

Ohio State Playoff Berth Likely Clinched After USC Falls In Pac-12 Championship To Utah



Despite suffering a 45-23 loss to Michigan in Ohio State's season finale and not playing in the Big Ten Championship Game of the second consecutive season, the Buckeyes are likely headed to the College Football Playoff following the result of the Pac-12 Championship Game on Friday.

USC, which was ranked at No. 4 in the College Football Playoff rankings released Tuesday, dropped a 47-24 decision to No. 11 Utah in the Pac-12 Championship Game, giving the Trojans their second loss of the season and essentially eliminating them from the playoff conversation, as the committee has never put in a team with two losses.

Going into the weekend, Ohio State needed a loss from at least one of USC or TCU and got that luck with the Trojans' loss to Utah, rendering the result of TCU-Kansas State moot for the Buckeyes outside of potential seeding.

No. 1 Georgia and No. 2 Michigan - both undefeated entering the weekend - have clinched their spots in the playoffs, and No. 3 TCU - also 12-0 on the season - can do so with a win over No. 10 Kansas State on Saturday, though there is some margin for error for the Horned Frogs following USC's loss.

Georgia and Michigan will likely retain their seeding barring an upset in their respective conference championship games, while a TCU win will likely slot the Horned Frogs at No. 3 and Ohio State at No. 4, setting up a matchup between the Buckeyes and the defending national champions at the Peach Bowl, while Michigan and TCU would play in the Fiesta Bowl. In the event of a Georgia or TCU loss, Ohio State could also wind up rematching Michigan in the semifinals.

The final College Football Playoff rankings will be released Sunday at 12:15 p.m. on ESPN after the remaining conference championship games are played on Saturday.