The football season never ends in Columbus, so there is quite a bit to report on, despite the fact that the Buckeyes played their last game more than six weeks ago. Your dutiful correspondent took an extended breather after the fall grind, but expects to be back to a regular Leaves column throughout the winter and spring. Today we'll briefly recap the Big Ten bowl games, and then bring you up to speed on the 2013 football recruiting class and talk about long term scheduling.

Bowl Wrap

The Big Ten went bowling without its best team, and arguably without two of its four best teams, when you figure in Penn State's absence. The conference's 2-5 bowl mark included an impressive performance by Northwestern over SEC opponent Mississippi State, and a squeaker over TCU by the Michigan State Spartans, but the top of the Big Ten card fared less well.

After the Wildcats' win in a noon kickoff, New Years Day went downhill for the B1G's. Michigan,

Nebraska
and
Wisconsin
were all matched up slightly over their heads, against teams ranked in the Top 10, and all three came up short, with #10 South Carolina, #7 Georgia, and #6 Stanford, respectively, knocking off the best the Big Ten had to offer. All three games were competitive and close, however, especially the Outback Bowl, where Michigan had no excuse whatsoever for
caving in the final seconds
against the Gamecocks.

Speaking of competitive, Purdue wasn't...getting thrashed by Oklahoma State as the Boilermakers took the field in limbo between their
outgoing
and
incoming
head coaches. Minnesota showed some game against Texas Tech, but
fell 34-31
, demonstrating again why teams with 2-6 conference records shouldn't be playing in bowl games.

The 12-0 Buckeyes finished at #3 in the final AP poll , behind champion Alabama and #2 Oregon (12-1), whose only loss was to #6 Stanford. By the way, don't ask how Notre Dame (#4), who got crushed by 'Bama, comes in ahead of Texas A&M (#5), who beat the Tide in Tuscaloosa and pummelled Oklahoma in the Cotton Bowl...'cause I got nothin'. Most of the "way too early"
informal polls for 2013
have the Buckeyes firmly in the Top 5.

Tweeters celebrating after the title game Monday night that the Buckeyes were once again bowl eligible were quickly reminded that Ohio State still has to win six games in 2013 to get there. Looking at the relatively soft OSU slate for next season , the more pressing question in Buckeye circles is whether or not Urban Meyer will be 25-0 at the helm of Ohio State by the first week of December.

2013 Recruiting Wrap

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