

Dear Central Florida, Your National Championship is Phony

Being from the Deep South, I have often heard it said that there are three sports seasons: College Football, Recruiting and Spring Football. The fact that many schools put 90,000 in the seats for their spring games, which are broadcast on ESPN, is proof that College Football is a year-round spectacle.

Despite this, I cannot think of many things that would cause me to write about College Football in May. But this is something that should have died in January and it hasn't.

Central Florida beat Auburn and pretended they were National Champions, having a parade, rings, the whole nine yards. It was cute and similar to what other non-National Championship teams have done in the past (i.e., Auburn 2004). Usually, this sort of thing goes by the wayside in a few days. But to paraphrase a controversial slogan of the times, they persisted.

In part, I blame social media. Somehow Twitter gives the illusion that we have access to celebrities and Facebook gives us a platform to sound off on everything to an ambiguous audience of hundreds of people. And via these extremely popular sites, Central Florida has clearly taken advantage of how no one seems to be able to ignore anything they disagree with. Similar to the "I'm not dignifying that with a response" being a response that dignifies, every time someone argued against Central Florida's real claim to a fake national championship, they gave more and more momentum to their argument.

Of course, that is what I'm doing. But only because Nick Saban of all people has now joined the fray. Nick Saban is the best

college football coach, maybe ever. But he's also a bit of a whiner. And as such he could not hold back last week on commenting on Central Florida's National Championship claim, deriding it as only he should have. And I cannot deny that once he joined in, people like me can no longer ignore it. It's time to weigh in.

Central Florida's national championship is no more real than the Tooth Fairy. The arguments posited to try to disprove that simply cannot be sustained. Here are a few:

Central Florida beat Auburn, who beat Alabama and Georgia

The A beats B beats C argument is lame. There now exists on the internet a website that will tell you (if it is possible) how to get from Team A to where they beat Team Z through a series of "they beat B who beat C, etc." The craziest one I've seen? Welch College (my alma mater) beats Villanova in 2018 Men's Basketball. That's right, an NCCAA school with a few hundred students beats the NCAA team that dominated the Men's tournament. Here is the proof:

Welch College Flames: 2018 National Champs. Print the banner

myteamisbetterthanyourteam.com				
On 1/15/2018	Welch	beat	Crowley's Ridge	75 - 62
On 1/6/2018	Crowley's Ridge	beat	Rust	79 - 72
On 11/30/2017	Rust	beat	Texas Col	97 - 86
On 12/7/2017	Texas Col	beat	Huston-Tillot	92 - 89
On 12/9/2017	Huston-Tillot	beat	St Thomas TX	85 - 77
On 2/17/2018	St Thomas TX	beat	LSU Shreveport	101 - 98
On 12/16/2017	LSU Shreveport	beat	Northwestern LA	85 - 84
On 11/21/2017	Northwestern LA	beat	ULM	76 - 61
On 2/10/2018	ULM	beat	Georgia St	90 - 82
On 12/20/2017	Georgia St	beat	Massachusetts	71 - 63
On 12/9/2017	Massachusetts	beat	Providence	72 - 63
On 2/14/2018	Providence	beat	Villanova	76 - 71

Here's the dirty little secret about Auburn 2018: They were a fantastic team, but they lost four times away from home, including to LSU (who lost to Troy at home, if you are a big fan of A beats B beats C). They beat Georgia at home but got romped at a neutral site. Central Florida needs to let this paltry argument go[1. Some UCF proponents, like SEC-hating Twitter clown Danny Kannel, try as well to point to an injury to Auburn's prime running back as to why the results were different in the two Georgia-Auburn games last year. Blaming injuries is one step above blaming refs.]

Central Florida was the only undefeated team

So was Utah in 2008. So was Boise in 2006. And they didn't get National Championships either. Why? Because their schedules were not difficult enough. It's great that UCF could knock off Auburn in the Peach Bowl, but when you play in the SEC and similar conferences, you get teams like Auburn several times a

year.

I conceded it's not fair that Central Florida's players and coaches cannot control their schedule. But that's part of sports. It's not fair that Auburn in 2004 and Penn St. in 1994 got no championship despite running the table against a legit strength of schedule. It's not fair that the players for Auburn in 1993 had nothing to do with the reason they were on probation and were the only undefeated team in the nation and got nothing.

Sports aren't fair.

Alabama claims titles from years past that are questionable

There is no doubt College Football has historically had the most convoluted method to naming a champion since the NCAA had never recognized one. If you look back through College Football annals, it is very hairy trying to figure out who gets credit for championships in what year because some schools claim them from non-AP poll and Coaches Poll sources (the two standard championships every year until the BCS). Additionally, teams used to be awarded championships before bowls were played. And is there anything more absurd to sports logic than having two (or more) national champions?

But now we do not have to deal with that. 2014 changed everything. We have a fairer system, and even more precisely, we have a playoff. Even if Alabama's 1973 Championship is shady (and I'm not arguing for or against it), you cannot apply standards or laws or any similar criteria to modern circumstances. It devalues advancements we have made.

Now, to balance some of this out, here are two things I do acknowledge that are not anti-UCF:

1. We need more teams in the playoff. Even if there were eight, I do not think Central Florida would have gotten in, but I have zero doubt the 8th best team in the nation most years can run through three other Top 8 teams in three weeks. I personally prefer 16. The NCAA tournament in basketball is not devalued at all despite the fact the bottom 32 teams or so have little to no chance to win it, so even if #16 has no chance to run the table, it still makes for more potentially great football.
2. UCF is likely doing this in part to help with recruiting. I do not mind it in that sense. The problem is I have zero doubt reams of people are truly arguing that they deserve their rings, parade, etc. because they deserved a championship last year. Those people exist mostly because they are UCF fans or hate Alabama or the SEC or just love controversy, which our current political climate proves people are addicted to. The belief that UCF actually deserves a national championship is what I am arguing against.

Agree? Disagree? Let us know below!