

*Of teams winning 2 or 3 National Championships in a single-decade*

## **Which Group will Florida join?**

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If the pre-season publications and the “college football experts” are correct, the Tim Tebow-led Florida Gators will join an exclusive list of six former champions and 7 accomplishments to win three official National Championships in a single decade (of seasons that began with a “0” and ending in “9”.)

Former Notre Dame lineman, Frank Leahy, led his alma mater to 4 titles in the 1940’s: 1943-46-47-49.

An interesting fact on the National Champions from 1940-49, named solely by AP, not a single one played in a bowl game, that is now part of the excitement to see if a final regular season No. 1 retains the top-spot or falters during post-season action.

Ten of college football’s first 12 top teams didn’t “go bowling,” yet AP named them champion.

No sooner, no pun intended, had Leahy’s run end, when Bud Wilkinson, legendary coach at Oklahoma, won three titles during his 17 year stay in Norman, 1947-63; with all the titles coming during his first nine seasons, 1947-56.

Still another of the coaching immortal, Paul “Bear” Bryant would continue the string in the turbulent 1960s; winning a NCAA official title\* in 1961-64-65. And to top it off, did so again in the 1970’s: 1973-78-79.

USC’s men of Troy claimed three titles in the 1970s under two coaches.

Winning a pair under its most successful coach since Howard Jones, the Trojans were No. 1 in 1972 and again, in 1974. After McKay left for the NFL, his assistant John Robinson won a share of the 1978 championship.

Can you imagine leaving USC for the expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers? I guess money talks!!

Then a short-lived dynasty of Miami of Florida; which saw three titles by as many different coaches.

Howard Schellenberger was in command when the Hurricanes captured their first title in 1983, a 31-30 shocking victory over Nebraska in the Orange Bowl.

Jimmy Johnson and Dennis Erickson won the 1987 and 89 titles, respectively. (Erickson also won a share of the 1991 title.)

Nebraska in the decade of the 1990s lost three bowl games to the eventual No. 1 team (1990-91 and 93) before winning the three titles under Tom Osborne, 1994-95 and in his final season, 1997.

So, with National Championships won in 2006 and 2008, the question all college football fans want to know: will the 2009 Gators bring-home the school's third title this decade; or fall into the group of teams that won two titles, in a 10-year span.

Come January we will know for sure; but on the Gators' schedule, does an opponent have the capability to surprise them?

None of the three championships the Gainesville-school has ever won has been with a perfect slate; all suffering a single-set back.

***For you trivia buffs out there reading this:*** When was the last time NCAA 1A or Bowl Subdivision teams now, had a new/first-time winning the title national championship for the very first time? It was.....drum roll please.....*Florida, 1996.*

Here's the list of champions that claimed three titles within the time-frame of a single decade; also the ones that were champs, twice.

### **Three-Time National Champions**

- Notre Dame, 1943-46-47-49
- Oklahoma, 1950-55-56
- Alabama, 1961-64-65
- Alabama, 1973-78-79
- USC, 1972-74-78
- Miami FL, 1983-87-89
- Nebraska, 1994-95-97

### **Two-Time National Champions**

- Minnesota, 1940-41
- Army, 1944-45
- Ohio State, 1954-57
- USC, 1962-67
- Ohio State, 1961-68
- Texas, 1963-69
- Notre Dame, 1964-66
- Michigan State, 1965-66
- Nebraska, 1970-71
- Notre Dame, 1973-77
- Oklahoma, 1974-75
- Penn State, 1982-86
- USC, 2003-04
- LSU, 2003-07
- Florida, 2006-08

*\*National Champions based on NCAA-official selectors: AP, UP-UPI, FWAA, NFFHF, USA Today-CNN, USA Today-ESPN and USA Today.*