

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

Dennis Stagliano's Gridiron Gold Sheet
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For the first time ever a sports service went the entire season without a single losing week. Ron Sataloff, President Sports Features Syndicate

Volume 39 Issue 1

September 10, 2020



FINALLY! COLLEGE & PRO FOOTBALL KICKOFF ISSUE

Joe Burrow's First NFL Game

College football has been reduced to few conferences, and some vow to play in the winter. The NFL has cancelled the preseason, and most teams will play before little or no fans. At least for a few weeks, I recommend bettors to adhere to smart money management. It's hard enough to handicap games, now add in all this uncertainty and it can get overwhelming. "Be patient and be smart while treading in this chancy exercise of sports betting". Dennis Stagliano, President, Gridiron Gold

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

ARMY - 17 Over UL Monroe by 27

UL Monroe Quarterback Caleb Evans must be replaced and that responsibility will be taken over by Colby Suits but he must hold off transfer Jeremy Hunt who is a dual threat under center. The top running back returning from last season will be Josh Johnson who rushed for 1,298 yards and 11 touchdowns. Josh Peterson is the best receiver at tight end returning from last season after making 43 receptions, while the top deep threat will be Perry Carter.

Army already started its season with a 42-0 rout of Middle Tennessee State on Saturday. Sandon McCoy led the Black Knights with three touchdown rushes in the first half. Quarterback Christian Anderson scored on a 24-yard run during the third quarter while Anthony Adkins added a fourth quarter touchdown for Army. The defense also played a role with Jon Rhattigan making a 43-yard pick-six. Tyrell Robinson is leading Army in rushing with 94 yards on just nine carries. Army rushed for 340 yards in its first week victory over Middle Tennessee State.

UL-Monroe is 4-10 ATS in its last 14, The OVER has cashed in each of the Warhawks last 5, Army is 4-2 ATS in its last 6, The UNDER has cashed in 6 of the Black Knights last 9

Army looked very strong in its opening game rout of Middle Tennessee State. The Black Knights vaunted rushing attack rolled up 340 yards on the ground. Army has covered the number in four of its last six and in five of its last six during September. The Black Knights have won 17 of the last 19 straight up at home. UL-Monroe has failed to cover in four of its last six and has lost six of its last seven SU on the road. In addition and not to be taken lightly, the UL-Monroe football program stopped its practices last week due to nine players having positive tests for covid-19. Also the Warhawks lost their defensive coordinator 10 days ago after Mike Collins stepped down prior to beginning his fifth season with UL-Monroe at DC. Army Black Knights are in much better shape over all and will wear down Monroe onto a win and cover.

Projected Score: Army 37, UL Monroe 10

NOTRE DAME - 19 Over Duke by 24

The Duke Blue Devils were 5-7 overall and 3-5 in the ACC during 2019. Offensively, eight starters return and will be led at quarterback by Chase Brice who transferred from Clemson. Deon Jackson returns after rushing for 641 yards and six touchdowns last season, but the receiving corps is untested (no experienced players).

On the defense, last season the Duke pass rush was very strong and seven of its top nine tacklers return. Victor Dimukeje returns after leading the Blue Devils in sacks last season with 8.5 and Chris Rumph is back after making 6.5 sacks of his own last season. Duke must replace Koby Quansah at linebacker and that unit could be the weak link of the defense. In the secondary several players were lost to transfers including Dylan Singleton who will start at one safety alongside Marquis Waters.

The Notre Dame Fighting Irish will be led by quarterback Ian Book who last season as a junior was a force accounting for 38 touchdowns while throwing just six interceptions. Over Book's final 4 games with Notre Dame last season the quarterback threw 14 touchdowns and did not have an interception. Wide receivers Avery Davis and Braden Lenzy return to lead the receiver corps.

The Notre Dame defense must replace three top pass-rushers from last season and the new group will be led by Ade Ogundeji. The linebackers are led by returning stars Drew White and Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, both had exceptional seasons in 2019. The defensive secondary lost two star safeties and a cornerback but Shawn Crawford is back and transfer Nick McLeod from North Carolina St will add excellent coverage abilities.

Duke is 1-4-1 ATS in its last 6 - The OVER has cashed in 8 of the Blue Devils last 11 - Notre Dame is 5-0 ATS in its last 5 - The UNDER has cashed in 11 of the Irish's last 16.

The Fighting Irish have one of the best if not the best offensive lines in the nation. Notre Dame has covered the number in each of its last five and has won each of its last 18 straight up at home. Duke has failed to cover five of its last six and has lost five of its last six SU. This is a boatload of point and the public has driven the line down to -19. I don't like laying big lumber in the first game, but I just can't deny the fact that the Devils defensive front 7 will get beaten up by the massive Irish offensive line. Also QB Book is as efficient as any in the country. Yes, I'm going to lay the lumber and back the Irish.

Projected Score: Notre Dame 37. Duke 13

FLORIDA STATE -12 Over Georgia Tech by 24

The Seminoles are coming to the game here looking really impressive and definitely are a team that should have a lot going for them on the year. The Seminoles have 7 starters coming back from the offense. The offense last year scored 28 points a game, ran the ball for 141 yards a game and threw the ball for 267 yards a game.

Defensively Florida State has 10 starters coming back. Those 10 starters will definitely help the Seminoles out quite a bit in the game here. Florida State, on the defensive side allowed only 28 points a game, but gave up only 147 yards on the ground and 277 yards a game in the air.

For what it is worth the Yellow Jackets are bringing back 10 offensive players. Now, that could help the Georgia Tech team out. However, last year Tech only scored 16 point game, ran the ball for 152 yards, but threw the ball for 133 yards per game.

The defense for Georgia Tech is coming back with 7 starters. Out of those 7 returning, only 2 are in the front 6. Defensively Georgia Tech can only improve as they allowed 32 points a game last year, gave up 215 yards a game on the ground, and the passing defense gave up only 207 yards per game.

Georgia Tech is 3-11-1 ATS in their last 15 games - The total has gone OVER in 6 of Georgia Tech's last 8 games - Florida State is 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games - The total has gone UNDER in 7 of Florida State's last 10 games.

Georgia Tech has a lot of question marks. Mostly, how well has the defense matured (no fall practice). The Sems have way too many weapons at their disposal, and that leads to the game tipping heavily in favor of Florida State.

Projected Score: Florida State 34, Georgia Tech 10

Louisiana Tech vs BAYLOR Over 56 by 16

The Louisiana Tech Bulldogs hope to set this season off with a bang and are coming off a 10-win season last year. The Louisiana Tech Bulldogs averaged 32.4 points per game and 436.8 yards while allowing an average of 21.8 points and 377.7 yards per game. Aaron Allen may takeover at quarterback after 75 pass attempts last season and three touchdowns, replacing the highly productive J'Mar Smith. Justin Henderson should be the workhorse again for the Bulldogs offense after a 1,000-yard season and 15 rushing touchdowns. Griffin Hebert and Adrian Hardy return at wiz receiver after more than 1,000 receiving yards and seven touchdowns. As long as Louisiana Tech finds a capable quarterback, this offense can do some serious damage. Defensively, Louisiana Tech lost its top-four tacklers from last year.

The Baylor Bears are coming off an 11-win season that ended in the Sugar Bowl. The Baylor Bears averaged 33.6 points per game and 421.5 yards while allowing an average of 19.8 points and 360.4 yards per game. Charlie Brewer returns at quarterback after throwing for 3,161 yards and 21 touchdowns while completing 64.5 percent of his passes. John Lovett was Baylors leading rusher with 655 rushing yards and five touchdowns while Tyquan Thornton and R.J. Sneed is a wide receiver duo that combined for more than 1,200 yards and eight touchdowns. The Baylor Bears want to run an even quicker tempo this season and have the pieces in place to be one of the best offensive teams in the country. Defensively, Baylor lost a ton of experience.

Bulldogs are 6-1 ATS in their last 7 games on grass - Bulldogs are 6-2 ATS in their last 8 games overall - Bulldogs are 8-3 ATS in their last 11 games as an underdog - Bulldogs are 8-3 ATS in their last 11 games in September - Bulldogs are 26-10 ATS in their last 36 games as a road underdog - Bulldogs are 12-5 ATS in their last 17 road games - Bulldogs are 9-4 ATS in their last 13 non-conference games.

Bears are 5-1 ATS in their last 6 games overall. - Bears are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 games on grass - Bears are 10-22-1 ATS in their last 33 games as a favorite - Bears are 1-3-1 ATS in their last 5 vs. CUSA. Bears are 3-10 ATS in their last 13 games as a home favorite - Bears are 2-8-1 ATS in their last 11 non-conference games.

The Louisiana Tech Bulldogs are a program that's heading in the right direction and they return a lot of production that helped them win 10 games last season. I could see LA Tech doing just enough to make this game somewhat competitive. The Baylor Bears are stacked on the offensive side of the ball once again and they keep talking about how excited they are to run Larry Fedora's up-tempo offense. There will be a lot of possessions and I don't trust the Bears on the side. As for betting, I'm going over 56 points.

Projected Score: Baylor 44. LAT 28

SOUTH ALABAMA + 10 Over Tulane by 4

The Green Wave did look decent at times last year on defense. The worst ranking for the defense of Tulane was the passing defense which was ranked 54th in the nation. The rushing defense was ranked 64th. With that defense getting those rankings they are returning a total of 7 starters. The offense, see below.

South Alabama ended up picking up a win in their opening game. The Jaguars ended up beating the Southern Miss Golden Eagles by a score of 32-21. The defense is what really showed up big and impressive for the Jaguars as it was not expected to do as good as what they did.

The Jaguars ended up getting a very impressive game from Desmond Trotter who threw the ball for 299 yards, 2 touchdowns, but was picked off 2 times. The leading rusher for the Jaguars was Carlos Davis who ended up carrying the ball 15 times for 85 yards.

Tulane are 8-3 ATS in their last 11 games - The total has gone UNDER in 4 of Tulane's last 5 games - South Alabama are 5-1 ATS in their last 6 games - The total has gone UNDER in 8 of South Alabama's last 11 games.

The Jaguars looked fairly impressive in their first win of the year. Tulane is coming into the game here for the first time of the season. The Green Wave for their part are returning 7 for the defense. Tulane is heading into the game here with some question marks when it comes to the offensive side of the ball. The Green Wave have only 4 starters coming back from their strong offense. What could really be problematic for the Tulane squad is none of the returning starters are from the key positions. The Green Wave end up losing the game. Jaguars in an upset.

Projected Score: South Alabama 28, Tulane 24

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PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

WASHINGTON + 6.5 Over Philadelphia by 3

The Philadelphia Eagles come into the 2020 season looking to take a step forward after a decent 2019 season that saw Philly finish with a 9-7 record and win the horrendous NFC East division crown. The Eagles' stay in the postseason was short-lived though, as Philadelphia was bounced by the Seattle Seahawks in the Wild Card round. Carson Wentz was finally healthy and the Eagles got a full season from their franchise QB and it paid dividends with Wentz throwing for over 4,000 yards, 27 touchdowns and just 7 interceptions while completing 63.9% of his pass attempts. And all of this while having no receiver log more than 500 receiving yards in the regular season. The questions about the receiving group are warranted, with DeSean Jackson and Alshon Jeffery often injured while Greg Ward broke through but doesn't have the credentials to suggest that it was anything more than a one-off season. Miles Sanders is expected to lead Philly's ground attack once again, but he just hasn't seemed like the type of running back that can shoulder a full workload. The good news for the Eagles is they boast one of the top tight end tandems in the game, with Zach Ertz and Dallas Goedert, with the two combining for over 1,500 receiving yards, 11 touchdowns and 146 receptions.

Defensively, Fletcher Cox is the stalwart and main man on the Eagles' pass rush, but now he has some help after Malik Jackson appears to be fully healthy as well as the addition of Javon Hargrave via free agency. Brandon Graham also returns after recording 8.5 sacks last year but the Eagles have a ton of question marks in the secondary with Malcolm Jenkins leaving for no money.

The Washington Football Team come into the 2020 season in the midst of a whirlwind of change, starting from the team name and now to the head coaching ranks. Washington finished with a record of 3-13 last season, their worst record since finishing with 3 wins back in 2013, with Washington missing the playoffs for the fourth straight season. The change started at the top when Ron Rivera was brought in to lead Washington into the future alongside expected week 1 starter Dwayne Haskins. Haskins started at QB from week 9 onward and as much as he was criticized for questionable decision making at times, he appeared to get better as his feet got underneath him, and finished the season with 1,365 yards, 7 touchdowns and 7 interceptions. There's a ton of questions in the Washington backfield, with Adrian Peterson now gone, Derrius Guice gone after off-field issues, Bryce Love recovering from surgery last year, and unproven commodities like J.D. McKissic and third-round draft pick Antonio Gibson.

Defensively, Washington used their second overall pick to select Chase Young out of Ohio State, a defensive end that Washington hopes is their second coming of Julius Peppers. Young logged 16.5 sacks and 21 tackles for a loss in 2019 with Ohio State and Washington hopes that Young can have an immediate impact on their pass rush. Young joins Ryan Kerrigan and Montez Sweat in an intimidating edge-rushing corps for Washington, while the secondary was improved by signing Kendall Ruller and Ronald Darby to replace Josh Norman and Quinton Dunbar that were part of a Washington defense that allowed opponents to convert on almost half of their third downs last year.

Philadelphia is 5-2 in their last 7 games as a road favorite and 1-6 ATS in their last 7 games in September while the under is 4-1 in their last 5 week 1 matchups. Washington is 2-8 ATS in their last 10 home games and 0-5 ATS in their last 5 games within the division while the over is 4-1 in their last 5 games overall. Philadelphia is 5-1 ATS in the last 6 meetings between these two teams.

There are a lot of question marks in this game. One being why the Skins could not pick a better nickname than "Football Team". Give me a break. How about Washington "Do Nothings"! With that said, these two teams have been able to put up points, as both meetings last year seeing at least 59 points and the Eagles have also racked up at least 24 points in each of the last six head-to-head against Washington. But with all the question marks this year and the total set at only 42.5, Mr. Bookie thinks not. I predict a close game, so I'm going to take the home dog "FOOTBALL TEAM" +6.5 and call for a straight up upset.

Projected Score: Washington 24, Philadelphia 21

LA Chargers - 3 Over CINCINNATI by 10

The Los Angeles Chargers are coming off a five-win season that ended with them losing six of their last seven games. The Chargers won't have Phillip Rivers for the first time in years, which makes journeyman Tyrod Taylor the week 1 starter. If Taylor can improve his accuracy and make better decisions with the ball, there's a chance for this offense to be successful. There's more than enough playmakers with running back Austin Ekeler and receivers Keenan Allen, Mike Williams and Hunter Henry. Defensively, the Chargers are sixth in the league last season in yards allowed per game and we should see a similar effort this year. A defensive end trio of Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram III is as good as it gets in this league while Desmond King II and Drue Tranquill are promising young players. There's potential with this Chargers squad, but a lot of it comes down to how effective their quarterback is going to be.

The Cincinnati Bengals have nowhere to go but up after winning just two games last season and often getting blown out on the field. The Bengals will start rookie quarterback Joe Burrow, and it will be interesting to see just how prepared he is given the lack of proper training camp and no preseason games. The return of a healthy AJ Green obviously goes a long way and running back Joe Mixon is coming off back to back seasons of 1,000 rushing yards. Burrow has the weapons around him to be successful, so it should be fun to see his progression at the next level. Defensively, the Bengals went out and snagged D.J. Reader, Mackensie Alexander, Trae Wayne, Josh Byner and Vonn Bell in hopes of improving what was a brutal defense overall. Carlos Dunlap and Geno Atkins still produce one of the better defensive lines in the game.

The Chargers are 1-5 ATS in their last 6 games as a favorite and 1-5-1 ATS in their last 7 games overall. The Bengals are 33-16-2 ATS in their last 51 games in September, 3-11 ATS in their last 14 home games and 3-7 ATS in their last 10 games overall. The over is 4-1 in Chargers last 5 games overall. The over is 4-0 in Bengals last 4 games overall. The Chargers are 1-6 ATS in their last 7 meetings.

The Los Angeles Chargers are the better team, and they're a team I've backed many times on the road. The Cincinnati Bengals had the worst record in the league last year, and Burrow is a major addition. But is Burrow ready now, especially with no pre-season games played. He could shock me, but until he does, I'll back my road warriors based on their 10-4-2 ATS in their last 16 road games. Chargers win and cover.

Projected Score: San Diego 23, Cincinnati 13

ARIZONA + 7½ Over San Francisco by 3

The Arizona Cardinals are coming off a five-win season and ended up losing seven of their last nine games. Kyler Murray enters his second season at the quarterback position and should be more polished than he was a year ago. Murray has a new toy in wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins, and the Cardinals have one of the better WR trios in the league when you include Christian Kirk and Larry Fitzgerald. Running back Kenyan Drake also looked comfortable in this Arizona offense. Defensively, the Cardinals allowed the most yards in the league last season, so there's clearly a need for improvement. Budda Baker and Chandler Jones are two of the better defenders in the league, but they'll need a bounce back season from cornerback Patrick Peterson. The additions of Jordan Phillips and Devon Kennard should instantly improve the Cardinals defense.

The San Francisco 49ers won 13 regular season games and watched their season come to an end with a disappointing Super Bowl loss. The 49ers watched Emmanuel Sanders leave in free agency and Deebo Samuel is sidelined with an injury. The offensive line is also banged up a bit with injuries to Weston Richburg and Ben Garland, so the 49ers offense is going through it before they even take the field for real. There's once again pressure on Jimmy Garoppolo to show up and it's going to take more than his security blanket in George Kittle to help out. Defensively, the 49ers return majority of what was a historic defense last year, and that includes their top-three tacklers in Fred Warner, Dre Greenlaw and Jimmie Ward. Nick Bosa seems to get better each season as a pass rusher and Richard Sherman is still a top level corner despite being 32 years old. It's hard to repeat success in the NFL, but the 49ers are once again a legit Super Bowl contender.

The Cardinals are 2-0-2 ATS in their last 4 road games, 3-1-2 ATS in their last 6 vs. NFC and 7-3-2 ATS in their last 12 games overall. The 49ers are 5-2-1 ATS in their last 8 vs. NFC, 7-18-1 ATS in their last 26 games as a favorite and 1-3-1 ATS in their last 5 vs. NFC West. The over is 6-2 in Cardinals last 8 games on grass. The over is 6-2 in 49ers last 8 home games.

The Arizona Cardinals hung around with the 49ers in two games last season and each of the last seven meetings have been decided by 10 or less points. History suggests a close game here, (Cardinals are 3-0-1 ATS in their last 4 meetings in San Francisco and 4-0-1 ATS in their last 5 meetings), and the Cardinals are better than they were last season while the 49ers are possibly the most banged up team entering week 1 of the regular season. The 49ers have a lot of injuries in the trenches and they're not as stacked on the outside offensively as they were a year ago. Getting a touchdown and the hook is where my money will go. Very well could be a big upset in week 1.

Projected Score: Arizona 24, San Francisco 21

Pittsburgh – 3½ Over NY GIANTS by 10

The Pittsburgh Steelers are coming off a frustrating 8-8 season that ended with them losing three straight games. The Steelers offense should be more reliable with a healthy Ben Roethlisberger at quarterback, a veteran who seems to be eager to prove there's something left in that tank. The addition of Eric Ebron to pair with James Washington and JuJu Smith-Schuster gives the Steelers one of the better group of pass catchers in the league. As long as the offensive line holds up, the Steelers are in business on the offensive end. Defensively, the Steelers and two cornerstones in T.J. Watt and Minkah Fitzpatrick, playmakers who can flip a game on its head with one play. Linebackers Bud Dupree and Devin Bush have come into their own and big things are expected of Terrell Edmunds this season.

The New York Giants are coming off a four-win season, but they did win two of their last three games, so maybe this team is heading in the right direction. Jason Garrett is the offensive coordinator for the Giants, and

it's going to be interesting to see what he can get out of quarterback Daniel Jones, running back Saquon Barkley and tight end Evan Engram. The pieces are there for the Giants to be an explosive offense, it just comes down to the differences Garrett makes as an OC that he couldn't make as a head coach. Defensively, the Giants have nowhere to go but up, and New York is hoping the additions of physical defensive backs Julian Love and Jabrill Peppers is a good start. There's reason for hope with the Giants, I think but would I bet on it?

The Steelers are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 Monday games, 4-9-1 ATS in their last 14 games as a favorite and 2-7 ATS in their last 9 games in Week 1. The Giants are 4-9 ATS in their last 13 games in September, 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games on fieldturf and 3-12-1 ATS in their last 16 home games. The under is 7-1 in Steelers last 8 games overall. The over is 4-1 in Giants last 5 games overall.

How about those first game numbers for both teams. Well, one of them has to cover. There's value lost in these Monday night home underdogs without a crowd in place. MNF crowds add juice to the home team. That's not the case this season and a lot of these games are pretty much on a neutral site, like a scrimmage game. Barley is a beast for the GMen and if the Steelers don't corral him he can run wild. Nevertheless, the Pittsburgh Steelers are the better team here on both sides of the ball. I'll take the Steelers by 10.

Projected Score: Pittsburgh 27, NY Giants 17

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