avery with 723, but has scored 14 touchdowns this season alone. Martin played as a freshman, but did not score until the second game of the 2009 season against Miami of Ohio.

Junior wide receiver Titus Young caught the ball 71 times for 969 yards and ten touchdowns. Austin Pettis, another junior wide receiver, completed 62 receptions for 850 yards and 14 touchdowns.

Boise State outscored all their opponents combined 574-230. They also averaged

## BSU AWARDS

- 7 First-team All-Conference honorees
- Quarterback Kellen Moore named WAC Offensive Player of the Year
- Coach Chris Petersen voted WAC Coach of the Year

460.5 offensive yards per game and kept their opponents to 299.6 per game.

The Broncos, on average, lost 54.8 yards per game because of penalties. They did, however, have a 38% rate of successful third down completion and a 75% fourth down completion rate.

Jeron Johnson, junior safety, was a lead contributor to the Broncos defense with 88 tackles this season, 24 more than the next closest player. Junior defensive end Ryan Winterswyk had 8.5 sacks on the quarterback for a total loss of 47 yards. Johnson and junior cornerback Brandyn Thompson tied for the most interceptions of the season with four each.



MATT CILLEY / AP Photo  
Boise State's Doug Martin (22) breaks a tackle against New Mexico State's Donte Savage (52) during the second half of a football game on Dec. 5 in Boise, Idaho. Boise State went on to win 42-7.



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Post-game interview with head coach Gary Patterson.

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## FIESTA BOWL

## Frogs want new competition

By Stephen Hawkins  
AP Sports Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Something is missing now that TCU has finally busted into the Bowl Championship Series: a chance to prove themselves against a team from one of the major conferences with automatic access to the big-money games.

Instead, the third-ranked Horned Frogs (12-0) will go to the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 4 to play the same team they beat in a pre-Christmas bowl game last year. Another undefeated BCS buster, No. 6 Boise State.

"It's kind of like a little re-match or whatever," receiver Jeremy Kerley said. "Even for the Boise fans, I'm pretty sure they don't want to see that, for us to have to play them. It's kind of unfortunate on both parts."

There was no obvious mention of Boise State as the opponent when the Frogs' BCS destination was revealed to more than 3,000 fans attending a bowl-watch party on campus Sunday night.

Boise State got its chance to play one of the major-conference teams in its other BCS appearance, beating Oklahoma in a memorable 2007 Fiesta Bowl. Then last year's BCS buster, Mountain West foe Utah, got to play Alabama in the Sugar Bowl. The Utes won to complete a 13-0 season and finished No. 2 in the AP poll.

That was the same kind of game TCU envisioned it might get after its first undefeated regular season since 1938, the season of its only AP national championship.

"I figured because of what Utah started last year, maybe we'd have a chance to play for it this year," running back Joseph Turner said.

"The thing is, we've played (Boise)," senior receiver Bart

Johnson said. "I'd love to play somebody like a Florida or someone like that where we could really showcase and show the nation what we're all about."

Everybody will instead get the third postseason matchup between TCU and Boise State (13-0) in seven seasons.

TCU won 17-16 in the Poinsettia Bowl last year, handing

"I'd love to play somebody like a Florida or someone like that where we could really showcase and show the nation what we're all about."

Bart Johnson  
senior receiver

the Broncos their only loss the past two seasons. Boise State won 34-31 in the 2003 Fort Worth Bowl that was played on the TCU campus.

This time, it will be the first undefeated BCS matchup outside the national championship game. It is the first time two teams from conferences without automatic bids to the BCS have played in the five big-money bowls in the same season.

"We're just happy that we're going to a BCS game," senior cornerback Rafael Priest said. "We'd love to go against a team on a bigger stage. (Boise) is a good team. They're 13-0. You don't come across that too much, so you've got to give them all their respect. Both are BCS busters. We're going to take our opportunity and make the best of it."

The Frogs have won a school-record 14 games in a row, second only to Texas' 17-

game streak. They won on the road against Clemson and Virginia in September and have won their last seven games by at least 27 points, including games against No. 15 BYU and No. 23 Utah.

And they came oh so close Saturday to things falling into place for a possible shot at being the first outsider to play for the BCS national championship, a day of game watching that quarterback Andy Dalton described as "a roller coaster of emotions."

First, No. 17 Pittsburgh blew a 21-point lead against No. 4 Cincinnati, missed an extra point with 1:36 left and lost by a single point when the Bearcats scored the winning touchdown a minute later.

Later that night, Nebraska led Texas 12-10 with 1:44 left, and was storming the field in celebration of an apparent upset in the Big 12 championship game when Colt McCoy threw an incomplete pass as the clock ticked to :00. Except officials reviewed the play, put a second back on and the Longhorns kicked a game-winning field goal.

Texas will play SEC champion Alabama in the BCS national title game, which guarantees that one of them will finish No. 1 in the USA Today coaches' poll. Voters in other polls, though, aren't obligated to vote the Texas-Bama winner as their top team.

Frogs coach Gary Patterson, who moved his team up from fourth to second in his latest coaches' poll vote, has already reminded his team that they can still win an AP championship. They can also put themselves in position to start higher in the polls next season, when they lose only six senior starters. TCU was No. 17 in this year's AP preseason poll.



WES WYNNE / Staff Photographs  
TCU tailback Matthew Tucker runs for his second touchdown for the game versus Utah in November. The Frogs won 55-28.

## TCU allotted 17,500 tickets

By Chris Blake  
Staff Reporter

The athletics department made it a point to fill ticket requests for every student who wants to attend the Fiesta Bowl, the athletics director said. Chris Del Conte, athletics director, said that despite a campuswide e-mail that said 2,325 of 17,500 tickets the university was allotted would be reserved for students, "not one student will be turned away" if he or she requests a ticket.

Sean Conner, director of ticket operations, said that after students buy their tickets, about 2,000 tickets will be distributed among players' families, coaches' families, the chancellor's office and trustees. The rest of the tickets will go to members of the Frog Club.

Members of the Frog Club

are ranked using the Horned Frog Priority Point system, which uses a formula that is slightly less complicated than the one used to determine the BCS standings. It takes into consideration how long a member has been a season ticket holder and how many seats they purchased during the 2009 season. Donations are also figured into the formula.

Donors who are ranked from No. 1 to 250 have the option to buy up to 10 Fiesta Bowl tickets, 251-500 could purchase up to eight, 501-750 could buy six, 751-1000 have the option for four and No. 1,001 and up could purchase two.

The Horned Frog Priority Point system has been in place since the end of the 2006 season and has been used for each bowl game since then, in addition to key road games

such as Texas and Oklahoma.

Del Conte said if the university sells all 17,500 tickets, then it would ask the Fiesta Bowl administration for more.

"I just told the guys from the Fiesta Bowl, I brought a can of purple paint," he said. "We're coming to paint Phoenix purple, and every one of our fans should come out and do the same thing."

Tickets to the game can already be found on many ticket Web sites, including StubHub, where one ticket costs as much as \$3,500 and on TicketsNow where a fan could spend \$1,102 on a game ticket.

Del Conte stressed that to make a national impression, selling all the tickets is a must. "We need every single person that has a pulse, that is a fan of TCU to make sure they show up in Phoenix on Jan. 4," Del Conte said.

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*Megan and Victor Boschini*

**TCU**  
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# Some students unhappy with bowl placement

By Rachel Holt  
Staff Writer

Several students left Daniel-Meyer Coliseum with mixed emotions Sunday night. As proud as these Frog Fans were of their football team to be picked to play in a BCS bowl game, they were less enthusiastic about the matchup.

"Regardless of who we are playing, that's a great accomplishment for the Horned Frogs," said Jimmy Hopper, a senior history major and 2009 Mr. TCU. "It is already generating a lot of national publicity, as the country wants to see the two non-BCS powers go head-to-head."

Some students felt frustration about the BCS.

"(A friend) said, 'I feel like we got invited to the party, but had to sit at the children's table,' and I'm ready to prove the BCS wrong," said Peter Welch, a senior marketing major who will attend the game.

Audrey Spalding, a senior advertising/public relations major, said non-automatic qualifying teams deserve to be given more consideration.

"The BCS isn't fair, but there's nothing we can do about it," Spalding said.

Some students felt cheated out of having a more challenging matchup.

"By playing a non-BCS team it defeats the purpose of being in a bowl in the first place," said Anne Pennebaker, a senior biology major.

"It may be a bigger stadium than last year, but we're still just playing the same team."

When it comes to playing Boise State for a second time, some students said the Frogs will prove themselves to the BCS.

"We are both different teams than we were last year," Welch said. "We are a better team, and they aren't going to be able to score on our defense."

Others said they believe that the game will be an opportunity for the Frogs to prove their abilities and earn more respect.

"With a big TCU victory in the bowl game, we will be able to demonstrate what we are capable of and that we belong at the top," said Thomas Duggins, a senior political science major. "This game and this season will prove what a strong team TCU has."

However, enthusiasm for the football team is spreading fast.

"It's an honor to be invited to a BCS bowl, period, and I am excited to establish our dominance in the BCS," said Cameron Giammalva, a senior supply chain management major. "I hope that the surges in the recent years from non-automatic qualifiers will help change the rules of the bowl games."

Students went online early Monday morning to buy their football and plane tickets.

"I'm going — already have my plane ticket and hotel room, and we will destroy Boise State," Spalding said.



The Horned Frogs celebrate with SuperFrog after their 41-0 Homecoming win over UNLV in October.

WES WYNNNE / Staff Photographer

# Frogs', Broncos' powerful offenses to be on display

By Andrew Bagnato  
AP College Football Writer

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Welcome to the BCS Buster Bowl.

AP No. 3 TCU and No. 6 Boise State will meet in the Fiesta Bowl, marking the first time a BCS game other than the championship game has a matchup of unbeaten teams.

It's also the first time two teams from conferences without automatic bids to the BCS have played in the five big-money bowls in the same season.

Mountain West champion TCU (12-0) earned an automatic bid to break into the BCS for the first time in school history.

Western Athletic Conference champ Boise State (13-0) became the first team from a non-automatic qualifying conference to receive an at-large bid.

"We think it's a matchup that's credible," Fiesta Bowl CEO John Junker said. "If there was a glass ceiling, we think we've taken a chunk out of it."

The Horned Frogs and Broncos played in the Poinsettia Bowl last season. TCU won 17-16 to

hand Boise State its only loss of the season.

This time, the so-called little guys will move their tussle to the big stage — and Junker said the Fiesta didn't mind staging a rematch, which he said got a thumbs-up from TV partner Fox.

"We're not the NFL," he said. "There's new players, new stories, new energy. These are two teams that have been atop the rankings all year long, and we're very excited for a chance to match them."

They might want to roll back the roof at Glendale's University of Phoenix Stadium on Jan. 4, because the game should provide plenty of offensive fireworks.

Boise State has the nation's highest-scoring attack, averaging 44.1 points per game. TCU ranks fourth at 40.7 points per game.

For a few hours on Saturday night, it looked as if the Horned Frogs might slip into the BCS title game. No. 3 Texas found itself in a protracted defensive struggle with No. 21 Nebraska in the Big 12 playoff, and a Longhorns loss may have cleared the way for TCU to become the first school from a

non-automatic qualifying conference to play for the national title.

But Texas pulled out a 13-12 victory, stunning the Cornhuskers and TCU coach Gary Patterson.

**"We got what we wanted, we're playing a great opponent. With tough opponents there is great opportunity."**

**Chris Petersen**  
Boise State head coach

"I had to walk outside. ... I didn't even say anything," Patterson said. "I got up... I walked out in my bare feet, walked down the street, it was cold and I didn't even feel it. What else was I going to do. I had the same feeling when Utah scored at the end of the game a year ago (a 13-10 Frogs loss while Utah went on to be BCS buster). You get so close, but yet you're so far away."

It might not have mattered because unbeaten Cincinnati

finished ahead of TCU in the final standings anyway.

The Horned Frogs will settle for a trip to the desert for their BCS debut.

Patterson told his team it can still play for The Associated Press national championship. It's a long shot, because the Horned Frogs are third in the latest AP Top 25, behind Texas and Alabama, which are meeting in the BCS title game.

"That's what I told them, I said our whole deal is we're going to have to show the nation in this next bowl game that we belong, that we're one of the top two teams in the nation," Patterson said. "You can still win the AP, so that's what our whole goal is within the next month, to try to get ourself against a very good opponent, which is going to be hard to do anyway because they're a very good opponent."

TCU chews up 265.5 yards rushing, fifth nationally. Quarterback Andy Dalton ranks fourth nationally in passing efficiency, with 22 TDs and only five interceptions in 279 pass attempts.

Boise State players, parents and fans gathered in the new press box at Bronco Sta-

dium to watch the bowl selection show.

The crowd erupted when the pairing was announced. But moments later, the crowd reacted with much less enthusiasm when TCU was announced as the Broncos' foe. Bronco fans had been hoping for a matchup with a Big Ten team like Iowa or Penn State.

Boise State coach Chris Petersen said he wasn't disappointed to face the Frogs. "We got what we wanted," Petersen said. "We're playing a great opponent. With tough opponents there is great opportunity."

The Broncos will make their second Fiesta Bowl appearance in four years. Most fans distinctly recall their first trip.

In January 2007, the eighth-ranked Broncos used a passel of trick plays to stun 10th-ranked Oklahoma in a game still regarded as one of the great bowls in college football history.

Associated Press Writer Todd Dvorak in Boise, Idaho, and AP Sports Writer Stephen Hawkins in Fort Worth contributed to this report.

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## FIESTA BOWL

## BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



Alabama players celebrate their 32-13 win over Florida in the SEC championship game at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta on Dec. 5. DAVE MARTIN / AP Photo

## Early bettors pick Alabama over Florida

By Oskar Garcia  
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Early bettors are siding with No. 1 Alabama in the BCS national championship game, driving up point spreads across Las Vegas casinos, oddsmakers said Monday.

Sports books expect gamblers to think highly of the 4-point favorite Crimson Tide after they cruised in the Southeastern Conference championship game against defending national champion Florida, said Mike Seba of Las Vegas Sports Consultants.

Alabama (13-0) faces No. 2 Texas in the title game Jan. 7.

Texas (13-0) beat Nebraska 13-12 in the Big 12 championship, but struggled.

"You have to re-adjust your ratings and then you also have to think, everybody just saw what we saw and who would you go bet on right now?" said Seba, whose firm provides betting lines to roughly 90 percent of casinos in Nevada. "Obviously, you'd bet Alabama."

The Las Vegas Hilton opened its bets Sunday by spotting Texas fans 3.5 points, but Alabama bettors pushed the Crimson Tide to a 5.5-point favorite there, said Race and Sports Book Executive Director Jay Kornegay.

"If we were to set a line on this game prior to those (conference) championship games, Texas would have been a slight favorite," Kornegay said. "Most bettors have a very short-term memory."

Gamblers siding with Alabama at MGM Mirage casinos and the Wynn Las Vegas also raised their spreads to 5.5 points, officials from each of the casinos said.

Johnny Avello, race and sports book director at Wynn Las Vegas, said the early Alabama bettors are likely tourists who won't be around during the game or gamblers who think Alabama should be favored by more points.

Avello said he expects the spread to swing as high as 6.5



Texas kicker Hunter Lawrence is lifted on the shoulders of teammates after kicking the game-winning field goal in their 13-12 win in the Big 12 Conference championship game against Nebraska on Dec. 5 in Arlington. TONY GUTIERREZ / AP Photo

points or as low as 4 points, depending on what happens during the next month.

"Good practices, any suspensions, guys getting hurt during practice, momentum shifts," Avello said. "Alabama has all the momentum going into this Saturday, but we're not playing Saturday."

Jay Rood, race and sports book director for MGM Mirage, said the break will give Texas enough time to study its performance against Nebraska and fix whatever

problems it may have.

"There's a whole lot of things that can happen, that can go awry or correct itself," he said.

Rood said Alabama opened the season at 20-1 odds to win the national title, but bettors didn't flock to them early. Texas, meanwhile, had 10-1 odds on winning the national championship at the start of the season, he said.

"Alabama was kind of overlooked," Rood said.

## PREVIEW

continued from page 1

questionable when they're kicking it.

TCU ranks No. 1 in kick returns and No. 21 in punt returns, whereas Boise ranks No. 5 and No. 37, respectively.

Kicker Ross Evans has had a good year overall, converting 14 of 17 field goals and 60 of 62 extra points, but his misses have been worrisome. He missed field goals at Clemson, against Utah and early in the game against New Mexico. The Frogs record was obviously unharmed by the misses, but all three were significant at the time.

On the Broncos side, Kyle Brotzman has hit on 17 of 23 field goals and missed one extra point. Brotzman missed a 38-yarder in the Poinsettia Bowl last December that would have made the difference for Boise.

Overall, Boise definitely has BCS credentials, but the Horned Frogs seem to have the key numbers in their favor.

The Broncos are by no means an easy team, and they will make TCU pay

for mistakes. However, this year's Frog offense has eight position players who can hurt you in different ways and keep each other fresh. The defense has seen the Boise offense before and should be ready for any tricks, but Moore has taken his magic to a new level this year.

Overall, Boise definitely has BCS credentials, but the Horned Frogs seem to have the key numbers in their favor.

If Boise State wins this game, it will be on his arm.

If Patterson has this team properly prepared on the X's and O's and he and the team leaders have the team mentally ready to play, TCU is certainly a national championship-caliber team.

Whether that team shows up in Glendale, Ariz. is another story.

I believe they will, and after a slow start will control the ball in a 28-20 victory.

Josh Davis is a junior news-editorial journalism major from Highland Park.

## QUICK SPORTS

## Alabama cancels class for championship

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) — Alabama students and faculty won't have to worry about missing class to attend the national title football game.

The university canceled classes from Jan. 6-8.

The school said Tuesday that students will have to make up for the lost class time. They have two days

of classes upon returning from the Christmas break before getting another respite for the game.

Alabama cited the number of students who have to be in Pasadena and those students and staff who want to attend the game.

The top-ranked Crimson Tide plays No. 2 Texas on Jan. 7 in Pasadena, Calif.

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# Glendale provides Frog fans with fun

By Jourdan Sullivan  
Staff Reporter

For the spirited and faithful Horned Frog fans traveling to Arizona for the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, the city of Glendale and surrounding areas provide activities and entertainment for everyone.

For those with a sweet tooth, Cerreta Candy Company in Glendale offers free tours of the family-owned candy shop. Guided tours start at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, and each tour lasts approximately 30 minutes. Visitors can also take a self-guided tour Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

See how a slab of caramel becomes a tasty treat and more. You can find the Cerreta Candy Company at 5345 West Glendale Ave.

The chic city shopper and those with a knack for socializing can explore Westgate City Center. The center features unique stores, a variety of restaurants and an 20-screen movie theater. For a complete list of shops and restaurants visit [www.westgatecitycenter.com](http://www.westgatecitycenter.com).

Glendale also offers several options for the outdoor enthusiast.

With 15 miles of multi-use trails, visitors to the 1,185 acre Thunderbird Conservation Park can hike, jog or bike. Birds and wildlife inhabit the park and visitors can watch them from behind the three wildlife viewing blinds off the trails on the north side.

A 15-minute drive into Phoenix offers travelers a variety of opportunities as well.

The sports nut can tour Chase Field, home of the Arizona Diamondbacks major league baseball team. Ball-

**For more information**

-  **Glendale**  
[visitglendale.com](http://visitglendale.com)
-  **Phoenix**  
[visitphoenix.com](http://visitphoenix.com)

park tours begin at 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Jan. 2. The cost is \$6 per adult, with discounts for children and seniors.

Sports fans can also attend a Phoenix Suns basketball game versus the Memphis Grizzlies at U.S. Airways Center on Jan. 2 at 7 p.m.. For ticket information visit [www.nba.com/suns](http://www.nba.com/suns).

On game day, join other football fans at the Westgate Bowl Week Football Blast. The free pre-game party runs from noon to 6 p.m. and will feature appearances by the TCU and Boise State marching bands, live music, food, drinks and face painting.

For travelers more interested in nature, Phoenix provides an array of outdoor activities also.

The Desert Botanical Garden spans 50 acres and features a collection of desert plants. The garden opens daily at 8 a.m. and closes at 8 p.m. Student tickets cost \$7.50, with a valid student ID. The garden is just outside Glendale in Phoenix at 1201 N. Galvin Parkway.

Both cities offer a number of options for fans traveling to the game. From shopping to sports, travelers won't have to look far for fun and entertainment.

For more information about what to do in Glendale visit [www.visitglendale.com](http://www.visitglendale.com). For a list of restaurants and attractions in Phoenix, go to [www.visitphoenix.com](http://www.visitphoenix.com).

# Championship teams product of system?

By Eddie Pells  
AP National Writer

There were five undefeated teams and only two spots in the title game.

Alabama and Texas came out winners in that bit of BCS math, while TCU, Cincinnati and Boise State were left with nice consolation prizes.

The imperfect method of choosing a national champion paired top-ranked Alabama against No. 2 Texas in the BCS title game — a Jan. 7 meeting that will bring together Heisman Trophy hopefuls Colt McCoy of the Longhorns and Mark Ingram of the Crimson Tide.

And, of course, Sunday's bowl bids also produced plenty of fodder for second-guessing.

No. 3 TCU, No. 4 Cincinnati and No. 6 Boise State also finished undefeated. All three were included in the BCS, but none will play for the championship — a predictable result that will renew the annual debate about college football's way of determining the best team in the land.

"We absolutely recognize that there were five undefeated teams that had very good seasons, and the fact is, only two could play in the game," BCS executive director Bill Hancock said.

Seeking its first national title since 1992, Alabama opens as a 3-point favorite for the game at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif. That's the place where Vince Young almost single-handedly led Texas to a victory over Southern California in 2006 to claim the national title.

The other BCS matchups: Oregon against Ohio State in the Rose Bowl; Iowa against Georgia Tech in the Orange; Florida against Cincinnati in the Sugar and TCU against Boise State in the Fiesta.

The TCU-Boise State game

also will pit a pair of undefeateds against each other, two teams from small conferences that don't always get automatic spots in the BCS. This is the first time in BCS history that two of the small schools have been selected. Both should be expected to use the title-game snub as motivation.

"We're here to prove a point," TCU coach Gary Patterson said. "I voted for us No. 2 in polls today when we voted. We believe we have a great football team and we're out to show we could be the No. 1 team in the nation."

The Longhorns (13-0) have been on both sides of the BCS debate.

Just last year, their chances for a national title were squashed when they lost a three-way tiebreaker for the Big 12 South title.

**"We were within one second of playing for a national championship."**

**Brian Kelly**  
Cincinnati head coach

This time, Texas defeated Nebraska 13-12 in the Big 12 title game to secure its spot in the national championship, though the less-than-dominating performance certainly left things open for debate.

Still, there was a big gap between Texas and TCU in the BCS rankings, the coaches' poll and The Associated Press poll, which is not included in the BCS formula. The AP awards its own national championship.

Alabama, meanwhile, got 113 yards rushing and three touchdowns from Ingram to defeat Florida 32-13 in the SEC championship game, an overwhelming victory over the defending national champions



TONY GUTIERREZ / AP Photo  
Texas quarterback Colt McCoy celebrates with the trophy following his team's win in the NCAA college football Big 12 Conference championship game against Nebraska Dec. 5 in Arlington. Texas won 13-12.

that made the Tide (13-0) an easy choice for No. 1.

But is anything really clear-cut when it comes to the BCS?

TCU was ranked No. 17 in the preseason polls and never really had a chance to rise above the bigger, more traditional programs that were ahead of them.

Cincinnati made it through the Big East, one of the six so-called power conferences, and needed a 21-point comeback against Pittsburgh on Saturday to move to 12-0. The Bearcats finished third in the BCS rankings and would've taken Texas' spot had the Longhorns not pulled out their last-second win.

"We were within one second of playing for a national championship," coach Brian Kelly said. "It's not crazy (for Cincinnati) to play for a national championship."

Boise State finished its fourth undefeated regular sea-

son in the past six years, but still found itself ranked behind No. 5 Florida, in large part because it plays in the Western Athletic Conference.

A perfect scenario for an eight-team playoff, perhaps, but that's years off. The current system is set for the next four years. And to hear the BCS officials tell it, there's nothing really wrong with the system, anyway.

"We do feel like it's working, and college football is thriving," Hancock said. "We recognize there are elements in each constituency that don't like it, but the fact is, it has a consensus. The critics, the play-off proponents, do not have a consensus."

Certainly, he'll get no argument from Texas or Alabama, who meet for the first time since the 1982 Cotton Bowl — a 14-12 Longhorns win over the Tide and Bear Bryant.

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