

Huskies keep top ranking

(AP) — The Pitt Panthers, who dropped from first to third despite an unbeaten record, moved up to second place Monday in The Associated Press college football poll, only seven points behind No. 1 Washington.

Penn State jumped from eighth to third by virtue of its 27-24 victory over Nebraska, with the Cornhuskers falling from second to eighth.

Three teams — Boston College, Minnesota and Auburn — made the Top Twenty for the first time this season, while Ohio State, Illinois and Michigan dropped out.

Washington received 25 of 59 first-place votes and 1,114 of a possible 1,180 points from a nationwide panel of sports writers and sportscasters following a 37-21 triumph over Oregon. Pitt, a 20-3 winner over Illinois, climbed from third to second with 19 first-place ballots and 1,107 points.

Last week, with 55 voters responding, Washington led Nebraska 1,045 points to 1,011, with Pitt at 989.

Seven first-place votes went to Penn State, which scored with four seconds left to nip Nebraska.

The Nittany Lions received 1,032 points.

Florida rose from fifth to fourth with one first-place vote and 973 points after defeating Mississippi State 27-17. The Gators swapped places with Alabama, which edged Vanderbilt 24-21 and slipped from fourth to fifth.

Georgia trimmed South Carolina 34-18 and climbed from seventh to sixth with one first-place vote and 864 points, while Southern Methodist, a 16-13 winner over Texas Christian, dropped from sixth to seventh with 803 points.

Nebraska was eighth with 702 points, followed by UCLA — the Bruins received the remaining first-place ballot — with 662 points and Arkansas, with 607. UCLA, No. 12 last week, moved into the Top Ten with a 31-27 victory over Michigan, while Arkansas edged Mississippi 14-12 and slipped from ninth to 10th.

UCLA's surge pushed Notre Dame out of the Top Ten despite a 28-14 triumph over Purdue. Behind the Irish in the Second Ten are North Carolina, Arizona State, West Virginia, Texas, Southern California, Miami, Boston College, Minnesota and Auburn.

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reason.

Passing is a major element in football today. The San Francisco 49ers rode the pass to a Super Bowl title last year, and Oregon's foes have shown it works well at the college level. Oregon's opponents have combined for 900 passing yards thus far, while the Ducks have just 930 yards in total offense.

As Fresno State coach Jim Sweeney, a former die-hard option coach at Washington State, said before his Bulldogs threw for 297 yards in a 10-4 win over the Ducks, passing is the way the game is going today and if you refuse to do it you are going to be left behind.

So far the Ducks have been. But Widmark defends his play selections as appropriate in the situations they were called. "I would agree we have played it a little close to the vest at times. Given the situations that was the thing to do," he said, referring to the ASU game where they took a conservative posture on offense.

"We had three situations Saturday that if they had been stopped would have been called conservative, but they worked for big plays, including one for a 22-yard touchdown.

"It wasn't any different," he added, comparing Saturday's calls to the previous games. What was different was the execution of the plays, which allowed them to work, according to Widmark.

It was, however, nice to see the Ducks air things out against Washington. And it was nice to see success. The question now is whether or not they can keep it up.

It won't be an easy chore. The injury-riddled Ducks lost three

more key performers on offense. Quarterback Mike Jorgensen went down with a sprained ankle after becoming the first signal-caller to take charge this season by moving the Ducks 80 yards on the game's first drive. The Ducks also lost Moser with a fractured foot, possibly for the season, and Thomas went down in the first half but may return next Saturday.

The blow that hurts the most will be Jorgensen. Brooks has been looking for a quarterback to take charge all fall. Jorgensen did that Saturday, running the option with authority.

Lusk came in relief and played well, definitely his most impressive showing of the year before two late interceptions ended Oregon's comeback.

With Jorgensen on the shelf, the continuous battle between freshman Dana Hill and Lusk will resume again this week, assuming Hill is out of Brooks' dog house.

That means another challenging week for Widmark. "It has added to the challenge because I'm preparing someone different each week," Widmark said of the musical quarterback situation. "As with anything else, different people have different qualities, and you have to do what is best for those qualities."

Despite all the uncertainty, Widmark is confident about the remainder of the season. "I think we showed against the number one football team in the nation that if we execute and do things right we're a damn good football team."

No one will argue with that. They just hope it shows up in the win column.

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