

Breaking the Tie

By Tex Noel, Executive Director of the Intercollegiate Football Researchers Association

The College Football Bowl Season has begun; with 35 games and 70 teams local enterprises and economies have prepared for this time of the year.

As teams prepare for this extra game—Number 13 to be exact—will it prove to be lucky for those who will be playing in the game.

In sports, especially with college football; teams can prepare all they want. Even if a coach yells till he's hoarse and blue in the face; its still the players are the ones to go-out and execute plays and make the big plays.

Seven days after the reveling of bring in a New Year; two historic programs; each with a past accomplishments made-up of players and coaches to create their own hall of fame, will do battle.

Alabama and Notre Dame or Notre Dame and Alabama will meet...not only to decided the 2012 National Championship. Each team enters the fray exactly tied with 9 Official National Championships—since the AP poll era began during the 1936 season.

A closer looks reveals:

**Most Official National
Championship Seasons**

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Season	Team	W-L-T	Selectors
1943	Notre Dame	9-1	AP
1946	Notre Dame	8-0-1	AP
1947	Notre Dame	9-0	AP
1949	Notre Dame	10-0	AP
1964	Notre Dame	9-1	NFFHF
1966	Notre Dame	9-0-1	AP, UPI, FWAA, NFFHF
1973	Notre Dame	11-0	AP, FWAA, NFFHF
1977	Notre Dame	11-1	AP, UPI, FWAA, NFFHF
1988	Notre Dame	12-0	AP, UPI, FWAA, NFFHF, USA TODAY/CNN

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1961	Alabama	11-0	AP, UPI, NFFHF
1964	Alabama	10-1	AP, UPI
1965	Alabama	9-1-1	AP, FWAA
1973	Alabama	11-1	UPI
1978	Alabama	11-1	AP, FWAA, NFFHF
1979	Alabama	12-0	AP, UPI, FWAA, NFFHF
1992	Alabama	13-0	AP, FWAA, UPI/NFFHF, USA TODAY/CNN
2009	Alabama	14-0	AP, FWAA, NFFHF, USA TODAY, BCS
2011	Alabama	12-1	AP, FWAA, NFFHF, USA TODAY, BCS

As you will notice, both schools shared two seasons when they were both #1 over a nine-year period; including the 1973 when the met in the Sugar Bowl. (Notre Dame claimed the classic, 24-23.)

The above national championship seasons would be consider official by NCAA standards. Historically, which selectors to consider and ones not, has been the topic of many conversations over the years.

And prior to 1936, there were almost the same number of selectors and teams that were vying for the top spot.

Early selectors that were not considered being official by current trends; set the tone for what would take place in 1936.

Men like Dickinson, Dunkel, Boand, Houlgate all made choices that are recognizable by historians; but not the average fan.

These four men counted for the majority of the Pre-AP era; agree and not so agreeable at times...still presented the standards for a National Championship debated.

But in looking at the same pair of teams, the Irish and Crimson Tide; in this scope of college football's choice for #1...the same result—both teams remain tied.

Pre-1936 Official National Championship Seasons

- ❖ **Alabama** 1925-26-30-34-36
- ❖ **Notre Dame** 1920-24-27-29-30

Between Pre-1936 and Post-1936, a dilemma set-in. More selectors and while they named a champion during a respective season; they were not considered official.

These would be considered...

Actual National Champions, post 1936

- Alabama 1941-75
- Notre Dame 1938-53-67-70-89-93

Time to research and see what others, or retroactive (the naming of a No.1 after the seasons has been played; using scores or a computer formula).

The searched turned that the Crimson Tide were duly named a retroactive champion three times vs. Notre Dame once.

Retro-Active National Championship Seasons

- Alabama 1945-66-77
- Notre Dame 1919

Again, you will notice that in two of the Tide's retro #1 seasons, were years that the Irish would claim official crowns.

By adding all of the titles for the various sources, Notre Dame can claim the most titles—by 2, 21-19.

While retro-active crowns are great for bragging rights; and following years of research on the history of college football's national championship; for what it's worse, I would stick to the official and the actual—regardless if the selections were Pre-or-Post 1936—selections.

Regardless of the team that will hoist the Silver Crystal Football, both schools have the right to claim the best of the best—in 2012 and all-time.

Worth Noting: The Crimson Tide have played an Independent team 57 times in a bowl game; compiling a 27-27-3 mark. However, in major contests, their record falls to 14-18-1.*

***Conference vs. Conference Bowl Records – (1901-2011); Andrew McKillop**

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