



Tulane head coach Jon Sumrall, left, reacts after winning the American Conference championship, Dec. 5.



Alabama quarterback Ty Simpson



Miami Hurricanes fans pose for a photo during a game against SMU, Nov. 1.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS: INDIANA LEADS THE FIELD

Hoosiers Make History

BY JOHN MARSHALL  
AP Sports Writer

Indiana has a long history of mediocrity, a basketball school unable to gain any traction on a football field. Curt Cignetti has quickly altered the Hoosiers’ trajectory. A year after making the College Football Playoff for the first time, Indiana earned the No. 1 spot in this year’s 12-team field following a thrilling win over reigning national champion Ohio State in the Big Ten title game. “We’re going to go in the playoffs as the No. 1 seed and a lot of people probably thought that wasn’t possible,” Cignetti said. “But when you get the right people and you have a plan, and they love one another and play for one another and they commit, anything’s possible.” The Hoosiers (13-0) were an easy choice at No. 1 for the playoff selection committee as the only undefeated team left in the Football Bowl Subdivision. Ohio State, Georgia and Texas Tech also earned first-round byes. The back end of the playoff field caused a bit of consternation and produced a pair of upstarts: American Conference champion Tulane and Sun Belt champion James Madison. “We’re playing with house money a little bit, right?” Tulane coach Jon Sumrall said. “For us, you only get one shot at this. Have no regrets, let it all hang out and enjoy the opportunity.”

BITTER IRISH

Notre Dame closed the season on a 10-game winning streak, by an average of 30 points, but still were passed over for the CFP in favor of Alabama and Miami. The snub led to a rant by Irish athletic director Pete Bevacqua, who railed against everyone from the CFP selection committee to the ACC. The Irish were so upset they opted to not play in any bowl.

ALSO OUT

The Irish weren’t the only school green with envy. Duke did its job by winning the ACC championship game for the first time since 1962, but didn’t get a CFP invite. Twisting the knife even more, Miami got in despite failing to even qualify for the ACC title game thanks to the league’s tiebreaker.

FIRST-ROUND MATCHUPS AND FOUR TEAMS AWAITING THE WINNERS (all times Eastern):



No. 9 Alabama (10-3) at No. 8 Oklahoma (10-2) • Dec. 19, 8 p.m.

The Crimson Tide are back in the CFP after being snubbed last year despite a lopsided loss to Georgia in the Southeastern Conference title game. They get a chance to prove they belong and try to avenge a 23-21 home loss to the Sooners in November. Turnovers will be key; the Crimson Tide had three



No. 10 Miami (10-2) at No. 7 Texas A&M (11-1) • Dec. 20, Noon

The Hurricanes got into the CFP despite failing to reach the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game, jumping Notre Dame in line. The Aggies had their undefeated season end against rival Texas, but still have their best record since a perfect 1939 season.



No. 11 Tulane (11-2) at No. 6 Ole Miss (11-1) • Dec. 20, 3:30 p.m.

A trip to the CFP wasn’t enough for the Rebels to keep coach Lane Kiffin, who bolted for LSU. Ole Miss will be coached by Pete Golding against a Tulane team riding a Green Wave of momentum after knocking off North Texas in the AAC title game. The Rebels beat Tulane 45-10 when the teams met in September.



No. 12 James Madison (12-1) at No. 5 Oregon (11-1) • Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m.

Like Ole Miss, James Madison will have a new coach, but it won’t happen until after the CFP. Bob Chesney is sticking around to see the Dukes through their biggest game in program history before he becomes head coach at UCLA. Oregon’s only loss was to Indiana and the Ducks will be looking to bounce back after being knocked out of the CFP as the No. 1 seed a year ago.



No. 2 Ohio State (12-1) plays the Texas A&M-Miami winner • Dec. 31, Cotton Bowl

Could a late-season loss be good for the Buckeyes? Maybe. Ohio State was No. 1 pretty much all season, defending its national championship with a series of lopsided wins. A 13-10 loss to Indiana in the Big Ten title game could shake any complacency the Buckeyes might have had – and potentially spell trouble for whichever team they face.



No. 4 Texas Tech (12-1) plays the Oregon-James Madison winner • Jan. 1, Orange Bowl

Texas Tech has taken heat for

the price tag of its roster, but the investment paid off. The Red Raiders’ 12 wins are already most in school history and they’re headed to the CFP for the first time. The Big 12 champions have a formidable defense, led by wrecking ball linebacker Jacob Rodriguez.



No. 1 Indiana (13-0) plays the Oklahoma-Alabama winner • Jan. 1, Rose Bowl

Cignetti has reversed the course of what had been the losingest program in the FBS. A team that won three games three years ago reached the CFP in his first season and silenced doubters this year with its first Big Ten championship since 1967. The Hoosiers also have Fernando Mendoza, one of college football’s most exciting quarterbacks.



No. 3 Georgia plays the Ole Miss-Tulane winner • Jan. 1, Sugar Bowl

The Bulldogs are CFP regulars and the last team to repeat as national champions, in 2021 and 2022. Georgia’s lone loss was to Alabama in September and that was avenged with a 28-7 trouncing in the SEC title game. The Bulldogs are fierce defensively and quarterback Gunner Stockton is a proven winner.

Indiana head coach Curt Cignetti looks on during the game against Purdue, Nov. 28. AP PHOTO/DOUG McSCHOOLER



BOWL SCHEDULE

**Dec. 13**  
**Celebration Bowl, Atlanta**  
South Carolina State vs. Prairie View A&M, noon (ABC)  
**LA Bowl, Inglewood, Calif.**  
Boise State vs. Washington, 8 p.m. (ABC)

**Dec. 16**  
**Salute to Veterans Bowl, Montgomery, Ala.**  
Troy vs. Jacksonville State, 9 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 17**  
**Cure Bowl, Orlando, Fla.**  
Old Dominion vs. South Florida, 5 p.m. (ESPN)  
**68 Ventures Bowl, Mobile, Ala.**  
Louisiana vs. Delaware, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 18**  
**Xbox Bowl, Frisco, Texas**  
Arkansas State vs. Missouri State, 9 p.m. (ESPN2)

**Dec. 19**  
**Myrtle Beach Bowl, Conway, S.C.**  
Kennesaw State vs. Western Michigan, 11 a.m. (ESPN)  
**Gasparilla Bowl, Tampa, Fla.**  
Memphis vs N.C. State, 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF, FIRST ROUND**  
No. 11 Alabama (10-3) at No. 8 Oklahoma (10-2), 8 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

**Dec. 20**  
**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF, FIRST ROUND**  
No. 10 Miami (Fla.) (10-2) at No. 7 Texas A&M (11-1), noon (ESPN/ABC)  
No. 17 Tulane (11-2) at No. 6 Mississippi (11-1), 3:30 p.m. (TNT/HBO Max)  
No. 19 James Madison (12-1) at No. 5 Oregon (11-1), 7:30 p.m. (TNT/HBO Max)

**Dec. 22**  
**Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, Boise, Idaho**  
Utah St. vs. Washington St., 2 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 23**  
**Boca Raton Bowl, Boca Raton, Fla.**  
Louisville vs. Toledo, 2 p.m. (ESPN)

**New Orleans Bowl, New Orleans**  
Western Kentucky vs. Southern Miss, 5:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Frisco Bowl, Frisco, Texas**  
Ohio vs. UNLV, 9 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 24**  
**Hawai’i Bowl, Honolulu**  
Cal vs. Hawaii, 8 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 26**  
**GameAbove Sports Bowl, Detroit, Mich.**  
Central Michigan vs. Northwestern, 1 p.m. (ESPN)

**Rate Bowl, Phoenix**

New Mexico vs. Minnesota, 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)  
**First Responder Bowl, Dallas, Texas**  
FIU vs. UTSA, 8 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 27**  
**Military Bowl, Annapolis, Md.**  
Pittsburgh vs. East Carolina, 11 a.m. (ESPN)

**Pinstripe Bowl, Bronx, N.Y.**  
Clemson vs. Penn St., noon (ABC)

**Fenway Bowl, Boston**  
UConn vs. Army, 2:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**Pop-Tarts Bowl, Orlando, Fla.**  
No. 12 BYU vs. No. 24 Georgia Tech, 3:30 p.m. (ABC)

**Arizona Bowl, Tucson, Ariz.**  
Fresno St. vs. Miami (OH), 4:30 p.m. (CW Network)

**New Mexico Bowl, Albuquerque**  
No. 23 North Texas vs. San Diego St., 5:45 p.m. (ESPN)

**Gator Bowl, Jacksonville, Fla.**  
No. 25 Missouri vs. NO. 20 Virginia, 7:30 p.m. (ABC)

**Texas Bowl, Houston**  
LSU vs. No. 21 Houston, 9:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 29**  
**Birmingham Bowl, Birmingham, Ala.**  
Georgia Southern vs. Appalachian State, 2 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 30**  
**Independence Bowl, Shreveport, La.**  
Coastal Carolina vs. Louisiana Tech, 2 p.m. (ESPN)

**Music City Bowl, Nashville, Tenn.**  
Tennessee vs. Illinois, 5:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Alamo Bowl, San Antonio, Texas**  
No. 16 Southern Cal vs. TCU, 9 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dec. 31**  
**ReliaQuest Bowl, Tampa, Fla.**  
No. 13 Vanderbilt vs. No. 23 Iowa, noon (ESPN)

**Sun Bowl, El Paso, Texas**  
Arizona St. vs. Duke, 2 p.m. (CBS)

**Citrus Bowl, Orlando, Fla.**  
No. 14 Texas vs. No. 18 Michigan, 3 p.m. (ABC)

**Las Vegas Bowl, Las Vegas**  
No. 15 Utah vs. Nebraska, 3:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF, QUARTERFINALS**  
**At Cotton Bowl, Arlington, Texas**  
Miami/Texas A&M winner at No. 3 Ohio St., 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Jan. 1**  
**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF, QUARTERFINALS**  
**At Orange Bowl, Miami Gardens, Fla.**  
James Madison/Oregon winner at No. 4 Texas Tech, noon (ESPN)

**At Rose Bowl, Pasadena, Calif.**  
Alabama/Oklahoma winner at No. 1

Indiana, 4 p.m. (ESPN)

**At Sugar Bowl, New Orleans**  
Tulane/Mississippi winner at No. 2 Georgia, 8 p.m. (ESPN)

**Jan. 2**  
**Armed Forces Bowl, Fort Worth, Texas**  
Texas State vs. Rice, 1 p.m. (ESPN)

**Liberty Bowl, Memphis, Tenn.**  
No. 22 Navy vs. Cincinnati, 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Duke’s Mayo Bowl, Charlotte, N.C.**  
Mississippi St. vs. Wake Forest, 8 p.m. (ESPN)

**Holiday Bowl, San Diego, Calif.**  
No. 21 Arizona vs. SMU, 8 p.m. (FOX)

**Jan. 8**  
**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF, SEMIFINALS**  
**At Fiesta Bowl, Glendale, Ariz.**  
TBD, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Jan. 9**  
**COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF, SEMIFINALS**  
**At Peach Bowl, Atlanta**  
TBD, 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Jan. 19**  
**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**AT MIAMI**  
All times Eastern