The Oklahoma Cowpokes are bellyaching in their beer this week. They don't get to play undefeated LSU in the BCS Championship Game.

Ah, the BCS. An imperfect system at best.

The Harris Interactive Poll, comprised of 115 voters (including this writer) from various walks of life, submitted their final top 25 votes Sunday.

LSU was a consensus No. 1. The brilliance of the panel is overwhelming, no?

No.

Alabama came out second, with Oklahoma State third. That's the way my poll read, but I recognize there is legitimate room for debate that Oklahoma State deserved to jump an idle Alabama and grab the coveted second spot at the table.

Not so for Harris Poll voters Scott Johnson, former Auburn AD David Housel, former NFL QB Craig Morton and former NFL center Jeff Van Note. They all voted Oklahoma State No. 5 on their ballots. They must have gotten a bad steak in Stillwater somewhere along the way.

But that isn't as inexcusable as what former Notre Dame wide receiver Derrick Mayes, former Hawaii coach Bob Wagner and former Iowa sports information director George Wine did.

When I saw the name Bob Wagner, I thought that was the former actor whose actress wife Natalie Wood died under murky circumstances years ago.

They all had the Cowboys ranked No. 6. Really? Wine, 80 years old, also had Houston at No. 5. Maybe Saturday's 49-28 tanning by Southern Miss didn't compute with Wine.

It points out why some people just can be trusted to be objective. Did Wine factor in Oklahoma State's only loss this season was administered by Iowa rival Iowa State? Did Wine know the game was played in Ames, Iowa on the day Oklahoma State players and coaches learned of the deaths of the school's head women's basketball coach and an assistant in an airplane crash?

There is always going to be regional and local bias in human polls. When I voted on the Associated Press poll for years, it was skewed by regional bias with some voters. The AP did a good job identifying the compulsive biased voters and weeding them out of the process.

The people who select Harris Poll voters need to do the same thing with the 115 current voters.

Wagner had Oregon ranked No. 5, with two losses. Fifteen voters had Oklahoma State ranked fourth or lower.

Retired SEC Commissioner Roy Kramer, the recognized father of the BCS, placed five SEC teams in his top 11 spots. C'mon, Coach. We know the SEC is the best football conference in the country. Five straight national championships, and soon to be six, prove it.

But five teams in the top 11? That is subjective, perhaps, but highly suspect.

I have no problem with voters who put Oklahoma State No. 2 and Alabama No. 3. Alabama did not play in its conference championship game. Alabama did not win its division in the SEC.

No, because LSU beat Alabama in a field goal contest, 9-6 in overtime. When you have the sport's two top-ranked defensive teams playing each other, touchdowns become scarce as overweight Victoria's Secret models.

And there is nothing in the BCS criteria that two teams from the same conference, or division, cannot play for the national championship.

If I believe the two best teams in the country play in the same conference, or even the same division, those are the teams I want to see play for all the marbles.

And voted accordingly.

by Joe Biddle

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