

College Football Playoff

Media Conference

Tuesday, November 20, 2018

Rob Mullens

Press Conference

GINA LEHE: Good evening, and welcome to the College Football Playoff Selection Committee teleconference. Joining us tonight is Bill Hancock, executive director of the College Football Playoff, along with Rob Mullens, College Football Playoff Selection Committee chair.

ROB MULLENS: Good evening, everyone. Week 4 is complete, and here are our rankings: Alabama is No. 1; Clemson is No. 2; Notre Dame is No. 3; Michigan is No. 4. Obviously nothing changed since last week. But that doesn't mean we didn't discuss or consider changes. We did. We talked about whether Alabama and Clemson should flip. Obviously we decided not to. We talked a long time about Notre Dame, Michigan and Georgia and where they should be ranked, especially after looking at their full resumes, including the one head-to-head, we ranked them as the way we did.

UCF after its win against a ranked Cincinnati team moved from No. 11 to No. 9. In contrast to last week when eight teams which previously were ranked between No. 11 and No. 24 lost their games, only five teams in the top 25 lost their games this week.

Because of this relative stability, because so many teams won, that contributed to Syracuse and Iowa State's drop in the rankings.

I appreciate the hard work and effort of our members, that our members put into this process. It's an honor to do this every week. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone, and I'm pleased to take your questions.

Q. You said on TV that UCF was a more complete football team than Ohio State. I'm wondering what the committee's discussion was on Ohio State specifically, how incomplete they are, and how that discussion has evolved over the course of your meetings.

ROB MULLENS: Yeah, we spent considerable time talking about Ohio State and UCF, and I think -- I don't want to -- we said while UCF may not have the depth of talent of Ohio State, the committee thought they're playing more as an all-around team after week 12.

Q. And how does that relate to Ohio State? Why



COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF

are they not playing as complete, and how did that discussion go?

ROB MULLENS: Well, obviously we watched the Maryland game and the games the weeks before. Their defense is struggling a little bit. Their offense is obviously keeping them in the games and helping them find a way to win. But that's what it came down to.

Q. You mentioned before that you guys obviously are aware of Oklahoma's struggles on defense, but why isn't that having more of an effect or an impact on where OU is ranked?

ROB MULLENS: We have mentioned it in several weeks, but I think that's balanced by the dynamic offense that they have and their ability to find a way to win riding that offense.

Q. Is there pretty good separation? You mentioned it on the telecast, 6, 7 and 8, you spent a lot of time talking. Is there a pretty big separation between that group, 3, 4, 5 and then the group 6, 7, 8? And the follow-up question is did Army get any consideration for the top 25?

ROB MULLENS: To your second question, I believe Army was in the pool of teams that were considered, yes. So that would mean that they did get consideration.

My response on TV was to a specific question about Washington State, and my answer was related to that grouping of 6, 7 and 8, but we spent considerable time talking about 3, 4, 5, as well. You know, we take a deep dive on all these teams, look at the most recent week's results, and in the end, rank them the way we did: Oklahoma 6, LSU 7, Washington State 8.

Q. You were asked about Ohio State and about Oklahoma. Some Ohio State fans have been pointing out that both of those teams have struggled on defense and they're both among the top-ranked offenses in the country. What is the level of separation that the committee sees between them that has Oklahoma ranked sixth and Ohio State ranked 10th?

ROB MULLENS: We don't put measurements of separation. We discuss the teams, we look at their full body of work and their resumes, and then we rank them. This week the committee put Oklahoma at 6

and Ohio State at 10.

Q. Just to follow up on Dan's question, not so much about the separation between Oklahoma and Ohio State, but they do have very similar stats. When you compare those two teams specifically, how do you view Oklahoma and how do you view Ohio State in the same context?

ROB MULLENS: Again, it's going to be repetitive. When we look at their full body of resumes, with Oklahoma we see one of the top offenses in the country with a dynamic quarterback, understanding that their defense struggles, and their only loss is to a ranked Texas team on a neutral site. We understand Ohio State has a quality road win over Penn State. They keep finding a way to win, a close overtime win at Maryland, again, with their offense carrying the weight.

Q. Would you say the Purdue game is the biggest difference with them right now, losing to Purdue the way that they did?

ROB MULLENS: That's not the way the discussion happens. You don't narrow it down like that. Again, we line up the full resume side by side, and it never comes down to just one thing.

Q. You said at the opening that you considered whether to flip Alabama and Clemson. I was wondering if you could just elaborate on that discussion, what factors were discussed, and is it closer in your eyes now than it has been the last few weeks?

ROB MULLENS: Similar to the discussion we've had the last few weeks. I don't think much has changed. I think it's been pretty consistent. We see two well-balanced teams, efficient on offense, strong on defense, that perform week in and week out. So I think it's been very consistent how the committee has viewed it, but we do have a responsibility to make sure we take a deep dive each week, and we've done that.

Q. We talk a lot about data and we talk a lot about resumes and we also talk about the eye test. Central Florida, is the lot of the discussion with them just have to come down to the eye test because their schedule is so dissimilar to virtually every other team we're talking about?

ROB MULLENS: All of the above. You know, again, it's never just one piece of it. But yes, the full body of work is a piece of it, and you have to take all those elements: Watching the games as we do, looking at the data as we do, and then having the discussion and the debate in the room. So it's all the above.

Q. As the season goes on and rankings change, does your viewpoints of wins, does the committee's viewpoint of a win change, meaning

does Ohio State's win over Penn State hold more weight in the committee's eyes than it might have a few weeks ago when they were lower?

ROB MULLENS: Again, we start with a clean sheet, and we compare the full resume, and we know what the opponents have done over the course of the season. So I don't know that we apply more weight or less weight. What I do know is we put the full resume up there, we see who they beat, and evaluate it that way.

Q. You keep saying you were having trouble, a discussion about ranking 3, 4, 5. Seeing as Notre Dame has a win over No. 4 and over four top-25 teams, what's keeping them in that 3-to-5 range for you as opposed to being lumped in with 1 and 2?

ROB MULLENS: I want to be clear. We said there was a deep discussion on 3, 4, 5, and the head-to-head at this point still does carry the weight. That's why Notre Dame is 3, Michigan is 4, and Georgia is 5.

Q. What is keeping them from joining with the 1-2 discussion?

ROB MULLENS: Again, I think when you look at those, we see Alabama and Clemson through week 12 as more complete teams with strength on both sides of the ball.