

Gridiron Gold Sheet Bowl Games

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**Previews & Picks For Every Bowl Game &
Gridiron Gold Sheet Bowl Game of the Year**

Dennis Stagliano's Award Winning Football Newsletter

Volume 37 Bowl Issue 1 Contains 10 Bowl Game Picks From Dec 15- thru Dec 20, 2018

CELEBRATION BOWL December 15, Noon ET, Atlanta, GA

Alcorn State vs N. Carolina A&T - 8

The Alcorn State Braves face the North Carolina A&T Aggies in the Celebration Bowl. The Braves were led by dual threat quarterback Noah Johnson who completed 61.5% of his throws for 1,451 yards with ten touchdowns and eight interceptions. Johnson also topped the ASU rushing attack with 664 yards on 89 carries for an impressive 8.2 yard average while De'Shawn Waller and PJ Simmons almost 1,200 yard on 216 carries.

Raidarious Anderson gave the Alcorn State passing game explosiveness with 21 catches for 390 yards (18.6 ypc) while Chris Blair totaled 385 yards on 30 receptions. Lamar Raynard paced the North Carolina A&T passing attack connecting on 54.6% of his passes for 1,247 yards and a solid 15-5 touchdown/interception ratio.

The North Carolina A&T Aggies are giving up 8 points and although we believe NCAT will win this game, we just can't pass up the 8 points with the explosive Braves QB Noah Johnson.

TAKE: ALCORN STATE + 8

NEW MEXICO BOWL December 15, 2:00 ET, Albuquerque, NM

North Texas vs Utah State - 7½

The Utah State Aggies finished the season with an impressive 11-2 record however, which included an 11-game winning streak, however, had to be disappointed with how the regular season ended as the Aggies didn't get the opportunity to play in the Mountain West Championship after falling to the Boise State Broncos in their regular season finale. This will be the Aggies 3rd Bowl game in the past 4 years and they will be looking for their 1st bowl win since defeating the UTEP Miners in the New Mexico Bowl in 2014.

On the season, Utah State is averaging 47.2 ppg on 492.5 total yards per game (288.8 passing yds/g; 203.7 rushing yds/g). Offensively, Utah State has been led by Jordan Love who completed 65.8% of his passes for 28 TD & 5 INT while averaging 267.3 passing yds/g

The Mean Green are 10-3 ATS in their last 13 non-conference games, however, are just 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games following a straight up win. The Aggies are 4-0 ATS in their last 4 non-conference games and 9-3 ATS in their last 12 games overall.

Both of these offenses had outstanding success this season throwing the football as the Mean Green ranked 11th in passing offense while Utah State ranked 18th. We've been impressed by the Aggies this season, a virtual money making machine. We expect the Aggies offense to be tough to slow down. The aforementioned, Jordan Love threw for 28 TD's with only 5 INT's while averaging 267.3 passing yds/g. The Mean Green were +8 in turnovers this year. We think they will have to get a few turnovers on an Aggie QB that plays smart and cautious. We expect the Mean Green offense will not be able to keep this one close, therefore, we're going to lay the lumber with Utah State minus the points.

TAKE: UTAH STATE - 7½

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CURE BOWL
December 15, 1:30 ET, Orlando, FL

Tulane - 3½ vs LA Lafayette

Louisiana is 4-1 ATS in their last 5 bowl games and 8-2 ATS in their last 10 games overall while the over is 11-1 in their last 12 non-conference games. Tulane is 2-5 ATS in their last 7 games overall and 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games on turf while the under is 5-1 in their last 6 non-conference games..

This is one of the easier picks of the opening day of bowl season in my opinion. The Green Wave are talented, but the Ragin' Cajuns have had the bulk of the success between these two teams ATS, as has the underdog, which Louisiana also is in this spot. Both teams also match up fairly well and Tulane's QB status is up in the air for this game. I think in this one, you have to go with the team with less question marks and as such, we will take the points with 3 and back the bowl tested Louisiana plus the points in this spot.

TAKE: LA LAFAYETTE + 3½

LAS VEGAS BOWL
December 15, 3:30 ET, Las Vegas, NV

Arizona State vs Fresno State – 3

The Bulldogs are 8-2 ATS in their last 10 non-conference games, 1-6 ATS in their last 7 bowl games and 26-7-1 ATS in their last 34 games overall. The Sun Devils are 2-7 ATS in their last 9 bowl games, 2-6 ATS in their last 8 non-conference games and 1-6 ATS in their last 7 vs. MWC. The over is 4-1 in Sun Devils last 5 non-conference games. The under is 22-8 in Bulldogs last 30 games overall.

The Fresno State Bulldogs finally beat Boise State to win the MWC title and have a defense that's allowing 14.3 points per game during their three-game winning streak. The Arizona State Sun Devils have topped 30 points in four of their last five games and have won 11 of their last 13 games SU when scoring at least 30 points. The Fresno State Bulldogs have covered nine of their last 11 games when favored of at least three points. The Arizona State Sun Devils have covered each of their last five games when an underdog of at least three points. Arizona State has the ability to grind out a victory here, but we don't trust the Sun Devils offense to show up, as it was a very inconsistent bunch all year long. The Fresno State Bulldogs were one of the more consistent teams in the country all year and they've allowed 16 or less points in nine of their 13 games. We will lay the field goal in this contest and back the Fresno St Bulldogs.

TAKE: FRESNO STATE - 4

CQMELLIA BOWL
December 15, 5:30 ET, Montgomery, AL

Eastern Michigan vs Georgia Southern – Pk

Eastern Michigan is 14-3 ATS in their last 17 non-conference games and 24-11 ATS in their last 35 games overall while the under is 6-2 in their last 8 games on turf. Georgia Southern is 9-3 ATS in their last 12 games overall and 4-0 ATS in their last 4 non-conference games while the under is 6-2 in their last 8 games on turf.

Eastern Michigan has been a monster ATS out of conference dating back to last season, and with this line being a pick 'em, a win sounds simple enough. However, Georgia Southern's option offense did a ton of damage this season, finishing top-10 in the FBS in rushing yardage per game while the Eagles allowed almost 200 yards per game on the ground this season. We think this is a recipe for Georgia Southern to control tempo on the ground one more time, so we're going to side with the Georgia Southern Eagles to pick up the win in this one.

TAKE: GEORGIA SOUTHERN - PK

NEW ORLEANS BOWL
December 15, 9:00 ET, New Orleans, LA

★ Best Bets ★

Middle Tennessee State vs Appalachian State - 6½ & 51

Appalachian State enters this one at 10-2 overall. The Mountaineers recorded losses to Penn State and GA Southern but otherwise took out Savannah State, Charlotte, Gardner-Webb, South Alabama, Arkansas State, Louisiana, Coastal Carolina, Texas State, Georgia State, Troy and Louisiana again in the Sun Belt Title Game.

Over on the Middle Tennessee side, they're 8-5 this year. The Raiders have taken out TN-Martin, FL Atlantic, Marshall,

Charlotte, ODU, WKU, UTEP and UAB while falling to Vanderbilt, Georgia, FIU, Kentucky and UAB in the conference championship.

In the UAB game December 1, MTSU's Brent Stockstill logged 362 yards with two touchdowns and two picks, while Zack Dobson put up 52 yards on the ground. Terelle West was the lead Blue Raiders receiver on 81 yards and three catches.

The Raiders are 5-1 ATS in their last six overall and 5-1-1 ATS in their last seven versus the Sun Belt. MTSU is 4-1 ATS in their last five following an ATS loss and 1-4 ATS in their last five bowl games.

Meanwhile, the Mountaineers are 4-0 ATS in their last four non-conference games and 12-4 ATS in their last 16 overall. App State is 8-3 ATS in their last 11 on turf and 7-3 ATS versus a team with a winning record.

App State is more versatile than you may think; sure, they prefer to run at every opportunity but can also throw if they're so motivated. Defensively they've been great as well, routinely holding opponents to single-digit totals this year.

MTSU has a tendency to stall out on offense here and there, so a little ball control and some defensive prowess from the Mountaineers could go a long way in covering the spread and going under the posted totals number. **We're taking Appalachian State – 6½ and under 51.**

TAKE: APPALACHIAN STATE - 6½ & Under 51

BOCA RATON BOWL **December 18, 7:00 ET, Boca Raton, FL**

Northern Illinois vs Alabama Birmingham - 2½

NIU was far from an explosive through the air with Marcus Childers connecting on 57.6% of his throws for 1,996 yards with 15 touchdowns and ten interceptions. Jauan Wesley was the most explosive Northern Illinois receiver with 49 catches for 585 yards and a pair of touchdowns with DJ Brown being the possession receiver with 55 receptions for 484 yards and five TD's.

AJ Erdely and Tyler Johnston III were identical passers for Alabama-Birmingham at around 56%-57% with 1,539 yards and 950 yards respectively and combined 14 touchdowns and 15 picks. Even though UAB didn't throw all over the field the receiving corps had explosive numbers with Xavier Ubosi, Andre Wilson and Kailon Carter combining for 60 catches for over 1,500 yards.

Both teams had similar success this year. Passing games are almost identical. Both being mirror images of each other, we'll take the Blazers with the points and the fact that we think they're the better team.

TAKE: UAB – 2½

FRISCO BOWL **December 19, 8:00 ET, Frisco, TX**

Ohio - 3 vs San Diego State

The Ohio Bobcats have won five of their last six games and have a chance to win back-to-back bowl games for the first time since 2011-12. Nathan Rourke is completing 61.1 percent of his passes for 2,228 yards, 22 touchdowns and seven interceptions. Rourke and Quinton Maxwell have combined for 24 touchdown passes and seven interceptions this season. Papi White and Andrew Meyer have combined for 1,342 receiving yards and 13 touchdowns while Cameron Odom has 29 receptions. The Ohio Bobcats ground game is averaging 261.9 yards per contest, and A.J. Ouellette leads the way with 1,142 yards and 12 touchdowns. Defensively, Ohio is allowing 26.7 points and 399.6 yards per game. Evan Croutch leads the Ohio Bobcats with 79 tackles, Kent Berger has five sacks and Javon Hagan has two interceptions.

The Aztecs are 3-7 ATS in their last 10 games in December, 1-5 ATS in their last 6 non-conference games and 1-6 ATS in their last 7 games overall. The Bobcats are 5-1 ATS in their last 6 bowl games, 16-5 ATS in their last 21 non-conference games and 5-2 ATS in their last 7 games overall. The over is 3-1-1 in Bobcats last 5 games overall. The under is 20-8 in Aztecs last 28 games following a ATS loss.

The San Diego State Aztecs really fell apart towards the end of the season with losses in four of their last five games, but they're only being outscored by 5.6 points during their three-game losing streak. The Ohio Bobcats have scored 49 or more points in five of their last six games and six of their eight victories have been decided by double digits. The San Diego State Aztecs have covered seven of their last eight games when an underdog of at least three points. The Ohio Bobcats have split their last 10 games ATS when a favorite of at least three points. Despite San Diego State keeping games close in its losses, you can't like the confidence of this club heading into this game with the way it ended the

season. The Ohio Bobcats have a scoring machine as of late and have several different players who can takeover the running game. We expect Ohio to score enough late to pull away in this game and cover the spread..

TAKE: OHIO - 3

GASPARILLA BOWL **December 20, 8:00 ET, Tampa, FL**

★ **Best Bets** ★

Marshall - 2 vs South Florida

The South Florida Bulls head in to their Bowl looking for answers with a five game slide to end the regular season hanging over their heads. South Florida averaged 443 yards and 29.2 points with the #36 rushing attack totaling 202.5 yards. The Bulls defense gave up 442 yards and 31.5 points with the opposition piling on almost 245 rushing yards.

Blake Barnett gave USF a dangerous passing game with 62.1% completions for 2,477 yards with eleven touchdowns and eleven receptions. Tyler McCants led the Bulls with 607 yards on 58 receptions with three others totaling between 400-500 yards as Barnett spread the ball around. Alabama-Birmingham received 1,095 rushing yards from Jordan Cronkite on 173 touches with Johnny Ford totaling 737 yards on 104 carries.

The Marshall Thundering Herd were the definition of a defense first squad outscoring the opposition 27.4-22. Marshall averaged 384.5 yard behind average passing and rushing numbers while the defensive side of the football were ranked #23 with 323 yards given up with only 104 yards allowed on the ground.

Isaiah Green captained the Thundering Herd passing game at 55.4% completions for 2,060 yards with 15 touchdowns and ten picks. When Marshall went to the air the ball usually went in the direction of Tyre Brady who caught 60 passes for 819 yards and nine touchdowns. Tyler King topped the Thundering Herd on the ground with 655 yards on 108 totes while Brenden Knox added 365 yards on 60 touches.

Thundering Herd are 6-0 ATS in their last 6 bowl games. South Florida Bulls are 0-4 ATS in their last 4 home games and this game is being played in Tampa. South Florida has the offensive edge but Marshall has a formidable opportunistic defense that will force mistakes and give their own offense a short field. We're backing the Thundering Herd.

TAKE: MARSHALL - 2



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