

IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

Suddenly, being undefeated isn't good enough for national title game

With 5 undefeateds left, who really deserves a Rose Bowl appearance?

The battle for the BCS championship is really starting to heat up as the 2005 campaign enters the final stretch of the regular season. Several top-ranked teams head into the weekend vying for a conference championship and a potential national title game invitation.

1) Southern California: The Trojans have now won 30 straight games. There are kids approaching their third birthday and Southern Cal has yet to lose in their lifetime. The Trojans won an epic game on the road against Notre Dame

and have taken care of business against everyone else on the schedule. All eyes are now focusing on the season-ending rivalry game against UCLA. The only real question with this team is how many of their players will be invited to New York for the Heisman ceremony.

2) Texas: The Longhorns were able to get the monkey off their backs by finally defeating Oklahoma in the Red River Shootout. The Big 12 is extremely weak this year. UT's key wins this season came against Ohio State and Texas Tech. Quarterback Vince Young continues to gain momentum in the Heisman Trophy race, especially after racking up 267 rushing yards — 239 passing — against Oklahoma State last week.

3) Virginia Tech: Boston College decided to take away Hokie quarterback Marcus Vick's ability to run in last week's Thursday night contest. They challenged Vick to beat them with his arm, something most analysts were not sure he

Green's Top 10 College Football Picks

1. Southern California
2. Texas
3. Virginia Tech
4. UCLA
5. Alabama
6. LSU
7. Miami
8. Penn State
9. Notre Dame
10. Georgia

could do. Vick responded by completing 22 of 28 passes for 280 yards and a touchdown in the 30-10 win. Virginia Tech might be the most balanced team in the country. They have a very good offense, a great defense and great special teams play.

4) UCLA: This team is the real Cinderella story of 2005. UCLA has remained unbeaten by winning two overtime games. The Bruins trailed Cal big before unleashing an offensive firestorm against the Bears. They also spotted Washington State 21 points before rallying to win. Quarterback Drew Olson and running back Maurice Drew are a formidable tandem. Crosstown rivals Southern Cal have become celebrities in Los Angeles. If the Bruins can remain undefeated, the final game of the year against the

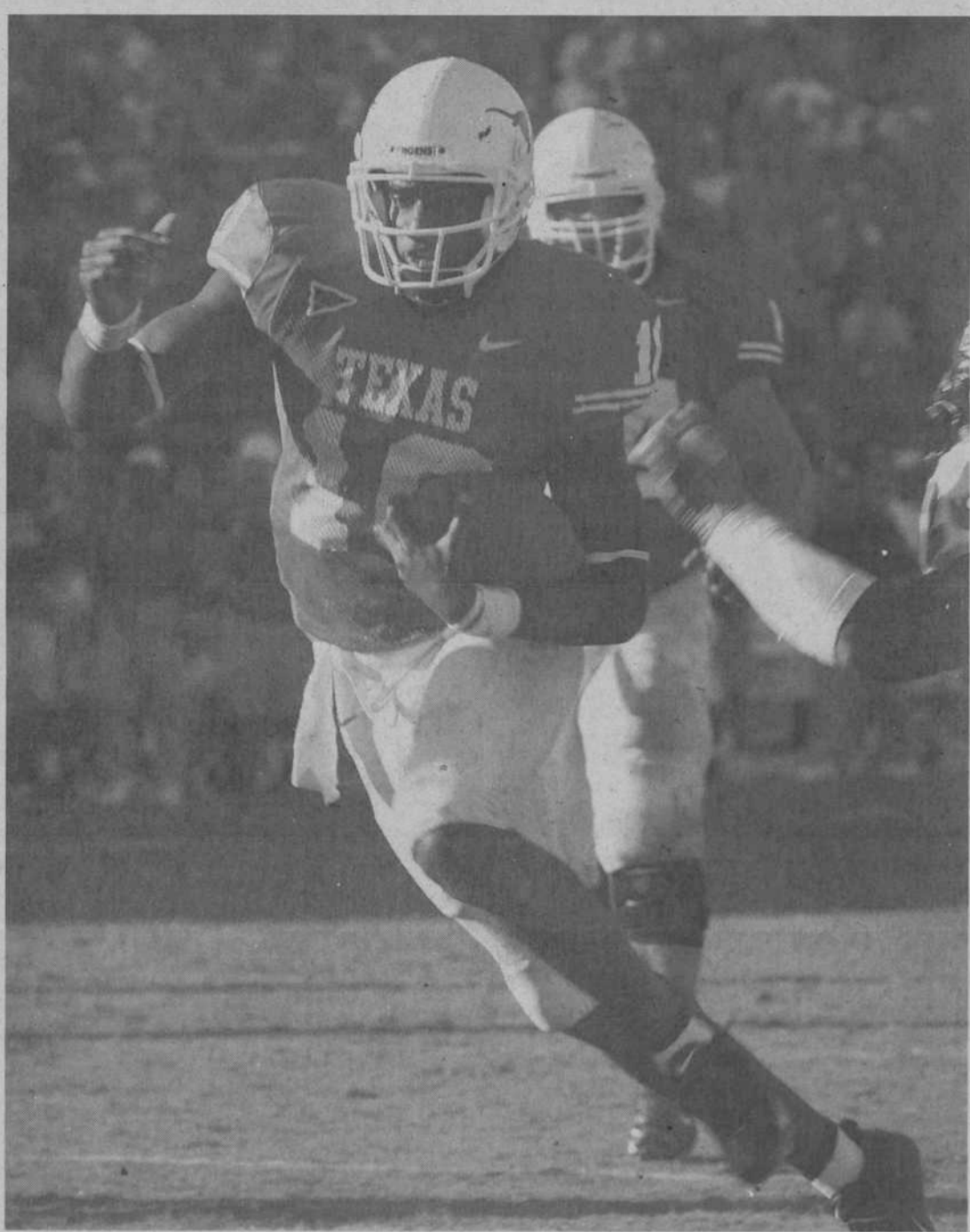
Trojans will give them a chance earn all the respect they deserve.

The SEC: Alabama has turned quite a few heads by starting off 8-0. Losing star wide receiver Tyrone Prothro devastated the Tide's offensive capabilities. Luckily for Bama, they have one of the best defenses in the nation. The SEC West might as well be called the SEC Wild West this year, because even with Alabama undefeated, the division is still up for grabs. LSU can win it by beating Alabama and winning the West if Alabama defeats LSU by winning out and defeating Alabama in the Iron Bowl. In the East, where Georgia once had a commanding lead, Florida has since charged back. Florida beat Georgia last week, and if Georgia slips up against Auburn, Florida would get the nod.

The ACC: Florida State's arrival into the ACC sent waves of fear into the rest of the conference's member teams. FSU has dominated league play nearly every year since joining the ACC in 1992. The traditional ACC schools are reeling once again with the addition of Boston College, Miami, and Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech won the ACC last year, and is undefeated in 2005. Miami and Florida State remain dominant powers, and even Boston College has been whipping up on the older ACC schools, losing only to FSU and Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech and Florida State are on a collision course for Jacksonville and the inaugural ACC championship game. Before that happens the Hokies will have to survive a battle with the Hurricanes on Saturday.

The Big Ten: Penn State, Wisconsin and Ohio State stand at 5-1 in the conference. The champion from this conference will likely come from the winner of the Penn State-Wisconsin game Saturday.

The Big 12: This conference is way down this year. Texas has a cakewalk into the Big 12 title



Texas quarterback Vince Young has the Longhorns primed for a shot at the national championship.

Green's Heisman Watch List

1. Reggie Bush
Southern California Running Back
2. Matt Leinart
Southern California Quarterback
3. Vince Young
Texas Quarterback
4. Maurice Drew
UCLA Running back
5. LenDale White
Southern California Running back

game and will destroy its northern division opponent.

The Big East: This conference does not even merit discussion.

The Pac-10: UCLA vs. Southern Cal, and I cannot wait to watch this game.

Week 10 predictions:

Virginia Tech vs. Miami: Virginia Tech is a very well-coached team. Miami's weaknesses will be exposed.

Prediction: Virginia Tech 27 Miami 10

Oregon vs. California: This is a battle between two ranked Pac-10 teams. Expect the points

to come from all over the field as Oregon edges Cal.

Prediction: Oregon 35 Cal 28

Penn State vs. Wisconsin: Joe Pa's return to prominence continues with a Big Ten title within his grasp.

Prediction: Penn State 28 Wisconsin 21

Notre Dame vs. Tennessee: Tennessee offensive coordinator Randy Sanders resigned after the USC game. The Vols are near the bottom of every offensive category in the country.

Prediction: Notre Dame 38 Tennessee 12

Southern Cal vs. Stanford: Stanford nearly knocked off USC last year before the Trojans made a fourth-quarter comeback. This game is in L.A. Expect a close game early, but Southern Cal pulls away in the third quarter.

Prediction: USC 67 Stanford 30

Last Week: 2-3 Season: 28-13

RADIO • CONTINUED FROM B6

The crew believes that its on-field experience gives it the edge as the game progresses and different plays start to develop. "I feel like I have the advantage over people that didn't play the game," Ellis said. "Being a former quarterback helps me anticipate plays based on formations and reads."

With all of these factors going for them, the thing that helps the group the most is that they all have a passion for Gamecock football and sharing their views about the team year after year.

"I wouldn't do it if I didn't love every minute of it," Ellis said.

Being able to maintain a connection with the team they

once played for is very important to them.

"You're close enough, but you're not too close," Suggs said. "You've suffered and worked hard during the week, and it feels like a great victory when you can bring good news to somebody back home."

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu

NUTT • CONTINUED FROM B6

Razorbacks do dominate is rushing offense, leading the league with 1,796 yards on 314 carries, amassing 256.6 yards per game. Largely on the legs of standout freshmen Darren McFadden and Felix Jones, the Hogs are second in

the league with 16 touchdowns on the ground.

While there has been promise, this year has been filled with frustration for Nutt and his program. The Razorbacks must win all four of their last games to become bowl-eligible. Arkansas has Ole Miss, Mississippi State

and LSU after the Gamecocks visit. That's a mighty tall order for a young team and a man who's fallen on hard times after just recently being considered one of the best in the business.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu

After huge win, Spurrier makes believers out of those accustomed to disappointment

Gamecocks must stop potent running game, 'Pig Suey' chanting

1) Will Sidney Rice continue his streak of consecutive games with a touchdown reception?

Like I've said for the last two weeks, this question has officially reached superstition status. I honestly feel that if I don't include it, and Sidney Rice fails to catch a touchdown pass, it will be my fault. Therefore I will continue to include this question until further notice.

I still have absolutely no idea how he does it. His second touchdown catch against Tennessee was in between four different defenders. FOUR. I think twice before getting in an elevator with four people, let alone catching a pass across the back line of the end zone in Neyland Stadium right in front of the student section. At this point, not only am I on the Sidney Rice Bandwagon, but I also park it in my garage at night and wash it twice a week.

If Arkansas thinks they have somebody on their roster that can cover Sidney, then by all means step up and give it a shot.

I'm going to start keeping a chart like Chad Johnson does that says "Who Can Cover Sidney Rice?" Every week I'll list the opposing team's defensive backs, and every week I'll cross their names out with giant red X's.

2) Can Carolina's defense slow down Arkansas' running game enough to win?



5 Questions with Jake Broom Third-year political science student

ARKANSAS

It is no secret that Arkansas is going to try to pound the ball. If they didn't, they'd be stupid. Arkansas is by far the No. 1 rushing offense in the SEC, averaging about 256 rushing yards per game. USC's defense is 10th in the SEC, allowing an average of 168 yards rushing per game.

If I were Arkansas coach Houston Nutt, I wouldn't throw the ball. At all. Zero. None.

But, luckily, my name isn't Houston Nutt. So what do I know?

3) How will Arkansas' true-freshman quarterback react in his first start?

So let me get this straight. Houston Nutt tells freshman quarterback Casey Dick that he is going to redshirt this year, and he hasn't played at all. Then, all of a sudden, the week before the Razorbacks eighth game of the year, he promotes him from clipboard holder to starting quarterback against an SEC opponent. I think it's safe to say Nutt has officially entered full-fledged "I'll do whatever it takes

to keep me from getting fired" mode.

I know what you're thinking: With a name like Casey Dick, the guy has to be good. But trust me, this could end very, very badly.

4) What is the deal with the 12:30 kickoff time?

Yes, the 12:30 start is garbage, but think about this — Arkansas is on Central time. So this bad boy is actually kicking off at 11:30 a.m. Arkansas time.

Being on Jefferson-Pilot is bad enough — I've seen better production quality during "Play for Points" in my Theatre 200 class — but the combination of it being a Jefferson-Pilot game and the kickoff being set at 12:30 is killing me. Why don't they just go all out and start broadcasting these games at 8 a.m. on Lifetime. That is the only way they could possibly get less people to watch.

5) What kind of people wear pigs as hats and scream "WOO, PIG SUEY?"

Out of all of the strange traditions SEC schools have, I'd say the whole "Pig Suey" thing is the most disturbing.

There are only three things in life that are certain — death, taxes and some 300-pound woman with a pig on her head screaming "PIG SUEY" as you walk by her pickup truck before every Arkansas game. It never fails.

These are not your average people. Let me put it this way — two of the most famous people ever from Arkansas are Chelsea Clinton and Billy Bob Thornton. Just let that simmer for a while.

Gamecock Challenge

The Challenge: Every week, The Gamecock's readers and staff test their sports knowledge with game predictions. Want to be Reader of the Week? E-mail selections for next week's games to gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu and see if you have the best knowledge of college football around the country.

	Jonathan Hillyard Sports Editor (58-23)	Alex Riley Asst. Sports Editor (49-30)	Stephen Fastenau News Editor (53-26)	Michael LaForgia Editor in Chief (49-30)	Steven Van Haren Copy Desk Chief (50-29)	Bennie Riley, Jr. Reader of the Week (52-25)
Duke at Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson
Tennessee at 9 Florida State	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame
N.C. State at 9 Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.	Florida St.
14 Wisconsin at 10 Penn St.	Penn St.	Penn St.	Wisconsin	Penn St.	Wisconsin	Penn St.
Texas A&M at 19 Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech	Texas Tech
5 Miami at 3 Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech	Virginia Tech
Vanderbilt at 13 Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida	Florida
Missouri at 25 Colorado	Missouri	Missouri	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado	Missouri
Wake Forest at Georgia Tech	Georgia Tech	Georgia Tech	Wake Forest	Georgia Tech	Georgia Tech	Wake Forest
USC at Arkansas	USC, 28-14	USC, 35-17	USC, 48-21	USC, 21-7	USC, 21-14	USC, 27-17