11-23-11 Wilson Post My Bid

Vanderbilt travels to North Carolina where it will play Wake Forest.

Tennessee will travel to Kentucky where it will meet the Big Blue's football team.

If Vanderbilt and Tennessee win their games, both teams will be bowl eligible with the minimum requirement of six victories.

That only goes to further prove there are far too many bowl games in college football.

The Tennessee-Vanderbilt game was filled with bad play, and even worse officiating. Both coaches were doing their best Saint Vitus dance impersonations on the sidelines.

Did anyone expect anything different? You had Tennessee entering the game 5-6, looking for its first win in SEC play. You had a 5-5 Vanderbilt team that beat SEC bottom feeders Ole Miss and Kentucky.

You now have two SEC teams who have to win their final game of the season to become bowl eligible. That would mean they won half their games, lost the other half.

The teams Vanderbilt beat have a combined record of 18-36, with FCS school Elon having the best record of 5-6. Vanderbilt plays Wake Forest having lost six of its last eight games.

Tennessee has been outscored 212-85 in conference games. The Vols won their first SEC game Saturday, beating Vanderbilt in overtime.

After escaping in overtime, Vols Coach Derek Dooley turned a non-word into a verb when he said: “We just gritted out a win.’’

Vanderbilt left Neyland Stadium feeling they gave the game away. In many ways, they are correct.

Place-kicker Ryan Fowler misfired on two short range field goals. Quarterback Jordan Rodgers had his worst game since moving into the starting role, throwing three interceptions and fumbling away the ball that led to Tennessee’s first touchdown.

They managed to turn a 72-yard pass that put the ball on Tennessee’s one-yard line into an 85-yard penalty, thanks to the knucklehead play of Josh Jelesky. The offensive lineman committed a blatant clipping penalty half a field away from the play. Jelesky is a junior who should know better by now. It makes me doubt that all Vanderbilt football players are rocket scientists.

Tennessee had its share of gaffes. Their field goal kicker hit his only attempt so low it flew under the radar at McGhee-Tyson airport, nearly decapitating a lineman or two.

Quarterback Tyler Bray was not as sharp as he was before breaking a thumb. This was his first time back and the rust was apparent.

Even the coaches set the stage for next season as James Franklin took exception to what leaked out of Tennessee’s locker room in the form of Dooley telling his team that they were Tennessee and Tennessee always beats the (expletive) out of Vanderbilt.

Franklin took his turn during Monday’s press conference to respond.

“That’s a wound that I’ll leave open,’’ Franklin declared. “I won’t forget it.’’

Them’s fighting words, way I figure it.

Emotions were high. Sure, Tennessee players celebrated as Franklin pointed out, like they won the Super Bowl. Why not? They had been kicked around much of the season, losing three of their SEC games to teams ranked 1-2-3 in the BCS standings.

Emotions were high for Franklin after his team beat Ole Miss earlier in the season. He wiped away tears in the post-game press conference. Nothing wrong with what either coach did.

It’s college football. It’s why unranked Iowa State upset then No. 2 ranked Oklahoma State last Friday night.

In the SEC, every team better drain its passion bucket every Saturday or they will be the team that walks off a loser.

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