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 off-season.

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 charred fans and alumni asking themselves the same dreary questions. Is it time to take down that perennial 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 illegal payments and other unpleasant legal matters to less-sensational factors like academic performance, attendance, financial strength and, yes, the school’s fans, coaches and administrators are just plain obnoxious.

Here are the results.

Rice: One of last 17 teams to never have been found guilty of major violations. Tha good. The bad: 6-18 last two years.

![Rice](image)

Northwestern: Would rank higher on the Shame Grid if not for insufferable fans who wear ridiculous T-shirts (“All We Do Is Win”) and pretend college football began in 1995 (before which this program was a joke).

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Notre Dame: This is definitely the year the Irish return to glory. We should mention, though, that in 14 of the last 18 years, Notre Dame finished with fewer points in the AP poll than it started with.

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M O R E  I N F O

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 champions. Tech went 6-7 last season, including losses to No. 9 Kansas and arch-rival Georgia in consecutive games in the same year, then had its 2009 ACC title vacated on official violations.

Michigan: After ex-coach Rich Rodriguez’s disastrous tenure, the team recently scheduled Appalachian State—who lost to the Wolverines their last year and opened last year’s season with a 1-2 upset loss to Chaminade.

Mississippi: Last Southeastern Conference title was in 1963, but the Rebels are one of the nation’s top five teams in national recruiting when it comes to overall talent.

Ohio State: March 8: “We trust him [then-coach Jim Tressel] implicitly.” Also March 8: “I’m just telling the coach doesn’t disqualify me.” July 7: “The institution will not include 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 road rage arrest was the.readout showing how fast the cops were going in pursuit: 145 miles per hour.

Texas: At the risk of contradicting all that is sacred in capital punishment, don’t you have enough money, Texas? Is the Longhorn Network worth all this trouble?

Texas A&M: At the risk of contracting what we just said about Texas isn’t it better for the Big 12 basically a capstone of the Longhorns’ hearing the rightful NFL running back?/

Wisconsin: We know it’s perfectly legal, but couldn’t you have let the quarterback (Russell Wilson) for last Ohio State go to another school? The Ineligible.

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