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AMERICA'S CFB GAME ARMY BLACK KNIGHTS vs NAVY MIDSHIPMEN

NCAA Landscape

In the first seven years of the College Football Playoff, four teams have gobbled up 17 of the 28 available spots: Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State and Oklahoma. After a crazy rivalry week, the sport is down to one of the above.

For years, critics of the four-team playoff have argued that expanding the field will be good for the game and get more programs involved. Instead, football's middle class decided to rise up and defeat the programs that have lorded over the sport since the playoff era started in 2014.

No. 10 Oklahoma was edged by No. 7 Oklahoma State in its first Bedlam loss since 2014 and just third since Mike Gundy took over the Cowboys in 2005. Not to be outdone, No. 2 Ohio State physically collapsed against No. 5 Michigan for its first loss in The Game since 2011. No. 3 Alabama crushed No. 1 Georgia.

Point is, some fan base is about to be historically happy. That fan base is called Cincinnati. They're in and we have a David and Goliath game as the Bearcats face the big Bama tide.

When everything is on the line, there are enough good players and coaches throughout the sport to produce mayhem. And with Oklahoma, Ohio State and Clemson now going to "regular" bowl games, there will be more opportunities than ever for the middle class to show that on any given day, they can compete with the best.

Michigan: Finally, Jim Harbaugh's moment has come. After losing his first five matchups against Ohio State, his Wolverines put together the biggest win since he arrived in Ann Arbor. Michigan rushed for nearly 300 yards and made the Buckeyes look soft in one of the most physical displays of the season. Suddenly, it's Ohio State having to answer existential questions about competing for national championships. In many ways, this is the team that was promised when Harbaugh took over the program in 2015. The Wolverines win with efficient quarterback play, stifling defense and a powerful run game that has become far more multiple under offensive coordinator Josh Gattis. There might not be a bigger winner in college football this season after the Wolverines obliterated Iowa last week and capture their first Big Ten Championship since 2004 and a spot in the final four. They're joined by Alabama, Cincinnati and their matchup with Georgia which should be very physical.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Army - 7 & 34 Over Navy by 14 & Over Total by 14

America's Game is back Saturday afternoon when the Army Black Knights (8-3) face-off against the Navy Midshipmen (3-8). Army will retain the Commander in Chief's Trophy and will earn it for the 10th time in school history. This game will air live on CBS.

Through 11 games, the Army offense is averaging 35.5 points per game and averaging 394.8 yards per game, 93.6 through the air and 301.2 on the ground. Defensively, the Black Knights are allowing 22.8 points and 324.1 yards, 220.5 passing and 103.6 rushing.

The Navy offense is averaging 20.4 points per game and 283.3 yards per game, 54.5 through the air and 228.8 on the ground. Defensively, the Midshipmen are allowing 29.6 points and 359.8 yards, 22.8 passing and 131.6 rushing.

Army Trends: Army are 4-2 ATS in their last 6 games. The total has gone UNDER in 6 of Army's last 8 games. Army are 4-1 SU in their last 5 games. Army are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 games against Navy. Army are 4-1 SU in their last 5 games against Navy. Army are 8-3 SU in their last 11 games this season. Army are 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games against an opponent in the American Athletic Conference conference. The total has gone UNDER in 15 of Army's last 20 games played in December. The total has gone UNDER in 5 of Army's last 5 games played in week 15. Army are 4-1 SU in their last 5 games played on a Saturday.

Navy Trends: Navy are 4-1 ATS in their last 5 games. The total has gone UNDER in 5 of Navy's last 7 games. Navy are 3-13 SU in their last 16 games. The total has gone UNDER in 10 of Navy's last 10 games against Army. Navy are 7-2 ATS in their last 9 games this season. Navy are 1-9 SU in their last 10 games against an opponent in the Independents (FBS) conference. The total has gone UNDER in 5 of Navy's last 5 games played in December. The total has gone UNDER in 5 of Navy's last 5 games played in week 15. Navy are 6-1 ATS in their last 7 games played on a Saturday. Navy are 2-13 SU in their last 15 games when playing as the underdog.

Last time out, Army visited the Liberty Flames and left with an impressive 31-16 win. Army dominated this game from the word go as they jumped out to a 24-0 lead and never looked back. Christian Anderson went 3/4 for 102 yards, one touchdown, and zero interceptions. Jakobi Buchanan had a big day with 22 carries for 80 yards, a 3.6 average, and three touchdowns. Defensively, the Black Knights allowed 384 total yards and forced two Liberty interceptions.

Navy finished their conference season with a 38-14 thumping over the Temple Owls. The Midshipmen never trailed in this game and pulled away with a 14-0 fourth quarter. Two Navy passers went 6/12 for 72 yards, two touchdowns, and zero interceptions. Navy ran the ball 60 times for 219 yards, a 3.7 average, and three touchdowns. Defensively, the Midshipmen allowed 182 total yards and recovered three Temple fumbles.

Army won last season, but Navy still leads this rivalry 61-53-7. The Navy Midshipmen are having one of their most disappointing seasons in recent memory. At the first two weeks of the season, I didn't think they would even win a game. That's how bad they were, but they are showing recent signs of life, which includes a blowout road win over Temple. The Army Black Knights are one of the more underrated teams in the country, as they have the second best rushing attack, they're a top-20 scoring offense and their defense is extremely consistent. I usually lean the points in this rivalry game, especially when six of the last nine meetings have been decided by seven or fewer points. However, Navy struggles to finish drives offensively and the defense is 92nd in scoring defense. And while Navy runs the ball well, Army is 11th in rush defense. Since our entire staff are Army veterans, we show our loyalty. But Army can put this one away quickly as the weather is supposed to be good. **I'll lay the chalk and also play over the total points.**

Projected Score: Army 31, Navy 17

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

James Madison - 7 Over Montana by 15

Friday at 7 PM ET

The Montana Grizzlies are coming off a second round win over Eastern Washington. The James Madison Dukes are fresh off a second round win over Southeastern Louisiana.

The Montana Grizzlies have won four of their last five road games. Cam Humphrey is completing 61.1 percent of his passes for 1,701 yards, 16 touchdowns and 7 interceptions. Mitch Roberts and Samuel Akem have combined for 1,313 receiving yards and 8 touchdowns, while Cole Grossman has 34 receptions. The Montana Grizzlies ground game is averaging 137.9 yards per contest, and Xavier Harris leads the way with 601 yards and 2 touchdowns. Defensively, Montana is allowing 15.3 points and 315.2 yards per game. Robby Hauck leads the Montana Grizzlies with 118 tackles, Patrick O'Connell has 13 sacks and Justin Ford has 9 interceptions.

The James Madison Dukes have won six of their last seven home games. Cole Johnson is completing 67.3 percent of his passes for 3,274 yards, 37 touchdowns and 2 interceptions. Antwane Wells Jr. and Kris Thornton have combined for 2,085 receiving yards and 26 touchdowns, while Solomon Vanhorne has 24 receptions. The James Madison Dukes ground game is averaging 162.6 yards per contest, and Latrelle Palmer leads the way with 691 yards and 2 touchdowns. Defensively, James Madison is allowing 15.8 points and 272.2 yards per game. Diamonte Tucker-Dorsey leads the James Madison Dukes with 94 tackles, Isaac Ukwu has 9 sacks and Greg Ross has 4 interceptions.

The Montana Grizzlies have proven time and time again they can win on the road, and they have a high level defense that travels. Let's not forget, Montana went on the road and beat Washington in its season opener, and it just dominated one of the top teams in the country in Montana State. The Montana Grizzlies are not a pushover, and they won't be intimidated in this spot. Expect a dog fight.

The Griz are known for tough, hard nosed defense and they allowed over 600 yards of total offense and over 500 of that came through the air. They are also known for a great rushing attack but due to injuries that just hasn't gotten going all season.

JMU's strength is its aerial attack and the Montana secondary is a weakness the Dukes will take full advantage. An added factor in this game is the travel. The furthest Montana traveled this season was to Arizona and never really left that time zone, now they are traveling to Harrisonburg, VA in a place that is known for having a good home crowd. The James Madison Dukes are the better, more explosive team mainly due to their quarterback play, as they can get hot in a hurry and bury teams out of nowhere. This line is fair to the Dukes. **Lay the points and take JMU.**

Projected Score: JMU 31, Montana 14

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

South Dakota State -7 Over Villanova by 17

Saturday at 2 PM ET

Villanova nearly lost to Holy Cross in the second round and the offense looked lethargic and underwhelming from start to finish. If the Holy Cross defense can bottle up RB Justin Covington, so can SDSU.

South Dakota State was at one point was one of the three best teams in the nation but slid a bit in the middle of the season. It appears the Jackrabbits have figured it out after taking down No. 4 Sacramento State last week.

The defense will give Villanova fits again this week and they will struggle to score. Meanwhile SDSU's offense should find some success against a suspect Wildcats defense.

Projected Score: SDSU 31, Villanova 14

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

Montana State + 7 Over Sam Houston by 6

Saturday at 8:30 PM ET

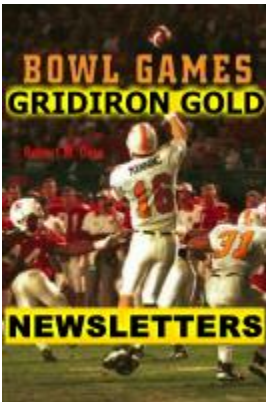
This pick's reasoning is very similar to the SDSU pick. Sam Houston was a multi touchdown favorite against UIW, but literally won by a few inches after Incarnate Word drove the length of the field and couldn't punch it in the end zone in the final seconds.

Dating back to last playoffs, Sam Houston has been a lucky team. Not taking anything away from them since they are a good football team they just seem to make mistakes early and get bailed out by opponents late and hold on to wins.

Montana State isn't going to make a lot of mistakes and will make Sam Houston pay for the mistakes it makes. Sam Houston is favored by 7 and I like the value on Montana State not only to cover but possibly win outright.

Montana State has the defense to hold the Sam Houston offense down, it hasn't allowed more than 30 points all season and in all of its wins hasn't allowed more than 20. The offense won't light up the scoreboard but if Montana State scores over 21 it may win this game. **Give me the 7 points.**

Projected Score: Montana St. 27, Sam Houston 21



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NFL Landscape

I'd like to start things off here by giving a shout out to Lions fans everywhere. You guys sat through 12 weeks of torture before finally being able to watch your team pull off a win. I'm not saying the city of Detroit should hold a parade for the Lions today, but congrats on the win.

Let's get to my rundown.

Winner: Steelers. With their season on the line, the Steelers shocked the Ravens in one of the most dramatic games of the day. Sure, there's a 100% chance that Big Ben leaked the news of his possible retirement in hopes of inspiring his team, but who cares because the plan worked and now the Steelers are back in the AFC playoff race.

Loser: Bengals. Every month, the Bengals suck us in and make us think they're going to be a serious playoff contender and every month, they get blown out and make us regret taking them seriously. Last month, it was a 41-16 loss to the Browns. This month, it was a 41-22 loss to the Chargers that might have been the most painful loss of the season for Cincinnati and that's because Joe Burrow came out of the game with an injured pinky.

Winner: Dan Campbell. When an NFL team goes winless through the first 12 weeks of the season, you usually see the players give up on the coach, but that didn't happen in Detroit. Despite an 0-10-1 start, Campbell was able to inspire his guys week after week and it paid off with a wild 29-27 win against the Vikings. Instead of celebrating after the game, Campbell dedicated the win to the students who lost their lives at Oxford High School in Michigan. What's not to like about this guy?

Loser: Ravens. Their offense has completely fallen apart over the past month and they seem to be losing their grasp on the AFC North after their wild loss to the Steelers. Since Week 10, the Ravens haven't hit the 20-point mark in a single game.

Winner: Gardner Minshew. In reality, the winner is every football fan alive and that's because "Minshew Mania" is once again sweeping the nation. With Jalen Hurts out due to an injury, all Minshew did was throw for 242 yards and two touchdowns in a dominating win over the Jets. I'm not saying there should be a QB controversy in Philadelphia, but I'm saying that "Minshew Mania is back.

Loser: 49ers. The 49ers are the Bengals of the NFC. Just like the Bengals, they suck you in and make you think they're a serious playoff contender, then they go out and fall flat on their face in an ugly loss.

Lions get an 'A' for winning their first game of the season. The Lions might not technically deserve an "A" for the way they played in this game, but we're giving them one anyway for picking up their first win of the season. After a Vikings TD with just 1:50 left to play, it looked like the Lions were going to lose another game due to a blown lead, but then the impossible happened: Jared Goff led a game-winning drive. Over the final 110 seconds of the game, Goff threw for 80 yards, including an 11-yard scoring pass to Amon-Ra St. Brown on the final play of the game to give Detroit the win. The Lions won despite turning the ball over twice and that's mainly because their defense came up with big plays when Detroit needed them the most. Grade: A

Vikings takeaway: In one of the most embarrassing losses by any NFL team this year, the Vikings imploded in the first half, then fought back to take the lead late in the fourth quarter before letting the Lions drive straight down the field to score a game-winning touchdown with no time left. The Vikings continue to be one of the most baffling teams in the NFL. One week, they'll beat the Packers and then in another week, they'll lose to the Lions. The loss overshadowed a huge game from Justin Jefferson, who caught 11 passes for 182 yards and a TD. Grade: C

Seattle 30-23 over San Francisco. With their season on the line, the Seahawks came through with arguably their most well-rounded performance of the season. The offense, defense and special teams all came up with huge plays in the upset win. The big plays started early when Travis Homer ran 73 yards for a TD on a fake punt that capped the Seahawks' opening possession. Defensively, not only

did the Seahawks force three turnovers -- with two interceptions and a fumble recovery -- but they also recorded a safety in the third quarter that tied the game up at 23. Not to mention, they came up with a goal line stand at the end that won game for the Seahawks. As for Seattle's offense, it wasn't perfect, but it came up with big plays when it had to and none was bigger than Russell Wilson's 12-yard TD pass to Tyler Lockett on a third-down play in the third quarter. That TD ended up being the game-winning score. The Seahawks might not be back in the playoff race, but with teams like the Bears, Texans and Lions still on their schedule, they have an outside chance to get there. Grade: A-

With the 49ers running the ball so well over the past few weeks, there hasn't really been a lot of pressure on Jimmy Garoppolo, but that pressure was finally there on Sunday and he wilted. Garoppolo had two ugly interceptions, including one that came in the third quarter, which led to the game-winning TD by Seattle. The 49ers lost this game because they made too many huge mistakes. Besides Garoppolo's interceptions, Travis Benjamin also lost a fumble on the opening kickoff of the second half. The 49ers also handed the Seahawks two points in the third quarter when Garoppolo got sacked for a safety. George Kittle came up big for the 49ers (nine catches for 181 yards and two touchdowns) but he was about the only player powering the 49ers' offense in this game. The loss on Sunday marks San Francisco's fourth straight loss to Seattle. The Seahawks just seem to be the one team the 49ers can't beat. Grade: C

With blustery 60 mph winds blowing in Buffalo, Josh McDaniels and the Patriots' coaching staff came up with a crazy game plan for Monday night: They decided not to throw the ball. And the craziest part is that the plan worked. In a game plan straight out of 1950, the Patriots ran the ball 45 times while only throwing three passes. The plan worked because the Patriots' run game was so effective. Damien Harris totaled 111 yards, including a 64-yard TD run in the first quarter that gave New England an early lead. Overall, the Patriots totaled 222 yards on the ground. The Patriots' defense also did its job, holding the high-powered Bills offense to just 230 total yards. Nick Folk also came up big, hitting two field goals (41, 34) on a night where every field goal attempt came with some risk. As for Mac Jones, he only threw three passes in the win, which is the second-fewest pass attempts a team has had in a win since the AFL-NFL merger in 1970. Grade: A

Considering this game was played in Buffalo, you'd think the Bills would have been prepared to play in ugly weather, but instead, they looked absolutely lost trying to run their offense on a night where the wind gusts reached up to 60 mph. Due to the high winds, most of Josh Allen's throws were off-target, which would have been fine if the Bills had any sort of run game to back him, but they didn't. Speaking of the run, the Bills' defense got absolutely steamrolled by a Patriots ground attack that totaled 222 yards. The Bills also had some serious troubles in the red zone. The Bills' offense drove inside of New England's 15-yard line twice in the fourth quarter, but came away with zero points due to a missed field goal (which was kicked into the wind) and a failed fourth down. Grade: B-

KEY INTRA/INTER CONFERENCE MATCHUPS

HIGHLIGHT THE NFL WEEK 14 SLATE OF GAMES

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS					
	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	Army - 7	Navy Over 34	J Madison - 7	S Dakota St - 7	Montana St +7
NFL	Saints - 5½	Niners Over 47	Falcons + 3	Raiders + 10	

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

New Orleans - 5½ over NY JETS by 16

This game will be played at MetLife Stadium at 1:00 PM ET on Sunday, December 12, 2021.

This is a good spot for the Saints, who have struggled with a combination of Trevor Siemian and Taysom Hill since Jameis Winston went down. Here, they face a Jets team near the bottom of the league in yards per play allowed, and this should be the best chance Hill has to have success as a quarterback in the NFL for a while.

The New York Jets have been a disaster on defense this season, and last week they proved that a sub-NFL caliber quarterback isn't enough to help them get stops. Gardner Minshew tore the Jets to pieces in his first week as the Eagles quarterback in Week 13. Taysom Hill should be able to do the same.

Despite being big underdogs for much of the season, the New York Jets are a league-worst 3-9 against the spread this year. While the Saints have had their issues covering the number on a regular basis, they should be able to get the job done against arguably the worst franchise in the NFL right now.

New Orleans dropped its fifth straight game last week, falling on Thursday Night Football at home against the Dallas Cowboys. The loss to Dallas was another offensive nightmare for the Saints, as they couldn't get anything going with Taysom Hill as their quarterback. This week, the Saints look to move in the right direction against a Jets team that should give them a chance to move the ball.

To be fair to the Saints, the last four games of their five-game losing streak have come against quality competition. The Titans, Bills, Eagles and Cowboys are all quality opponents, even if they have lacked consistency throughout the year. But the Jets are far beneath all of those teams, and a bad day from Taysom Hill against the Jets would really do damage to claims that he can become a legitimate NFL quarterback.

The New York Jets dropped their fourth game out of five in Week 13, when they fell to the Philadelphia Eagles by a score of 33-18. In that game, the porous Jets defense reared its ugly head once again by allowing Gardner Minshew to move the ball effectively for Philadelphia. This week, the Jets will hope to have better results against another quarterback that isn't used to starting in Taysom Hill.

Of course, the offense of the Jets hasn't been any good either as of late. In their last four games, the Jets have scored 20 or more points just once, with that coming against the lowly Houston Texans. The Jets will hope for better offensive results against the Saints this week, but they haven't shown any reason to believe those results are coming.

Projected Score: New Orleans 30, NY Jets 14

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

San Francisco at CINCINNATI Over 47 by 8

The San Francisco 49ers and Cincinnati Bengals both had win streaks snapped last time they took the field. This week, both teams will look to get back on track with a win, as they are running out of time to secure wins to help them in the race for the playoffs. Both teams should come out with a serious sense of urgency this week.

This game will be played at Paul Brown Stadium at 4:25 PM ET on Sunday, December 12, 2021.

Cincinnati has either been great offensively or terrible defensively on a regular basis this season. In

their last six games, a team has scored 41 points four times, as the offensive advantages in their games has been undeniable either for or against them. Expect a similar result here against a Niners team that can hurt the Bengals in a number of ways.

The 49ers are one of seven teams that have had the over hit in more than half of their games this season. Their unpredictable offensive play calling, combined with their inconsistent defending, has made them a solid candidate for going over the total. This game is no exception, as they should have trouble with Joe Burrow and the Cincinnati offense while putting up points of their own.

The start time of this game should help the Niners come out sharp. This is a rare 4:25 PM East coast start time for the Bengals at home, due to the high-profile nature of this matchup. As a result, the Niners will be less likely to come out sluggish, as they aren't dealing with the body clock game situation that West coast teams face starting in the early Sunday window when traveling East.

The San Francisco 49ers lost a heartbreaking game last week to the Seattle Seahawks, dropping back to 6-6 on the season in the process. San Francisco got off to a great start in that game, but faltered in a huge way in the second half, turning the ball over and failing to slow down a struggling Seattle offense in the third and fourth quarters. In this game, they face a Cincinnati offense that is dynamic, and could put the Niners below .500 for the season.

If the Niners want to win this game, they will need to cut down on mistakes. Errors on offense and special teams were costly against the Seahawks, and could be costly again this week. The team that is the most careful with the ball could come away with what should be a high-scoring game, and that hasn't always been the Niners this season.

The Cincinnati Bengals had a two-game win streak snapped last week when they lost 41-22 at home to the LA Chargers in Week 13. The Bengals were a disaster defensively in that game, allowing Justin Herbert to move the ball at will from start to finish. This week, things aren't likely to get any easier for the Bengals defense, as the Niners can beat teams in a number of ways with their offense.

Cincinnati will need to curtail their turnovers if they want to win, just like the Niners. The Bengals turned the ball over four times last week, with Joe Burrow throwing two interceptions. They will also need to hope that Joe Mixon will be in good enough shape to play, as he suffered a neck injury against the Chargers, and his absence would impact the Bengals severely on offense.

Cincinnati had a shot late in last week's game versus the Chargers, but the bad fourth quarter sealed the loss. The Bengals posted 356 yards of offense with 21 first downs, but also coughed up four turnovers (two fumbles and two picks).

As for the Niners, they had 365 yards against the Seahawks with 6.5 yards per play in their last game. Trouble is, San Francisco went just 3-of-10 on third downs with 10 penalties and three turnovers. This is a tough matchup and picking against the spread makes it a very difficult decision. The better play here is the totals play. Will San Francisco or Cincinnati play better here? In a good matchup I think the Bengals and Niners score easily and **go over the 47 total points.**

Projected Score: Cincinnati 28, San Francisco 27

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

Atlanta + 3 Over Carolina by 9

The Atlanta Falcons and Carolina Panthers have played once this season, with the Panthers coming out on top in that matchup. Here, the Falcons will look to turn the tables on the road against a reeling Panthers squad. These two 5-7 teams look to help their playoff prospects with a win in this NFC South clash.

This game will be played at Bank of America Stadium at 1:00 PM ET on Sunday, December 12, 2021. Outside of the game against Arizona, where the Cardinals played without Kyler Murray or DeAndre

Hopkins, the Panthers have really struggled with Cam Newton at quarterback. In his two starts, the Panthers have been outscored 60-31 against the Washington Football Team and Miami Dolphins. Against another mediocre team in the Falcons, the Panthers' struggles with Newton will continue.

Atlanta has been predictable this season, getting crushed by good teams while playing competitively against bad teams. Carolina is definitely closer to the latter category at this point in time, and the Falcons should have a shot to win this game outright, in addition to covering the three-point spread.

In their first meeting with the Panthers, Atlanta gave Cordarrelle Patterson just 14 touches on the ground and through the air. Since then, Patterson has had 15 or more touches in three of the four games he has appeared in, and he will have more impact against a Panthers team missing its top offensive weapon in Christian McCaffrey.

The Atlanta Falcons fell at home to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in Week 13, getting beat 30-17 by a Buccaneers team that completed the season sweep against Atlanta. This week, the Falcons have a much better chance to win, against a Panthers team that has been struggling mightily. But the Falcons will need to step up offensively if they want to pick up a win to move to 6-7.

Atlanta is averaging just over 10 points per game over its last four games, with 21 of their 41 points during that stretch coming against the struggling Jacksonville Jaguars. Carolina has a solid defense, as the Falcons learned for themselves when they were held to 13 points at home against the Panthers earlier in the year.

The Carolina Panthers lost their second straight game last week, getting beat convincingly by the Miami Dolphins. For the second straight week, the Panthers' offense couldn't get going, as the Dolphins held them to just 10 points for the game. Here, the Panthers will hope for the first successful start of Cam Newton's second tenure with the team.

Newton has not been helped by the absence of Christian McCaffrey, who is going to miss the rest of the season. And the firing of offensive coordinator Joe Brady isn't likely to help things in the short term either. But Newton deserves some of the blame for the offensive issues in Carolina also, as he has struggled to make throws, like he has for much of the last few years.

The Panthers are going to need quite a bounce-back from their tepid Miami game. Carolina put up just 198 yards there with 10 first downs and three interceptions. The Panthers had hit 21 or more points in consecutive games before the 10-point dud.

As for Atlanta, they faded after halftime in the Bucs game but overall their stats weren't too bad. The Falcons have hit 17 points or fewer in three of their last four, but will have ample opportunities against the Panthers based on the Panthers sluggish offense that will give the Falcons excellent field position all game long. Who you gonna back? Matty Ice or the Fugazi Superman? Give me Matty Ice even if it's a hot day in Carolina on Sunday. Payback for the last time these teams met. I feel comfortable taking the Matty Ice led Falcons and the points in this revenge game. The Atlanta Falcons beat the bumbling Carolina Panthers straight up. **Back the Falcons.**

Projected Score: Atlanta 26, Carolina 17

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

Las Vegas +10 Over KANSAS CITY by 3

The Las Vegas Raiders and Kansas City Chiefs enter this week separated by two games in the AFC West standings. A win by the Chiefs could really separate them from the competition in their division, while the Raiders could make things interesting again with a win.

This game will be played at 1:00 PM ET at Arrowhead Stadium on Sunday, December 12, 2021.

Las Vegas started out well at 3-0 before losses to the Chargers and Bears. Two more victories over Denver and Philadelphia came next, then a 1-4 run. The losses in that stretch have been to the

Giants, Chiefs, Bengals and Washington.

The Las Vegas Raiders suffered their fourth loss in five games last week, losing in disappointing fashion against the Washington Football Team. Las Vegas got off to a slow start offensively, but still managed to take the lead in the final minutes of the game. The Raiders failed to get the stop they needed down the stretch, though, with Washington taking the ball down the field for a game-winning field goal.

Against Kansas City, the Raiders cannot afford another slow start on offense. While the Chiefs have not been clicking on all cylinders offensively, they do have the potential to score in large quantities, as the Raiders saw themselves a few weeks ago. The Raiders will need to at least put some scoreboard pressure on the Chiefs if they want a chance at an upset win.

Over on the Chiefs' side, they started out the season at a spotty 3-4 with losses to the Ravens, Chargers, Bills and Titans. Kansas City has since won their last five, taking out the Giants, Packers, Raiders, Cowboys and Broncos in that stretch.

The Kansas City Chiefs won their fifth straight game last week, beating the Denver Broncos in a 22-9 game. Kansas City shut down Teddy Bridgewater and the Broncos offense, getting a defensive touchdown to help cover up for their offensive shortcomings. But if the Chiefs want to get a sixth straight win, they are going to need more from Patrick Mahomes and their offense.

Kansas City put up 41 points in their last game against the Raiders. KC notched 516 yards of offense with 29 first downs and just four penalties. But that was their only game scoring more than 20 points on offense in their last six outings. Last week against the Broncos, the Chiefs needed a pick six to break the 20 point mark, as their offense has really tailed off over the last month and a half. So will it be the Raiders who allow the Chiefs to score like they did the last time they met?

Over the last month and a half, the Chiefs have scored over 20 points just twice in six games. Last week was one of those games, with the Chiefs offense needing a pick six to help them barely get over the 20 point mark. If the Chiefs struggle to put up points again this week, they could see their grip on the division lead loosened by the Raiders.

Las Vegas beat the Chiefs at Arrowhead last season as a sizable underdog, using their running game to score a surprising victory there. This time around, the Raiders may not win outright, but they should be able to do enough to keep this game within a single digit margin even if the Chiefs manage to win in the end.

The Raiders are averaging more yards per play than the Chiefs this season and are much better defensively. Despite the differences in reputation between these teams, the **Raiders are a good bet to cover a big number here**, as they should be able to stay within striking distance of a struggling Chiefs offense. **Take the generous point spread and back the revenge minded Raiders + 10.**

Projected Score: Las Vegas 27, Kansas City 24

