

Path To College Football Playoff Remains Unlikely But Not Impossible For Ohio State



With Ohio State's loss to Michigan this past weekend, the Buckeyes' fate is now left out of their hands as the College Football Playoff committee dropped Ohio State to No. 6 in their most recent rankings, leaving Ohio State out of the race for the national championship as it currently stands.

The Buckeyes were left in a similar situation last season, leaving their fate in the hands of the committee after a loss to Michigan in the regular-season finale. Ohio State was able to sneak into the College Football Playoff, but this time around, even more will have to go the Buckeyes' way if they want a chance of competing for a national championship.

As it stands, the committee's top four includes No. 1 Georgia, No. 2 Michigan, No. 3 Washington and No. 4 Florida State. Considering all four are undefeated, a win in their respective conference championship games would make things easy for the committee, but also leave Ohio State out of the playoff. Oregon is next out at No. 5 in the rankings.

For Ohio State to make the College Football Playoff, the Buckeyes' fate comes down to the results of the SEC, Big 12 and ACC Championship Games. Michigan is likely in regardless of how the Big Ten Championship Game plays out, while the winner of Washington and Oregon will be in, with the loser unlikely to receive further consideration for a playoff spot.

- **SEC Championship Game, No. 1 Georgia vs. No. 8 Alabama:** Ohio State needs Georgia to win to eliminate Alabama from playoff consideration with two losses.
- **Big 12 Championship Game, No. 7 Texas vs. No. 18 Oklahoma State:** Ohio State needs Oklahoma State to win to eliminate Texas from playoff consideration with two losses.
- **ACC Championship Game: No. 4 Florida State vs. No. 14 Louisville:** Florida State is undefeated, but a loss to Louisville combined with a season-ending injury to quarterback Jordan Travis would likely have the committee considering other one-loss teams like Ohio State or potentially Washington instead of Florida State. The Seminoles likely need a win to secure a playoff spot.

If all three results go Ohio State's way, the committee would be left with Georgia, Michigan and either Washington or Oregon, with a one-loss Ohio State, one-loss Florida State and potentially one-loss Washington in consideration for the remaining playoff spot, which would likely go to the Buckeyes. But wins by either Alabama or Texas would put the Crimson Tide or Longhorns over Ohio State as a one-loss conference champion, while the committee would not be able to leave out an undefeated Florida State.

Should Ohio State sneak into the playoffs, it would be as the No. 4 seed with a rematch against No. 1 Georgia, with the Bulldogs likely to select the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans. But should Ohio State miss out on the playoff, the most likely destination is the Orange Bowl, which Louisville considered a popular choice for the Buckeyes in Miami.