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FEAST ON RIVALRY WEEK GAMES OLE MISS vs MISS ST & MICHIGAN vs OHIO ST.

NCAA Landscape

What did I learn in Week 12? If you've got a \$95 million contract extension on the table, you better sign that thing ASAP!

I kid. I kid. But Mel Tucker's reported extension doesn't look quite as good after Ohio State ran through the Spartans. Nor does Oregon after Utah squashed the Ducks. The Heisman race, though? That got awesome quick. Cincinnati did, too.

We start with winners and losers, hit on every Power Five team (plus a lot of teams in the G-5), break down the Heisman race, rank the top 10 and spin things forward to what promises to be an appetizing Thanksgiving spread.

Let's get started.

Winner: Ohio State Buckeyes

Early Saturday morning, you were able to get C.J. Stroud Heisman odds at +225. By halftime, those odds had jumped to -400. It was that kind of day for Stroud and the Buckeyes against No. 7 Michigan State. There were technically two top-10 teams on the field. But Ohio State treated the Spartans like it would FCS competition in a 56-7 win, which saw Buckeye backups enter early in the third quarter as Ohio State raced out to a 49-0 halftime lead.

Ohio State's defense pitched its best outing of the season. Yet I'd be remiss to start anywhere else but the Buckeye offense, which is the best unit in college football in the non-UGA defense division; and if you're doing an early preview of a possible national title game, just remember that great offense tends to beat great defense in this era. Stroud was the conductor and didn't miss. He finished the day 32-for-35 with 432 yards and six touchdowns, a flawless performance on the biggest stage. Stroud always had great odds at winning the stiff-arm trophy in a wide open Heisman race, especially with remaining against Michigan State, Michigan and a Top 25 Big Ten West opponent in front of him. After this game? Stroud undoubtedly has the inside track alongside Bryce Young, who had his own virtuoso performance Saturday afternoon. Those two will have a fun Heisman duel the next two weeks.

As for Ohio State's WR corps: It would be hyperbolic to call them the best group we've seen in recent memory because of Alabama 2019's squad. But the Buckeyes' top trio of Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson is right there. Unsurprisingly, a problematic Spartan pass defense did not have an answer for any of them. All three cleared the 100-yard barrier, combining for 371 yards and five touchdowns. There's an excellent chance all three receivers are over the 1,000-yard mark by the end of the regular season. They'd be only the fifth trio to do so and only the second from the Power

Five. Have I mentioned arguably the nation's best o-line and running back (TreVeyon Henderson)? This is a juggernaut of an offense, which is clicking at the best possible time. Watch out, Michigan. Watch out, college football.

Loser: Oregon Ducks

There's been a lot of talk about Oregon as a power on the rise under Mario Cristobal. This is because of things like recruiting and a culture built on physicality. Yet with everything on the line in a must-have game against Utah, the Ducks were dominated in a 38-7 loss to No. 23 Utah. The Utes were more ready to play. The Utes were more physical. The Utes looked like a team playing for their season.

Oregon? It didn't score a point in the first half. It made errors on nearly every drive. It didn't seem to fight back. And thus for the second time in three seasons, the Ducks' playoff hopes have been popped by listless Week 12 performances. At least that 2019 loss to Arizona State was close. The Utes yielded almost nothing. And thus Oregon returns to Eugene bloodied and bruised, a program on the rise that floundered once again when faced with an opportunity to take the next step.

As much as fans would like it to be, progress in college football isn't linear. Just because Oregon plateaued in this spot two years doesn't mean it would push past that mark in 2021. And even with the knowledge Utah was favored, this remains a severely disappointing effort and result for the Ducks, especially when you consider the opportunity they had. Oregon had beaten Ohio State. It slayed goliath. The hard work was done. It just needed to play consistent, steady football in the Pac-12 and it'd reach the playoff. Instead, the Ducks beat themselves against Stanford (go look at Stanford's final drive to send the game into OT) and didn't show up in Salt Lake City.

USC is down. Washington is down. Stanford is down. Oregon had every opportunity to run through the Pac-12. The Ducks could still win the Pac-12 and are positioned well for the future thanks to their talent and recruiting. But college football is a fickle sport. You don't always get these opportunities back. And the Ducks have now wasted two of them.

Winner: Cincinnati Bearcats

So, about that margin of victory ...

Faced with the best opponent they've seen since Notre Dame, the No. 5 Cincinnati Bearcats all but ran SMU off the field. Cincinnati raced out to a 41-0 lead and cruised to a 48-14 win. It was a refreshing blowout for a Cincinnati team that had failed to cover in four straight games, a victory made all the sweeter when you consider Oregon's loss later in the day.

Back to Cincinnati's big win. The Bearcats didn't surrender a point until the fourth quarter. SMU (8-3) is a good football team. Cincinnati treated the Mustangs like they were their scout team, derailing a top-20 offensive attack and holding SMU and impressive QB Tanner Mordecai to a paltry 66 yards passing.

Question the schedule if you'd like; the committee certainly will. But the Bearcats sure look like one of the best four teams in the country headed into Thanksgiving.

Loser: Auburn Tigers

I'm not one of those people who thinks it's always the right call to go for it on fourth down. I like aggressive coaches but everything is situational. What I do need from a coach is consistency. And that's the damning part of Bryan Harsin's performance in a 21-17 loss to South Carolina.

Up 14-7 in a game it had thoroughly controlled and facing 4th-and-1 from its own 35-yard line with 3:01 remaining in the first half, Auburn decided to go for it. That's not a terrible decision. Tank Bigsby is among the best running backs in college football. Let him get a yard. Instead, Harsin called a pass. Ok, fine — play-action and something in the flat? Nope. T.J. Finley threw 25 yards downfield into triple-coverage and the ball fell incomplete. Six plays later, we had a 14-14 tie on our hands.

Later in the game, this time from Auburn's 38-yard line, the Tigers faced a fourth-and-8 and were down 21-17 (on this drive, with about four minutes left, Bigsby never touched the ball). The Tigers punted. This makes sense in some ways. Auburn had all three timeouts and its defense had played well. Two problems: Auburn forced one three-and-out the entire day and needed one to have a chance to win and Harsin had already shown a willingness to go for it in his own territory. Why not take a shot and keep the ball in your offense's hands? Auburn's defense did force a punt, but the ball grazed a member of the Tigers' return team and the Gamecocks recovered, ending the game.

These are just a smattering of questionable coaching decisions for a team that's had plenty of them the last few weeks. They've had blown leads, too. The Tigers were up 14-0 in the second quarter and lost to South Carolina. They were up 28-3 in the second quarter to Mississippi State and lost that one, too.

There's a good chance Auburn finishes the regular season 6-6 with Alabama next week. Gus Malzahn never won fewer than seven games in his Tigers tenure. There's going to be some Harsin malcontent on The Plains. I don't expect that storyline to go away.

Winner: Clemson Tigers

For the first time this year against Power Five competition, the Tigers scored more than 30 points, rolling past No. 10 Wake Forest 48-27. Wake Forest had one of the nation's worst run defenses entering the week and Clemson smartly exploited that. Kobe Pace ran for 191 yards, Will Shipley ran for 112 and each scored a pair of touchdowns in what amounts to an offensive explosion for a team that's plodded along all year.

By Clemson's standards, it's been a miserable season in Death Valley. Yet here we are with one week to go in the regular season and the Tigers are alive in the ACC Atlantic race. Clemson needs Wake Forest to lose next week at Boston College and for NC State to lose at home vs. North Carolina. So, is Clemson (8-3) likely to return to the ACC title game for a seventh straight year? No. But it's at least possible, as is a 10-win season. That's a testament to Dabo Swinney's culture in Death Valley. Some teams may have quit. This team never did.

Loser: Stanford Cardinal

Cal is a program with some serious problems. The Bears have been devastated by COVID-19 protocols, don't move the football well (70th nationally in yards allowed per play) and most recently lost to an Arizona team that hadn't won since 2019. So what did it do this week? Beat rival Stanford, 41-11, on the road.

The loss is the sixth straight for the Cardinal after a surprising upset of Oregon. And not much has gone right during that stretch. Stanford has averaged just 14 points per game over those six games. A once proud and bruising rushing attack fronted by names like Toby Gerhart, Christian McCaffrey and Bryce Love? That's gone. The Cardinal are averaging just 2.5 yards per carry the last six games. And the defense? Not much better. Cal put up 636 yards of offense against a defensive unit that entered the week ranked 104th nationally in yards allowed per play.

To suggest David Shaw is on the hot seat would be silly. He's got among the longest leashes in the country. But if you remove a shortened 2020 season, this is now two straight full-season campaigns where Stanford will finish 4-8 or worse. Shaw's staff has long been defined by consistency. But given the on-field results, the waning recruiting returns and struggles on both sides of the ball, perhaps it's time Shaw made some serious changes in Palo Alto. If not, the Cardinal risk falling further and further behind.

ACC + Notre Dame Report

Notre Dame beat Georgia Tech, 55-0, to improve to 10-1. With the win, Brian Kelly is the first Irish coach to ever post 10-plus wins in five straight seasons. No. 8 Notre Dame's path to the playoff is still unlikely. But if Cincinnati and one other team stumbles, the Irish have a shot.

Brennan Armstrong returned from injury and had a day (487 yards, 3 TDs) but Pittsburgh had more firepower in a 48-38 win over Virginia. Kenny Pickett threw for 340 yards and four touchdowns as the No. 18 Panthers clinched the ACC Coastal. They'll face either Wake Forest, NC State or Clemson in the ACC title game.

NC State stayed alive in the ACC Atlantic race with a 41-17 win over Syracuse. The No. 20 Wolfpack limited Syracuse to just 66 yards passing.

Tyler Van Dyke threw for 357 yards and three touchdowns as Miami beat Virginia Tech, 38-26. The win clinches bowl eligibility for the Hurricanes and likely guarantees a 7-5 season with Duke ahead. Will that be enough for Manny Diaz to save his job? We'll see how long it takes the Hurricanes to get a new AD in place.

Florida State beat Boston College, 26-23, thanks to a great day from quarterback Jordan Travis (251 yards, 3 TDs). The Seminoles began the year 0-4. They've now won five of their last seven and have a chance to clinch bowl eligibility next week in the Swamp.

North Carolina won its sixth game with a 34-14 win over FCS Wofford. Sam Howell missed the game due to an upper body injury. Redshirt freshman Jacolby Criswell got the start in his place. Bummer for Howell in what was likely his final game at Kenan Memorial Stadium.

Malik Cunningham had himself a day for Louisville midweek, throwing for 303 yards, rushing for 224 and accounting for seven TDs in a 62-22 Louisville win over Duke. The Lamar Jackson-like performance clinched bowl eligibility for the Cardinals. A sputtering Blue Devils team has now lost seven straight in ACC play. We're on David Cutcliffe retirement watch.

Big 12 Report

Texas Tech went nowhere in a 23-0 loss to No. 9 Oklahoma State. The Cowboys held the Red Raiders to 108 total yards as Oklahoma State clinched a spot in the Big 12 title game. The Cowboys are the best defensive unit we've seen in the Big 12 in a long time.

No. 11 Baylor had to do without starting QB Gerry Bohanon, who exited with a hamstring injury in the first half, and still managed to win at Kansas State, 20-10. Redshirt freshman Blake Shapen came in and was efficient (16-for-21, 137 yards) as Baylor's defense limited K-State to just 263 total yards. The victory clinches only the 11th nine-win season in Bears history.

Brock Purdy threw an INT to end the game as No. 13 Oklahoma held on to beat Iowa State, 28-21. The Sooners managed just 96 yards passing, but the defense stepped up to keep Oklahoma's Big 12 and playoff hopes alive. As for Iowa State ... this is yet another loss in what's been a disappointing 2021 season.

TCU put together a 14-play, 67-yard drive and hit a 25-yard field goal with six seconds remaining to beat Kansas 31-28. Max Duggan made his return from injury and threw for 166 yards. It's been a tumultuous season for TCU, but it can still clinch bowl eligibility next week against Iowa State.

West Virginia beat Texas, 31-23, to hand the Longhorns their sixth straight loss. It's the first time since 1956 the Longhorns have lost six straight games. Steve Sarkisian will not reach a bowl game his first season, something both Charlie Strong and Tom Herman did. The Mountaineers need one more win for bowl eligibility. They travel to Kansas next week.

Big Ten Report

There would be no trap game in College Park for Michigan this week. The No. 6 Wolverines rolled past Maryland, 59-18, thanks to an efficient 259 yards and two touchdowns from Cade McNamara. The Wolverines will likely be ranked in the top 5 next week ahead of a showdown with Ohio State. Maryland, for its part, is still searching for its sixth win despite a 4-0 start.

A star has been born in Madison, and he's 6-foot-2, 238 pounds and just 17 years old. Get to know the name Braelon Allen, who ran for 228 yards and two touchdowns as No. 15 Wisconsin edged out

Nebraska 35-28. The victory keeps the Badgers atop the Big Ten West. As for the Huskers ... all eight of their losses have come by nine points or fewer.

Illinois led early but a 100-yard kick return from Charlie Jones sparked the No. 17 Iowa Hawkeyes to a 33-23 win. It was a pretty typical Iowa game. The Hawkeyes were outgained (312 to 255) but won the turnover battle (2 to 1) and made a big play on special teams.

Penn State held Rutgers to 165 total yards in a 28-0 win. The Nittany Lions were without starting QB Sean Clifford, who exited the game midway through the first quarter, for most of the day. True freshman Christian Veilleux stepped in for Clifford and finished 15-for-24 with 235 yards and three touchdowns.

Aidan O'Connell hit a few home runs as Purdue rolled past Northwestern, 32-14, at Wrigley Field in Chicago. O'Connell finished with 423 yards, many of which went to Milton Wright, who had 213 yards and three scores. With a win next week against Indiana, the Boilermakers could clinch their first eight-win season since 2007.

Pac-12 Report

UCLA snapped a two-game losing streak against USC, rolling past their intracity rivals, 62-33. Bruins QB Dorian Thompson-Robinson had one of the best games of his career, finishing 16-for-22 with 349 yards passing, 46 yards rushing and six total touchdowns. With a win over Cal next week, the Bruins can finish with eight wins for the first time since 2015. Any hot seat talk surrounding Chip Kelly has quickly disappeared.

It's been a wild season for Washington State, but the Cougars clinched bowl eligibility Friday evening in a 44-18 win over Arizona. Good for those players. Jayden de Laura threw for four TDs and Max Borghi ran for a career-high 139 yards.

Dylan Morris had his best outing of the season ... and Washington still lost to Colorado, 20-17. If you had told somebody yesterday that Washington's dreadful offense would ignite for 388 yards passing, they'd have bet you the Huskies would beat the Buffaloes. Nope. Colorado returned a fumble 88 yards for a touchdown, nailed two field goals and won.

SEC Report

No. 1 Georgia had a pre-Thanksgiving cupcake, beating FCS Charleston Southern, 56-7, on Saturday afternoon. The Buccaneers averaged 2.2 yards per carry, which is actually better than what they managed on 37 passes at 1.6 yards per attempt.

It feels wrong to kick the game down here, but No. 2 Alabama held on to beat Arkansas, 42-35. The Tide were led by a program-record 559 yards and five touchdowns passing from Bryce Young. The Razorbacks (7-4) have losses to Georgia, Ole Miss, Auburn and Alabama. Talk about a brutal schedule. The Iron Bowl next week should be fascinating.

Ole Miss' offense didn't look sharp, but the No. 12 Rebels scored enough to beat Vanderbilt, 31-17. Matt Corral threw for 326 yards and two touchdowns in what he said will be his last game in Oxford.

No. 16 Texas A&M rolled past FCS Prairie View A&M, 52-3. Prairie View A&M managed seven (yes, seven) passing yards.

Continuing the theme of cupcakes, No. 25 Mississippi State rolled past Tennessee State, 55-10. Bulldogs QB Will Rogers (391 yards, 5 TDs) set single-season program records for passing yards and touchdowns in the win.

Tennessee put up 561 yards of offense as it rolled past South Alabama, 60-11. Hendon Hooker threw for 273 yards and two touchdowns on 17-for-20 passing. The win sends Tennessee bowling for only the second time in the last five seasons.

Kentucky had no issues with New Mexico State in a 56-16 victory. Will Levis led the way with 419

yards and four touchdowns passing.

Group of Five Report

Jaren Hall threw for 312 yards, Tyler Allgeier ran for 136 and BYU beat Georgia So., 34-17, to move to 10-2. The No. 14 Cougars were up 3 at halftime but shut the Eagles out the rest of the way.

San Diego State only plays close games in the Mountain West, but it managed to win another Friday night in a 28-20 victory over UNLV. The No. 19 Aztecs were up by just one with less than three minutes left to play before it scored the game-sealing touchdown.

UTSA snapped UAB's three-year streak atop the C-USA West division with a 34-31 victory. The No. 22 Roadrunners were down late but put together a seven-play, 77-yard drive and scored the game-winning TD as time expired. UTSA is 11-0 for the first time in program history and clinched the West division with the win. You can't really say enough about what Jeff Traylor has done in S Antonio.

Houston won its 10th straight game, rolling past Memphis 31-13 on Friday evening. The No. 24 Cougars were up 21-3 at halftime and held the Tigers to just 4.7 yards per pass. Houston clinched a spot in the American championship game with the win. With UConn on deck, the Cougars will be almost guaranteed to be 11-1 when they face Cincinnati.

The East Division of C-USA will go down to the wire after Western Kentucky beat FAU and Marshall beat Charlotte. The Hilltoppers and Thundering Herd will face off next Saturday at Marshall for the division.

Northern Illinois clinched the MAC West on Wednesday with a 33-27 overtime win over Buffalo. The Huskies forced a goal-line fumble on Buffalo's first possession of OT and then Clint Ratkovich took it 25 yards on their first play to seal the game. Northern Illinois has played seven straight one-possession games in conference play. The Huskies are 6-1.

In terms of the MAC East race, Miami (Ohio) beat Bowling Green, 34-7, while Kent State blanked Akron, 38-0, to set up a showdown next week in Kent for the division.

Frank Gore Jr., a running back by trade, played quarterback and threw two TDs as Southern Miss upset Louisiana Tech, 35-19, in Ruston.

Players of the Week

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Bryce Young, QB, Alabama: There were a number of elite offensive performances this week. But when you consider the stakes and the moment, nobody had a better day than Young. The sophomore QB threw for an Alabama record 559 yards to go along with five touchdowns in a seven-point win over Arkansas. And he tossed some dimes Saturday, including a number of chunk plays to Jameson Williams. Those 559 yards are the second-most ever thrown by a SEC QB in a single game.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Trenton Simpson, LB, Clemson: The stats aren't eye-popping, but Simpson was everywhere for Clemson in its win over Wake Forest. The Tigers' linebacker finished the day with a team-high nine tackles, one sack and 1.5 tackles for loss along with a number of QB pressures as Clemson held the Demon Deacons under 30 points for the first time this season. Using its own statistics system, PFF credited Simpson with an additional sack on five total QB pressures, one QB hit and one hurry.

RIVALRY WEEK

It's rivalry week, and this one is shaping up to be awesome! The Egg Bowl is your marquee Thanksgiving action, and Ole Miss vs Miss St. (7:30 p.m. ET, ESPN) are as good as they've been in a long time. Saturday starts off with a banger. Ohio State travels to Michigan (12 p.m., FOX) for the most intriguing version of The Game since 2016. We've got predictions for both games, so read on.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

Miss St - 1 & 60 Over Ole Miss by 7 & Over Total by 9

The Ole Miss Rebels and Mississippi State Bulldogs meet Thursday in week 13 SEC college football action in the Egg Bowl at Davis Wade Stadium. The Ole Miss Rebels look to build on their three-game winning streak. The Mississippi State Bulldogs look for a win after winning four of their last five games.

The Ole Miss Rebels have lost two of their last three road games. Matt Corral is completing 67.5 percent of his passes for 3,100 yards, 19 touchdowns and 3 interceptions. Dontario Drummond and Braylon Sanders have combined for 1,272 receiving yards and 11 touchdowns, while Jahcour Pearson has 25 receptions. The Ole Miss Rebels ground game is averaging 231.1 yards per contest, and Jerrion Ealy leads the way with 643 yards and 5 touchdowns. Defensively, Ole Miss is allowing 25.4 points and 429.6 yards per game. Chance Campbell leads the Ole Miss Rebels with 87 tackles, Sam Williams has 10.5 sacks and AJ Finney has 3 interceptions.

The Mississippi State Bulldogs have won four of their last six home games. Will Rogers is completing 76 percent of his passes for 4,113 yards, 34 touchdowns and 8 interceptions. Makai Polk and Jaden Walley have combined for 1,460 receiving yards and 14 touchdowns, while Austin Williams has 45 receptions. The Mississippi State Bulldogs ground game is averaging 62.1 yards per contest, and Dillon Johnson leads the way with 397 yards and 4 touchdowns. Defensively, Mississippi State is allowing 24.7 points and 326.1 yards per game. Jett Johnson leads the Mississippi State Bulldogs with 73 tackles, Tyrus Wheat has 6 sacks and Emmanuel Forbes has 3 interceptions.

The Rebels are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 games as a road underdog and 4-1 ATS vs. a team with a winning record. The Bulldogs are 5-1 ATS in their last 6 Thursday games and 5-0 ATS in their last 5 games overall. The under is 6-0 in Rebels last 6 games overall. The over is 4-0 in Bulldogs last 4 games overall.

The Ole Miss Rebels have played the more consistent football this season, but it's the Mississippi State Bulldogs who have more balance to their attack, and their seventh rated rush defense could be the difference here. We have two of the best quarterbacks in the nation in this contest. Rebels Matt Corral is an NFL high round pick and the Bulldogs Will Rogers is completing 76 percent of his passes for 34 touchdowns and only 8 interceptions.

These teams hate each. Really, really hate each other. One of the biggest rivalries in the country. This is going to be a great night game to watch on Turkey Day. My power ratings say Ole Miss by 2 and was my original pick, but I've switched over to the Bulldogs based on the home team has won 12 of the last 17 meetings in the Egg Bowl. So, in a near pick em game, **take the Bulldogs at home and take over 60 points.**

Projected Score: Mississippi St. 38, Ole Miss 31

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

Kansas St. + 3 Over TEXAS by 9

The Kansas State Wildcats and the Texas Longhorns meet Friday in Big 12 college football action from Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium. Kansas State is fresh off a matchup versus Baylor. The Wildcats ended up losing by 10 points. As for Texas, they played West Virginia in their last game. In that one the Longhorns lost by eight points.

Kansas State got off to a 3-0 start this year, but then hit a losing streak versus Oklahoma State, Oklahoma and Iowa State. The Wildcats were able to recover from there and rattled off wins versus Texas Tech, TCU, Kansas and West Virginia.

In the game versus Baylor last weekend, Kansas State got to within a 17-10 deficit heading into the fourth quarter but couldn't catch up in a 20-10 loss. QB Skylar Thompson put up 158 yards on 15-of-29 passing and Deuce Vaughn rushed 11 times for 128 yards and a score.

Over on the Texas side, they won four of their first five games with a lone loss to Arkansas as the blemish. The Longhorns hit the skids after that though, falling to Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Baylor, Iowa State and Kansas.

In Saturday's game versus West Virginia, the Longhorns were outscored 21-10 in the second half and couldn't get much closer in a 31-23 defeat. QB Hudson Card finished on 123 yards with a TD, and Keilan Robinson added 111 yards and a score on nine carries.

Meanwhile, Texas is 1-7 ATS in the last eight Friday games and 0-6 ATS in the last six overall. Texas is 0-5 ATS in their last five in November.

The Wildcats had a solid game against a great Baylor team last Saturday and would have been even better without the two turnovers. As for Texas, they weren't able to make much of an offensive impact against West Virginia with 355 total yards, 16 first downs and 2-of-10 on third-down tries. The Longhorns didn't have the ball for very long either.

Kansas State should replicate that sort of clock-control game and cruise to a victory. Note that the Wildcats are 5-0 ATS versus a team with a losing record and 10-3 ATS in the last 13 November games. Kansas State is 3-1-1 ATS in the last five overall. Comparing quarterbacks Kansas State has a huge advantage with the veteran Skylar Thompson. **Take Kansas St plus the 2.5 points.**

Projected Score: Kansas St. 30, Texas 21

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

UAB - 12 Over UTEP by 27

The UTEP Miners and the UAB Blazers meet Friday in Conference USA college football action from Protective Stadium. UTEP played Rice in their last outing. The Miners ended up winning by 10 points. As for the Blazers, they're fresh off a matchup versus UTSA. In that one UAB lost by three points in a tough loss.

UTEP came out of the gate on a nice run over their first seven games, with a 54-13 loss to Boise State on September 10 being their only defeat. The Miners had some trouble after that however, losing to FAU, UTSA and North Texas in the next three.

On Saturday versus Rice, UTEP gave up 21 points in the second quarter but had the offense moving in a 38-28 win. QB Gavin Hardison put up 366 yards, two scores and a pick. Ronald Awatt rushed for 119 yards on nine carries.

Over on the Blazers' side, they kicked off the year on a 5-2 run over their first seven, losing to Georgia and Liberty in that stretch. UAB then lost to Rice before beating LA Tech and Marshall to kick off November.

The Blazers played UTSA last weekend. In that matchup UAB had a 24-17 lead at halftime but couldn't hang on in a 34-31 defeat. QB Dylan Hopkins put up 254 yards with two scores and a pick, and DeWayne McBride led the rush on 144 yards and a TD.

The Miners are 6-2 ATS in their last eight overall and 6-2 ATS in their last eight conference games. UTEP is 5-14-1 ATS versus a team with a winning record.

Meanwhile, the Blazers are 3-0-1 ATS in the last four in November and 4-1-1 ATS in their last six overall. UAB is 6-2-1 ATS in their last nine on turf.

The Blazers started out well versus UTSA on Saturday, but eventually faded down the stretch. The 13

penalties certainly didn't help, but on the plus side UAB put up 20 first downs and 7.8 yards per play. As for UTEP, they put up a solid offensive game against Rice. The Miners finished with 488 total yards, 7.3 yards per play and 23 first downs in their latest win.

UAB is a far cry from Rice as UTEP steps way up in class. When they do play better teams they've not been very successful.

UTEP lost to UNT by 3 and 21 to UTSA. UAB trounced UNT and played UTSA straight up last week. UAB beat UTEP at home last year 37-10. UAB is the much better team and should plow through the Miners and win with a similar score as last year.

Deja Vu all over again, UAB buries the Miners and covers comfortably.

Projected Score: UAB 37, UTEP 10

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

BOSTON COLLEGE + 5 Over Wake Forest by 3

The Wake Forest Demon Deacons and the Boston College Eagles meet Saturday in ACC college football action from BC Alumni Stadium. Wake Forest played Clemson in their last game. The Deacons would go on to lose in an upset. As for Boston College, they're fresh off a game against Florida State. In that one the Eagles fell in a tough three-point loss.

Wake Forest won their first eight games this year, taking out Old Dominion, Norfolk State, Florida State, Virginia, Louisville, Syracuse, Army and Duke. After a loss to North Carolina 58-55, Wake beat NC State 45-42 in the next game.

On Saturday versus Clemson, the Deacons gave up double-digit points in three of four quarters during a 48-27 loss. QB Sam Hartman had 312 yards with a TD and a pick, and Quinton Cooley finished with 39 yards and a TD from eight carries.

Over on the Boston College side, they got off to a nice 4-0 run over their first quartet this year. The Eagles then fell to Clemson, NC State, Louisville and Syracuse before beating Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech.

In the Florida State game, Boston College was down 19-3 at halftime but eventually made a game of it despite losing 26-23. QB Phil Jurkovec had 148 yards and a TD, while Pat Garwo led the rush with 71 yards and a score on 24 carries.

The Eagles took a while to get going against Florida State but looked better in the second half. Boston College finished with 21 first downs and 6-of-16 on third down tries but were still in line for a potential comeback win after 13 fourth-quarter points. The team just fell short.

As for Wake Forest, they looked out of sorts in the Clemson game, giving up 543 total yards, 7.3 yards per play and 25 first downs. The Deacons had just 36 rush yards (playing from behind most of the way) and three turnovers.

The Eagles are 7-3 ATS in their last 10 games. The Deacons are 4-10-1 ATS in their last 15 road games and 2-8-1 ATS in their last 11 as a road favorite.

It's going to be tough for Wake Forest to bounce back after their rivalry game beating by Clemson. It's usually windy this time of year in Boston.

Take Boston College with the 5 points over the one the passing Deacons.

Projected Score: Boston College 34, Wake Forest 31

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

Ohio St - 7½ Over MICHIGAN by 14

The Ohio State Buckeyes and the Michigan Wolverines meet Saturday in Big Ten college football action from Michigan Stadium. Ohio State is coming off a matchup versus Michigan State. In that one the Buckeyes notched a dominant blowout victory. As for the Wolverines, they played Maryland in their last game. Michigan ended up winning in a blowout as well.

Ohio State lost to Oregon in their second game, but otherwise had a flawless run over their first 10 outings. The Buckeyes racked up wins versus Minnesota, Tulsa, Akron, Rutgers, Maryland, Indiana, Penn State, Nebraska and Purdue in that stretch.

In Saturday's game versus Michigan State, Ohio State destroyed the Spartans 56-7. At halftime, the score was already 49-0. QB CJ Stroud finished on 432 yards with six scores, and Master Teague led the rush with 95 yards and a TD on 21 carries.

Over on the Michigan side, they took out Western Michigan, Washington, NIU, Rutgers, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Northwestern before a game eight loss to Michigan State. The wolverines bounced back with wins over Indiana and Penn State in the next pair.

In the Maryland matchup, Michigan scored 28 points in the third quarter alone during a 59-18 rout. The Wolverines posted double-digit points in three of four quarters in the win. QB Cade McNamara put up 259 yards with two scores, and Hassan Haskins delivered 78 yards and two TDs on 20 carries.

The Buckeyes are 6-2 ATS in their last eight overall and 4-1 ATS in their last five after an ATS win. Ohio State is 5-2-1 ATS in their last eight conference games.

The Buckeyes have been on fire lately. Their offense has been decimating opponents by scoring tons of points. They've been literally unstoppable lately. The Buckeyes demolished Michigan State in every facet of the game last Saturday, posting 655 yards, 36 first downs, 7.6 yards per play and 6-of-9 on third-down tries. Ohio State plays superbly when everything is clicking. Stroud was the conductor and didn't miss. He finished the day 32-for-35 with 432 yards and six touchdowns, a flawless performance on the biggest stage

The Wolverines handled Maryland well (as they have most opponents all year). We should have a great matchup on our hands here. Note that the Wolverines are 5-0 ATS in their last five on turf and 6-1 ATS in their last seven overall. Michigan is 5-1 ATS in the last six at home. Trends favor Michigan.

The Big House will be packed to the gills. I was going to take Michigan with the points, but I just can't get over that performance last week by not only the offense, but also the defense of Ohio St. If the Buckeyes play close to last week's performance, the Wolverines will not be able to match points. Best line we found was 7½ at FanDuel. Wolverines won't go quietly. **Take Ohio State - 7½.**

Projected Score: Ohio St 37, Michigan 23

THANKSGIVING TURKEY DAY BONANAZA OF GUARANTEED PICKS



GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET NFL TURKEY FEAST BONANZA OF BEST BETS

NFL Landscape

The Colts' Jonathan Taylor has entered the M.V.P. discussion

This season, bludgeoning running attacks have paid off. Defenses have turned to deploying two-deep safety looks to diffuse the big-play potential of the league's most potent quarterbacks — Patrick Mahomes, Josh Allen, Kyler Murray. N.F.L. front offices have also started drafting lighter, quicker defensive players capable of reacting to their improvisation.

So the smart offensive minds are countering with the run.

That pivot absolutely makes the Indianapolis Colts dangerous down the stretch. Sunday's 41-15 win over the Buffalo Bills made this week's biggest takeaway clear: Jonathan Taylor has entered the M.V.P. chat. Colts running back Jonathan Taylor had five total TD's as Indianapolis shocked the Bills.

One year ago, he struggled to even stay on the field as a rookie. This season, it has taken a good two months for Taylor to calibrate with the Colts' powerful offensive line.

But Taylor's full repertoire was on display at rainy, windy Highmark Stadium in Western New York, and the Colts shoved the Bills' top-ranked defense around behind the running game, as Taylor finished with 185 rushing yards on 32 carries with five total touchdowns.

Indianapolis fed Taylor from the start. He carried the ball on six of the 11 plays of opening drive, scoring his first touchdown sliding behind a block by tight end Jack Doyle and carrying Buffalo cornerback Tre'Davious White on his back on a 3-yard run. His second score, a 23-yard reception that put the Colts ahead, 14-0, had Taylor again toting White over the goal line. His third touchdown came late in the first half, with Taylor going over the line to punch in a score. But Taylor saved his best to put the Bills away. In the third quarter, Buffalo Coach Sean McDermott's bizarre decision to have Tyler Bass attempt a 49-yard field goal backfired with a miss. On first-and-10 from midfield, Taylor had a dazzling 40-yard run in which he used a high-step hesitation to zoom past Bills safety Jordan Poyer. Then on the next play, he froze cornerback Levi Wallace with a shoulder dip and knifed inside for his fourth score to put the Colts up, 31-7. For the heck of it, Taylor plunged ahead for a fifth touchdown shortly after.

Monday morning will be a physically painful one for every defensive player in Buffalo, and the No. 1 reason, of course, was Taylor. He is a fascinating thinker, a philosophy major in college who thought about attending Harvard before choosing Wisconsin, because he dreamed of becoming an astrophysicist. Taylor's mind operates at a different level. When he wasn't blasting Big 10 Conference defenses, he was studying the works of the German metaphysician Immanuel Kant or tending to a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle without using the box as a guide.

Now, he's driving N.F.L. defenses mad and, with Titans running back Derrick Henry out, working his way into the most valuable player race.

Kansas City's defense needed a tweak, not an overhaul.

Kansas City's juggernaut offense had short-circuited for stretches this season while trying to compensate for a defense that gave up 30 or more points in four of its first five games. But against the league's most high-powered offense, its defense stepped up to deliver a black-and-blue 19-9 win over the Dallas Cowboys that should recharge Kansas City's Super Bowl expectations.

On a night when Patrick Mahomes wasn't bad, but also wasn't great, defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo managed to fluster Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott with a pass rush that held Prescott to his second-lowest yardage total (216) of the season. In all, Kansas City hit Prescott eight times, sacked him five times and intercepted two of his passes and forced a fumble.

So what changed for Kansas City's defense? It didn't hurt that the Cowboys were without receiver Amari Cooper, who tested positive for coronavirus and who is not vaccinated against Covid-19, and that top receiver CeeDee Lamb left Sunday's game with a concussion. Statistically, Prescott entered Sunday as the N.F.L.'s best quarterback against the blitz and Spagnuolo unloaded exotic pressures on him anyway. It worked.

The biggest factor of all, though, was moving Chris Jones back inside to defensive tackle after he spent much of the season on the edge. Kansas City defensive tackle Chris Jones had 3.5 sacks and recovered a fumble in the team's win over the Dallas Cowboys. He had more sacks Sunday (3.5) than he had all season (3.0), three quarterback hits and tipped the pass that ended up being intercepted by cornerback L'Jarius Sneed to end the Cowboys' final drive. On his third sack of the game, Jones busted out LeBron James's chest-thumping celebration. On his final takedown, he easily discarded the Cowboys' four-time All-Pro guard Zack Martin. Since Kansas City's Super Bowl triumph over San Francisco at the end of the 2019 season — when Jones declared immediately afterward that the Chiefs would be a dynasty — Jones has been this front seven's energy force. In giving up only 276 total yards against an offense averaging an N.F.L.-high 433.9 per game, it's safe to declare this defense officially back.

Cam Newton remains must-see TV.

Playing his first home game since rejoining the Panthers, Cam Newton had three total touchdowns in a loss. This was a reunion of necessity, the Carolina Panthers rolling out the red carpet for Cam Newton once more. A series of brutal decisions at the most important position in sports gave the Panthers no other choice but to call Newton, the 2015 M.V.P., who departed Carolina in 2019 after nine seasons with the team.

Carolina lost to the Washington Football Team on Sunday, 27-21, and now has a 5-6 record. But if nothing else, we know this out of Week 11: The quarterback who tore through the league in 2015 for 45 touchdowns en route to the Super Bowl is no more but it's also true that Newton, 32, had no business waiting for a job until mid-November. After scoring two touchdowns in a limited role last week, Newton started at home on Sunday and did not disappoint with three total touchdowns and 189 yards on 21 of 27 passing.

Of course, the numbers alone never do Newton justice. His arrival itself injected the Panthers with hope out of nowhere. When he was introduced on Sunday, the team blared "Coming Home" by Dirty Money featuring Skylar Grey over the loudspeakers. As smoke clouded the tunnel, Newton took a moment to bask in this improbable return before screaming at the top of his lungs and sprinting onto the field. Since he was drafted No. 1 overall in 2011, Newton's energy has been contagious and his unique swagger, on and off the field, gave the entire franchise an identity. But as he accrued injuries in Carolina, it looked as if Newton's arm was officially shot. He spent the 2020 season in New England struggling to throw the football, with only eight touchdowns in 15 starts. And after losing a training camp battle to the rookie Mac Jones this past summer, he was released.

Carolina's post-Newton quarterback plans simultaneously crumbled. After one season with Teddy Bridgewater as their quarterback, the Panthers traded for Sam Darnold, who stormed out to a 3-0 start this season then regressed each week before landing on injured reserve with a shoulder injury. On Nov. 11, the Panthers essentially said, "Why not?" and signed the most beloved player in franchise history. The team's margin for error is now minuscule but Newton's presence alone will bring a glimmer of hope and, bare minimum, a ton of excitement.

His touchdowns on Sunday were vintage Newton. Punctuating the game's first drive, he stepped up

as if he would run upfield, stopped, and jumped to throw a 10-yard touchdown pass to receiver D.J. Moore. Late in the second quarter, off a play fake, Newton raced to the left edge of the Washington defense and outran multiple defensive backs to the pylon, putting the Panthers up, 14-7. Newton then sprinted to midfield to perform his trademark “Superman” celebration.

In the end, Carolina’s leaky defense spoiled his return. Taylor Heinicke threw for three touchdowns and Washington ran for 190 yards on 40 attempts. For the Panthers, the game was a crash to reality in a cluttered N.F.C., but given that Newton prepared as a starter for all of one week in a completely new, complex offensive scheme run by coordinator Joe Brady, Newton was impressive. Carolina will keep opening that playbook for Newton and hope he still has some pixie dust.

Around the N.F.L.

Chargers 41, Steelers 37: A series of bonkers of plays — a blocked punt, a tipped pick, a fourth-down stop deep in Chargers’ territory — helped Pittsburgh overcome a 17-point deficit in the fourth quarter to take a lead late. But Justin Herbert found Mike Williams for a 53-yard touchdown with two minutes remaining and the Chargers got another big win in prime time.

Cardinals 23, Seahawks 13: Long live Colt McCoy. The journeyman quarterback has been a godsend with Kyler Murray out, and he out-played Russell Wilson with 328 yards and two touchdowns. No DeAndre Hopkins, no problem: Five different Cardinals had at least four receptions.

Bengals 32, Raiders 13: A bye week served Cincinnati well. Possibly no team is as healthy as the Bengals and that could ultimately be what separates them in a crowded A.F.C. North. After struggling defensively, Cincy held the Raiders to 13 first downs, 278 total yards and a 1-of-7 rate on third down.

Texans 22, Titans 13: Houston, 10 ½-point underdogs, shocked Tennessee on the road behind quarterback Tyrod Taylor’s two touchdown runs and a defense that forced four Ryan Tannehill interceptions. Three of those picks came in the fourth quarter. Injuries are piling up for the Titans, who lost top receiver A.J. Brown in the third quarter with an injured chest.

Vikings 34, Packers 31: Minnesota’s Kirk Cousins finished 24 of 35 passing for 341 yards and three touchdowns, with no interceptions and a 128.4 passer rating, to beat Green Bay, which played without running back Aaron Jones and tight end Robert Tonyan, two of Rodgers’s favorite targets.

49ers 30, Jaguars 10: A trendy Super Bowl pick in August, the 49ers seemed dead by October. But as they get healthier, they’re rediscovering their bruising identity and are now right in the thick of the playoff race at 5-5. A string of winnable games is lined up and, each week, it seems like Coach Kyle Shanahan dusts off a new play for do-it-all receiver Deebo Samuel. He rushed eight times for 79 yards and a touchdown.

Ravens 16, Bears 13: M.V.P. candidate Lamar Jackson was a late scratch with an illness and it wasn’t pretty offensively with Tyler Huntley at quarterback. However, Devonta Freeman bashed ahead for a 3-yard touchdown with 22 seconds left to improve Baltimore’s record to 7-3.

Eagles 40, Saints 29: Trevor Siemian has struggled mightily through three straight losses for New Orleans. He threw 18 incompletions and two picks on Sunday, while Eagles Coach Nick Sirianni’s decision to lean on the rushing attack continues to pay off. Philadelphia blasted the Saints for 242 yards on 50 attempts with three touchdowns.

Dolphins 24, Jets 17: Miami needs to see as much of quarterback Tua Tagovailoa as it possibly can the rest of the season to make a franchise-defining decision heading into 2022. He was solid against a bad Jets defense, completing 27 of 33 passes for 273 yards with two touchdowns.

Browns 13, Lions 10: Nothing like a date with Tim Boyle to get your defense back on track. The Browns’ passing game wasn’t sharp, but the Lions’ was worse, as Boyle threw for all of 77 yards on 23 attempts in place of an injured Jared Goff. As long as the Browns can feed Nick Chubb (130 yards), they’ll have a shot against anyone.

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

DETROIT + 3½ Over Chicago by 3

The Chicago Bears and Detroit Lions meet Thursday in week 12 NFL action at Ford Field. The Chicago Bears look to snap a five-game losing streak. The Detroit Lions look for their first win to rebound from a 0-9-1 record.

Justin Fields is completing 58.1 percent of his passes for 1,361 yards, 4 touchdowns and 8 interceptions. Darnell Mooney and Allen Robinson II have combined for 910 receiving yards and 4 touchdowns, while Cole Kmet has 29 receptions. The Chicago Bears ground game is averaging 133.1 yards per contest, and David Montgomery leads the way with 430 yards and 3 touchdowns. Defensively, Chicago is allowing 24 points and 343.9 yards per game. Roquan Smith leads the Chicago Bears with 110 tackles, Robert Quinn has 10 sacks and Angelo Blackson has 1 interception.

Jared Goff is completing 66.1 percent of his passes for 2,109 yards, 8 touchdowns and 6 interceptions. TJ Hockenson and D'Andre Swift have combined for 919 receiving yards and 4 touchdowns while Kalif Raymond has 30 receptions. The Detroit Lions ground game is averaging 114.2 yards per contest, and Swift leads the way with 555 yards and 4 touchdowns. Defensively, Detroit is allowing 27.3 points and 376.7 yards per game. Alex Anzalone leads the Detroit Lions with 64 tackles, Charles Harris has 4 sacks and Amani Oruwariye has 4 interceptions.

The Bears are 5-11-1 ATS in their last 17 Thursday games and 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games overall. The Lions are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 games on fieldturf and 5-12-1 ATS in their last 18 games in November. The under is 7-2 in Bears last 9 games overall. The under is 7-1 in Lions last 8 games overall. The Bears are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 meetings.

The Bears passing offense is the worst in the league, and they don't finish drives offensively. The Lions have their issues as well, obviously, but they've been competitive in a lot of these games and four of their last eight games have been decided by three or fewer points. The Chicago Bears have lost four of their last five road games. The Detroit Lions haven't won a home game since November 15 of last year. If the Lions are going to win a game this season, it's likely going to come here. It's about that time so **I'll grab the points with the Lions.**

Projected Score: Detroit 24, Chicago 21

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

Las Vegas at DALLAS Under 52 by 6

Last week nobody saw the Cowboys struggling as much as they did against a Chiefs defense that's been giving up points all season. Dak Prescott was picked off twice and the Cowboys struggled all day, managing only 9 points. They now travel back home for a Thanksgiving Thursday matchup with the Raiders, who had their own struggles on Sunday. How will this game play out? I believe it will be the contrast in the run game.

The Raiders have struggled to run the ball all season. Josh Jacobs is averaging 3.7 yards per carry and sits at just over 300 yards on the year. While he might be splitting carries with Kenyan Drake, having two backs combine for just over 500 yards is far from ideal. That's especially true going into a game against a Dallas defense that's forced turnovers in the passing game.

The Raiders have relied heavily on Derek Carr this year, and he's done a good job amidst the chaos that has engulfed the franchise so far this year. But it might be too difficult to throw on the Cowboys all day after they inevitably stuff the run early.

Recent reports say that Dallas may end up being without their top two receivers. Amari Cooper is out after testing positive for COVID-19, and CeeDee Lamb was diagnosed with a concussion after hitting

his head on the ground in the end zone last Sunday. With the Cowboys on a short week, he'll have to pass protocols quickly to get back in time.

As a result, the Cowboys most likely will turn to Ezekiel Elliott and Tony Pollard to move the ball. Pollard had 50 yards on only 7 carries against the Chiefs and has been a great contributor when he comes on the field all season for Dallas. Zeke has managed two 100-yard games on the year and is still essential to the teams productivity.

Raiders vs. Cowboys betting trends: The Cowboys are 8-2 against the spread this season, failing to cover against the Chiefs on Sunday after going into the game a 2.5-point underdog. The Raiders hold a 4-6 record against the spread, while they're 5-5 hitting overs. They've lost the last three in a row against the spread and are on a bit of a cold streak.

The NFL has decided that this season will make no sense at all, follow no patterns, create no obvious front-runners, and as a result, leave us bettors entirely bewildered.

I think the Cowboys and Raiders can go either way on the point spread. Now, with two games under his belt since returning from injury, Michael Gallup helps Dallas a in the passing game. Meanwhile, the Raiders gave up 99 yards rushing to the Giants' Devontae Booker and 150+ yards against the Bengals. Dallas gets this done, largely on the ground and in doing so, eats clock time.

If the Cowboys haven't managed to score 21 points in three of their last four games, I don't know why they'd suddenly be more capable of doing so without Amari Cooper or CeeDee Lamb (assuming the latter is ruled out). On the other side, the Raiders' game plan of throwing the ball all day when the run game doesn't work is unlikely to end well. **The play here is to take under 51½ points.**

Projected Score: Dallas 26, Las Vegas 20

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

Buffalo - 4 Over NEW ORLEANS by 13

The Thanksgiving Day games conclude with a contest in which both teams need a win.

The Bills were the latest to fall victim to the talent of Jonathan Taylor on Sunday, and they now head to New Orleans to face the Saints for Thursday's Thanksgiving prime-time game. The Saints will go into this one plagued by injuries and roster issues, as the status of Alvin Kamara and both starting offensive tackles hangs in the balance. Trevor Siemian will likely start once again, but we might see more of Taysom Hill. With a lot of question marks, who will this battle?

The Bills struggled against the Colts on Sunday, and the high-wind, heavy-weather environment was a factor. Buffalo centers its offense around Josh Allen, his arm, and pushing the ball downfield. On Sunday, that strategy faced adversity as the winter season started to descend on the NFL. The Bills had to battle their own home-field conditions as well as the thriving Colts.

Indy ran the ball down Buffalo's throat all game long. The Bills were without their leading tackler and middle linebacker Tremaine Edmunds for the second week in a row, as well as defensive tackle Star Lotulelei, who was placed on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Those are two guys you could use against a team boasting the hottest running back in the league.

The injury-riddled Saints face a challenge in this game. The Saints have far greater injury concerns. Michael Thomas has been gone all year, and a makeshift wide receiver corps has had to fill in the gaps. Alvin Kamara, who's not only the club's top running back, but also the most targeted player in the passing game, may miss another contest, marking a serious blow to the Saints' chances at retaining any momentum.

Both offensive tackles — Ryan Ramczyk and Terron Armstead — have missed time and didn't play against the Eagles. As a result, Philly had their way with Trevor Siemian and New Orleans' offense. A backup QB playing with a backup running back and backup tackles created the perfect recipe for

absolute disaster.

Buffalo is 5-5 against the spread and has been a team that can come out firing or misses entirely, turning them into a difficult club to back either way. For example, this week, they were 7-point favorites against the Colts and got destroyed. But the week before, they covered a -13.5 spread against the Jets with ease.

Then, you have games like the 9-6 loss to the Jaguars, which is just a nightmare for bettors. The Bills are 6-4 covering the over — 2-2 in the last four weeks. In short, Buffalo is a matchup nightmare for spreads and covering this year. They couldn't really be more on the fence if they tried.

The Saints, however, are 4-0 covering the over in the last four weeks. They've given up a lot of points to teams like the Falcons and Eagles, and they've scored at least 21 points per game.

Siemian hasn't done a terrible job under the circumstances, and you can never rule out the support of one of the league's greatest coaching systems under Sean Payton.

The fact that the Bills just took a home-field beat down from the Colts relaxes the spread for this week's game against the Saints. Buffalo couldn't get going because its running backs are not the type of backs who can handle 25+ carries in a blizzard. Matt Breida, Devin Singletary, and Zack Moss split the load, but the Bills are most dangerous with Allen throwing the ball downfield. The weather won't be a factor in the Superdome in New Orleans.

Injuries terribly plague the Saints, and Siemian will face pressure from the Bills' defensive line all day. I like the game to be a little closer if Kamara can go, but he's not expected to be available. Without him, it's a patchwork offensive game plan for the Saints, but the Bills can concede some points. I think the game might be more fun than we're expecting. Still, Buffalo's offensive firepower will reload and show itself again on Thanksgiving Thursday, ultimately proving too much for Siemian and the Saints. It's a fast track in ideal conditions and Josh Allen should shine once again. **Take Buffalo - 4.**

Projected Score: Buffalo 30, New Orleans 17

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

HOUSTON - 3 Over NY Jets by 11

The New York Jets will travel to Houston to take on the Texans in a matchup between two teams with 2-8 records. The Jets have lost their last three consecutive games against the Miami Dolphins, Buffalo Bills, and Indianapolis Colts. Houston were winners of their last game against the Tennessee Titans by the score of 22-13.

The Texans have had their share of injuries at the QB position, and have struggled because of it only averaging 15 points per game on the season. Houston is allowing 27.1 points per game on defense.

Tyrod Taylor helped the Texans defeat the Titans last week going 14-24 for 107 yards, but the real contribution for Taylor was on his rushing attack where he scored two touchdowns. David Johnson will be the lead back for the Texans, he also has had his fair share of injuries and has only 137 yards rushing on the season.

For the New York Jets, Zach Wilson is still hurt so Joe Flacco will be under center for the second consecutive game. After the injuries to their first two QBs, the Jets traded for Flacco whom they had the services of already two seasons ago under the Adam Gase regime.

One of the only bright spots for the Jets this season has been WR Corey Davis, who has 477 yards receiving and four touchdowns on the year.

The Jets are 1-5 ATS in their last 6 games. The total has went over in 6 out of the last 7 Jets games. The total has went under in 4 out of the last 5 Texans games. The Texans are 1-8 in their last 9 games.

The Texans have activated Tyrod Taylor who looks healthy, and ready to go after a win against the Titans who were previously 8-2 before running into Taylor and the Texans. Before Taylor was hurt early in the season but is responsible for the Texans only other win this season in week one versus the Jaguars 37-21. I'm backing Tyrod Taylor and the resurgent Texans.

Projected Score: Houston 28, NY Jets 17

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS					
	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	MSU-1 & Ov 60	Kansas St. + 3	UAB - 12	Boston College + 5	Ohio St - 7½
NFL	Detroit + 3½	Dallas Under 52	Buffalo - 4	Houston - 3	

NFL Lines			
Date/ET	Rot	Team	Line
11/25/21	105	Chicago Bears	-3.5
12:30 ET	106	Detroit Lions	41.5
11/25/21	107	Las Vegas Raiders	51
4:30 ET	108	Dallas Cowboys	-7
11/25/21	109	Buffalo Bills	-4.5
8:20 ET	110	New Orleans Saints	46.5
11/28/21	251	Tennessee Titans	44.5
1:00 ET	252	New England Patriots	-5.5
11/28/21	253	New York Jets	44
1:00 ET	254	Houston Texans	-3
11/28/21	255	Philadelphia Eagles	-3.5
1:00 ET	256	New York Giants	46
11/28/21	257	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	-2.5
1:00 ET	258	Indianapolis Colts	51.5
11/28/21	259	Atlanta Falcons	46.5
1:00 ET	260	Jacksonville Jaguars	PK
11/28/21	261	Carolina Panthers	-1.5
1:00 ET	262	Miami Dolphins	42.5
11/28/21	263	Pittsburgh Steelers	45.5
1:00 ET	264	Cincinnati Bengals	-3.5
11/28/21	265	Los Angeles Chargers	-2.5
4:05 ET	266	Denver Broncos	47
11/28/21	267	Minnesota Vikings	48.5
4:25 ET	268	San Francisco 49ers	-3
11/28/21	269	Los Angeles Rams	48
4:25 ET	270	Green Bay Packers	-1
11/28/21	271	Cleveland Browns	46
8:20 ET	272	Baltimore Ravens	-4.5
11/29/21	273	Seattle Seahawks	47
8:20 ET	274	Washington WFT	-1

College Football Lines

Date/ET	Rot	Team	Line
11/23	101	Buffalo	58.5
7:00 ET	102	Ball State	-6.5
11/23	103	Western Michigan	-4
7:00 ET	104	Northern Illinois	62.5
11/25	113	Fresno State	-8
3:30 ET	114	San Jose State	53.5
11/25	111	Mississippi	61
7:30 ET	112	Mississippi State	-2
11/26	115	Ohio	-5.5
12:00 ET	116	Bowling Green State	47.5
11/26	117	Eastern Michigan	64
12:00 ET	118	Central Michigan	-8.5
11/26	119	Boise State	-3
12:00 ET	120	San Diego State	44
11/26	121	Kansas State	51.5
12:00 ET	122	Texas	-2.5
11/26	123	Utah State	-16
1:00 ET	124	New Mexico	49.5
11/26	125	Iowa	44.5
1:30 ET	126	Nebraska	-3.5
11/26	127	UTEP	50
2:00 ET	128	UAB	-12.5
11/26	131	Missouri	62.5
3:30 ET	132	Arkansas	-14
11/26	133	South Florida	62
3:30 ET	134	Central Florida	-18.5
11/26	135	Coastal Carolina	-15
3:30 ET	136	South Alabama	57.5
11/26	137	UNLV	48
3:30 ET	138	Air Force	-18
11/26	155	Cincinnati	-14
3:30 ET	156	East Carolina	58.5
11/26	143	Colorado	52.5
4:00 ET	144	Utah	-24
11/26	139	Texas Christian	58.5
4:30 ET	140	Iowa State	-15
11/26	129	North Carolina	63.5
7:00 ET	130	North Carolina State	-6.5
11/26	141	Washington State	-1
8:00 ET	142	Washington	43.5
11/27	145	Ohio State	-8
12:00 ET	146	Michigan	64

11/27 12:00 ET	147 148	Army Liberty	55.5 -4
11/27 12:00 ET	159 160	Navy Temple	-13 42.5
11/27 12:00 ET	161 162	Wake Forest Boston College	-5 64.5
11/27 12:00 ET	167 168	Houston Connecticut	-32.5 57
11/27 12:00 ET	169 170	Maryland Rutgers	-1.5 53
11/27 12:00 ET	171 172	Georgia Georgia Tech	-35 54.5
11/27 12:00 ET	179 180	Akron Toledo	58.5 -28
11/27 12:00 ET	181 182	Texas Tech Baylor	52 -15
11/27 12:00 ET	185 186	Miami (OH) Kent State	65.5 -2
11/27 12:00 ET	225 226	Florida State Florida	59 -2
11/27 12:30 ET	151 152	Miami (FL) Duke	-21 68
11/27 1:00 ET	187 188	Louisiana Tech Rice	-3 52.5
11/27 2:00 ET	153 154	Troy Georgia State	49.5 -6
11/27 2:00 ET	189 190	Texas-San Antonio North Texas	-11.5 59.5
11/27 2:00 ET	193 194	UNC Charlotte Old Dominion	56 -10.5
11/27 2:00 ET	231 232	Texas State Arkansas State	61.5 -2
11/27 2:30 ET	197 198	Georgia Southern Appalachian State	55.5 -24
11/27 3:00 ET	195 196	Massachusetts New Mexico State	57 -6
11/27 3:00 ET	205 206	Florida Intl Southern Miss	46 -10
11/27 3:00 ET	209 210	Hawaii Wyoming	48 -10
11/27 3:30 ET	173 174	Indiana Purdue	50.5 -15
11/27 3:30 ET	177 178	Northwestern Illinois	43.5 -6.5
11/27 3:30 ET	203 204	Oregon State Oregon	61 -7
11/27 3:30 ET	215 216	Alabama Auburn	-20 55

11/27 3:30 ET	221 222	Western Kentucky Marshall	76.5 PK
11/27 3:30 ET	223 224	Penn State Michigan State	-1 52
11/27 3:45 ET	149 150	Vanderbilt Tennessee	63.5 -31
11/27 3:45 ET	175 176	Virginia Tech Virginia	63.5 -8
11/27 4:00 ET	183 184	Wisconsin Minnesota	-6.5 39
11/27 4:00 ET	191 192	Arizona Arizona State	52 -20
11/27 4:00 ET	213 214	Tulsa Southern Methodist	62 -6
11/27 4:00 ET	229 230	Louisiana-Monroe Louisiana-Lafayette	54.5 -21.5
11/27 7:00 ET	163 164	West Virginia Kansas	-15.5 55.5
11/27 7:00 ET	227 228	Texas AM LSU	-6.5 45.5
11/27 7:00 ET	233 234	Middle Tennessee St. Florida Atlantic	49.5 -4
11/27 7:30 ET	157 158	Pittsburgh Syracuse	-11 58.5
11/27 7:30 ET	165 166	Kentucky Louisville	57 -2
11/27 7:30 ET	211 212	Oklahoma Oklahoma State	51.5 -3.5
11/27 7:30 ET	217 218	Tulane Memphis	57.5 -5.5
11/27 7:30 ET	219 220	Clemson South Carolina	-11 43
11/27 8:00 ET	207 208	Notre Dame Stanford	-17 52.5
11/27 9:00 ET	235 236	Nevada Colorado State	-5.5 55.5
11/27 10:30 ET	199 200	BYU Southern Cal	-7.5 65
11/27 10:30 ET	201 202	California UCLA	57.5 -7