

Predictions made for the 16 bowl games

Seventeen bowl games. Uh-Huh. For football fans, it's great. Lots of games to watch while the snow piles up outside. For sportswriters, like myself, who have to write prediction columns for their cranky sports editors, 17 games may as well be a 15-page term paper.

Oh, well . . . at least one of the games has been played already. Now for the other 16.

Independence Bowl, Dec. 23, Southern Mississippi vs. Texas-El Paso. First-year Southern Mississippi coach curly Hallman has led his Eagles to a 9-2 record, and has played a somewhat tougher schedule than UTEP. The game is in Shreveport, La. Who knows anything else about these teams, other than people associated with either of them, is a mystery to me. **UTEP 35, Southern Mississippi 24.**

Chuck Green **Bowl Predictions**

Sun Bowl, Dec. 24, Alabama vs. Army. Army is here because of its 9-2 season. Its 9-2 season is because of Cadet quarterback Bryan McWilliams, a graduate of Lincoln High School. Unfortunately, Army isn't playing one of its East Coast powder puffs. Alabama knows how to stop the wishbone -- which Army employs. The Crimson Tide has run it for several years, and its defense is quick and aggressive. This could be a boring game by the second quarter. **Alabama 38, Army 14.**

Aloha Bowl, Dec. 25, Washington State vs. Houston. For pure viewing pleasure, this one could be the best of the bowl season. The game pits the Cougars against the Cougars. Both teams have high-powered offenses and erratic defenses and both quarterbacks are aerial wizards, who could throw 40 times in this game. I'll pick Washington State because of their tougher Pac Ten schedule. **Washington State 45, Houston 34.**

Liberty Bowl, Dec. 28, South Carolina vs. Indiana. Both teams started the season with high hopes, but both sputtered in November. The Gamecocks have the services of quarterback Todd Ellis, but the Hoosiers have a swarming, blitzing defense that could give him fits. Both teams could be top-10 material in 1989. **South Carolina 27, Indiana 22.**

All-American Bowl, Dec. 29, Florida vs. Illinois. Florida is an injury-riddled team and Illinois is an up-and-coming contender. Gator quarterback Kyle Morris is trying to make Florida fans forget about Kerwin Bell -- as if they ever will -- and Illinois signal caller Jeff George is a notable passer. But the Florida defenders will be too much for the Illini in this one. **Florida 17, Illinois 6.**

Freedom Bowl, Dec. 29, Colorado vs. Brigham Young. Take away two turnovers against Nebraska, and Colorado might have upset the Cornhuskers for the second time in three years. This is Coach Bill McCartney's best team in his Colorado career. BYU has, as always, a plethora of talented receivers and a good quarterback in Sean Covey, but the Buffaloes are just too big, strong, fast and tested for the Cougars. Another possible blowout. **Colorado 31, BYU 20.**

Holiday Bowl, Dec. 30, Wyoming vs. Oklahoma State. Barry Sanders, Mike Gundy and Hart Lee Dykes. Need I say anymore? **Oklahoma State 45, Wyoming 28.**

Peach Bowl, Dec. 31, Iowa vs. North Carolina State. Iowa coach Hayden Fry is lucky to have a job. He's even luckier to have a bowl berth. His Hawkeyes have tied three games this season -- Oooh! Aaahh! -- and have a 6-3-3 record. The Wolfpack is loaded on offense but is suspect on defense. Look for N.C. State split end Naz Worthen to catch two early touchdown passes and give the Pack momentum. **N.C. State 28, Iowa 16.**

Mazda-Gator Bowl, Jan. 1,

Georgia vs. Michigan State. Another lopsided game. Michigan State has been overrated all season, earning a 6-4-1 record. Georgia has had hard luck all season, losing three games the Bulldogs could have won. This will be no contest. **Georgia 41, Michigan State 17.**

Hall of Fame Bowl, Jan. 2, Syracuse vs. Louisiana State. This is a very evenly matched game. Syracuse turned out better than expected this season, while LSU was a disappointment to some. This game will feature the passing talents of Tiger quarterback Tommy Hodson -- a future member of a National Football League roster -- and the defense of Syracuse. It may come down to the wire, but **LSU 27, Syracuse 24.**

Florida Citrus Bowl, Jan. 2, Clemson vs. Oklahoma. You know you have problems when you wish you didn't have to start Jamelle Holieway at quarterback. But that's what Sooner coach Barry Switzer has to be thinking. Oklahoma starter Charles Thompson is out with a broken leg, which he suffered in the final minute of the 7-3 loss to Nebraska.

Clemson, sporting a 9-2 record, isn't as good as last season, but is adequate enough to defeat Oklahoma. If the Tigers get their running game going, the Sooners, also not as good as last season's edition, are in for a long afternoon. **Clemson 23, Oklahoma 17.**

Cotton Bowl, Jan. 2, UCLA vs. Arkansas. A few weeks ago, I would have thought this game was going to be a rout. But then I saw Arkansas

play Miami -- the nation's best team -- to the wire on the Orange Bowl turf. UCLA came out of the blocks fast in September but has since dropped off -- probably due to the fact that they play in a tough conference.

The key is for the Bruins to protect quarterback Troy Aikman from the blitzing Razorback defense. Miami's Steve Walsh had problems, and the Hurricane line is one of the best at holding . . . er, pass blocking. Look for the Bruins to open up the passing game and pull away late in the second half. **UCLA 27, Arkansas 15.**

Rose Bowl, Jan. 2, Michigan vs. Southern California. The Big Ten doesn't usually win in the Rose Bowl. Southern California is one of the nation's three best teams, along with Miami and Notre Dame. The Trojans have won 10 games this season. Make that **11. USC 35, Michigan 21.**

Sugar Bowl, Jan. 2, Auburn vs. Florida State. Auburn has the best defensive line in college football, but the War Eagles (or Tigers, if you're a cat lover) don't have what could be called a real explosive offense.

Florida State, on the other hand, has one of the most potent offenses on any college campus in America. The Seminole running attack has been less-than-devastating, but it's due. Tailback Sammie Smith is one of the best running backs in America, despite his poor showing this season, and will be one of the nation's top contenders for the Heisman Trophy next season.

If Auburn's secondary doesn't play well, this game could get ugly. If

the War Eagle offense doesn't establish the running game early, it could get even uglier. **Florida State 20, Auburn 6.**

Sunkist Fiesta Bowl, Jan. 2, West Virginia vs. Notre Dame. This year's "Game of the Century" could be just that, or it could be a rout. This is one of the hardest games of the bowl season to figure, despite what some "experts" will have you believe.

Both teams are undefeated, and Notre Dame has clearly played the tougher schedule of the two teams. The Fighting Irish have defeated Michigan, Michigan State, Penn State and Southern Cal. Notre Dame beat Miami on the scoreboard, but only because the Hurricanes committed seven turnovers -- one of which was clearly not and would have given Miami a first-and-goal on Notre Dame's 1-yard line with two minutes to go. But that's beside the point.

Notre Dame has the nation's most balanced team. The Fighting Irish feature what is arguably college football's best offensive backfield. In addition, the Irish have a viscous swarming defense.

Notre Dame, however, will have its hands full stopping West Virginia quarterback Major Harris. Harris, a sophomore, is the best all-around signal caller in the college game, and is one of the leading contenders for the Heisman next year. He runs a 4.4-second 40-yard dash and can throw the ball 60 yards in the air on the run. And yes, he is better than Nebraska's Steve Taylor.

The key to the game is defense.

Both teams will score their points. Another factor is pressure. West Virginia has nothing to lose -- nobody expects them to win. Notre Dame, ranked No. 1, has everything to lose.

The teams have had two common opponents this season and in both cases, West Virginia's victories were much more convincing. So which team will win? Drumroll, please . . . **Notre Dame 27, West Virginia 24.**

Orange Bowl, Jan. 2, Nebraska vs. Miami. The game you've been waiting for.

Nebraska has an improved team from September, when the Huskers were rocked by UCLA. Nebraska's defensive line is much improved, but the Husker offense -- usually a gleaming example of consistency -- hasn't performed well the last two games of the season.

Miami, however, is the nation's new example program -- at least on the field. The Hurricanes' offense is spearheaded by quarterback Steve Walsh. Their defense is an attacking, aggressive one, and it could cause headaches for Nebraska coach Tom Osborne.

The bottom line here is Miami's passing attack. Let's face it, Nebraska has not yet mastered the art of pass defense. The Hurricanes have the most sophisticated offense in college football. Miami coach Jimmy Johnson has never beaten Nebraska. He thinks he will this year, and he thinks his team is the best in the nation.

He's right on both counts. **Miami 38, Nebraska 10.**



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