

SPORTS

The 2011 College Football Grid of Shame

After a Summer of Epic Scandals, We Rate all 120 Major Teams by How Embarrassed Their Alumni Should Be

BY DARREN EVERSON

College football, to put it as charitably as possible, had a less-than-ideal offseason.

From the Southeast to the Pacific Northwest, a series of scandals, controversies and incidents of boorish behavior has taken a

toll on the good names of several schools.

This weekend's spotlight game, for instance, pits No. 3-ranked Oregon, a school that's under NCAA investigation for possible recruiting violations, against No. 4 LSU, whose top quarterback, Jordan Jefferson, is suspended for his part in a brawl

outside a campus watering hole called *Shady's*.

This summer of scandal has left millions of chastened fans and alumni asking themselves the same dreary questions. Is it time to take down that pennant in my office? Should I peel the sticker off the rear window of my car?

This year, rather than simply predicting how each of college football's 120 major programs will fare on the field, we've also thrown in a helpful new variable: how embarrassed each team's fans should be about their allegiance to the program.

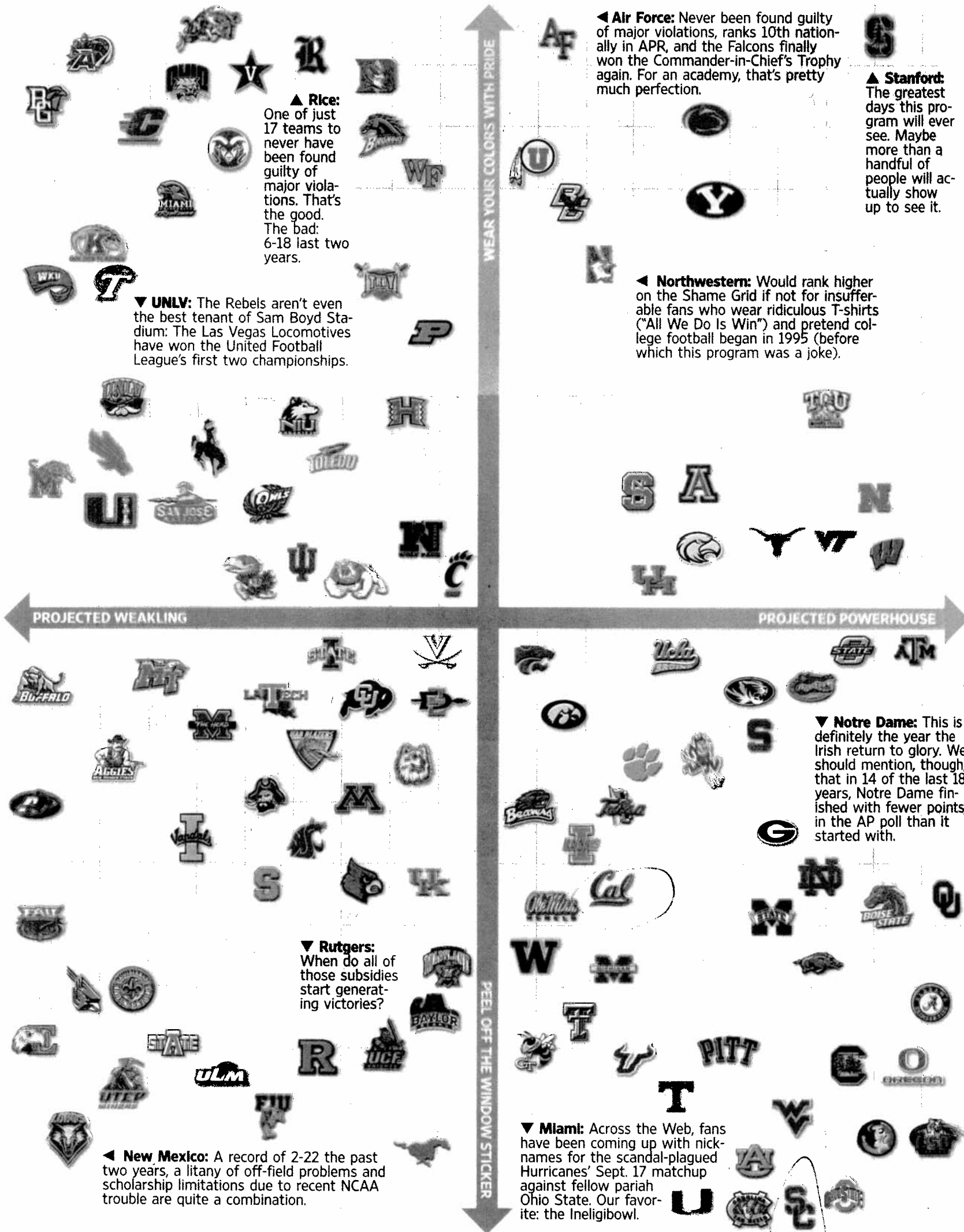
The Wall Street Journal's first-ever Alumni Shame Grid

shows, on the horizontal axis, roughly how we think every major school will perform on the field this season. On the vertical axis, it shows how much relative shame and disgrace its fans have endured lately.

Humiliation comes from many sources, of course. Our subjective ranking includes everything

from high-profile NCAA investigations into major rules violations and other unpleasant legal matters to less sensational factors like academic performance, attendance, financial strength and whether the school's fans, coaches and administrators are just plain obnoxious.

Here are the results.



MORE INFO

Auburn: Remember: Our scale reflects how much shame a school's supporters should feel, not whether they actually do.

Georgia Tech: In terms of across-the-board program failure, the Yellow Jackets are the defending national champs. Tech went 6-7 last season, including losses to 3-9 Kansas and archrival Georgia's worst team in years, then had its 2009 ACC title vacated over rules violations.

Michigan: After ex-coach Rich Rodriguez's disastrous tenure, the team recently scheduled Appalachian State—which gave the Wolverines their most embarrassing loss ever—for its 2014 opener. (In other news, Virginia is planning a celebration of its 1982 upset loss to Chaminade.)

Mississippi: Last Southeastern Conference title was in 1963, but the Rebels are one of the national heavyweights when it comes to oversigning.

Ohio State: March 8: "We trust him [then-coach Jim Tressel] implicitly." Also March 8: "I'm just hoping the coach doesn't dismiss me." July 7: "The institution will not excuse (Tressel's) behavior." August: A display honoring Tressel is completed in Ohio State's football building.

Oregon: The best part of the police video of cornerback Cliff Harris's high-speed traffic stop was the readout showing how fast the cops were going in pursuit: 141 miles per hour!

Texas: At the risk of contradicting all that is sacred in capitalism: Don't you have enough money, Texas? Is the Longhorn Network worth all this trouble?

Texas A&M: At the risk of contradicting what we just said about Texas: Isn't bolting the Big 12 basically a capitulation to the Longhorns? Isn't conquering your rival the whole point?

Wisconsin: We know it's perfectly legal, but bringing in a quarterback (Russell Wilson) for just one year is like adding a ringer to the company softball team: it's a little too mercenary.

See how every FBS team lines up against every other in the College Grid Grader at WSJ.com/Sports

