The BCeStimation is a weekly column that predicts which 10 teams will make it to the Orange Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, Rose Bowl and National Championship game.

Thanks to Alabama, there's a huge shakeup in this week's BCeStimation. And when I say "huge shakeup", I mean that Alabama was taken out of the National Championship game and replaced with another team. As we're halfway through the season, the conference and National Championship races are starting to take shape. For the purposes of this article, I watch just about every game I can (who am I kidding, I'd still watch 16 hours of college football every week whether I was obligated to or not). Here are some quick observations...

Watching Big East football makes me feel like I'm being punished for something. Watching ACC football is like watching the Big East on steroids. Okay, maybe not steroids, but a really good three week routine of protein shakes and light weight, high rep exercise. SEC football makes me hate double standards because they're allowed to have low scoring games with all their "defensive speed", but the Big Ten has low scoring games because they're slow and fat. Watching Big 12 football is entertaining because we get to watch one of their best teams shred the conference before joining the Big Ten. No one watches the Pac 10 because they're all hippies out there (just kidding west coast fan base I love you). I'm morally obligated to love watching Big Ten football because it's in my DNA. Plus, without Michigan football, there would be little chance of the world uniting in laughter, so if you hate the Big Ten, I guess you hate world peace as well.

You know the drill folks, so I'm jumping right into the predictions.

Orange Bowl: Florida State vs. West Virginia

Bobby Bowden's replacement vs. Rich Rodriguez's replacement! <~ Sadly, the most interesting aspect of this matchup.

Why Florida State? Because I refuse to allow Virginia Tech back into this article. Some people are saying Tech is back, but I still haven't forgotten about James Madison. And to Florida State's credit, they absolutely *drubbed* a Miami team that looked like the best in the ACC. Miami's front seven had looked solid going into Saturday night's contest, but the Seminoles racked up 298 yards rushing against Miami. Florida State utilized quick, short passes in the passing game and watched their receivers rack up plenty of yards after the catch. Miami quarterback Jacory Harris, hobbled by injuries, was ineffective against the Seminoles defense and completed only 19 of his 47 passes. After Florida State's embarrassing loss to Oklahoma, it seems as though they've righted the ship with their 45-17 beat down of the Hurricanes.

Why West Virginia? Because they remain the only semi-watchable team in the Big East. The Mountaineers routed UNLV 49-10 on Saturday, which wasn't unexpected because UNLV makes terrible things look not-terrible. West Virginia got huge plays from their backfield as quarterback Geno Smith tossed touchdown passes of 38 and 48 yards, and Noel Devine had an explosive 48 yard touchdown run himself. The 10 points UNLV managed were all in the second half and came against the Mountaineers second teamers.

I feel like I should be compensated at a higher rate for any Big East football games I have to watch. There has to be some kind of Big-East-watching-football clause out there that protects me from this. I mean, other people are paid better for dangerous jobs, right? My brain is at risk of implosion every time I think about Greg Schiano and how his team motto is "keep chopping wood".

Sugar Bowl: Alabama vs. TCU

The Sugar Bowl happily welcomes Alabama back just one week after I pushed them up to the National Championship game. South Carolina could make a run for this spot if they continue to win and if Bama continues to do whatever the heck they did on Saturday.

Why Alabama? I'm keeping the Tide in the BCS despite their loss to the Gamecocks. Looking back at the last three weeks, Alabama had a brutal stretch of games that no team should have to navigate. As I pointed out in last week's article, teams that lose nine defensive starters tend to have that "oh crap" game when they least expect it. Like the Buckeyes in the 2006 National Championship game, Alabama wasn't able to stop their opponent from getting huge plays. The 35 points the Tide gave up is the most since they beginning of time (almost accurate stat), but I still think Bama's going to have a great year. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't surprise me one bit if Bama went unbeaten through the rest of their schedule. This is why I have become the biggest Orebrasklahoma fan in the country.

Why TCU? Because they recorded their second shutout in as many weeks and improved to 6-0 on the season. The Horned Frogs are half way there to an undefeated record, which would all but guarantee them a BCS invitation. TCU continues to play great defense and is currently second in the country for points allowed (10.3 per game). In addition to this, they have a surprisingly effective running game that averages 278 yards per outing, which is seventh best in the country. Andy Dalton rebounded from his poorest performance of the year last week by completing 14 of 17 passes for 270 yards and three touchdowns. The Horned Frogs face BYU at home this week before Air Force brings their vaunted running game to Fort Worth for what should be a top-25 matchup.

Fiesta Bowl: Nebraska vs. Auburn

In my mind, Auburn leads a four horse race between themselves, Arkansas, South Carolina and LSU for the SEC's second BCS bid. Some clarity will be provided this weekend as Auburn and Arkansas square off at 3:30. Can't wait for that one. LSU and Les Miles continue to defy logic with their last minute antics. I really have no words...

Why Nebraska? Because they took their national showcase game against Kansas State seriously and throttled the Wildcats on Thursday night. After an embarrassing performance against South Dakota State two weeks ago, they took their bye-week to refocus and then

reminded the country why they're the class of the Big 12. Redshirt freshman quarterback Taylor Martinez put on a show for the purple-clad audience by rushing for 241 yards and four touchdowns while adding a touchdown through the air. The black-shirt defense suffocated Kansas State's production on offense, as well as high-profile running back Daniel Thomas by allowing only 13 points. Watching Nebraska makes me think that this is what Michigan would look like if they played defense.

The Cornhuskers will play a game they've had circled on their calenders since last December when they lost to Texas in the Big 12 title game. The Longhorns come to Lincoln after their bye-week in hopes that they can resuscitate their season with a huge upset. I'm taking Nebraska here.

Why Auburn? Because they're the only undefeated SEC team not coached by Les Miles. Auburn *did* struggle against a pretty bad Kentucky team, but I can see past one bad game for Auburn just like I saw past one bad performance for the Buckeyes (last week). As a matter of fact, Auburn traditionally struggles with Kentucky -- one of those unexplainable things like Ohio State has with Illinois. Quarterback Cam Newton continued his Heisman push with another stellar performance against the Wildcats; 210 passing yards, 198 rushing yards and four touchdowns. The defense remains a concern for Auburn, and will most likely lose them a game or two by the end of the season. Still, they're 6-0 and ranked seventh in the country. If they can get past Arkansas this week and the crazy mind-games of Les Miles and LSU the week after (both games are at home for the Tigers), this could be a special year for Auburn.

Rose Bowl: Iowa vs. Boise State

This could quite possibly be the least anticipated Rose bowl ever. At least when this game was predicted to be Oregen vs. Boise, you had the "who's gonna get punched" angle. What would be the hype here? "Who's going to get swallowed by Adrian Clayborn?"

Why Iowa? Because I'm not drinking the Michigan State kool-aid quite yet. Yes, the Spartans have looked impressive against Wisconsin and Michigan, but I just think Iowa is the better team. There's no doubt that Sparty's resume looks better right now; it's just a feeling I have. Although the transitive property isn't the greatest way to build an argument, we'll be able to compare Iowa and Michigan State a little better after Iowa plays Michigan this week. The Hawkeyes begin the toughest stretch on their schedule this weekend with the previously mentioned game against Michigan, followed by games against Wisconsin and Michigan State. If Iowa is as good as I

think they are, they'll protect their home turf (all three of these games are at home for the Hawkeyes) and enter November unbeaten in conference play.

Why Boise State? Because they beat Toledo 57-14. Nothing to see here people, keep moving.

Side note -- I saw this headline on ESPN.com Monday and it literally made me do a cartoon-like double take: " Boise State projected as BCS No. 1 ". This coincides with ESPN's show that premiered on Sunday night that's dedicated to BCS rankings and predictions (wondered where they got *that* idea... I'm expecting royalties, madams and sirs) where they projected Boise to be on top of the standings. This, in addition to the fact that Mark May and I agree on anything (he doesn't think Boise is a national title contender either, and seemingly hates them as much as I do) is solid proof that the universe is aligning itself against me. I'm positive it's trying to make my heart fail to put me in a bed next to Mark Dantonio in the *heart-at tack ward* (totally legit hospital terminology).

National Championship Game: Ohio State vs. Oregon

"Reunited and it feels so goooooood" Come on everybody, "Reunited 'cause we understoooooood". I love singing corporately.

Why Ohio State? Because I didn't PANIC(!) after last week's 24-13 win over Illinois, and apparently Ohio State didn't either. After the close win in Champaign, Terrelle Pryor and Ohio State came out with something to prove this Saturday, and poor Indiana was the victim here. Pryor stayed within the confines of the pocket and calmly torched Indiana's secondary for 334 yards and three touchdown, all within the first two and a half quarters of play. After Hoosiers quarterback Ben Chappell dropped 480 passing yards on Michigan's beleaguered secondary last week, he came into the 'Shoe and did nothing of the sort against the Silver Bullets, managing only 106 yards, two interceptions and no touchdowns. The Buckeyes will travel to Madison for their stiffest test of the season against the Wisconsin Badgers.

**Side note* -- the last two times Ohio State started the season 6-0, they went on to play for the National Championship. This totally means Ohio State's going to run the table because facts

are facts *amiright?*

Why Oregon? Because Oregon's running back LaMichael James might be a real life version of Sonic the Hedgehog. The Ducks continue to put up insane numbers on offense, and James is a big reason why. A couple of things concern me about Oregon, and one of them is their defense. After being one of the most opportunistic groups in the country during non-conference play, the Ducks have allowed over 28 points and 484 yards per game to conference opponents. They still haven't hit the meat of their conference schedule yet either, as games at USC, at Cal, at Oregon State and home games against Washington and Arizona still remain. If they continue leaking big plays on defense, one of these teams will knock off the Ducks.

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