

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

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College & Pro Football Best Bets Newsletter

Dennis Stagliano's Award Winning Football Newsletter

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL IN FULL SWING NOW WITH MAJOR MATCHUP GAMES ON TAP THIS WEEKEND

Join Now, College is in full swing this week

College football fans were treated to a four-game appetizer of games on Saturday, whetting the appetite for this week's main course. It's being called Week Zero and here's what we found out.

Hawaii sophomore quarterback Cole McDonald had himself a game in his first career start vs Colorado State, completing 26-of-37 passes for 418 yards and three touchdowns without an interception. McDonald also rushed for a team-high 96 yards and two TDs on merely 13 attempts.

Cedric Byrd, a juco transfer making his FBS debut, hauled in 11 receptions for 181 yards and one TD. Senior WR John Ursua had seven catches for 123 yards and two TDs, including a fourth-and-goal grab on the opening drive that allowed the Rainbow Warriors to draw first blood.

As a 17-point underdog, Nick Rolovich's squad darted out to a 37-7 lead with less than four minutes remaining in the third quarter. CSU quickly launched a comeback with 20 unanswered points to trim the deficit to 37-27 with 8:15 left. However, Hawaii responded with a field goal to make it 40-27.

Mike Bobo's squad didn't quit, though, scoring on a nine-yard TD pass from K.J. Carta-Samuels to Izzy Matthews with 4:42 remaining to pull to within six. But Ryan Meskell's 35-yard field goal, his third make of the night, gave the Rainbow Warriors a 43-34 win.

Hawaii hooked up money-line supporters with a gorgeous +700 return (paid \$700 on \$100 wagers). Rolovich's team was also a sweet money-line winner for first-quarter bets (+260) and first-half plays (+330).

Carta-Samuels connected on 34-of-50 throws for 537 yards and five TDs compared to just one interception in the losing effort. Preston Williams, a former 5-star recruit by Butch Jones to Tennessee who sat out last season as a transfer, had nine receptions for 188 yards and two TDs. Olabisi Johnson had six catches for 157 yards and two TDs.

New Mexico State hosted Wyoming in the late game hoping to post a fourth straight win over a Mountain West Conference foe. The Cowboys weren't willing to play along, though. They dominated the Aggies from start to finish in a 29-7 victory as 5.5-point road favorites. The 36 combined points dipped 'under' the 46-point total.

Craig Bohl's team enjoyed a 450-135 advantage in total offense. Nico Evans was the catalyst offensively, rushing 24 times for 190 yards and two Tds. Wyoming gave up its only score at garbage time when NMSU QB Matt Romero found Drew Dan for a 31-yard TD pass with only 1:16 left. The Cowboys host Washington State at War Memorial Stadium on Saturday. Meanwhile, the Aggies are face the Gophers on Thursday night.

Mark Whipple's UMass club has a dynamic offense led by senior QB Andrew Ford, who has a 50/18 touchdown-to-interception ratio during 20 career starts. Ford, who had a 22/4 TD-INT ratio last year, led UMass to a 63-15 win over Duquesne as a 21.5-point home 'chalk.' **This was Dennis' (Pres) Private Gold Pick of the Week.** The 78 combined points went 'over' the 69.5-point total.

Ford completed 13-of-19 throws for 186 yards and two TDs without an interception. Andy Isabella had five catches for 131 yards and two TDs, and the senior WR also had a 14-yard rushing score. Bilal Ally rushed for 109 yards and one TD on nine attempts, while Marquis Young ran 15 times for 90 yards and one TD. Back-up QB Ross Comis threw for two TDs without an interception and rushed for 49 yards and one TD on just two carries.

Senior safety Brice McAllister, a grad transfer from UConn, had two interceptions and a pick-six for 60 yards. The Minutemen, who are 9-2 against the spread in their past 11 games as road underdogs, are 18-point 'dogs at Boston College in Week 1.

Rice jumped out to a 16-0 lead midway through the second quarter against Prairie View A&M as a 23-point home favorite. The Panthers scored 21 second-quarter points, however, to take a 21-19 edge into halftime. They extended the lead to 28-19 going into the fourth quarter.

Rice, playing its first game under new head coach and former Stanford offensive coordinator Mike Bloomgren, cut the deficit to 28-26 with 11:46 remaining on Austin Walter's eight-yard TD run. Then the Owls forced a punt and a bad snap flew over the punter's head and resulted in a game-tying safety with 10:15 left.

Rice would get into field-goal range on its final drive to set up a game-winning attempt. Jack Fox was good from 23 yards out on the game's final play to give the Owls a 31-28 non-covering victory.

Rice RB Emmanuel Esukpa rushed for 173 yards and one TD on 32 carries. Walter added 83 rushing yards and two TDs on 11 attempts. The Owls will play host to Houston on Saturday.

Player News

-- Michigan confirmed reports of a foot injury to redshirt freshman WR Tarik Black on Sunday. He is being termed as out indefinitely pending further evaluation. The four-star recruit in the 2017 class started the Wolverines' first three games last year before going down with a season-ending foot injury. Black had 11 receptions for 149 yards and one TD in those three games.

-- Scott Frost has named true freshman Adrian Martinez as his starting QB. The Cornhuskers open at home Saturday vs. Akron. They were favored by 23.5 points over the Zips as of Sunday afternoon. We should note that Martinez did enroll early and participate in spring practice. Also, RB Tre Bryant announced his retirement due to lingering injuries to both knees. In Nebraska's first two games last year, Bryant rushed for 299 yards and two TDs with a 5.9 yards-per-carry average.

-- Kentucky starting offensive tackle Landon Young is out for the season after sustaining a knee injury at practice last week. Young, a junior, has started nine career games in his first two years with the Wildcats, who have one of the nation's top RBs in Benny Snell.

-- Rutgers has named true freshman Artur Sitkowski as its starting QB. Like Nebraska's Martinez, he enrolled early and was at spring practice. The Scarlet Knights open at home vs. Texas State from out of the Sun Belt Conference.

NFL PRESEASON QB ROTATIONS

A Look at Probable NFL Preseason Quarterback Rotations for 2018

TEAM	QUARTERBACK DEPTH CHART	TEAM	QUARTERBACK DEPTH CHART
ARIZONA	Sam Bradford, Josh Rosen, Mike Glennon, Chad Kanoff	LA CHARGERS	Philip Rivers, Geno Smith, Cardale Jones, Nic Shimonek
ATLANTA	Matt Ryan, Matt Schaub, Garrett Grayson, Kurt Benkert	LA RAMS	Jared Goff, Sean Mannion, Brandon Allen
BALTIMORE	Joe Flacco, Lamar Jackson, Robert Griffin III, Josh Woodrum	MIAMI	Ryan Tannehill, Brock Osweiler, David Fales, Bryce Petty
BUFFALO	AJ McCarron, Nathan Peterman, Josh Allen	MINNESOTA	Kirk Cousins, Trevor Siemian, Kyle Sloter, Peter Pujals
CAROLINA	Cam Newton, Garrett Gilbert, Taylor Heinicke, Kyle Allen	NEW ENGLAND	Tom Brady, Brian Hoyer, Danny Etling
CHICAGO	Mitchell Trubisky, Chase Daniel, Tyler Bray	NEW ORLEANS	Drew Brees, Tom Savage, Taysom Hill, J.T. Barrett
CINCINNATI	Andy Dalton, Matt Barkley, Jeff Driskel, Logan Woodside	NY GIANTS	Eli Manning, Davis Webb, Kyle Lauletta, Alex Tanney
CLEVELAND	Tyrod Taylor, Baker Mayfield, Drew Stanton, Brogan Roback	NY JETS	Josh McCown, Teddy Bridgewater, Sam Darnold
DALLAS	Dak Prescott, Cooper Rush, Mike White, Dalton Sturm	OAKLAND	Derek Carr, EJ Manuel, Connor Cook
DENVER	Case Keenum, Paxton Lynch, Chad Kelly	PHILADELPHIA	Carson Wentz, Nick Foles, Nate Sudfeld, Joe Callahan
DETROIT	Matthew Stafford, Matt Cassel, Jake Rudock	PITTSBURGH	B. Roethlisberger, Landry Jones, Mason Rudolph, Josh Dobbs
GREEN BAY	Aaron Rodgers, Brett Hundley, DeShone Kizer, Tim Boyle	SAN FRANCISCO	Jimmy Garoppolo, C.J. Beathard, Jack Heneghan
HOUSTON	Deshaun Watson, Brandon Weeden, Joe Webb, Steph Morris	SEATTLE	Russell Wilson, Austin Davis, Alex McGough
INDIANAPOLIS	Andrew Luck, Jacoby Brissett, Brad Kaaya, Phillip Walker	TAMPA BAY	Jameis Winston*, Ryan Fitzpatrick, Ryan Griffin, Austin Allen
JACKSONVILLE	Blake Bortles, Cody Kessler, Tanner Lee	TENNESSEE	Marcus Mariota, Blaine Gabbert, Luke Falk
KANSAS CITY	Patrick Mahomes, Chad Henne, Matt McGloin, Chase Litton	WASHINGTON	Alex Smith, Colt McCoy, Kevin Hogan

*Winston suspended first 3 games of regular season

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

DETROIT - PK Over Cleveland 5

It's still difficult for me to wrap my head around that 5-0 victory the Browns came away with in Week 3 versus the Eagles. But due to a strong effort by what looks to be an improved defense, they managed to shut Philadelphia out. They sacked Eagles' play callers seven times while forcing four turnovers. Tyrod Taylor completed 11 of 16 for 65 yards, despite the injury. Baker Mayfield completed 8 of 12 for 76 yards in the victory, while fellow rookie running back Nick Chubb went for 46 yards on 14 carries.

Through three weeks, the Browns have shown that they are leaps and bounds ahead of last year's team. Heading into Week 4, there will be a few position battles that the Browns need to shore up. Their first order of business will be deciding who replaces Joe Thomas. Shon Coleman, Greg Robinson and rookie Austin Corbett will be vying for that spot.

The Lions took on the Buccaneers in an exciting Week 3 matchup. Down 27-14 headed into the fourth quarter, the Lions outscored the Bucs 20-3 in the final frame to pull off outright win on the NFL odds. Matthew Stafford completed 9 of 18 passes for 113 yards, but was the only QB to not throw a touchdown pass. Matt Cassel went 7 of 11 for 60 yards and 1 touchdown, while Jake Rudock completed 9 of 12 for 58 yards and 1 touchdown. Rookie Receiver Marcus Lucas and fourth year wideout Bradley Marquez each came up with the touchdown grabs.

Rookie sensation Kerryon Johnson finally was able to show the opposition what he could do on the ground. Through the first two weeks, he had 8 receptions for 43 yards through the air. Week 3 however, he managed 4 carries for 25 yards which equated to a fantastic 6.3 yards per carry average. Johnson has the chance to be a star in the lions backfield and looks to be the guy Detroit will give the RB1 gig to at the start of the regular season.

Veteran quarterback Matt Cassel hasn't had anywhere near the preseason Rudock has. In three games so far, he's completed 23 of 38 for 183 yards and a TD/INT ratio of 1:1. Jake Rudock on the other hand almost had the equivalent of that in his Week 2 start alone. In his three preseason appearances, he's attempted a whopping 61 passes and has completed 44 of them. He has 313 yards passing with 2 touchdowns and zero interceptions. It's clear who should be Matthew Stafford's backup to start the regular season.

The Browns are 5-15-1 ATS in their last 21 road games, while the over is 11-4 in their last 15 road games. In the Lions last nine home games, the over has cashed in seven times. So if you're looking for a way to lean on this game based on those trends alone, it looks like you'd be better off pairing the over with Detroit.

Projected Score: Detroit 21, Cleveland 16

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

NY Jets - 3 Over PHILADELPHIA by 10

In the pursuit of settling on both the starting and backup spot under center, Sam Darnold finished his night 8 of 16 for 86 yards and a touchdown, while Teddy Bridgewater ended up 11 of 15 for 104 yards. Bilal Powell recorded a touchdown run on 10 carries that amassed 24 yards, while wideout Andre Roberts led the team with 34 yards receiving. New Jet, Terrelle Pryor got on the board with a TD reception in a losing effort, but solidified his chances of lining up with the starting O.

While most of the big names played in Week 3 against the Giants, it's hard to say who exactly will play against the defending champs in the final tune-up before the regular season. With Josh McCown likely etched in as the starter for Week 1, we'll more than likely see Darnold and Bridgewater try to one up the other in hopes of landing the backup gig.

In the loss to the Browns, the Eagles didn't perform well. In fact, they performed terribly. After shining in previous exhibition seasons (6-2, 5-3 ATS), it's clear as day that Doug Pederson has mailed it in this season failing to log a single win or cover against the closing preseason betting lines. Nick Foles completed 13 of 17 passes for 127 yards, but also turned the pigskin over three times. Fellow backup Nate Sudfeld went 11 of 21 for 72 yards. Third year back, Wendell Smallwood led the team in rushing with 53 yards on 12 attempts. Rookie receiver DeAndre Carter had 73 yards receiving to lead the team. Despite this being Carson Wentz's team, look for backups to play a key role in Week 4 as the regulars will get more rest ahead of the start of the regular season.

While Pederson likely would want to see his club put forth a yeoman's effort to stir up the pot before the regular season begins, I just don't foresee it happening. Philadelphia has shown no desire to compete in any of these preseason games, and that won't change this week. The health of the team is of utmost concern; not competing in the X season.

On the flipside, the Jets have shown much more fight through the first three weeks, and they still have a ton of questions to answer before the games start to really count. Mainly, who will be the starting quarterback? That will no doubt be decided here tonight with Darnold and Bridgewater set to duke it out for a third time. With that, I recommend backing the visiting Jets who have way more to prove than the defending champs.

Projected Score: NY Jets 24, Philadelphia 14

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

NY GIANTS - 2½ Over New England by 7

In the losing effort LW, the Patriots had solid quarterback play from both backups but the defense couldn't stop the Panthers offense. Tom Brady completed 12 of 18 passes for 102 yards, while backup Brian Hoyer went 16 of 24 for 109 yards. Running back Mike Gillislee rushed for 35 yards on 10 attempts scoring a touchdown and converting a two-point attempt. On the receiving end of the spectrum, second year man out of Iowa, Riley McCarron stood out with 4 receptions for 49 yards, while former Raider Cordarrelle Patterson had 5 receptions for 37 yards. Longtime Patriots kicker Stephen Gostkowski converted 2 of his 3 field goal attempts.

When looking back at why the Patriots struggled against a Panthers defense ranked No. 29 in passing yards allowed (257.7), they only managed 211 through the air. The Pats preseason pass defense has been bad, ranking No. 28 in the NFL with 254.7 passing yards allowed per game. They'll hope their No. 11 rush defense that's only allowed 87 ypg will be up to the task of limiting New York's rushing attack that's averaged nearly 106 ypg, good for No. 13 overall.

In Week 3 NFL preseason betting odds action, Giants quarterback Eli Manning threw for 188 yards and completed 74 percent of his passes. Backup Davis Webb went 5 for 11 for 73 yards, while third stringer Kyle Lauletta only had 2 attempts and completed one for a measly yard. The Giants No. 14 ranked passing offense accumulated 257 yards through the air, exceeding their average of 213.7. Jhurrell Pressley led the team in rushing with 71 yards on only 12 carries, good for a solid 5.9 yards between the tackles.

Third year stud Sterling Shepard showed off why the Giants are high on him. He hauled in seven passes for 78 yards, good for an 11.1 yards per catch average to lead the team. The Giants have averaged 319.3 yards per game of total offense through their first three games, which has been good for No. 14 in the NFL. Look for Shepard to get some more burn in Week 4 to prep for Week 1 of the regular season.

The Pats' rushing attack has been beastly ranking No. 10 with an output of 113.3 yards per game. This could however become a bit of an issue with a Giants stop unit ranked No. 2 defending the run in allowing just over 60 yards per game. It in fact will be my deciding factor in backing the home town Jints. Oh ya, also Tom Brady won't be suiting up in this one, so it will fall upon Brian Hoyer and Danny Etling to improve upon that paltry output against a stiff competitor.

After a miserable campaign last year and with something to prove in this final test before Week 1, the G-Men should cash in because they'll likely want this one more playing for a new coach, whereas Belichick is thinking regular season.

Projected Score: NY Giants 24, New England 17

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

BALTIMORE - 6 Over Washington by 10

In week 3 of preseason NFL betting action we saw the Redskins struggle at home against the Broncos, losing 29-17. Presumed third string quarterback Kevin Hogan performed well, throwing 7 for 9, with 88 yards and 2 touchdowns, while fellow backup Colt McCoy struggled in going 3 for 8 with 19 yards. Alex Smith didn't do much better, also going 3 for 8, but with 33 yards. All three field generals combined for 140 yards through the air, which is well below their 193 yard average.

Future Hall of Fame running back Adrian Peterson led the running backs with 11 carries for 56 yards. With the injuries to both Derrius Guice and Chris Thompson, the Redskins will have to rely on both AP and Robert Kelley, who rushed 8 times for 19 yards. All of the Redskins runners combined for 136 yards (5.4 YPC), well over their No. 8 ranked average of 117.3. On the receiving end of the spectrum, Darvin Kidsy caught three passes for 50 yards, while free agent acquisition, Paul Richardson only caught two balls for 31 yards. With Crowder out with injury, expect a youngster to fill his role week 4.

The Ravens had a tough start to the game against the Dolphins trailing 10-3 at halftime, but they then outscored the Dolphins 24-0 in the second half. The battle for the backup quarterback role continues. Lamar Jackson impressed going 7 of 10 for 98 yards and a touchdown, while his competitor Robert Griffin III went 9 of 15 for 68 yards. Likely roster cut Josh Woodrum went 3 for 5 for 47 yards. The trio combined threw for 211 yards, well above their 168.5 yard average.

The backup quarterback battle is really heating up in the Charm City with rookie Lamar Jackson and Robert Griffin III both making their case for the spot behind former Super Bowl MVP, Joe Flacco. Jackson has completed 27 of 58 passes (46.5%) with a TD/INT ratio of 3:1. Lamar had, what analysts call a "break out" game, proving that he is more than a runner. His competition, Robert Griffin III has completed 27 of 41 (65.8%) passes with an TD/INT ratio of 2:1. One more week of this battle will determine who ultimately gets the backup gig.

I don't see Washington competing much in this one. They haven't to this point, so why change now with the regular season a week away? Baltimore has won 12 straight preseason games, and I expect No. 13 to be lucky as well. Gotta love that battle at QB with Lamar Jackson and Robert Griffin III playing for position.

Projected Score: Baltimore 27, Washington 17

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