

In the Final Poll

AP's No. 3 with more First Place Votes than No. 2

By Tex Noel, Executive Director IFRA

In the 76 year history of the Final Associated Press (AP) College Football Poll, just 4 times the team ranked third received more first place votes than the school finishing second.

The last being in the final 2011 poll as Oklahoma State edged LSU, 4 first place votes to 1; but the latter would received more overall votes and thus be ranked No. 2 in the final poll, after being ranked No.1 for most of the 2011 season.

Prior to the 2011 final poll, the 1983 season when Auburn claimed a 7-3 margin over the Nebraska Cornhuskers, which had slipped to No. 2 following a 31-30 Orange Bowl setback to Miami of Florida. This was the school in South Florida's first title in school history.

The Hurricane would go-on to win three AP National Championships in a 9-year period that ended in 1991.

During that nine-year run, the school known as the "U" had an average final poll ranking of 1.50 with an average of 29.5 first place votes.

In 1973, Notre Dame claimed the AP title; while third place Oklahoma easily out-distance No. 2 Ohio State in first place votes, 16-11.

Can you imagine, if the Sooners were No. 1 in 1973 that would have jumped-started them as National Champion. Oklahoma would be AP's No. 1 in back-to-back seasons of 1974-75.

The Buckeyes, during the WW II era of college football, are the only school that has made this list twice.

In the final poll of 1944, Army winning in its first of two consecutive (and only) championships as the Buckeyes finished second.

That season third place finisher Randolph Field (Texas), a military installation picked-up 17 first place while OSU managed just three.

With a number of schools dropping football (and other sports for the duration of WW II) the wire service selected a number of service team to be included in weekly and final AP Poll.

In between the 1973 and 1983 seasons, the 1981 campaign to be more precise saw No. 3 Penn State receive alone first place finish, a year before winning its first AP title a year later.

And in 1986, when PSU won its second title, Oklahoma following the 1985 National Championship Season would earn 3 final poll first place votes.

Over a 33-year period beginning in 1938, AP's No. 2 would hold an average of margin 27.6 in first place votes over the team that was ranked third.

Included in this time period was an 11-year consecutive seasons (1950-60) which No. 2 holding an average margin of 49 votes over the nation's third ranked team.

Season	No. 2	FPV	No. 3	FPV	Difference
1950	Army	38	Texas	4	34
1951	Michigan State	104	Maryland	18	86
1952	Georgia Tech	36	Notre Dame	4	32
			Michigan		
1953	Notre Dame	141	State	8	133
1954	UCLA	133	Oklahoma	35	98
1955	Michigan State	88	Maryland	55	33
1956	Tennessee	48	Iowa	15	33
			Michigan		
1957	Ohio State	71	State	30	41
1958	Iowa	17	Army	13	4
1959	Mississippi	47	LSU	6	41
1960	Mississippi	16	Iowa	12.5	3.5

In exclusively, the polls would show Numbers 2 and 3 in consecutive seasons with the latter would hold a slim 5-to-3 margin for the number successive seasons beginning with the final poll of 1938.

The final poll of 2011 was the first time since 2000 that the third ranked team would earn more first place votes than No. 2. (Georgia in 2007 held a slim 3-1 margin over USC; marking the first time since 1990 when No. 3 would even receive any first-place vote recognition.

2007	2	Georgia	3	3	USC	1
2008	2	Utah	16	3	USC	1
					Oklahoma	
2011	2	LSU	1	3	State	4

Top 10 Margins between AP's No. 2 and No. 3 Ranked teams:

The largest margin

Year	No. 2	FPV	No. 3	FPV	Difference
1953	Notre Dame	141	Michigan State	8	133
1954	UCLA	133	Oklahoma	35	98
1951	Michigan State	104	Maryland	18	86
1948	Notre Dame	97	North Carolina	31	66
1942	Georgia	62	Wisconsin	4	58
1957	Ohio State	71	Michigan State	30	41
1959	Mississippi	47	LSU	6	41
1940	Stanford	44	Michigan	5	39
1950	Army	38	Texas	4	34
	Michigan State				
1955	State	88	Maryland	55	33
1956	Tennessee	48	Iowa	15	33

The lowest margin reveals:

Year	No. 2	FPV	No. 3	FPV	Difference
1966	Michigan State	8	Alabama	7	1
1975	Arizona State	5	Alabama	3.5	1.5
2007	Georgia	3	USC	1	2
			Mississippi		
1962	Wisconsin	5	i	2	3
1960	Mississippi	16	Iowa	12.5	3.5
1958	Iowa	17	Army	13	4
1974	USC	6	Michigan	2	4
1970	Notre Dame	8	Texas	3	5
			Notre Dame		
1964	Arkansas	11.5	Dame	6	5.5
1982	SMU	9	Nebraska	2	7