

We've reached 5 issues of this digest and have accumulated a host of new subscribers across the USA. Most of you are FCS AD staff, alumni, and fans representing each FCS conference. We'd like to take time to say "Thank You" for your patronage and support thus far. Look out for feature upgrades to our website, advertising opportunities, and more coming soon!

1. PRESEASON CRUNCH

Last week saw the first media-releasing of FCS Preseason [Consolidated Rankings](#). From these rankings spawn a series of Top 25 preseason polls. The College Sporting News (or [CSN](#) Poll) is a traditional polling system that FCS schools and conferences use.

College Sporting News 2011 Preseason Top 25

1. Appalachian State
2. Georgia Southern
3. Delaware
4. William & Mary
5. Eastern Washington
6. Montana State
7. New Hampshire
8. Northern Iowa
9. Wofford
10. North Dakota State
11. Villanova
12. Jacksonville State
13. McNeese State
14. James Madison
15. Penn
16. Lehigh
17. Southern Illinois
18. Stephen F. Austin
19. Montana
20. Liberty
21. Western Illinois
22. Florida A&M
23. Bethune-Cookman
24. Harvard
25. Central Arkansas



Courtesy: Dave Mayo (Appalachian, 1983)

Others receiving votes: Chattanooga, Colgate, Sam Houston State, Murray State, Southern Utah, Central Connecticut State, South Carolina State, Grambling, Robert Morris.

Any surprises? Disappointments? It appears that conference strength remains a dominant component of team position. CAA and SOCON conferences continue to represent well with 5 of top 10 in ranking power and 6 of top 10 in poll position. A few things stick out, though. No Great West or Pioneer League representation. There was buzz around Southern Utah's QB, Brad Sorensen, who's a Walter Payton Award Watchlister. I guess not strong enough to make the top 25. Jacksonville and Dayton ended last season with impressive records, but still an up-hill climb for Pioneer respect remains. Three-time MEAC champion, SC State, is beat out by Florida A&M and

Bethune-Cookman. Perhaps the Rattlers' 2010 finale defeat of rival Bethune-Cookman in last year's Florida Classic (handing the Wildcats there only loss of the regular season), 10 game win streak to end 2010, and returning 17 starters was enough to position them ahead of its nemeses. Lehigh's first round playoff win against Northern Iowa and preseason #1 for the Patriot League puts them at a #16, seats-edge spot. No pressure.

Well, how much weight do these and other rankings and polls truly have? Some hold the preseason with seriousness while many pay it no mind and hold on to the adage, "we'll see". In the words of my father, "it's not over til it's over".

Here are the top 5 preseason teams and top 5 season-end teams over last 3 years:

2010 start	2010 end	2009 start	2009 end	2008 start	2008 end
1.Villanova	1.EWashington	1.App St	1.Villanova	1.App St	1.Richmond
2.Montana	2.Delaware	2.Richmond	2.Montana	2.ND St	2.Montana
3.App St	3.Villanova	3.Montana	3.App St	3.N Iowa	3.James Madison
4.William & Mary	4.App St	4.N Iowa	4.William & Mary	4.Richmond	4.N Iowa
5.Southern Illinois	5.Ga Southern	5.Villanova	5.Richmond	5.UMass	5.App St

In 2010, 2 of the top 5 preseason ended in the final poll. In 2009, 4 of the top 5 showed up at season end. And, in 2008, 3 of the top 5 remained on year end polling. 2008 & 2009 preseason polls contained an FCS champion within the top 5. Will we get a champion out of this season's top 5 preseason? [The Underdawg](#) welcomes your comments and opinions.

2. REP YOUR SCHOOL

Part of the college football experience is wearing your "nalia"- representing your favorite team's logo, colors, and slogans on hats, shirts, and other apparel. It boosts game spirit and enthusiasm, and automatically becomes a closet favorite to pull out on early Saturday mornings. Whether you're in the stadium, at the tailgate, or on the couch affront the big screen, fans love to rep their squad no matter where they are.

Merchandising is big business for colleges and universities. Many institutions have hundreds of licensees and royalties anywhere between 7.5 to 14%, with monies going to support athletic scholarships and development mainly.

The Collegiate Licensing Company ([CLC](#)) is the oldest and largest collegiate licensing agency in the USA for trademark and branding of many schools, conferences, and organizations. The CLC's brand has grown to be a household mark of quality on collegiate sports apparel. Each quarter they produce a list of top 75 universities and manufacturers across the nation. In the FBS, Univ of Texas holds #1 in merchandise sales, with Alabama, Florida, Michigan, and Georgia rounding the top 5.

Of the 75, five FCS schools were in the count. **Here's a list of those 5 & their ranking at year end 2010:**

- Montana....#56
- Villanova....#68
- Georgetown....#69

Montana State...#72
Delaware....#73
James Madison...#74
(info through 12/2010; source: CLC.com)

The previous quarter saw the following rankings:

Montana..#56
Villanova..#67
Georgetown...#68
Delaware.....#71
Montana State...#72
(info through 9/2010; source: CLC.com)



Courtesy of University of Montana

Note: Villanova and Georgetown gained more merchandise sales through their basketball program prowess.

Go Big Sky and CAA! Their fans truly rep their schools! Whether at the campus bookstore or online, support the merchandising sales of your FCS team this season!

Bonus: Florida A&M leads all HBCU's in selling licensed merchandise for the last 3 years.

Trivia Results: Congrats to Reginald Thomas of Spartanburg, SC for answering last week's trivia. The only 2 FCS schools that share the same city name within their names are Jacksonville State (AL) and Jacksonville University (FL).

Trivia Question: Which FCS schools have the oldest and newest football programs to date, respectively?

Visit TheUnderdawg.com and enter your answer in the "Contact Us" section. Trivia answer and winner will be announced on the next digest.