

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

Dennis Stagliano's Gridiron Gold Sheet
An Award Winning Football Newsletter Since 1981



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 5

October 6, 2020



Zac Wilson Has B.Y.U. On the Rise in the Polls

FEATURING THESE GAMES VIRGINIA T. at NORTH CAROLINA FLORIDA at TEXAS A&M TENNESSEE at GEORGIA MISSISSIPPI at ALABAMA

Recap

This Week's Top Performers

Zach Wilson (BYU vs. LT): 24/26, 325 yds, 2 TD; 3 rush TD
Reggie Roberson Jr. (SMU vs. MEM): 5 rec, 243 yds, 2 TD
Khalil Herbert (VT vs. DUKE): 20 rush, 208 yds, 2 TD
Travis Etienne (CLEM vs. UVA): 187 yds from scrim, 2 TD
Kenny Pickett (PITT vs. NCST): 22/39, 411 yds, 1 TD; 2 rush TD
Shane Buechele (SMU vs. MEM): 32/45, 474 yds, 3 TD
Grayson McCall (CCAR vs. ARST): 20/29, 322 yds, 4 TD
Trevor Lawrence (CLEM vs. UVA): 25/38, 329 yds, 3 TD
Tylan Wallace (OKST vs. KU): 9 rec, 148 yds, 2 TD
Chuba Hubbard (OKST vs. KU): 20 rush, 145 yds, 2 TD

This Week's Passing Leaders

Shane Buechele (SMU)
32/45, 474 yds, 3TD
Mac Jones (BAMA)
20/27, 435 yds, 4TD
Kenny Pickett (PITT)
22/39, 411 yds, 1TD
Brady White (MEM)
29/42, 380 yds, 3TD
Austin Aune (UNT)
28/47, 339 yds, 2TD

This Week's Rushing Leaders

Khalil Herbert (VT) 20 att 208 yds, 2TD
J.D. King (GASO) 21 att 196 yds, 1TD
Sincere McCormick (UTSA) 22 att 150 yds, 1TD
Chuba Hubbard (OKST) 20 att 145 yds, 2TD
Spencer Brown (UAB) 26 att 144 yds, 0TD

This Week's Receiving Leaders

Reggie Roberson SMU 5 rec 243 yds, 2TD
DJ Turner (PITT) 8 rec 186 yds, 0TD
John Metchie (BAMA) 5 rec 181 yds, 2TD
Damonte Coxie (MEM) 8 rec 169 yds, 0TD
Tylan Wallace (OKST) 9 rec 148 yds, 2TD

Oklahoma dropped out of The Associated Press college football poll for the first time since September 2016 and No. 24 Iowa State jumped back into the Top 25 after a day of upsets.

There largely was stability at the top of the rankings Sunday after No. 1 Clemson, No. 2 Alabama, No. 3 Georgia and No. 4 Florida all won big, though the Bulldogs and Gators switched spots. Clemson received 52 first-place votes and Alabama got eight from the panel of sports writers and broadcasters.

Notre Dame was idle and held at No. 5, while No. 6 Ohio State received two first-place votes despite no Big Ten Conference games scheduled until late October.

Overall, though, five teams dropped out of the Top 25 after eight ranked teams lost Saturday, six to unranked opponents.

The Sooners were involved in one of those upsets, losing at Iowa State for the first time since 1960. Oklahoma's first two-game, regular-season losing streak in 21 years snapped its string of 64 straight poll appearances.

That was the fourth-longest active streak in the country behind Alabama, Ohio State (not including the polls in which it was not eligible) and Clemson.

The Sooners will head into their Red River rivalry game against Texas next Saturday as an unranked team for the first time since 2005.

The 22nd-ranked Longhorns managed to hold on to a spot in the rankings, falling 13 spots after losing at home to TCU.

Alabama's streak of poll appearances reached 201, the fourth longest of all time behind Nebraska's record 348 (1981-2002), Florida State's 211 (1989-2001) and Florida's 209 (1990-2002).

Ohio State's streak is up to 134, but it now comes with a caveat. The Buckeyes were ineligible to be ranked in the first two regular-season polls of this season because the Big Ten had postponed its football season. When the Big Ten (and other conferences) reversed course and decided to play, those teams became eligible again and the Buckeyes were back.

OUT

— UCF took the biggest fall among the five teams to drop out of the rankings, going from 11th to unranked and snapping a streak of 33 straight appearances.

— Mississippi State followed up its upset of LSU by losing to Arkansas at home. The Razorbacks snapped a 20-game SEC winning streak and the Bulldogs dropped from No. 16 to others receiving votes.

— Pitt stumbled at home to North Carolina State and dropped out.

— Memphis fell from the rankings after losing to SMU.

IN

— No. 23 Louisiana-Lafayette returned to the rankings without playing. It has been quite an early season for the Ragin' Cajuns, who last month made their first appearance in the AP Top 25 since 1943 by winning at Iowa State.

The return of Big Ten and Pac-12 teams to the rankings, combined with a couple of close victories against Sun Belt rivals, nudged the Cajuns out last week. Suddenly, beating Iowa State is looking impressive again.

— No. 18 SMU is the only 4-0 team in the country.

— No. 19 Virginia Tech got bumped by the Big Ten teams last week, but after winning another game shorthanded, the Hokies are back in.

— No. 25 Minnesota was No. 19 in the preseason but didn't return to the AP Top 25 last week when the Big Ten became eligible again. Having star receiver Rashod Bateman opt back in and become eligible helped win over some voters.

UP

— No. 15 BYU has its best ranking since 2009, when the Cougars briefly broke into the top 10 early in the season by upsetting Oklahoma. This BYU squad hasn't played an opponent as notable as the Sooners yet, but no team in the country has been more dominant. The Cougars have outscored Navy, Troy and Louisiana Tech by a combined 148-24.

— No. 8 North Carolina moved up four spots to match its best ranking since 2015.

— No. 10 Oklahoma State took advantage of the the eight ranked teams losing to jump seven spots after beating Kansas.

— No. 14 Tennessee was another beneficiary of a tumultuous week for ranked teams. The Vols moved up seven spots after beating Missouri.

CONFERENCE STATUS

For the first time, the Atlantic Coast Conference has four teams ranked in the top 10 of the AP poll. No. 7 Miami joins Clemson, Notre Dame and North Carolina. Only twice before in the history of the 67-year-old conference have four ACC teams reached the top 10 in the same season: 2016 and 2004. Oct. 2, 2016, was the last time three ACC teams were in the top 10 (No. 3 Clemson, No. 7 Louisville and No. 10 Miami) at the same time. The strangeness of a season altered by the coronavirus pandemic has aided the ACC in reaching this milestone. Notre Dame is a temporary member of the conference and two Power Five conferences, four FBS overall, have not even started playing. Still, a conference that had only one ranked team at the end of last season seems to be on its way to a nice rebound.

	RANKED vs. RANKED THIS WEEK THIS WEEK
SEC — 7 (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 17, 21). ACC — 5 (Nos. 1, 5, 7, 8, 19). Big Ten — 5 (Nos. 6, 9, 16, 20, 25). Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 10, 22, 24). American — 2 (Nos. 11, 18). Pac-12 — 1 (No. 12). Sun Belt — 1 (No. 23). Independent — 1 (No. 15).	No. 7 Miami at No. 1 Clemson. It's about to get real for the Hurricanes. No. 4 Florida at No. 21 Texas A&M. Aggies return home from Alabama, hoping for better against the Gators. No. 14 Tennessee at No. 3 Georgia. Vols get a chance to make a statement vs a Georgia team that looked scary good against Auburn. Guaranteed picks posted now at >>>>>> click here

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

North Carolina - 5 Over Virginia Tech by 14

Virginia Tech is 2-0 on the young season so far. The Hokies have taken out NC State 45-24 and Duke 38-31 consecutively on the way to an undefeated start. As for the Tar Heels, they're 2-0 in their opening pair. North Carolina beat Syracuse 31-6 in the opener, then eked by Boston College 26-22 last weekend.

Virginia Tech didn't have much trouble in their first game of the season. The Hokies dispatched NC State 45-24, building up a 31-10 lead at halftime and cruising the rest of the way. The Duke game was a little more interesting, however. Virginia Tech scored 28 points in the second half and still had to hang on for a 38-31 win.

In the victory over the Blue Devils, Virginia Tech QB Braxton Burmeister had 163 yards with one TD and one INT on 9-of-25 passing, with Tayvion Robinson catching two balls for 85 yards. The real star of the show there was Khalil Herbert, who rushed 20 times for 208 yards and two scores.

Over on the Tar Heels' side, they had a relatively smooth game versus Syracuse, winning 31-6 and out-gaining the Orange 463-202 in total yards. The 26-22 win over Boston College was more interesting however. North Carolina held on to a narrow 21-16 lead at halftime for an eventual 26-22 finish.

In the win over the Eagles, North Carolina quarterback Sam Howell posted 225 yards with two touchdowns and one interception. Michael Carter had 121 yards on 16 carries, and Dyami Brown added four catches for 60 yards.

This should be pretty interesting game. The Hokies have scored a total of 83 points through two games and shown some pretty solid offensive capabilities. The Tar Heels are no slouches when it comes to scoring either, with 57 points in two outings and just 28 points allowed. Still, I think North Carolina can put up some points here against a suspect defense. This will be an important matchup in determining what the ACC is going to look like in 2020. The Tar Heels have the better QB and their rush defense is good. **I'm taking the Heels.**

Projected Score: North Carolina 37, Virginia Tech 23

MY BOOKIE

DOUBLE YOUR FIRST DEPOSIT + FREE FUTURES BET



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Florida - 6 Over Texas A&M by 12

The Florida Gators enter this game looking to build off of a 38-24 win over South Carolina in their last game. Kyle Trask has thrown for 684 yards, 10 touchdowns and 1 interception on 71.8% passing while Dameon Pierce leads the Gators in rushing with 105 rushing yards and Kyle Pitts leads the Gators in receiving with 12 grabs for 227 yards and 6 touchdowns. Kadarius Toney also has 11 grabs for 145 yards and 2 scores this season. Defensively, Ventrell Miller leads the Gators with 21 total tackles including a team-high 17 solo tackles while Brandon Cox Jr. and Zachary Carter each have a team-high 1.5 sacks for the Gators while Gervon Dexter has Florida's lone interception this season.

The Texas A&M Aggies will try to bounce back from their first loss of the season coming in the form of a 52-24 loss to Alabama last time out. Kellen Mond has thrown for 507 yards, 4 touchdowns and an interception on 58.3% passing while Isaiah Spiller leads A&M in rushing with 142 rushing yards and Ainlas Smith has a team-high 150 receiving yards and a pair of touchdowns out of the backfield with a rushing score as well. Jalen Wydermyer has a team-high 10 catches for 101 yards and Chase Lane has 100 receiving yards for the Aggies as well. Defensively, Buddy Johnson leads the Aggies with 19 total tackles including 10 solo tackles while Micheal Clemons has 2.5 sacks this season.

The points are tempting as the two meetings since A&M joined the SEC have been decided by a combined 5 points. However, Florida's simply been the better team in two games this season, and while you can argue that A&M's loss to Alabama is excusable, the play from Kellen Mond needs to be better to give the Aggies a shot even at home. I'm not sure I'm a believer in Florida's top-5 ranking just yet, but Kyle Trask has been playing extremely well to start the year and the Gators look really good once again and could push for a double-digit win total, even in a condensed schedule, which would be the third in as many years under Dan Mullen. Home dogs in a conference rivalry are tempting, but A&M will be without most of their rabid fan base and minus the 13th man. For me this comes down to Trask vs Mond in the passing game. I think Florida wins this one by a few touchdowns so **I'll lay the points with the Gators here.**

Projected Score: Florida 35, Texas A&M 23

Liberty - 21½ Over LA Monroe by 11

The Louisiana Monroe Warhawks need a victory here to prevent their first 0-5 start to the season since 2003. The Louisiana Monroe Warhawks have lost four straight road games. Colby Suits is completing 63.4 percent of his passes for 1,043 yards, six touchdowns and two interceptions. Suits has six touchdown passes on his last 172 pass attempts. Josh Pederson and Jahquan Bloomfield have combined for 347 receiving yards and one touchdown while Jevin Frett has 10 receptions. The Louisiana Monroe Warhawks ground game is averaging 50.7 yards per contest, and Josh Johnson leads the way with 148 yards and two touchdowns. Defensively, Louisiana Monroe is allowing 35.3 points and 436.8 yards per game. Traveion Webster leads the Warhawks with 33 tackles, Kenderick Marbles has one sack and Keilos Swinney has three pass deflections.

The Liberty Flames look for a win and their first 4-0 start to a season since 2008. The Liberty Flames have won seven straight home games. Malik Willis is completing 72.5 percent of his passes for 418 yards, two touchdowns and zero interceptions. Willis and Chris Ferguson have combined for five touchdown passes this season. DJ Stubbs and Kevin Shaa have combined for 290 receiving yards and two touchdowns while CJ Yarbrough has four receptions. The Liberty Flames ground game is averaging 274.3 yards per contest, and Joshua Mack leads the way with 337 yards and one touchdown. Defensively, Liberty is allowing 21.7 points and 280.7 yards per game. Anthony Butler leads the Liberty Flames with 21 tackles, Durrell Johnson has four sacks and Emanuel Dabney has two pass deflections.

The Louisiana Monroe Warhawks may be winless on the season, but they've gotten good quarterback play this season and are coming off their best showing of the year where they took Georgia Southern down to the wire. Louisiana Monroe feels like a team that's slowly turning toward the right direction. The Liberty Flames are undefeated, but two of their three wins were decided by one possession and this will be just the fifth time they've been favored by 17 or more points. I was all over Liberty in past weeks, and Malik Willis is a monster QB. Nevertheless, the oddsmakers are over compensating. It's just weird seeing Liberty get all this love from oddsmakers, and I'm not sure I'm ready to lay these monster numbers just yet. Louisiana Monroe is showing progress from game to game. **I'll take the three touchdowns and hang on for the cover.**

Projected Score: Liberty 35, LA Monroe 24

Georgia - 14 Over Tennessee by 20

The Tennessee Volunteers will look to build on a 2-0 start to the year with a massive road win after picking up a 35-13 win over Missouri last time out. Jarrett Guarantano has thrown for 449 yards and 2 touchdowns on 61.1% passing while Ty Chandler leads the Vols in rushing with 176 rushing yards and a score and Eric Gray has 145 rushing yards with a pair of touchdowns. Josh Palmer leads Tennessee in receiving with 10 grabs for 156 yards and a touchdown as the lone 100+ yard receiver for Tennessee this season. Defensively, Henry To'o To'o and Trevon Flowers share the team-high with 12 total tackles while Deandre Johnson has a team-high 3.5 sacks for Tennessee. To'o To'o and Jackson each have an interception for the Vols as well this year.

The Georgia Bulldogs on the other hand, come into this one looking to build on their own 2-0 start after a 27-6 win over Auburn last time out. Stetson Bennett has thrown for 451 yards and 3 touchdowns on 64.9% passing while Zamir White leads the Bulldogs in rushing with 159 rushing yards and 3 scores. Kearis Jackson leads the Bulldogs in receiving with 15 grabs for 209 yards while George Pickens has a pair of receiving scores for Georgia this season. Defensively, Nakobe Jean leads the Bulldogs with 11 total tackles while Lewis Cole and Monty Cole each have 10 total tackles with Rice logging a team-high 7 solo tackles and Adam Anderson leads Georgia with two sacks this season.

I'm definitely impressed with what Tennessee's brought to the table and while the Vols showed some grit in that road win against South Carolina to open things up, I need to see more than a win over Missouri to think that the Vols will successfully go on the road here and take down Georgia. Yes, Tennessee's played well dating back to last year, but Georgia's a different animal, especially in the SEC, and the Bulldogs just shut down a good Auburn team like they weren't even there. Guarantano has been good, but how good vs the Dawgs. I think the difference is between the hedges and a stout Dawgs defense. The Tigers scored only 6 points on the Dawgs last week, but the Vols should get two TD's. The Dawgs will wear down the Volunteers, create turnovers and end the Vols winning streak. **I'll lay the points with Georgia here.**

Projected Score: Georgia 34, Tennessee 14

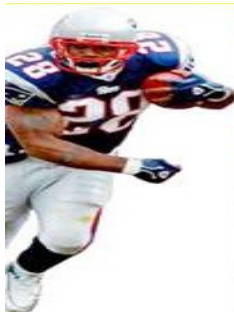
Alabama - 24 Over Mississippi by 31

The Alabama Crimson Tide will look to build on their 2-0 start after a 52-24 win over Texas A&M last time out. Mac Jones has thrown for 684 yards, 6 touchdowns and an interception on 74.5% passing while Najee Harris has rushed for 141 yards and 5 touchdowns this season. Jaylen Waddle leads Bama's receiving group with 13 grabs for 276 yards and 3 TDs while John Metchie III has 223 receiving yards and 2 TDs and DeVonta Smith has a team-high 14 grabs for 152 yards. Defensively, Christian Harris has a team-high 16 total tackles along with 14 solo tackles while Jordan Battle is right behind with 15 total tackles.

The Ole Miss Rebels will look to build off of a 42-41 win over Kentucky in their last outing for their first win of the season. Matt Corral has thrown for 715 yards, 7 touchdowns and an interception on 76.7% passing while Jerrion Ealy leads Ole Miss with 123 rushing yards with a pair of touchdowns. Elijah Moore leads the Rebels in receiving with 20 grabs for 319 yards while Kenny Yeboah and Jonathan Mingo each have 100+ receiving yards this season. Defensively, Keidron Smith and Jaylon Jones each have a team-high 17 total tackles with Smith logging 12 solo tackles and A.J. Foley has an interception this season.

I think Alabama will score easily here, but the defense this year has also left a lot to be desired for the Crimson Tide. Corral is hitting at 75% of his passes this year. We're going to learn a whole lot about the Crimson Tide pass rush and defensive backs in this game. Nevertheless, I'll side with the Tide in a game that could make Ole Miss one dimensional in a hurry. Hate to lay all this lumber, but **I'll take the Tide to roll and cover.**

Projected Score: Alabama 52, Mississippi 21



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Dak Lighting it up but Cowboys still losing?

NFL TNF MATCHUP NOLES vs BRADY AGAIN, WILL IT BE SWEET REVENGE TOM?

Recap

This Week's Top Performers	Week 4 Passing Leaders
Joe Mixon (CIN): 25 rush, 151 yds, 3 tot TD	Dak Prescott (DAL) 41/58 502 yds, 4TD
Dak Prescott (DAL): 41/58, 502 yds, 4 TD	Tom Brady (TAM) 30/46 369 yds, 5TD
Odell Beckham (CLE): 154 yds from scrim, 3 TD	Russell Wilson (SEA) 24/34 360 yds, 2TD
George Kittle (SFO): 15 rec, 183 yds, 1 TD	Gardner Minshew (JAX) 27/40 351 yds, 2TD
Tom Brady (TAM): 30/46, 369 yds, 5 TD	Ryan Fitzpatrick (MIA) 29/45 315 yds, 0TD
Dalvin Cook (MIN): 27 rush, 130 yds, 2 TD	Week 4 Rushing Leaders
Amari Cooper (DAL): 12 rec, 134 yds, 1 TD	Joe Mixon (CIN) 25 att 151 yds, 2TD
Teddy Bridgewater (CAR): 26/37, 276 yds, 2 TD; rush TD	Dalvin Cook (MIN) 27 att 130 yds, 2TD
DJ Chark (JAX): 8 rec, 95 yds, 2 TD	Ronald Jones (TAM) 20 att 111 yds, 0TD
Josh Allen (BUF): 24/34, 288 yds, 2 TD; rush TD	Melvin Gordon (DEN) 23 att 107 yds, 2TD
	D'Ernest Johnson (CLE) 13 att 95 yds, 0TD
	Week 4 Receiving Leaders
	George Kittle (SFO) 15 rec 183 yds, 1TD
	Amari Cooper (DAL) 12 rec 134 yds, 1TD
	Mike Evans (TAM) 7 rec 122 yds, 1TD
	Terry McLaurin (WAS) 10 rec 118 yds, 0TD
	Stefon Diggs (BUF) 6 rec 115 yds, 0TD

Over and under bettors went on a roller coaster ride in the Philadelphia Eagles-San Francisco 49ers game on Sunday Night Football. The Eagles opened up the scoring with a touchdown and two-point conversion before the 49ers answered with a touchdown and standard extra point. There were 15 total points on the board, and the over was trending after 15 minutes. However, the two sides played a scoreless quarter, and the halftime score was 8-7. Under bettors were feeling very good about things with just 25 total points on the board heading into the final quarter.

With just 5:50 left in the game, there were still 32 points on the board until QB Carson Wentz hooked up with recent acquisition WR Travis Fulgham for a 42-yard tip-toe job down the sideline, making it 18-14 in favor of the Eagles. Just eight seconds later the Eagles scored again, as CFL import LB Alex Singleton stepped in front of QB Nick Mullens pass for a 30-yard interception return for touchdown. All of a sudden under (45.5) went from feeling confident to terrible within a matter of moments.

After the pick-six, the Niners removed Mullens in favor of QB C.J. Beathard, and the latter led a scoring drive to make it 25-20 pending the two-point conversion. Beathard threw a strike to TE George Kittle in the end zone, but the sure-handed receiver who was having a monster game was unable to corral it. The under was hanging on by a half-point, but there was still time left on the clock. The Eagles got the ball back, but were forced to punt just under two minutes, giving San Francisco another chance. The Niners drove down to the Philly 33, and Beathard threw a desperation pass into the end zone which touched hands, but eventually fell out of bounds. Over bettors must've felt like they lost twice.

The lowest total on the board in Week 4 was on Thursday night in the Denver Broncos-New York Jets (41) game. Broncos QB Brett Rypien made his first NFL start and he ended up throwing three interceptions, but he

still hung on to win. And the Broncos posted 37 points, nearly taking care of the over themselves in the nine-point victory.

The second-lowest total on the board, and lowest on the Sunday slate, was the Los Angeles Chargers-Tampa Bay Buccaneers (42) cross-country battle. The teams got off to a quick start, as L.A. fired out to a 14-7 lead after 15 minutes, and a 24-14 lead at halftime. The Chargers already had a season-high for points in a single game with another entire half to go. The Bolts were averaging just 17.3 PPG through the first three outings, and the 'under' was 3-0. That changed Sunday, as the Bucs won 38-31.

The highest total on the board was in the Cleveland Browns-Dallas Cowboys (56.5) game, and this total wasn't even close to not cashing. The Browns fired up 31 points in the first half, leading 31-14 at the break. They led 41-14 after 45 minutes, so all that was needed was a field goal or more in the final quarter. That wasn't a problem, as the Cowboys made a furious run in the final 15, outscoring the Browns 24-8. The Browns held on for the 49-38 win, a total of 87 points for the highest-scoring game of the 2020 season. The point total eclipsed the 79 points the Falcons and Cowboys combined for in Week 2.

In the two prime time games we saw the over/under split 1-1, with the Monday night game between the Atlanta Falcons and Green Bay Packers set to lock horns. The rescheduled New England Patriots-Kansas City Chiefs game is technically a prime time game, kicking at 7:05 p.m. ET, but we'll consider it a 'normal' Week 4 game.

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Carolina at Atlanta Over 54 by 9

Earlier this year the Panthers looked like they were in the Trevor Lawrence sweepstakes. Now just two weeks later, the Cardinals have Kyler Murray struggling at quarterback and a terrible defense, while Carolina has an efficient Teddy Bridgewater and an improving defense. Both teams now sit at 2-2 in the competitive NFC.

The Panthers scored first, thanks to Bridgewater distributing the ball. He used his feet to convert a fourth-and-2, and a completion to D.J. Moore (4-49) to convert a third-and-10. A run from Mike Davis for about 20 yards set up a first-and-goal, and he then scored to put Carolina up 7-0. The next Carolina possession got moving with a screen to Robby Anderson for about 30 yards. Bridgewater finished the drive with his legs, scoring from 18 yards out to widen the Panthers' lead to 14 points. Bridgewater was 26-of-37 for 276 yards with two touchdowns and an interception. Mike Davis was excellent for the Panthers, running for 84 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries and snagging five receptions for 27 yards. Anderson made eight catches for 99 yards.

The Atlanta Falcons experienced heartbreak in back-to-back games leading up to Monday night's Week 4 showdown with the Green Bay Packers, but they may have experienced something even worse while falling victim to Aaron Rodgers in prime time: Confirmation that they are among the worst teams in the NFL through the first quarter of the 2020 campaign. Decimated by injuries as well as their own defensive ineptitude, the Falcons didn't finish Monday's showdown with star wideout Julio Jones, who left early after aggravating a hamstring issue, but they did finish it with a fourth straight loss -- this one courtesy of Rodgers, who was nearly flawless in another MVP-caliber performance alongside a breakout game for tight end Robert Tonyan en route to a 30-16 rout.

It's the same reason Aaron Rodgers looked like he was playing a JV team: Dan Quinn's defense was -- and is -- utterly in shambles. Injuries are part of the equation, no doubt, with the secondary, in particular, hit hard. But there's no reason a Packers offense cut down on some of its own starters should've averaged a first down every two plays. Atlanta almost always looked out of position, out of energy, or both. And let's not sugarcoat it: The offense wasn't much better. Again, injuries played a part, with Julio Jones forced off the field after one half of gutting it out at, what, 75 percent? But you're telling us Matt Ryan, Todd Gurley, Calvin Ridley and the rest of the gang aren't capable of more? The Falcons were so bad on defense that pretty much all of the Packers' big plays were wide-open breaks, but Robert Tonyan's third TD of the night was especially charming considering he somersaulted on his way to an easy score.

The Falcons were embarrassing this past Monday night and that alone should get this team playing with more effort. The offense will score against the Panthers and vice-versa after seeing that pathetic defensive effort by the Falcons. No telling what the Falcons will do this week, but I'm betting that they give up a lot of points once again and get enough scores to win and put this game over the total of 54. **Take Over 54.**

Projected Score: Atlanta 33, Carolina 30

LA Rams - 9½ Over Washington by 3

The Los Angeles Rams were not perfect on Sunday, stalling on consecutive drives after an opening-series touchdown and nearly allowing Daniel Jones to lead the New York Giants to a last-minute comeback. But they also capitalized when it mattered most, with Jared Goff hitting Cooper Kupp on a 55-yard catch-and-run touchdown to break things open in the fourth quarter and seal a 17-9 victory. Steadied by an early dose of quick-strike throws, the Rams improve to 3-1 in the NFC West with the low-scoring decision. Jared Goff hit Cooper Kupp for a 55-yard touchdown with 6:56 to play, and the Los Angeles Rams grinded out a 17-9 victory over the New York Giants on Sunday in a game marred by a post game fight between Rams cornerback Jalen Ramsey and Giants receiver Golden Tate. Ramsey and Tate scuffled at midfield after the final whistle after a game filled with trash-talking between the two Nashville-area natives. Ramsey has two young children with Tate's sister, and Tate was publicly upset last year when the couple went through a nasty public breakup. Ramsey and Tate both walked toward midfield when the game ended, and they immediately took swings at each other, eventually going to the turf in a heap. The veterans' teammates pulled them apart.

Darius Williams made a redemptive, diving interception at the Los Angeles 7 with 52 seconds to play as the Rams (3-1) barely stayed unbeaten at new SoFi Stadium and kept first-year Giants coach Joe Judge winless.

As for the Redskins, it was yet another underwhelming game from Dwayne Haskins. He didn't commit any turnovers, but that's because he spent the entire afternoon checking down for the most part. Haskins even tossed a check down on a fourth-and-goal try while down 28-10. It was an underwhelming sight, to say the least. Only three of Haskins' 11 third- and fourth-down passes traveled beyond the first-down marker, and every single one of his third- and fourth-down attempts failed to fly more than five yards. That's ridiculous. Haskins, despite the check downs, finished 32-of-45 for 314 yards. He also scored a touchdown via a sneak. Some of his yardage came in garbage time, so don't read anything into him eclipsing the 300-yard barrier. Haskins stunk, as he overthrew Peyton Barber in the flat and took a 24-yard loss on a sack in the red zone. Yes, you read that correctly: a 24-yard sack in the red zone. Antonio Gibson had a strong performance in a tough matchup. He was able to run just 13 times because of the constant deficit, but turned those opportunities into 46 yards and a touchdown. He also caught four passes for 82 receiving yards. The other back, J.D. McKissic, was guilty of an early fumble that set up a Baltimore score. Terry McLaurin was questionable entering Sunday, but managed to play. Despite the injury designation, McLaurin led the Redskins in receiving with 10 catches for 118 yards. A chunk of his yardage came at the very end of the game when Haskins finally showed some courage and lobbed up a 39-yard bomb to McLaurin, setting up a rushing TD to push ATS.

With all of that the Washington defense was on the field most of the game and played admirably against the powerful Ravens offense and the offense did put up 17 points. I don't like how the Rams played last week against the Giants and three of their four games have come down to the wire and they had chances to blow it against a banged up Giants team last week. The Rams are also just 6-7-1 against the spread in their last 14 games as a favorite of at least seven points. The Washington Football Team put up a fight last week against the Ravens and **I expect Washington to cover in this game as a 9½ point home dog.**

Projected Score: LA Rams 24, Washington 21

Arizona - 6½ Over NY Jets by 14

After the first two games of the season, the Arizona Cardinals looked like they were a dangerous threat in the NFC. But lately not so much. Last week on the first few Arizona drives, Murray missed some wide-open receivers deep downfield with poorly thrown passes. The Cardinals finally got going thanks to an overthrow by Bridgewater that floated to Patrick Peterson for an interception at the Panthers' 38-yard line. Murray used DeAndre Hopkins to set up a first-and-goal and threw a scoring strike to Jordan Thomas, which cut the score to 14-7. Murray was 24-of-31 for 133 yards with three touchdowns. He ran for 78 yards on six carries. Murray collected only 54 yards passing in the first half and left some points on the field due to inaccurate passes missing open receivers. Murray was Arizona's leading rusher because Carolina shut down Kenyan Drake (13-35). Hopkins was held to 41 yards on seven receptions. Murray finally made a big play, taking off on a 49-yard run, and he ended the drive with a touchdown pass to Christian Kirk.

Sam Darnold would be getting some reinforcements back this week after missing most of his supporting cast in an utterly embarrassing loss to the Colts last week. Darnold, with some help, would surely outplay his counterpart in this game as the former No. 3 overall pick in the NFL Draft. The opposing quarterback was the undrafted Brett Rypien, nephew of former Redskin quarterback Mark Rypien. The USC product had a big edge

over the Boise State alumnus, at least on paper. In reality, however, Rypien outplayed Darnold by a mile. Darnold opened this game on a very high note, as he rushed for a 46-yard touchdown on the opening drive. Darnold is not known as a scrambler, yet he somehow avoided linebacker Alexander Johnson on a blitz, and then ran by the entire bewildered defense for a score. Unfortunately for Darnold, it was downhill from there. He was injured on a Johnson sack later in the quarter, thanks to him holding the ball for an eternity in the pocket even though he had an open receiver at his disposal. Darnold later showed some poor accuracy, as he sailed some passes and even had difficulty connecting on 3-yard passes to his teammates in the flat. He made a huge mistake in the fourth quarter when he got rattled by Denver's pass rush and tripped over his own two feet. Darnold was gifted an opportunity to win the game because of some turnovers. However, all the Jets could do was settle for a pair of field goals in the fourth quarter, thanks in part to Adam Gase's incompetent decision to kick a field goal rather than attempt a fourth-and-inches try while down two points. Darnold had one final chance, yet couldn't even get to midfield. He was nearly picked and then took a sack on fourth down to end the Jets' chances of winning their first game. Darnold finished 23-of-42 for 230 yards. Those numbers aren't horrible, but they don't properly describe how terrible Darnold was in this contest. His accuracy was woeful at times, and he should've been intercepted on a couple of occasions. Even worse, he's not seeing the field well at all. Adam Gase has coached him very poorly, as Darnold has regressed each year. Gase must be fired soon, but perhaps not right away, as he gives the Jets the best chance of losing games and landing the No. 1 overall pick in the 2021 NFL Draft. I have the Jets selecting Trevor Lawrence there in my 2021 NFL Mock Draft. I also have Trevor Lawrence going back to school to avoid the Jets LOL. As for the Jets receivers, Crowder led the way with seven grabs for 104 yards, followed by Jeff Smith (7-81). Tight end Chris Herndon, expected to exploit a great matchup, was a huge disappointment with one single reception for 11 yards. He also dropped a pass.

There was some controversy at the end of the game, as several Jets defensive linemen tried to concuss Rypien with dirty hits to the helmet. This was the least-surprising thing in the world to see from a Gregg Williams-coached defense. It's amazing to me that Gregg "Sweep the Leg" Williams is still allowed to coach in the NFL after what transpired during Bountygate. That was Rypien and if he pulls that stuff with Murray he will be gone for sure.

It's hard to back the Jets even with them as home dogs. They have a very hard time scoring. Would not surprise me if Joe Flacco starts this week considering Darnold's shoulder injury, but it's not going to change my pick. Take Arizona and Murray to bounce back with a win and cover.

Projected Score: Arizona 31, NY Jets 17

Dallas - 10 Over NY Giants by 3

For the fourth time in as many games, the Giants' offense did not gain 300 yards. But their 295 total yards matched the season high they set on Sept. 20 in Chicago. The Giants rushed for a season-high 136 yards, 61 more than they had two weeks ago against the Bears. Wayne Gallman and Daniel Jones each had team-high totals of six carries and 45 yards. The Giants' 159 net passing yards was their lowest total since they threw for 134 yards at Chicago on Nov. 24, 2019. The Rams entered the game averaging 30 points, 27 first downs and 449.7 yards in their first three games. The Giants' defense held them to 17 points, 15 first downs and 240 yards, more than 200 under their average. The latter figure was the lowest total by a Giants opponent since Washington gained 176 yards on Sept. 29, 2019. Los Angeles ran for only 58 yards, the fewest allowed by the Giants since Washington rushed for 55 yards last year. Aside from Cooper Kupp's 55-yard touchdown reception in the fourth quarter, the Rams did not run a play that gained more than 16 yards.

Jones completed 23 of 36 passes for 190 yards, no touchdowns and an interception that clinched the game for the Rams in the final minute. He had a 65.7 passer rating. After throwing at least one touchdown pass in each of his first 13 career starts, Jones has not thrown one in the last three games. He has thrown 108 consecutive passes without a touchdown. Jones was sacked five times, the most sacks he has absorbed since Nov. 10, 2019, when the Jets got to him six times. Jones' six rushing attempts tied his career high, set vs. Dallas on Nov. 2, 2019. His 45 rushing yards were his third-highest total; he ran for 54 yards last year against the Cowboys and 39 last week vs. the 49ers. Devonta Freeman started for the first time with the Giants and rushed for 33 yards on a game-high 11 carries and caught four passes for 35 yards. The Giants started Logan Ryan and Adrian Colbert at safety. Ryan took over at strong safety in place of Jabrill Peppers. When Peppers injured his ankle early in the game vs. San Francisco, Ryan moved to strong safety and Julian Love entered the game at free safety, where he started the first two games. Love was limited in practice this week by knee

and ankle injuries and was replaced in the starting lineup by Colbert, who missed the previous two games with a quad injury. With Peppers inactive because of an ankle injury, veteran receiver Golden Tate assumed the punt return duties and had three runbacks for 30 yards, including a 15-yarder.

It was "deja vu all over again" for the Cowboys. This game echoed what transpired in the Week 2 contest against the Falcons, as some very sloppy Dallas play allowed the opponent to establish a huge lead. In this case, it didn't appear to be heading that way immediately, as a potential Dak Prescott interception was dropped, and the ball popped into CeeDee Lamb's hands, setting up a touchdown where Prescott threaded the needle to Amari Cooper. However, a tie game quickly swelled to a two-touchdown lead for the Browns, as Prescott was strip-sacked by Myles Garrett to set up a quick score for Cleveland. This was followed by an Ezekiel Elliott fumble that allowed Kareem Hunt to find the end zone, giving the Browns a 28-14 advantage. Cleveland eventually led 41-14, but that's when the Cowboys mounted their comeback, just as they did against the Falcons. They drew to within 41-38, but it wasn't quite deja vu all over again, but rather deja vu nearly again, because the Browns, unlike the Falcons, were able to stop the Cowboys. They picked off Prescott to set up an insurance score, securing the victory. Prescott eclipsed the 500-yard barrier, going 41-of-58 for 502 yards, four touchdowns and an interception. Any box-score readers will assume that Prescott played extremely well, but was ultimately betrayed by a defense that surrendered 49 points. That, however, couldn't be further from the truth. Prescott, as mentioned, gave the Browns seven free points in the opening half, and that number easily could have been more. I counted at least four dropped interceptions by the Browns, including one that may have gone back for six. Most of Prescott's production simply came in garbage time, which was more than half of his game. When things mattered most, Prescott came up short. Down 41-38, Prescott had a potential pick-six that was dropped, followed up by an actual interception on the very next play.

Elliott was also responsible for this defeat, thanks to the aforementioned fumble. Given the deficit, Elliott never had a chance to get going, as he was given just 12 carries, which he turned into 54 yards. Elliott finished fourth on the receiving list, falling behind Cooper, Lamb and Dalton Schultz. Cooper led the way with 12 catches for 134 yards and a touchdown, while Lamb found the end zone twice while securing five grabs for 79 yards. Schultz (4-72) also scored. All of these guys obviously were able to benefit from extreme garbage time, which should continue to be a trend as long as the Cowboys continue to miss countless defenders to injury.

There's no team in the NFL allowing more points per game than the Cowboys this season, and only the Seahawks and Falcons are allowing more yards per game. The Cowboys have a lot of talent on both sides of the ball, but the sloppy play is starting to become a trend, and they're an onside kick away from being winless on the season. The New York Giants are banged up, but they continue to compete and have hung around in three of their four games. On the surface, with Peppers out for the Giants, it looks like Cowboys will put up tons of points. That's what I thought last week, when they played the Rams. I'm going to take the points and the Giants as Jones usually plays better against them. The Cowboys really shouldn't be giving up 10 points against this rival. This is also a heated division rivalry where six of the last 10 games between the Cowboys and Giants have been decided by seven or less points. Take the **10 points**.

Projected Score: Dallas 27, NY Giants 24

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS

	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	N Carolina - 5	Florida - 6	LA Monroe +21½	Georgia - 14	Alabama - 24
NFL	Falcons Over 54	Washington +9½	Cards - 6½	Giants + 10	

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