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Herbstreit likes Alabama to win another national title

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Kirk Herbstreit likes Alabama to repeat as national champion. (ESPN).

Kirk Herbstreit, one of the hosts of ESPN College GameDay, chatted with me about the upcoming season. He has partnered with Allstate on the Ultimate Road Trip Sweepstakes, where fans can register for an opportunity to win a trip to the 2014 Sugar Bowl.

I asked the questions and he answered.

Q: What were the reasons you picked Alabama to defeat Ohio State for the national championship?

A: When you make these predictions in August, you're going by what you see on paper. Look at Alabama. What you see on paper is very favorable. They have that big game at Texas A&M – and it looks like Johnny Manziel will play in that game – but outside of that, the schedule looks manageable. They have LSU at home, but other than that, they're at Kentucky, at Mississippi State and at Auburn. You have to put Alabama up there. The same for Ohio State. Their schedule is favorable.

Q: You also picked Alabama to defeat Georgia in the SEC championship game. Georgia lost a lot on defense. Why do you think they're going to make it back to the SEC title game?

A: They lost eight guys to the NFL on that side of the ball. Even though the guys they have this year are not as familiar as the ones they had last year, there's not as big of a drop off as it might look on paper. People will say, 'They lost eight starters to the NFL. Oh boy.' I don't think that it will be a drop off because I think last year's group underachieved. I wouldn't be surprised if the young guys on this year's defense were eager to make a name for themselves and play with a greater level of intensity.

In college football, there's no exhibition, like in high school and in the NFL. So Georgia gets to play Clemson in the first game. That defense gets to face Tajh Boyd and Georgia's first-year safety and first-year linebacker have to play against a guy who's been around, who's a three-year starter. There are a lot of deception in that offense, and Georgia's players are going to have to make sure they watch the ball, not what's going on in the backfield.


Q: You picked Louisville QB Teddy Bridgewater to win the Heisman Trophy. Do you think Louisville will cruise through its season with that schedule?

A: Louisville won't cruise through. I wouldn't be surprised to see them struggle in games. They open with Ohio, who will be tough, and then play Kentucky. This is a Louisville team that could have lost at Florida International, at Southern Miss and at South Florida last year. It lost to Syracuse and lost to Connecticut. They played a great game against Florida, but people forget that they're still building a program there. With 16 returning starters around Teddy Bridgewater, and the speed around him, they have a chance to have a good year.

Q: The big debate down here is who is better between A.J. McCarron, Johnny Manziel and Aaron Murray. The SEC writers picked Johnny Manziel and the coaches selected Aaron Murray. Who do you think is the best QB of those three?

A: That's a good question. Those are three QBs any program in the nation would love to have. I'll go with A.J. McCarron because of the two championships. He has a calming influence on his team and makes good decisions. He checks into good plays and out of bad plays at the line. There's a lot to like about A.J. McCarron. I'll go with Manziel at No. 2. As for longevity, McCarron has been there for three years and has a better body of work. I'm a huge fan of Manziel, as far as what he can do on a football field. If all this noise and distraction goes away, I don't think it'll be a factor. Manziel works hard and knows what he needs to do to make it to the next level and have a great year.

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