

Orlando Sentinel

SPORTS WEDNESDAY

UF BASKETBALL

Not the sign he's looking out for

White pushing to get the most out of struggling Gators

BY EDGAR THOMPSON
Orlando Sentinel

GAINESVILLE — The Florida Gators' two best players, point guard Andrew Nembhard and shooting guard Noah Locke, are also the two of the team's youngest players.

It's a good sign for the future. It also has become a big problem this season for coach Mike White.

"When you've got freshmen leading, not a sign of a great team," White said Tuesday. "That's where we're at."

White never imagined the Gators (8-5) would be in this position to start conference play.

UF entered this past Saturday's SEC opener against South Carolina at home a week removed from a 77-43 rout of Butler, a quality program that had beaten the Gators a month earlier.

During a 71-69 loss to the Gamecocks, UF led by as many as 14 points — one of four double-digit leads on the night — before collapsing down the stretch in dramatic fashion. The Gators failed to make a field goal during the game's final 7:17 and allowed an uncontested dunk with 2.5 seconds remaining following a length-of-the-court inbound pass.

"Literally 10 days ago, we looked like a top-10 team, in my opinion," White said. "Butler's a good team and then we can look like we did the other day."

Some of the Gators' issues against South Carolina were all-too familiar — long scoring droughts, poor free-throw shooting and the lack of an inside game.

White is particularly frustrated and flummoxed by the struggles of senior guards KeVaughn Allen and Jalen Hudson.

Allen scored 10 points during the first half against South Carolina, but did not attempt a shot in the game's final 19 minutes.

"I can't explain it," White said. "I love him. Talked to him about it again yesterday. I can't explain it. He's very talented and he got off to a really good start and he's hard

Please turn to **GATORS, C4**



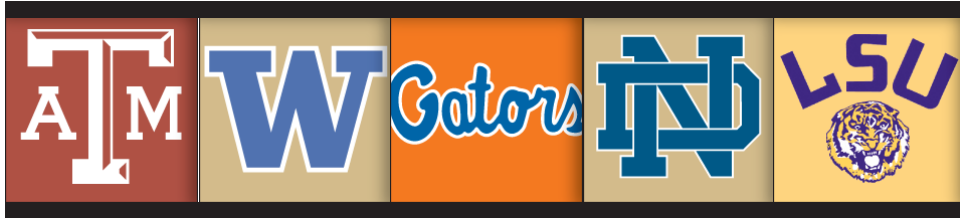
MARK HUMPHREY/AP

UF coach Mike White is frustrated by the Gators' lack of effort and consistency during the team's 8-5 start.

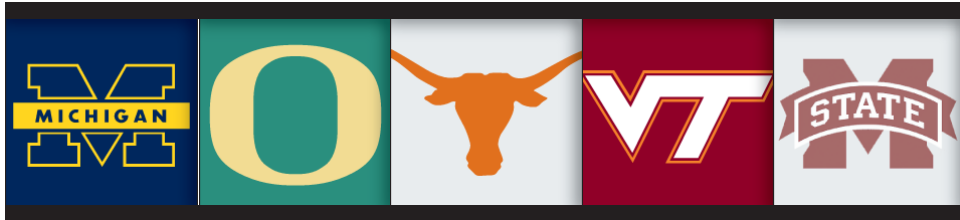
COLLEGE FOOTBALL 2019 RANKINGS



It's never too early



to start talking



about next season.



A first look at the



Top 25

Now that the 2018 college football season has come to a close, here are my 2019 never too early top 25 college football rankings:

1. Alabama: Once again, Alabama and Nick Saban head into a season as the proverbial favorites — especially with the return of All-SEC selections in quarterback Tua Tagovailoa and receiver Jerry Jeudy along with linebackers Dylan Moss and Mack Wilson. The Crimson Tide have played in four straight national championships and a fifth one seems inevitable, especially with a manageable schedule and the top recruiting class in the country.

2. Clemson: Dabo Swinney has apparently found the blueprint for success, with the Tigers having played in three out of the past four national championship games. And the foundation appears solid for another run with the likes of quarterback Trevor Lawrence and running back Travis Etienne back in 2019.

COMMENTARY



MATT MURSCHEL
On College Sports

The defense suffers the loss of Christian Wilkins and Austin Bryant, but the schedule sets up nicely for another ACC championship and a likely return to the College Football Playoff semifinals.

3. Georgia: It was a disappointing finish for the Bulldogs, who were shut out of the College Football Playoff semifinals after a loss to top-ranked Alabama in the SEC Championship Game and dropped their Sugar Bowl showdown with Texas. Jake Fromm and D'Andre Swift return to guide an offense that will be without its top three receivers from 2018. The defense needs to return to form, especially with an influx of five-star

talent from the second-best recruiting class in the country.

4. Oklahoma: Oklahoma has won four straight Big 12 titles and the Sooners don't look like they're slowing down anytime soon.

Heisman winner Kyler Murray is gone, but Austin Kendall could step up and become the next great OU quarterback.

New defensive coordinator Alex Grinch has a tremendous challenge ahead of him, but any improvement on that side of the ball has to be a bonus for a unit that ranked No. 114 nationally in total defense.

5. Ohio State: Ryan Day takes over after the retirement of Urban Meyer and the first challenge he could face is choosing the next Buckeyes quarterback.

With Dwayne Haskins leaving for the NFL, that opens the door for either Tate Martell or possibly Georgia

Please turn to **RANKINGS, C3**

BUCS

Focus on offense with hire of Arians

'QB Whisperer,' former Cardinals coach to work with Winston

BY RICK STROUD
Tampa Bay Times

TAMPA — The Bucs need a quarterback whisperer. Bruce Arians wrote the book on it.

His next chapter will begin in Tampa Bay.

Arians, 66, will become Tampa Bay's sixth head coach since 2008, replacing Dirk Koetter who was fired after a 5-11 mark on Dec. 30.

Arians has agreed to a four-year contract with a club option for a fifth year.

Arians wrote a book called "The Quarterback Whisperer: How to Build an Elite NFL Quarterback" with Lars Anderson.



Arians

His next project will be Jameis Winston, 25, the No. 1 overall pick in 2015 who has only one year left on his rookie contract. Winston already is one of the most prolific passers in Bucs history but has produced only one winning record in four seasons. He is scheduled to earn \$20.92-million in 2019.

Arians has nurtured four Pro Bowl quarterbacks — Peyton Manning, Ben Roethlisberger, Andrew Luck and Carson Palmer.

Please turn to **BUCS, C2**

MAGIC

MORE ROAD WOES

Magic's struggles away from home linger with lopsided loss to Kings

BY MARK BILLINGSLEY
Orlando Sentinel Correspondent

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — All it took was a seemingly innocuous 9-0 early second quarter run to ignite the Sacramento Kings late Monday night. The streak gave the Kings a 38-25 lead and from there they never trailed in defeating the Orlando Magic 111-95.

Nikola Vucevic had another statbook-filling night with 18 points and 13 rebounds in just 24 minutes. He scored the Magic's first five points and then he and the rest of the Magic cooled off. Aaron Gordon's layup halfway through the second quarter ended the Kings' 13-0 run that included the end of the first quarter and an 0-for-10 shooting streak for the Magic during that span.

Terrence Ross came off the bench to score a game-high 20 points, including five 3-pointers, for the Magic.

Orlando had 16 turnovers, including 10 in the first half when

Please turn to **MAGIC, C5**

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