

College Gameday

By Adam Kilgore

THE RUNDOWN

NOON

Noon: No. 21 Maryland at No. 20 Boston College, ESPN
Noon: Miami at Virginia, WDCA (Channel 20), WJZ (Channel 13)
Noon: Connecticut at Syracuse, WMAR (Channel 2)
Noon: Iowa at Minnesota, MASN
Noon: Michigan State at Penn State, ESPN2
Noon: No. 16 Oklahoma at Baylor, Comcast SportsNet
Noon: Yale at Harvard, WGN
Noon: Western Carolina at No. 3, Florida, pay-per-view
Noon: North Carolina State at North Carolina, pay-per-view
12:30: Temple at Navy, CSTV
12:30: No. 22 Tennessee at Vanderbilt, pay-per-view
12:30: Middle Tennessee State at South Carolina, pay-per-view
1: Villanova at Delaware, CNS

It feels like there might be some game on later today, one that people have sort of been talking about. Can't quite place it. In the meantime, Boston College and Maryland will go a long way toward deciding the Atlantic Coast Conference Atlantic Division. Boston College can jump back into the race with a victory, especially if Wake Forest loses later today. Maryland reminds you that aspirin can save your life if a heart attack strikes — the Terps have won their last five games by a combined 13 points. (To be safe, save the pork rinds for the Baylor-Oklahoma game that starts at the same time.) A not-so-surprising big favorite is Notre Dame, which hosts Army in technically the next time slot, but there's a game at 3:30 that's taking up most of our attention. Notre Dame's **Brady Quinn**, who has thrown 18 touchdown passes and no interceptions in his last six games, will have a great chance to bolster his Heisman profile against a dreadful defense.



LATE AFTERNOON

2:30: Army at No. 6 Notre Dame, WRC (Channel 4), WBAL (Channel 11)
2:30: Montana State at Montana, pay-per-view
3:30: No. 15 Auburn at Alabama, WUSA (Channel 9), WJZ (Channel 13)
3:30: No. 2 Michigan at No. 1 Ohio State WJLA (Channel 7), WMAR (Channel 2)
3:30: Arizona at Oregon, pay-per-view
4: San Diego State at Texas Christian, Versus

Let's see here, think there's some game on at this hour. Sort of important, lot of fans want to watch, maybe? Oh, right, the Game of the Century to End All Humankind. Okay, maybe it's not that big, but the buildup for the "game" (if you really want to call it that) between No. 1 Ohio State and No. 2 Michigan has been thicker than any other game this season, by far. And why not? Two of the best offensive players (Troy Smith and **Ted Ginn**) against two of the best defensive players (LaMarr Woodley and Leon Hall). One of the best rivalries in pro sports. Dotting the "1." "Hail to the Victors." It has everything you'd want in a late-November college football game. It even made Auburn-Alabama a forgotten second billing — that game kicks off at 3:30 as well. Don't make a plan of watching much of that, but it's worth a few clicks during Michigan-OSU commercials. The truly adventurous viewer can wander to Kansas-Kansas State and see how the Wildcats respond after their upset of Texas. Fair warning to HDTV owners: Mark Mangino in high-def, not a pretty sight.

NIGHT

7: No. 19 Virginia Tech at No. 14 Wake Forest, ESPN2
7: Arkansas State at Troy, pay-per-view
7:45: No. 7 Rutgers at Cincinnati, ESPN
8: No. 17 California at No. 4 Southern California, WJLA (Channel 7), WMAR (Channel 2)
8: Mississippi at No. 9 LSU, pay-per-view
11: UCLA at Arizona State (joined in progress), Comcast SportsNet

So long as the seismic event that was Michigan-Ohio State hasn't ripped a hole in the universe, some pretty good college football games are on. The best Pacific-10 game of the season is on ABC at 8, when No. 4 Southern California (No. 3 in the BCS) hosts No. 17 California. Trojans fans will be alone in their rooting for USC and coach **Pete Carroll**, because the rest of college football nation will align themselves with the two-loss Bears in hopes of knocking the one-loss Trojans out of the national title picture. At 7:45 on ESPN, the State University of New Jersey, a.k.a. America's Team, a.k.a. Rutgers, plays at Cincinnati, which will be more dangerous than it sounds. The Bearcats hung tough at Ohio State and Virginia Tech and, like Rutgers, have a physical defense. At 7, No. 14 Wake Forest hosts the No. 19 Hokies in a meaningful game for both. Wake Forest needs a win to maintain the lead in the ACC Atlantic and Virginia Tech needs a win to stay in contention for a spot in the Chick-Fil-A Bowl.



OTHER TOP 25

No. 5 Arkansas at Mississippi State, 2:30 p.m.
 No. 10 Louisville vs. South Florida, 7:30 p.m.
 No. 12 Wisconsin vs. Buffalo, noon.
 No. 13 Boise State vs. Utah State, 3 p.m.
 No. 18 Georgia Tech vs. Duke, 1:30 p.m.
 No. 22 Tennessee at Vanderbilt, 12:30 p.m.
 No. 23 BYU vs. New Mexico, 4 p.m.



ISTOCK PHOTO: WASHINGTON POST ILLUSTRATION

Happens Every Year

Top-Ranked Ohio State and No. 2 Michigan Play Today, But the 'Game of the Century' Moniker Has Been Trotted Out for Decades

Award Winners

» **Nebraska 35, Oklahoma 31, 1971:** "The best Game of Eternity or Mankind," Dan Jenkins called it, and most people whose opinions matter agree. Watched by a national audience on Thanksgiving day, highlighted by Johnny Rodgers's weaving punt return, the Huskers maintained their No. 1 ranking and went on to win the national championship. Wrote Jenkins in Sports Illustrated: "It is impossible to stir the pages of history and find one [game] in which both teams performed so reputedly for so long throughout the day."



» **Texas 15, Arkansas 14, 1969:** They won't call last season's national championship game, a classic 41-38 Longhorns win, the "Game of the Century" in Austin because of this one. It was to be played in the third week of October, but ABC public relations maven Beano Cook persuaded coaches Frank Broyles and Darrell Royal to push it back to December to create more hype. It worked — Richard Nixon attended the game to award the winner a plaque declaring it the national champion. Books have been written about the game (best title: "Horns, Hogs, and Nixon Coming").

» **Notre Dame 31, Florida State 24, 1993:** Critics derided NBC as the "Notre Dame Broadcasting Company" for hyping No. 1 FSU at No. 2 Notre Dame as the "Game of the Century." But the network had the last laugh when the Seminoles and Irish played a thriller. Notre Dame secured victory only when nickel back Shawn Wooden deflected Charlie Ward's last-minute pass on fourth down in the end zone. The Irish, though, lost to Boston College the next week, and Florida State went on to win the national title.

Michigan and Ohio State will play the latest "Game of the Century" today, but it will not be the first time the rivals thrust that phrase into college football legend. In 1969, a rookie coach named Bo Schembechler led the Wolverines to an upset of No. 1 Ohio State, pushing Texas to No. 1 and Arkansas to No. 2.

Those two teams would play a game on ABC the next week, and it would be the final game of the centennial season of college football. A few clever ABC executives met, and a slogan was born: the "Game of the Century."

Ever since, historians and talking heads have slapped the moniker on games from the past, present and future, turning the phrase into more of an idea than a defining term. A Google search of "College Football" and "Game of the Century" yields 26,300 hits.

"It's kind of become blasé to say it, almost," said Bill Little, an assistant athletic director at Texas who has been with the school since 1968. "It kind of lost its value."

"The phrase I hear most often is, 'This year's "Game of the Century,"' college football historian Michael Mac-Cambridge said. "People realize what they're doing, and they call themselves on it."

The earliest "Game of the Century" is Notre Dame's 18-13 upset win over Ohio State in 1935, a game that helped vault Notre Dame to its exalted status. Another 1935 game, Southern Methodist-Texas Christian, was labeled the "Game of the Half-Century."

Now the phrase has spiraled nearly out of control. Commentators referred to several games this season, such as Ohio State-Texas and even Louisville-West Virginia, as "Games of the Century." Cumberland University created a Web site dedicated to the 222-0 loss it suffered to Georgia Tech in 1916 and referred to it as the "Game of the Century."

"There have been so many," Dan Jenkins, the former Sports Illustrated college football guru who now is a historian for the National Football Foundation, wrote in an e-mail. "What do you want to count?"

A few throughout history still merit consideration, including the Arkansas-Texas game that made the label ubiquitous.

"Well, it was unbelievable, the hype that went into that game," legendary Texas coach Darrell Royal said. "You can expect the hype to increase considerably, because of more press and more television and more radio and more everything, when Ohio State and Michigan tee it up."

Straight to Video



» **Notre Dame 10, Michigan State 10, 1966:** In his dispatch for Sports Illustrated, Jenkins famously wrote that Notre Dame "tied one for the Gipper" after then-coach Ara Parseghian did not attempt to score during Notre Dame's final possession. Students held a bonfire to burn all the copies of the magazine they could. Perhaps they had a point: Notre Dame backup quarterback Coley O'Brien, in for the injured Terry Hanratty, suffered from diabetes, and Parseghian felt it would affect his throwing and didn't want to risk a turnover.

» **Army 0, Notre Dame 0, 1946:** Historians hail it as one of the sport's classics, but one fact is inescapable: *neither team scored!* The game boiled down to Army's Doc Blanchard and Glenn Davis — Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside — against Notre Dame's Johnny Lujack, who played quarterback and safety. Lujack made a shoestring tackle on Blanchard in the fourth quarter that prevented him from scoring a long touchdown. "I really don't see what the big deal is," Lujack said of Blanchard afterward.

» **Penn State 14, Miami 10, 1987:** A college football-record television audience watched the game, which earned a 25.1 rating, and it delivered in terms of drama. So what's the problem? Miami outgained Penn State 445-162 and converted 22 first downs compared with Penn State's eight — and lost. The Hurricanes committed seven turnovers, including five interceptions by Vinny Testaverde. Pete Giftopoulos picked off the seventh at the goal line to give the Nittany Lions the national title.

BCS ALARM CLOCK



ONE MINUTE UNTIL MIDNIGHT

Last Saturday's upsets narrowed the list of national title contenders, but the BCS is still far from off the hook.

Three undefeated teams and four one-loss programs remain in the title discussion. In an odd set of circumstances, all three unbeaten — Ohio State, Michigan and Rutgers — are playing today in the state of Ohio, and all three will be supremely tested.

Fans of the schools still in contention will have odd allegiances today.

Rutgers supporters need Arkansas and USC to lose, so they better be rooting hard for Mississippi State and California today. Notre Dame faithful better do the unthinkable and cheer for hated Michigan; it would be difficult for voters to place the Fighting Irish ahead of the Wolverines, who romped in South Bend in September.

If you are an Arkansas fan, go buy a Notre Dame T-shirt and a UCLA hat and join the Jeff Tedford fan club. For the Hogs to have a chance, USC likely has to lose one of its three remaining regular season games. The Razorbacks are a different team from what they were in early September, but that 50-14 loss to the Trojans is hard to overcome in a head-to-head debate.

Each of the top eight schools in the BCS will play another team in the top eight over the next three weeks. We will have some answers soon.

Three Clock Moving Scenarios

- Michigan beats Ohio State; Rutgers wins out. Would the Scarlet Knights have a chance to be the No. 1 team in the computer polls? **Probability: 20%**
- Michigan beats Ohio State in convincing fashion, Notre Dame wins out, Florida loses. Would the voters really want a rematch of Michigan's early-season thrashing of Notre Dame? **Probability: 25%**
- Notre Dame, Florida and USC all are knocked out. Who gets the bid, Arkansas, Rutgers or the OSU-Michigan loser? **Probability: 16%**

THE PLAYBOOK

FIRST DOWN

Good Buy?

A seller on eBay sold what he claims is former Virginia Tech quarterback Marcus Vick's ring from the 2003 Insight Bowl. Winning bid: \$826. Vick, currently a member of the Miami Dolphins, was dismissed from the school after last season following a spate of bad behavior. "I hadn't heard about that," Tech senior linebacker Brenden Hill said. "The thing about it is, you never know. It could be somebody just saying that. I don't think he has that disdain and dislike for this program. I doubt he really did that. If someone did do that, that would be a little slap in the face to the program. But I don't think he did that."



SECOND DOWN

Goodbye

Jim Kleinpeter punished Oklahoma for losing to Texas Tech last Saturday by dropping the Sooners from No. 15 to No. 24 in his Associated Press poll vote. One problem: Oklahoma didn't lose. Kleinpeter's vote was taken away after the gaffe was discovered, proving that in college football, voters can be disenfranchised for a lack of knowledge. Kleinpeter asked someone in the press box while covering LSU-Alabama about the Oklahoma game and was told the Sooners had lost, when they actually won, 34-24. Kleinpeter said he couldn't find the score the next day, so he relied on the word of mouth.



THIRD DOWN

Good Night

More than 100 years after it introduced college football to electricity, Mansfield University turned the lights out. The Division II team finished 0-10 this season and cut its football program, but it leaves a unique legacy. Mansfield hosted the first outdoor night football game in 1892. That game, however, was a harbinger for things to come for Mansfield. Then called Mansfield State Normal School, it played a scoreless tie against Wyoming Seminary in Mansfield, Pa. One hundred four years later, the Mountaineers finished 2-29 over the last three seasons.



FOURTH DOWN

Goodness!

Darrell Dickey's name no longer will be on North Texas's payroll, but it will be plastered on the school's practice facility. A booster named Jim McIlvane — known locally as "Mattress Mac" for his bedding commercials — donated \$1 million to the Mean Green on one condition: the practice facility he was funding needed to be named after Dickey, or he was giving the money to the music department. This wouldn't be much of a problem, except for the minor detail that North Texas fired Dickey last week.

