

Poll Mania Football

Poll Mania Football is a game that simulates a college football season, by following the games and rankings of the Top 20 teams. Each week you will resolve all the games for the ranked teams, rolling special dice for each team's score. Each team uses a different set of the special dice, which reflects their ratings for offense and defense, home and away. After each week's games are completed, you will calculate the rankings for the next week using simple addition and subtraction, to simulate a real college football poll. At the end of the season, you will crown your national champion.

The Dice

You will need 2 six-sided averaging dice, as well as one normal six-sided die. Averaging dice are numbered 2-3-3-4-4-5 and can be found at Amazon.com. Alternatively, you can use normal six-sided dice, but treat any 1 as a 3, and any 6 as a 4.

The Scoresheet

Each scoresheet is designed for one week of the football season. The top 20 teams are listed on the scoresheet, and the results of their games are recorded there. The calculations for the following week's rankings are carried out, and the new rankings are determined.

Season Sheet

Each season's sheet shows all of the ratings for the major college football teams from that year. The ratings consist of an offensive rating for home and away, a defensive rating, an overall rating, and the number of re-rolls each team gets for the season.

Beginning The Season

Start the season by writing the names of the top 20 teams from the preseason poll onto the scoresheet. Using the season schedule, write the opponents for each team on the scoresheet as well. You are now ready to play the week's games, starting from the #20 team and working your way up.

Playing A Game

Using the team ratings sheet, add the first team's offense rating to their opponent's defense. For example, if UCLA is at home and playing Southern California, and the team ratings sheet shows that UCLA's Home Offense is 0, and Southern California's Defense is -3.5, then UCLA's scoring rating for this game is -3.5. Ignore the fraction for now, and UCLA's base scoring rating is -3.

Roll the two averaging dice and add them together. Add or subtract the team's scoring rating from this total. This is how many touchdowns the team has scored, so multiply this number by 7.

In our example, if UCLA rolls a 3 and a 4, we add them together and subtract 3, for a total of 4. Multiplied by 7 gives them 28 points as a base number.

Finally, using the fraction from the initial calculation, roll the normal six-sided die and reference the Scoring Adjustment chart to find the final score for this team. For example, if UCLA rolls a 1, we check the -0.5 column to see that they get -1 to their final score. This gives them a final score of 27.

Repeat this for the opponent's offense and the first team's defense. This gives you the final score for the game.

Re-Rolls

Some teams have a number of re-rolls that they can use during the season, indicated by a circle on the team ratings sheet. Use your judgment on when to use a team's re-rolls, as the number listed is all they have for the entire season. Using a re-roll allows the team to roll both of their offensive or defensive dice again. Cross off the circle when a team uses their re-roll

Overtime

Beginning in 1996, a game that ends in a tie goes to overtime. We use a simplified method to determine the winner of a tie game: each team rolls one die, and the higher roll gets an extra 7 points added to their score, winning the game.

Rankings

After the final score is decided, you can write down the ranking calculations for that team. There are separate sets of columns for when the team wins or loses, or has a bye week. In each case, you will start with a base score, and possibly adjust it for various categories to arrive at the team's ranking score. This ranking score will then be used to rank the teams for the following week.

If the team wins:

1. Start with the base score for winning (e.g., 20 points for the #1 ranked team).
2. Add 4 for each loss the team has.
3. If the team won the game by more than 14 points, subtract 5.
4. If the opponent was ranked (use all that apply):
 - a) Subtract 12.
 - b) If the opponent was ranked higher than the current team, subtract 15 more.
 - c) If the opponent was ranked five or more place higher than the current team, subtract 18 more.
5. If the opponent was not ranked, but is from a major conference, subtract 6.

If the team loses:

1. Start with the base score for losing.
2. Add 4 for each loss the team has, including the loss from the current game.
3. If the team lost the game by 14 points or less, subtract 15.
4. If the opponent was ranked (use all that apply):
 - a) Subtract 20.
 - b) If the opponent was ranked higher than the current team, subtract 17 more.
5. If the opponent was not ranked, but is from a major conference, subtract 6.

If the team has a bye this week, simply use the base score for a bye.

Add up all the adjustments, and fill in the Total column for this team.

“Major Conference” refers to the conferences which are generally seen as the strongest. In today's game, that means conferences like the Big Ten, the Pac 12, the SEC, and so on. Some prestigious Independent teams would also qualify, especially in the past when many more teams were Independent. These would include such schools as Notre Dame, Penn State, Pittsburgh, and others.

Example:

Here's how the top rankings would have worked for the games from October 22nd, 2011.

LSU defeated #19 Auburn, 45-10. LSU starts with the base score of 20. They have no losses so there is no adjustment for that. They won by more than 14 points, so a -5 goes in that column. Auburn was ranked, so a -12 goes into that column. No other adjustments are applicable, so we add everything up: $20 - 5 - 12 = 3$. Write 3 in the total column.

Rank	Team	Opponent	Final Score	Bye		Win						Loss						Total	New Rank		
				Base	Base	Was the Opponent...						Was the Opponent...									
						Ranked (use all that apply)			Unranked			Ranked (use all that apply)			Unranked						
					# of Losses x4	Won by more than 14? (-5)	Ranked? (-12)	Ranked Higher? (-15)	Ranked 5 or more Higher? (-18)	In a Major Conf? (-6)				# of Losses x4	Lost by 1-14? (-15)	Ranked? (-20)	Ranked Higher? (-17)	In a Major Conf? (-6)			
1	LSU	#19 Auburn	45-10	10	20		-5	-12						98						3	
2	Alabama	[BYE]	---	19	28									108						19	
3	Oklahoma	Texas Tech	38-41	29	37									117	+4	-15			-6	100	

Alabama had a bye, so they simply get the base score of 19 for the bye.

Oklahoma lost to Texas Tech, 38-41. Start with the base score of 117 for losing. They now have one loss, so a +4 goes in that column. The game was close since they lost by 14 or less, so a -15 goes in that column. Texas Tech was unranked, and is from a major conference, so a -6 goes in that column. Adding it up, Oklahoma's total is $117 + 4 - 15 - 6 = 100$.

Losses

At the end of the week's games, record losses for every team that lost against the ranked teams. Simply make a mark in the Losses column on the season sheet for each team. In the example above, losses would be recorded for Auburn and Oklahoma. In this game, only losses are tracked, and only for the games involving a ranked team. Wins are not tracked.

New Rankings

After all the games for the week have been played, simply write the new rankings in the New Rank column, using the numbers in the Total column to rank the teams. The team with the lowest Total is #1, the next lowest total is #2, and so on. If two teams have the same Total, give the higher (better) ranking to the team that previously had the lower (worse) ranking.

Any team with a total of over 190 falls out of the rankings. They will be replaced by a new team entering the rankings in the next step.

Next Week

Start a new scoresheet for the next week. Starting with the #1 team and working down, write in the top 20 teams. If there are less than 20 teams ranked, because one or more have lost and fallen out, you will need to select new teams to enter the rankings.

Choosing Newly Ranked Teams

Find the team that has the highest difference between their Overall rating (Ovr on the team ratings sheet) and the number of losses they have so far for the year. In other words, subtract the number of losses from the overall rating for each team, and pick the team that has the biggest result. This is the team that will enter the rankings. If two or more teams are tied, choose whichever you want to be ranked. Generally, it is better to have teams from different conferences in the rankings, rather than many teams from a single conference.

End of the Season

Conference Championships

Some conferences have a championship game at the end of the regular season. Those that do are marked on the schedule. To determine the teams that are playing in the championship game, find the team in each division that has the highest score under Method #2, above.

Bowl Games

Bowl games have represented the culmination of the college football season since the Rose Bowl began a century ago. The number of bowl games has steadily increased since then, and these days almost half of the major college teams go to a bowl game. However, the complexity of the bowl selection process has also increased over time, and a full treatment of the process, largely driven by economic considerations, is beyond the scope of this game.

Thus, in this game, you will decide how to fill out the schedule of bowl games. Use whatever method suits you best, including the final rankings as well as conference champions as determined by Method #2 from above.

Score Adjustment Chart

	-0.5	0	0.5
1	-7	-4	0
2	-6	-1	+1
3	-4	0	+3
4	-2	0	+5
5	-1	+2	+6
6	-1	+3	+6