

Bowl Coalition, Alliance and BCS History

The history of the Bowl Championship Series began in 1992 with the Bowl Coalition and lasted for three seasons through 1994. The Bowl Coalition featured four games – the Orange, Sugar, Cotton and Fiesta Bowls – with conference champions locked into the Orange (Big Eight), Sugar (Southeastern) and Cotton (Southwest) Bowls and the Fiesta Bowl having the ability to pair two at-large teams. The Fiesta Bowl had the ability to select one Coalition-eligible team, that was not a conference champion, before the national selection date. The original Coalition also involved champions from the BIG EAST and the Atlantic Coast Conferences, as well as Notre Dame.

Selections were made on the basis of how the champions of the Big Eight, Southeastern and Southwest Conferences finished in the final regular-season poll, which was a combination of the CNN/USA Today rankings. All selections were made by the Coalition as a group on the first Sunday in December following the final weekend of the regular season. All teams had to have at least six wins against Division I-A opponents and Notre Dame was guaranteed a spot with seven wins and could still qualify with six wins given mutual agreement between the bowls and the University.

There were 56 Division I-A members that were members of the original Coalition, which also included original involvement with the Gator and Hancock Bowls. The remainder of the bowls remained in place, many with predetermined conference tie-ins. A second layer of bowls eventually was identified and came to be known as the Tier Two bowls.

1992 Season

Sugar Bowl

Alabama 34, Miami, Fla. 13

* Had first selection, but had automatic matchup between SEC champion Alabama, which was ranked No. 2 in final regular season AP poll, against BIG EAST champion Miami, which was ranked No. 1.

Cotton Bowl

Notre Dame 28, Texas A&M 3

* Had second selection based on SWC champion Texas A&M being ranked No. 4 at end of regular season and chose at-large selection Notre Dame.

Orange Bowl

Florida State 27, Nebraska 14

* Had third selection based on Big Eight champion Nebraska being ranked No. 11 at end of regular season and chose ACC champion Florida State.

Fiesta Bowl

Syracuse 26, Colorado 22

* Had fourth selection and chose at-large selection Syracuse and also picked at-large selection Colorado.

1993 Season

Orange Bowl

Florida State 18, Nebraska 14

* Had first selection, but had automatic matchup between Big Eight champion Nebraska, which was ranked No. 1 in final regular season coalition poll, against ACC champion Florida State, which was ranked No. 2.

Sugar Bowl

Florida 41, West Virginia 7

* Had second selection based on BIG EAST champion West Virginia being ranked No. 3 at end of regular season and chose SEC champion Florida.



Notre Dame received an at-large bid to the 1993 Cotton Bowl, where it defeated Southwest Conference champion Texas A&M 28-3 (photo by Don Stacy)

Cotton Bowl

Notre Dame 24, Texas A&M 21

* Had third selection based on SWC champion Texas A&M being ranked No. 7 at end of regular season and chose at-large selection Notre Dame.

Fiesta Bowl

Arizona 29, Miami, Fla. 0

* Had fourth selection and chose at-large selection Miami and also picked at-large selection Arizona.

1994 Season

Orange Bowl

Nebraska 24, Miami 17

* Had first selection based on Big Eight champion Nebraska being ranked No. 1 at end of regular season in coalition poll and chose BIG EAST champion Miami.

Sugar Bowl

Florida State 23, Florida 17

* Had second selection based on SEC champion Florida being ranked No. 5 and chose ACC champion Florida State.

Cotton Bowl

USC 55, Texas Tech 14

* Had third selection based on SWC champion Texas Tech being unranked and chose at-large selection USC.

Fiesta Bowl

Colorado 41, Notre Dame 24

* Had fourth selection and chose at-large selection Notre Dame and also picked at-large selection Colorado.

The Bowl Alliance lasted three seasons, 1995 through 1997, and involved three games – the Fiesta, Orange and Sugar Bowls. A predetermined rotation created a situation in which each year a different bowl had the first two choices, while a second bowl choose third and fifth and the third bowl chose fourth and sixth. Conferences that were part of the Alliance were the Big 12, Atlantic Coast, BIG EAST and Southeastern, leaving two at-large slots.

The most noteworthy change from the Coalition to the Alliance involved the elimination of the conference tie-ins which had been in existence for years. The goal was to provide the best opportunity to match the top two teams and provide the greatest flexibility in creating the postseason matchups amongst the Alliance partners.

In 1995, the first year of the Alliance, there was only one at-large position since the merger of the Big Eight and Southwest Conferences into the Big 12 had not yet taken place, providing five guaranteed conference champions that season.

Notre Dame was guaranteed the at-large slot in 1995 by finishing in the final regular-season top 10 of either the *Associated Press* or CNN/USA Today poll. The Irish accomplished that and played Florida State in the Orange Bowl.

A second at-large spot opened up in 1996 though Notre Dame had no way to guarantee itself a slot in an Alliance game. Notre Dame's ability to qualify for one of those games came by earning a spot in the pool of available teams and teams were required to win at least eight games to qualify. Notre Dame won eight games in 1996 and qualified for the pool, but ultimately was not selected.

The BCS is revamped for the 2006 season, featuring the four traditional BCS games in early January, followed by a National Championship Game matching the top two teams in the BCS rankings one week later.

1995 Season

Fiesta Bowl

Nebraska 62, Florida 24

* Had first and second selections and picked Big Eight champion Nebraska, which was ranked No. 1 in final regular season AP poll, against SEC champion Florida, which was ranked No. 2. This pick was required through mandatory No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup rules.

Orange Bowl

Florida State 31, Notre Dame 26

* Had third and fifth selections and picked ACC champion Florida State against at-large selection Notre Dame.

Sugar Bowl

Virginia Tech 28, Texas 10

* Had fourth and sixth selections and picked BIG EAST champion Virginia Tech against SWC champion Texas.

1996 Season

Sugar Bowl

Florida 52, Florida State 20

* Had first and second selections and picked SEC champion Florida and ACC champion Florida State.

Fiesta Bowl

Penn State 38, Texas 15

* Had third and fifth selections and picked at-large selection Penn State and Big 12 champion Texas.

Orange Bowl

Nebraska 41, Virginia Tech 21

* Had fourth and sixth selections and picked at-large selection Nebraska and BIG EAST champion Virginia Tech.

1997 Season

Orange Bowl

Nebraska 42, Tennessee 17

* Had first and second selections and picked Big 12 champion Nebraska and SEC champion Tennessee.

Sugar Bowl

Florida State 31, Ohio State 14

* Had third and fifth selections and picked ACC champion Florida State and at-large selection Ohio State.

Fiesta Bowl

Kansas State 35, Syracuse 18

* Had fourth and sixth selections and picked at-large selection Kansas State and BIG EAST champion Syracuse.

The Bowl Championship Series began for the 1998 season and a description of its selection process is found on the previous page.

1998 Season

Fiesta Bowl

Tennessee 23, Florida State 16

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: SEC champion Tennessee (No. 1) vs. ACC champion Florida State (No. 2).

Rose Bowl

Wisconsin 38, UCLA 31

* Had Big Ten champion Wisconsin against Pac 10 champion UCLA based on agreement with respective conferences when neither champion was involved in national championship game.

Sugar Bowl

Ohio State 24, Texas A&M 14

* Had first and third selection among four remaining teams based on losing automatic qualifier (SEC champion Tennessee) to national championship game and Tennessee being ranked higher than Florida State; picked at-large selection Ohio State first and Big 12 champion Texas A&M third.

Orange Bowl

Florida 31, Syracuse 10

* Had second and four selection among four remaining teams based on losing automatic qualifier (ACC champion Florida State) to national championship game and Tennessee being ranked higher than Florida State; picked at-large selection Florida State second and BIG EAST champion Syracuse fourth.

1999 Season

Sugar Bowl

Florida State 46, Virginia Tech 29

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: ACC champion Florida State (No. 1) vs. BIG EAST Champion Virginia Tech (No. 2).

Rose Bowl

Wisconsin 17, Stanford 9

* Had Big Ten champion Wisconsin against Pac 10 champion Stanford based on agreement with respective conferences when neither champion was involved in

national championship game.

Orange Bowl

Michigan 35, Alabama 34 (overtime)

* Had SEC champion Alabama based on regional consideration; had first pick among remaining spots and selected at-large selection Michigan.

Fiesta Bowl

Nebraska 31, Tennessee 21

* Had Big XII champion Nebraska based on regional consideration; had second pick among remaining spots and selected at-large selection Tennessee.

2000 Season

Orange Bowl

Oklahoma 13, Florida State 2

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: Big XII Champion Oklahoma (No. 1) vs. ACC champion Florida State (No. 2)

Rose Bowl

Washington 34, Purdue 24

* Had Big Ten champion Purdue against Pac-10 champion Washington based on agreement with respective conferences when neither champion was involved in national championship game.

Sugar Bowl

Miami 37, Florida 20

* Had SEC Champion Florida based on regional consideration; and selected at-large pick Miami.

Fiesta Bowl

Oregon State 41, Notre Dame 9

* At-large selections, picking independent Notre Dame, who was ranked 11th in the Bowl Championship Series poll and the Pac-10's Oregon State, who was ranked sixth.

2001 Season

Rose Bowl

Miami 37, Nebraska 14

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: BIG EAST Champion Miami (No. 1) vs. at-large pick Nebraska (No. 2).

Orange Bowl

Florida 56, Maryland 23

* Had ACC Champion Maryland based on regional consideration; and selected at-large pick Florida (No. 5 in the BCS).

Sugar Bowl

LSU 47, Illinois 34

* Had SEC Champion LSU based on regional consideration; and selected Big Ten Champion Illinois (No. 8 in the BCS).

Fiesta Bowl

Oregon 38, Colorado 16

* Had Big 12 Champion Colorado based on regional consideration; and selected Pac-10 Champion Oregon (No. 4 in the BCS).

2002 Season

Fiesta Bowl

Ohio State 31, Miami 24 (2 ot)

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: Big Ten Champion Ohio State (No. 2) vs. BIG EAST Champion Miami (No. 1).

Orange Bowl

USC 38, Iowa 17

* Selected at-large pick USC (No. 4 in the BCS) and at-large selection Iowa (No. 5 in the BCS).

Sugar Bowl

Georgia 26, Florida State 13

* Had SEC Champion Georgia (No. 3 in the BCS) based on regional consideration and ACC Champion Florida State.

Rose Bowl

Oklahoma 34, Washington State 14

* Selected Big 12 Champion Oklahoma vs. Pac-10 Champion Washington State due to regional considerations.

2003 Season

Sugar Bowl

LSU 21, Oklahoma 14

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: SEC Champion LSU (No. 2) vs. at-large bid Oklahoma (No. 1).

Fiesta Bowl

Ohio State 35, Kansas State 28

* Selected Big Ten Champion Ohio State (No. 5 in BCS) and Big 12 Champion Kansas State (No. 10 in the BCS).

Rose Bowl

USC 28, Michigan 14

* Selected Pac-10 Champion USC (No. 3 in BCS) and at-large selection Michigan (No. 6 in BCS) based on final Bowl Championship Series poll, despite USC's No. 1 ranking in final Associated Press poll.

Orange Bowl

Miami 16, Florida State 14

* Selected BIG EAST Champion Miami (No. 5 in BCS) and ACC Champion Florida State based on regional considerations.

2004 Season

Orange Bowl

USC 55, Oklahoma 17

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: Pac-10 Champion USC (No. 1) vs. Big 12 Champion Oklahoma (No. 2).

Rose Bowl

Texas 38, Michigan 37

* Selected Big 12 Champion Texas (No. 4 in the BCS) vs. at-large selection and Big Ten Champion Michigan.

Fiesta Bowl

Utah 35, Pittsburgh 7

* Selected at-large selection and Mountain West Conference Champion Utah (No. 6 in BCS) vs. Big East Champion Pittsburgh.

Sugar Bowl

Auburn 16, Virginia Tech 13

* Selected SEC Champion Auburn (No. 3 in BCS) vs. ACC Champion Virginia Tech (No. 8 in BCS).

2005 Season

Rose Bowl

Texas 41, USC 38

* Had No. 1 vs. No. 2 matchup for national championship according to final Bowl Championship Series poll: Pac-10 Champion USC (No. 1) vs. Big 12 Champion Texas (No. 2).

Fiesta Bowl

Ohio State 34, Notre Dame 20

* Had at-large selection Ohio State (No. 4 in BCS) vs. at-large selection Notre Dame (No. 6 in BCS).

Sugar Bowl

West Virginia 38, Georgia 35

* Had SEC Champion Georgia (No. 7 in BCS) and Big East Champion West Virginia (No. 11 in BCS).

Orange Bowl

Penn State 26, Florida State 23 (3 ot)

* Selected Big Ten Champion Penn State (No. 11 in BCS) and ACC Champion Florida State based on regional considerations.