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CFB RIVALRY WEEK LOADED WITH BIG GAMES

NCAA Landscape

College football is a sport of pageantry, school pride and passion. It's something that connects friends for decades. It's the beautiful chaos that occupies our Saturdays every single fall. Let's recap this past weekend of action and name our winners and losers.

Winner: USC Trojans

Lincoln Riley took his Oklahoma playbook, staff and quarterback with him to Los Angeles this off season. Turns out he took Oklahoma's ability to win shootouts, too, because the Trojans survived a barn burner in a 48-45 win over UCLA.

Caleb Williams had his Heisman moment under the lights in Hollywood. He threw for 470 yards and totaled 3 touchdowns while sprinkling in jaw-dropping throws from time to time. He's brilliant. You could argue he's the most important player in college football.

The Trojan defense? Not so great. USC came into the week ranked 103rd nationally in yards allowed per play, and UCLA did pretty much whatever it wanted offensively. But like Williams, the Trojan defense sprinkled in game-changing moments in the form of turnovers. USC created four of them, including a game-sealing pick by former five-star recruit Korey Foreman. The Trojans have survived two serious upset bids this season (Oregon State and UCLA). USC's defense produced four turnovers in both games.

Can USC continue to win with a firecracker offense that must carry its defense week after week? Who knows. Oklahoma's history under Riley portends that style will eventually cause the Trojans to crumble. But Riley also led Oklahoma to a lot of playoff appearances, and that'd be more than good enough for the USC faithful in Year 1.

Loser: Tennessee Volunteers

Things were set up perfectly for Tennessee to backdoor into the College Football Playoff. The Vols were supposed to thump South Carolina and Vanderbilt, finish 11-1 and then wait for a bid. That path seemed written in stone. Until it wasn't. South Carolina played a near perfect offensive football game and shocked the Vols, 56-31, in Columbia. To add a literal insult to injury, Tennessee starting QB Hendon Hooker went down in the fourth quarter. He couldn't put much weight on his leg walking to the locker room. He entered the night as someone who could've easily won Tennessee's first Heisman Trophy. Those hopes feel over with the loss and injury occurring in concert.

Perhaps we should've seen this coming. Tennessee's defense is average at best (48th nationally in yards allowed per play), and its pass defense has shown cracks all season. South Carolina, by keeping the ball for nearly 40 minutes, both exhausted that unit and exposed it. On a night Tennessee couldn't score to keep up, those possessions added up to more and more defensive mistakes.

Tennessee is the first top 5 CFB Playoff team to give up 60 points in a regular season game. The Vols weren't frauds. Anyone who tells you otherwise hasn't been paying attention. But, they did let a generational opportunity slip away.

Winner: South Carolina Gamecocks

South Carolina has been waiting for a moment like this since the Head Ball Coach lost his magic touch. Gamecocks fans have been through a lot since then. It lost seven straight to arch-rival Clemson while watching the Tigers turn into a national dynasty. Its other top rival, Georgia, is college football's current alpha. The quarterback carousel has been a grisly revolving door (there were a few promising recruits who crashed to earth as well as a part-time Publix grocery bagger and a graduate assistant who luckily had another year of eligibility).

So, how sweet it was to look another rival in the face — No. 5 Tennessee — and knock them out of the playoff race while nearly doubling them up. Gamecocks 63, Volunteers 38. Williams-Brice Stadium hasn't looked that good in years. And, neither has Spencer Rattler, who became the sixth SEC quarterback to throw for over 435 yards and six touchdowns in a game since 2000. I can't speak to what would explain the 10 weeks before it, but this is what Rattler and South Carolina were hoping for when he transferred in from Oklahoma.

As Shane Beamer & Co. keep building this up, another huge opportunity awaits in one week's time with a trip to Clemson.

Loser: North Carolina Tar Heels

There's no player on North Carolina's roster you'd trust more to make a big play than Josh Downs. He's a star receiver and one of the best players in his position nationally. That's why North Carolina's 21-17 loss to Georgia Tech hurt so badly for Tar Heel fans. The game was quite literally in Downs' hands, and he dropped it. Downs dropped the would-be go-ahead touchdown with 4:10 remaining.

It's a brutal loss for North Carolina. It ended any hope the Tar Heels had of making the CFB Playoff. It likely also closes the door on Drake Maye's Heisman chances.

Obviously, quite a bit of credit belongs to Georgia Tech (5-6). Brent Key is now 4-3 as the program's interim head coach with a pair of Top 25 wins to his credit. He will receive a hard look from the Yellow Jackets administration for the full-time job.

But given the stakes and how the loss occurred, it's hard not to focus on the Tar Heels. They had everything in front of them if a little chaos occurred nationally. Those hopes ended on Saturday.

Winner: TCU Horned Frogs

Everything seemed to go wrong for TCU in Waco. There was an extra point attempt that banged off the upright. There was a dropped two-point conversion that would've tied the game. The Horned Frogs were without their top three skill players (Quentin Johnston, Derius Davis, Kendre Miller) as they attempted a fourth quarter comeback. Even quarterback Max Duggan had blood running down his arm when that potential game-tying two-point conversion hit the ground.

Nonetheless, TCU endured. Again.

This time the No. 4 Horned Frogs won, 29-28, over the defending Big 12 champions. It's TCU's seventh straight win by 10 points or fewer and its eighth win by that margin in the last nine games.

The Horned Frogs play in the most balanced Power Five conference, and they've played nine straight games since an early September bye. Usually, teams would have dropped a game by now.

The law of averages almost always demands recompense after that many close wins. But, this TCU team has shown it is far from ordinary. That's why the Horned Frogs are a playoff-worthy team.

Loser: UCF Knights

I love a good box score. And, few box scores bring me joy like Navy's 17-14 win over UCF. Why? Here's Navy's final passing line for the afternoon: 0-for-1. Yep, Navy beat the No. 20 team in the country without completing a pass. It was a thing of beauty. Navy held the ball for nearly 40 minutes, hamstringing a UCF offense that relies on its run game (3.5 ypc) and tempo. Talk about a deflating day in the Bounce House.

There are significant implications of the Knights losing this game. UCF is no longer in the driver's seat to reach a New Year's Six Bowl. The top-ranked G5 team is assured a spot in the New Year's Six, and the Knights just opened the door for fellow American teams in addition to those like Coastal Carolina, Troy, South Alabama or even UTSA. The Knights will also no longer host the AAC championship game. That right now belongs to the winner of Tulane vs Cincinnati this week.

Winner: Iowa Hawkeyes

I've said a lot of bad things about Iowa this year. I distinctly remember calling the Hawkeyes offense an "abomination" after a Week 8 loss to Ohio State. You're probably thinking I'm going to apologize after Iowa's 13-10 win over Minnesota. Well, I'm not. Just because Iowa's offense has shifted from an abomination to merely terrible doesn't mean I was incorrect.

But what I will concede is Kirk Ferentz knows what he's doing. He might have a blind spot the size of The Hawkeye State for his son, Brian — who serves as the team's offensive coordinator — but Iowa manages to annually overcome a terrible offense. With the win over the Gophers, Iowa now controls its own destiny in the Big Ten West. Beat Nebraska next week, and the Hawkeyes are playing for a conference title.

Would I pick Iowa over Michigan or Ohio State? Absolutely not. But, for betting purposes, that will depend on the point spread. College football is a sport in which expectations must be managed. The Hawkeyes have to play a different brand of football because of their lack of a top-tier recruiting ceiling. And, few manage their program better in that regard than Kirk Ferentz.

Iowa is now assured of its 10th straight winning season and has a shot to win a conference crown. That constitutes a successful season no matter how infuriating the offense might be.

ACC SCORES AND NOTES (+ NOTRE DAME)

Clemson controlled the game throughout in a 40-10 win over Miami. The No. 9 Tigers (10-1) held the Hurricanes (5-6) to 98 total yards, including 1.3 yards per carry. If not for a missed field goal and a pair of Clemson turnovers in Miami territory, this final score would've been much uglier. Miami will have to beat Pittsburgh next week to avoid missing the six-win barrier for the first time since 2007.

No. 18 Notre Dame blanked Boston College, 44-0, to move to 8-3 on the season. The star of the day was true freshman cornerback Benjamin Morrison, who had three interceptions. The Eagles (3-8) were limited to 173 total yards and had five turnovers in the loss.

Florida State continued to build momentum with a 49-17 win over Louisiana. It's the No. 19 Seminoles' fourth straight win by at least 25 points.

Louisville beat No. 24 NC State, 25-10, in a game in which both teams were without their starting QBs. The Wolfpack (7-4), forced to play third stringer Ben Finely, averaged just 3.99 yards per play. Louisville (7-4) has rebounded nicely from a 2-3 start.

Virginia Tech snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 23-22 win over Liberty. This is pretty easily the biggest win of the Brent Pry era. The Hokies (3-8) had lost three of their last four games by six points or fewer.

Wake Forest snapped a three-game losing skid with a 45-35 win over Syracuse. Sam Hartman paced the Demon Deacons with 331 yards and 4 touchdowns. The Orange (6-5) have now lost five straight games after a 6-0 start.

Pittsburgh (7-4) outlasted Duke (7-4) for a 28-26 win in what was a choppy game all around. Kedon Slovis threw interceptions on Pittsburgh's first two drives of the second half. Meanwhile, the Blue Devils saw a fumble returned for a TD early in the fourth quarter giving Pittsburgh what turned out to be an insurmountable lead.

BIG 12 SCORES AND NOTES

Kansas State scored on every possession of the first half in a 48-31 win over West Virginia. Wildcats starting QB Will Howard got the start in place of an injured Adrian Martinez. The No. 15 Wildcats can clinch a Big 12 title berth next week with a home victory over Kansas. The Mountaineers (4-7) started redshirt freshman Garrett Greene (204 yards, 3 TDs, 2 INTs) over JT Daniels.

Oklahoma beat No. 22 Oklahoma State, 28-13, to clinch bowl eligibility. It was a weird game. The Sooners raced out to a 28-0 lead and didn't score again. The Cowboys had more yards than the Sooners, but they also had four turnovers. The loss eliminates Oklahoma State from the Big 12 title race.

Texas only ran the ball 22 times last week in a loss to TCU. It didn't make that mistake against Kansas. The Longhorns, paced by Bijan Robinson, ran 57 times for 427 yards as a team in a 55-14 win. Robinson had 243 yards and 4 TDs in the win. Texas (7-4) is still alive in the Big 12 title race. It can clinch a spot with a win over Baylor next week and a K-State loss. Kansas (6-5) started quarterback Jalon Daniels for the first time since Oct. 1 when he went down with a shoulder injury.

Texas Tech beat Iowa State, 14-10, to clinch bowl eligibility. The Cyclones (4-7) out gained the Red Raiders by 146 yards, but Iowa State missed a pair of field goals and saw a pair of other drives end at the goal line on fourth down. Iowa State is now 0-6 in Big 12 play this year in games decided by a possession or less. It has one last shot vs. TCU.

BIG Ten SCORES AND NOTES

Michigan endured a pair of scares Saturday afternoon in a 19-17 win over Illinois. The No. 3 Wolverines needed a last-second field goal to escape with a victory. They also, seemingly, avoided serious injury for star running back Blake Corum. The likely Heisman finalist left the game in the first half with what looked to be a serious knee injury. But Corum returned in the second half with Jim Harbaugh saying post game his knee was "structurally fine." As for Illinois (7-4) ... this is a brutal third straight loss. The Illini are now a game back of Iowa and Purdue in the Big Ten West.

Penn State true freshman running backs Kaytron Allen (117 yards, 1 TD) and Nick Singleton (a kick return TD) starred in a 55-10 win over Rutgers (4-6). The Nittany Lions (9-2) allowed only 167 yards of total offense. The Scarlet Knights will hope to stop a four-game losing streak next week in College Park.

Purdue led Northwestern, 14-3, at halftime and held on for a 17-9 victory. The win keeps the Boilermakers (7-4) in a tie atop the Big Ten West ahead of their season finale against Indiana. The Wildcats (1-10) have now lost 10 straight games. This is easily the worst season of the Pat Fitzgerald era.

Wisconsin mounted a pair of fourth quarter touchdown drives to erase an 11-point deficit and beat Nebraska, 15-14, in Madison. The victory keeps the Badgers (6-5) alive in the Big Ten West. It's also huge for Jim Leonhard's chances to be named the program's full-time head coach. He's been the likely candidate in Madison since Paul Chryst was fired. As for Nebraska, it turns out getting rid of Scott Frost doesn't change everything. The Huskers (3-8) have lost one-possession games in two of the last three weeks.

Indiana beat Michigan State, 39-31, in 2-OT. This was a terrible loss for the Spartans. The Hoosiers had to start third-string QB Dexter Williams who completed only two passes for 31 yards. But Michigan State (5-6) still couldn't get it done. The Hoosiers (4-7) can thank running back Shaun Shivers (115 yards, 1 TD) for helping to snap a six-game losing streak.

PAC-12 SCORES AND NOTE

Washington had no issue dispatching Colorado, 54-7, to move to 9-2 on the season. The No. 17 Huskies had a very balanced evening, throwing for 295 yards and rushing for 280. Colorado (1-10) didn't score until late in the third quarter. The Buffaloes have now lost five straight.

True freshman running back Damien Martinez ran for 138 yards and 2 touchdowns in a 31-7 Oregon State win over Arizona State (3-8). The Beavers (8-3) head into the Civil War with a chance to win nine games for the first time in a decade. Arizona State is fully in the middle of a coaching search.

Washington State picked off Arizona QB Jayden de Laura four times in a 31-20 win. All four of those INTs occurred in the second half as the Wildcats attempted to scale a 21-6 halftime deficit. Cougars QB Cameron Ward totaled 246 yards and 2 TDs as WSU moved to 7-4 on the season.

Stanford led 17-6 over Cal until early in the fourth quarter. Then the game flipped. The Bears scored a touchdown early in the fourth to cut it to 17-12. Three plays later, Cal returned a fumble for a touchdown to totally flip the game. The Bears (4-7) were paced by true freshman running back Jaydn Ott, who ran for 97 yards and a touchdown. Stanford (3-8) finished a woeful 1-8 in Pac-12 play with a game on deck against BYU.

SEC SCORES AND NOTES

Georgia had to grind out a 16-6 win over Kentucky, in a contest that wasn't truly decided until the final minutes. The No. 1 Bulldogs (11-0) were paced by their run game with Kenny McIntosh rushing for 143 yards and a TD. Kentucky (6-5) just wasn't good enough in critical situations, finishing a combined 4-for-14 on third and fourth down.

Jayden Daniels threw for 297 yards, ran for 111 more and totaled 2 TDs in a 41-10 win by No. 6 LSU over UAB.

Bryce Young finished the day 18-for-24 with 221 yards and 2 touchdowns in a 34-0 win over Austin Peay by No. 8 Alabama.

Ole Miss looked a bit broken Saturday in a 42-27 road loss to Arkansas. The Razorbacks led at one point 42-6. The No. 14 Rebels (8-3) were never in this game. Is that because they are out of the SEC West race? Is that because Lane Kiffin rumors are hanging over the program? The Razorback fans sure seemed to suggest the latter. Arkansas (6-5) is now bowl eligible for back-to-back seasons for the first time since 2015-16.

How about Vanderbilt? A week after the Commodores snapped a 26-game SEC losing skid, they started the program's first SEC winning streak since 2018 thanks to a 31-24 win over Florida (5-6). Anthony Richardson threw for a career-high 400 yards, but it wasn't nearly enough on a day in which two UF turnovers led directly to a pair of Vanderbilt touchdowns. The Commodores (5-6) are now one game away from bowl eligibility ahead of a date with Tennessee.

Tank Bigsby and Jarquez Hunter both cleared the 100-yard barrier and accounted for two touchdowns in a 41-17 Auburn win over Western Kentucky. The Tigers (5-6) are still technically alive for a bowl berth with the Iron Bowl ahead of them.

Mississippi State gobbled up its cupcake in a 56-7 win over East Tennessee State. Will Rogers threw for 301 yards and 5 TDs in the win.

The conditions (and fan support) were tough in College Station, but Texas A&M snapped a six-game losing skid with a 20-3 win over UMass.

Brady Cook threw for 251 yards, ran for 71 and totaled 3 touchdowns in a 45-14 Missouri win over New Mexico State. The Tigers (5-6) have a shot to clinch bowl eligibility next week at home against Arkansas.

Five G-5 Things to Know

No. 25 Cincinnati beat Temple, 23-3, while No. 21 Tulane topped SMU, 59-24, to set up a showdown next week between the two for a conference title spot. The Bearcats will host the Green Wave with the winner guaranteed home field advantage in the American championship game. Despite its loss to Navy, the UCF Knights will reach the AAC title game if they beat South Florida on Saturday thanks to tiebreakers over both Cincinnati and Tulane.

UTSA had no trouble in a 51-7 win over Louisiana Tech. The Roadrunners (9-2) have already clinched a spot in the C-USA title game. The final spot will come down to North Texas and Western Kentucky. The Hilltoppers kept their hopes alive with a 45-10 win over Rice while the Mean Green were idle. Given that UNT holds the head-to-head tiebreaker between the two teams, it can clinch next week with a win over the Owls or a Hilltoppers loss to FAU. Western Kentucky needs to beat FAU and hope Rice can upset UNT.

Coastal Carolina's game with Virginia was canceled last weekend in the aftermath of the shooting on UVA's campus. The Chanticleers play James Madison next week, but they've already clinched the Sun Belt East. Things are less settled in the West after both Troy and South Alabama won Saturday. Both teams sit at 6-1 in conference with the Trojans owning the tiebreaker. A Troy win over Arkansas State next Saturday or a South Alabama loss would send the Trojans to the title game. The Jaguars need to beat Old Dominion and hope Arkansas State can upset Troy.

Boise State clinched the Mountain division of the Mountain West with a 20-17 come-from-behind victory over Wyoming.

The MAC picture is reasonably clear heading into the final week of the season. Ohio beat Ball State, 32-18, while Bowling Green upset Toledo, 42-35, to set up a Tuesday showdown for what will likely determine the MAC East title.

The only potential wrench in that path is Buffalo. The Bulls, who had their game Saturday canceled due to weather, could still finish as part of a three-way tie atop the MAC East if they were to win out and Bowling Green were to beat Ohio. Things are far more simple in the MAC West. Toledo — despite its loss to Bowling Green — will play in Detroit for a conference title.

Players of the week

Offense

Spencer Rattler, QB, South Carolina:

Rattler played the game of his career against Tennessee, throwing for 438 yards and 6 touchdowns on 30-for-37 passing. He's only the sixth SEC QB since 2000 to throw for at least 435 yards and 6 TDs in a single game.

Ironically, he was on Oklahoma's roster with a first-hand seat to watch Joe Burrow accomplish the same feat in the 2019 Peach Bowl. Rattler's come a long way in his career, and this is the best we've ever seen from him.

Defense

Benjamin Morrison, CB, Notre Dame:

Boston College could do almost nothing against Notre Dame's defense. And, nobody played a bigger role in the shutout than Morrison.

The true freshman cornerback finished the day with three interceptions in a game in which the Eagles completed only 9-of-22 passes for 117 yards. Morrison is the first Notre Dame defender since Harrison Smith in 2010 to post three INTs in a game.

HEISMAN RACE

1. Caleb Williams, QB, USC (32-for-43, 470 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT | 8 carries, 32 yards, 1 TD)
2. Blake Corum, RB, Michigan (18 carries, 108 yards, 1 TD | 2 catches, 38 yards)
3. Hendon Hooker, QB, Tennessee (25-for-42, 247 yards, 3 TDs | 5 carries, 25 yards)
4. Drake Maye, QB, North Carolina (16-for-30, 202 yards, 1 INT)
5. C.J. Stroud, QB, Ohio State (18-for-30, 241 yards, 1 TD)

My Top Ten

1. Georgia
2. Ohio State
3. Michigan
4. TCU
5. USC
6. Tennessee
7. LSU
8. Alabama
9. Clemson
10. Oregon

Spinning it forward

Rivalry week is an endless feast in college football and there are games that matter almost every single day.

Tuesday night there's a critical game in the MAC on between Bowling Green and Ohio (7 p.m., ESPNU).

Thursday night gives us the always testy Egg Bowl with Mississippi State having to travel to Ole Miss (7 p.m. ESPN). Could that be Lane Kiffin's final game as Ole Miss' head coach?

Friday is loaded, too. The noon window has some fire with Tulane traveling to Cincinnati for a MASSIVE game in the American.

Baylor travels to Texas to face a Longhorn team that is still hoping to play for a Big 12 title.

The afternoon window features NC State and UNC (3:30 p.m. ABC) and Nebraska at Iowa (4 p.m., BTN).

There's also Florida at Florida State (7:30 p.m.) in what will surely be a testy rivalry game.

Then, there's Saturday. ...

Obviously, Michigan at Ohio State is the biggest game of the weekend (12 p.m., FOX). The afternoon window will feature Iowa State at TCU (4 p.m.).

The night window is loaded with LSU at Texas A&M (7 p.m., ESPN) and Notre Dame at USC (7:30 p.m., ABC).

At the time of this writing, there are also several games without kickoff times. This includes the Iron Bowl, the Civil War and the Sunflower Showdown, which all have degrees of national relevance.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

NORTH TEXAS - 14 Over Rice by 4 **Rice at NORTH TEXAS Over 60 by 12**

The Rice Owls and North Texas Mean Green meet Saturday in week 13 college football action at Apogee Stadium in Denton, Texas.

The Rice Owls have lost 4 of their last 6 games. The North Texas Mean Green have split their last 10 games.

The Rice Owls have lost 4 of their last 5 road games.

Rice quarterback TJ McMahon is completing 60.2 percent of his passes for 2,102 yards, 18 touchdowns and 14 interceptions.

Bradley Rozner and Luke McCaffrey have combined for 1,462 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns, while Isaiah Esdale has 34 receptions.

The Rice Owls ground game is averaging 139.4 yards per contest, and Cameron Montgomery leads the way with 449 yards on 75 carries.

Defensively, Rice is allowing 35 points and 384.5 yards per game. Chris Conti leads the Rice Owls with 63 tackles, Josh Percy has 5.5 sacks and Gabe Taylor has 2 interceptions.

The North Texas Mean Green have won 4 straight home games.

Mean Green quarterback Austin Aune is completing 57.6 percent of his passes for 2,912 yards, 29 touchdowns and 11 interceptions.

Roderic Burns and Jyair Shorter have combined for 1,133 receiving yards and 9 touchdowns, while Var'Keyes Gumms has 28 receptions.

The North Texas Mean Green ground game is averaging 209.6 yards per contest, and Ayo Adeyi leads the way with 690 yards and 4 touchdowns.

Defensively, North Texas is allowing 31.3 points and 455 yards per game. KD Davis leads the North Texas Mean Green with 105 tackles, Mazin Richards has 7.5 sacks and Ridge Texada has 3 interceptions.

The Owls are 3-8 ATS in their last 11 road games and 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games overall.

The Mean Green are 6-2 ATS in their last 8 home games and 6-1 ATS in their last 7 games overall.

The over is 12-3 in Owls last 15 games overall. The over is 7-2 in Mean Green last 9 games overall. The road team is 5-2 ATS in their last 7 meetings.

The North Texas Mean Green are the better team and should be favored, but I'm not sure about two touchdowns when you consider they're 122nd in total defense, 112th in passing defense and 109th in scoring defense.

North Texas has lost a few games, it probably shouldn't because of poor defensive play. Even a bad offensive team like the Rice Owls should have some sort of success.

North Texas is playing to get to their Championship game. Also, Rice is playing for a bowl berth, so there's motivation for both. The Mean Green have a powerful running game and Rice has the higher percentage thrower T.J. McMahon. Both quarterbacks have thrown multiple picks, so the turnover-free team is tantamount to a spread cover.

Because of the tendencies of both teams I'm going to take the 14 points and also the over 60.

Projected Score: North Texas 38, Rice 34

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

SOUTH ALABAMA - 16½ Over ODU by 27

The Old Dominion Monarchs and South Alabama Jaguars meet Saturday in college football action at Hancock Whitney Stadium.

The Old Dominion Monarchs have lost 5 straight games. The South Alabama Jaguars have won 4 straight games.

Old Dominion quarterback Hayden Wolff is completing 56.8 percent of his passes for 2,623 yards, 16 touchdowns and 6 interceptions.

Ali Jennings III and Javon Harvey have combined for 1,482 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns, while Blake Watson has 31 receptions.

The Old Dominion Monarchs ground game is averaging 93.5 yards per contest, and Blake Watson leads the way with 806 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Defensively, Old Dominion is allowing 26.5 points and 447.5 yards per game. Jason Henderson leads the Old Dominion Monarchs with 161 tackles, Denzel Lowry has 4.5 sacks and Tre Hawkins III has 2 interceptions.

South Alabama quarterback Carter Bentley is completing 64.8 percent of his passes for 2,786 yards, 22 touchdowns and 9 interceptions.

Jalen Wayne and Caullin Lacy have combined for 1,435 receiving yards and 13 touchdowns, while Devin Voisin has 50 receptions.

The South Alabama Jaguars ground game is averaging 160.6 yards per contest, and La'Damian Webb leads the way with 938 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Defensively, South Alabama is allowing 19.4 points and 296.4 yards per game. Jaden Voisin leads the South Alabama Jaguars with 68 tackles, Jamie Sheriff has 5 sacks and Yam Banks has 5 interceptions.

The under is 5-0 in Monarchs last 5 games overall.

The over is 5-2 in Jaguars last 7 games on grass.

The Monarchs are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 games in November and 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games overall.

The Jaguars are 7-2 ATS in their last 9 home games and 3-0-1 ATS in their last 4 games overall.

The Old Dominion Monarchs look like a team that's given up a while ago, as they've lost 5 straight and the offense cant do anything, scoring a combined 17 points in their last 3 games.

The South Alabama Jaguars are one of the more balanced teams in the Sun Belt, and they can win double-digit games for the first time in school history.

The Old Dominion Monarchs have lost 4 of their last 5 road games. Conversely, the South Alabama Jaguars have won 4 of their last 5 home games and the Jaguars are 7-2 ATS in their last 9 home games and 3-0-1 ATS in their last 4 games overall.

Also, it's senior day for a roster that has 19 seniors. This is likely going to get ugly for ODU.

I'll lay the lumber and back the Jaguars - 16½

Projected Score: South Alabama 37, ODU 10

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

BUFFALO - 2½ Over Kent St by 11

The Kent State Golden Flashes and Buffalo Bulls meet Saturday in week 13 college football action at UB Stadium.

The Kent State Golden Flashes have lost 5 of their last 8 games.

The Buffalo Bulls have won 5 of their last 7 games.

The Kent State Golden Flashes have lost 5 of their last 6 road games.

Kent St quarterback Collin Schlee is completing 59.2 percent of his passes for 2,095 yards, 13 touchdowns and 5 interceptions.

Devontez Walker and Dante Cephas have combined for 1,581 receiving yards and 13 touchdowns, while Ja'Shaun Poke has 29 receptions.

The Kent State Golden Flashes ground game is averaging 201.7 yards per contest, and Marquez Cooper leads the way with 1,186 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Defensively, Kent State is allowing 29.2 points and 441.6 yards per game. Nico Bolden leads the Kent State Golden Flashes with 92 tackles, Saivon Taylor-Davis has 5.5 sacks and Montre Miller has 2 interceptions.

The Buffalo Bulls have won 2 of their last 3 home games.

Bulls quarterback Cole Snyder is completing 59 percent of his passes for 2,336 yards, 14 touchdowns and 7 interceptions.

Justin Marshall and Quian Williams have combined for 1,164 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns, while Jamari Gassett has 27 receptions.

The Buffalo Bulls ground game is averaging 151.5 yards per contest, and Ron Cook Jr. leads the way with 600 yards and 4 touchdowns.

Defensively, Buffalo is allowing 27.4 points and 402.5 yards per game. Shaun Dolac leads the Buffalo Bulls with 109 tackles, Daymond Williams has 3.5 sacks and Marcus Fuqua has 5 interceptions.

The under is 4-0 in Golden Flashes last 4 games overall. The over is 4-1 in Bulls last 5 home games.

The Kent State Golden Flashes are a tough team to figure out, as they scratch out wins here and there, but nothing is consistent. Kent State is horrible defensively, ranked 114th in total defense and 96th in scoring defense.

The Buffalo Bulls have had a couple of weeks to rest up and prepare, given that their meeting against Akron was postponed. Buffalo is decent enough offensively and is slightly more trustworthy on defense.

Note that The Golden Flashes are 5-11 ATS in their last 16 road games and 1-6 ATS in their last 7 games overall opposed to the Bulls being 23-9-1 ATS in their last 33 home games and 5-2-1 ATS in their last 8 games overall.

In addition, the home team is 4-0 ATS in their last 4 meetings and the favorite is 5-1 ATS in their last 6 meetings.

The trend is your friend in this spot.

The Bulls should win this game at home. I'll lay the small number.

Projected Score: Buffalo 31, Kent St 20

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

HOUSTON - 12 Over Tulsa by 23

The Tulsa Golden Hurricane and Houston Cougars meet Saturday in college football action at TDECU Stadium.

The Tulsa Golden Hurricane have lost 6 of their last 8 games. The Houston Cougars have won 5 of their last 6 games.

Golden Hurricanes quarterback Davis Brin is completing 59.2 percent of his passes for 2,138 yards, 17 touchdowns and 8 interceptions.

Keylon Stokes and JuanCarlos Santana have combined for 1,867 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns, while Malachai Jones has 34 receptions.

The Tulsa Golden Hurricane ground game is averaging 142.2 yards per contest, and Deneric Prince leads the way with 689 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Defensively, Tulsa is allowing 33.4 points and 407.1 yards per game. Bryson Powers leads the Tulsa Golden Hurricane with 94 tackles, Joseph Anderson has 3.5 sacks and Justin Wright has 2 interceptions.

Houston quarterback Clayton Tune is completing 68.7 percent of his passes for 3,459 yards, 35 touchdowns and 9 interceptions.

Nathaniel Dell and Matthew Golden have combined for 2,718 receiving yards and 20 touchdowns, while KeSean Carter has 33 receptions.

The Houston Cougars ground game is averaging 144.9 yards per contest, and Stacy Sneed leads the way with 489 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Defensively, Houston is allowing 33.2 points and 429.9 yards per game. Donavan Mutin leads the Houston Cougars with 72 tackles, Derek Parish has 5 sacks and Jayce Rogers has 2 interceptions.

The over is 5-1 in Cougars last 6 games overall. The over is 4-1 in Cougars last 5 home games.

The Tulsa Golden Hurricane are dreadful defensively, and it makes them hard to trust on the road. Even more of an issue here when you consider the Houston Cougars are 10th in passing offense and 14th in scoring offense. It's also senior day for a Houston roster that has 17 seniors. Tulsa isn't covering numbers this season despite being underdogs most nights.

The Tulsa Golden Hurricane have lost 4 of their last 5 road games and are 0-6-1 ATS in their last 7 games overall.

The Houston Cougars have won 3 of their last 4 home games.

Here are the stats. The Tulsa Golden Hurricane ground game is averaging 142.2 yards per contest. The Houston Cougars ground game is averaging 144.9 yards per contest. That's a stalemate.

But, there is a real mismatch when it comes to quarterback play. Golden Hurricanes quarterback Davis Brin is completing 59.2 percent of his passes for 2,138 yards, 17 touchdowns and 8 interceptions.

Houston quarterback Clayton Tune is completing 68.7 percent of his passes for 3,459 yards, 35 touchdowns and 9 interceptions.

Houston quarterback Clayton Tune is by far the better quarterback by 1300 yards and more than doubled the touchdown passes thrown between the two signal callers.

Enough said, I'll take Houston in a comfortable double-digit victory and cover.

Projected Score: Houston 44, Tulsa 21

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Notre Dame at USC Over 57 by 14

Notre Dame + 7 Over USC by 3

The Notre Dame Fighting Irish and the USC Trojans meet Saturday in college football action from LA Memorial Coliseum.

Notre Dame is fresh off a matchup versus Boston College. In that game the Irish won in blowout fashion.

As for USC, they played UCLA last weekend. The Trojans powered out a three-point win in a high scoring game.

Notre Dame struggled at the beginning of the year with a 3-2 record over their first five games. After a loss to Stanford, the Irish hit their stride with wins over UNLV, Syracuse, Clemson and Navy in the next four.

In the Boston College matchup, the Irish had very few issues. Notre Dame got off to a 37-0 lead in the first half and cruised to the 44-0 shutout win.

QB Drew Pyne managed 156 yards and a TD. Logan Diggs added 122 yards with one touchdown on 15 carries.

Over on the USC side, they won their first six versus Rice, Stanford, Fresno State, Oregon State, Arizona State and Washington State. The Trojans lost to Utah then beat Arizona, California andyare Colorado in the next trio.

Matched up against UCLA last weekend, USC was within one point going into the second half. The Trojans scored 28 more points on the way to a 48-45 victory.

QB Caleb Williams finished with 470 yards, two scores and a pick, while Austin Jones added 120 rush yards and two TDs.

The Irish are 6-1 ATS in their last seven on grass and 4-1 ATS versus a team with a winning record.

Notre Dame is 15-5-1 ATS in their last 21 in November.

Meanwhile, the Trojans are 5-1 ATS versus a team with a winning record and 5-2 ATS in their last seven at home. USC is 7-3 ATS in the last 10 on grass.

Notre Dame put on a defensive clinic versus Boston College in their last game, holding the Eagles to 173 total yards, 11 first downs and five turnovers. Matching up with USC is obviously going to be a much tougher test, however the Irish are on a nice run with 35 or more points in each of their last five games.

As for USC, they had a pretty great day against UCLA in their last game, notching 649 total yards with 30 first downs. The Trojans gave up 513 yards on the other side but it was a nice win.

This is going to be a great game to watch. Caleb Williams is a superstar and will be very tough to stop. Conversely, the Fighting Irish have tallied over 35 points in their last five games.

I like this one to be a shootout as well. So give me the Over 57. I'm also going to make this a double play because I'm taking Notre Dame plus 7.

Projected Score: Notre Dame 37, USC 34

NFL WEEK STUFFED WITH TURKEY DAY GAMES

NFL Landscape

Through the first 10 weeks of the year, the New York Giants were having a dream season, but they got hit with a harsh reality check during Sunday's surprising loss to the Detroit Lions.

The big problems that led to the Giants' struggles in 2021 finally reared their ugly heads for the first time in 2022. A big reason the Giants went 4-13 last season is because their running game was non-existent and because Daniel Jones was a turnover machine, and those were both problems during New York's 31-18 loss.

Jones went eight weeks without throwing an interception, but that streak finally ended on Sunday when he got picked off by Aidan Hutchinson in the second quarter.

That was one of two interceptions that Jones would throw against the Lions. The Giants QB also threw a pick in the third quarter when a comeback was still possible.

When the Hutchinson pick happened, the Giants were leading 6-3, but that lead melted away three plays later when the Lions scored a touchdown to go up 10-6. After that, Detroit would never trail.

Saquon Barkley and the Giants running game has been incredibly successful this year, so New York hasn't really had to rely on Jones, but with Barkley getting stopped cold on nearly every play -- his longest run was four yards -- the Giants were forced to turn to Jones (Barkley only totaled 22 yards on 15 carries against the Lions).

Although Jones' numbers weren't bad -- he finished 27 of 44 for 341 yards and a TD -- most of his production came in garbage time in the fourth quarter. The Giants haven't had to worry about making any huge comebacks this year, but after falling behind 24-6 in this game, it's worth questioning whether this offense is capable of playing from behind.

The Giants dealt with a lot of issues on Sunday -- they were hit hard by injuries, their run game got shut down and they dealt few untimely penalties -- so this loss wasn't all on Jones, but considering the Giants were going up against one of the worst defenses in the NFL, you have to expect more from Jones and the offense as a whole.

Alright, let's get to the grades for every game from Week 11.

Detroit 31-18 over N.Y. Giants

Lions B+

The Lions are now on a three-game win streak, which officially makes them one of the hottest teams in the NFL, and they've been showing a lot of improvement each week. Jamaal Williams was the offensive star of the game with three touchdowns on the day. Defensively, the Lions forced three turnovers that they were able to convert into 14 points and that ended up making a huge difference in the win.

Giants D

This was an embarrassing loss for the Giants. The offense was shut down by a Lions defense that has been one of the worst in the NFL this year, and a big reason for that was because Daniel Jones seemed to take a step back. Jones, who hadn't thrown an interception since Week 3, threw two against the Lions.

Atlanta 27-24 over Chicago

Bears B-

The Bears offense actually looked impressive in this game, but only in the first half. By the time the second half rolled around, the Falcons seemed to catch on to what Chicago was doing, and the Bears

never really adjusted. The Bears didn't even total 100 yards in the second half and their offensive struggles ended up being a big reason why they lost. Of course, the fact that they gave up a 103-yard kickoff return also didn't help. The bad news in all of this for the Bears is that Justin Fields is now battling a shoulder injury and if that ends up being serious, it's hard to see this team being very competitive down the stretch.

Falcons B

The Falcons couldn't convert on third down in this game and they had two ugly turnovers, but they were able to win, thanks to some timely plays from their defense and special teams. The most timely play of all came from Cordarrelle Patterson, who set the NFL record for most career kickoff return touchdowns with a 103-yard return during a first half that ended with the game tied at 17. The Falcons defense hasn't been great this year, but it was great in the second half of this game. Not only did it limit the Bears to just seven points, but Jaylinn Hawkins came away with a game-winning interception. At 5-6, the Falcons are still in the division title race as we head to Thanksgiving, which is more than almost anyone thought they were going to do this year.

New Orleans 27-20 over Rams

Rams C

The Rams went into this game without Cooper Kupp and they lost Matthew Stafford in the third quarter, so the fact that they were able to keep this close was actually kind of impressive. The problem for the Rams is that their normally reliable defense absolutely disappeared at the start of the second half with the Saints scoring on each of their first three possessions. With the Rams now sitting at 3-7, it's starting to feel like their season might be over, which is something you never thought you'd hear about a defending Super Bowl champ just 11 weeks into the season.

Saints B

Saints coach Dennis Allen decided to stick with Andy Dalton this week, and the veteran QB made his coach's gamble pay off. Going up against a tough Rams defense, Dalton had his best game of the year, going 21 of 25 for 260 yards and three touchdowns, which gave him a nearly perfect QB rating (149.5). If Dalton plays like this going forward, the Saints (4-7) could scratch and claw their way back into the race for the division title.

Baltimore 13-3 over Carolina

Panthers C-

The Panthers defense gets an A+ for holding the Ravens to just 13 points, but the offense was a total failure. In his first start since Week 5, Baker Mayfield didn't do much to prove that he should keep the job. Mayfield threw two fourth-quarter interceptions during a second-half implosion by the offense that also included a lost fumble by Shi Smith. After shocking the Falcons in Week 10, the Panthers had another chance to pull off a surprise win, but their offense let them down.

Ravens C

The Ravens had a bye in Week 10 and it seemed like Baltimore's offense also thought the team had a bye in Week 11 because the Ravens had an ugly first half on the offensive side of the ball. Their first five possessions ended with four punts and an interception before they were finally able to figure things out. The only reason this game didn't turn into a potential upset win for Carolina is because the Ravens defense absolutely shut down the Panthers offense. Not only did they sack Baker Mayfield four times, but they also forced three turnovers. This wasn't a pretty win, but all victories count the same in the NFL and the Ravens will gladly take their ugly W back to Baltimore.

[Thanksgiving Day Specials & Guaranteed Picks](#)

Washington 23-10 over Houston

Commanders A

The Commanders might have the most underrated defense in the NFL right now. After shutting down the Eagles in Week 10, the Commanders looked even better in Week 11 while facing a hapless Texans offense. The defense made a statement on Houston's opening drive with a Kendall Fuller pick-six. The Commanders pass rush racked up five sacks while simply overwhelming an overmatched Houston offensive line. Washington also got 11 points from kicker Joey Slye, who hit three field goals. The Commanders offense could have missed the flight to the game and Washington probably would have still won. At 6-5, the suddenly hot Commanders are now in the thick of the NFC playoff race.

Texans F

If there was any question about whether the Texans (1-8-1) are the worst team in the NFL, they answered all of them in this game. This team totaled just FIVE YARDS of offense in the first half, and our rule here is that if you total five yards of offense in the first half of a game, you get an automatic 'F.' It's a good thing they're in line to get the first overall pick in the NFL Draft because they need all the help they can get.

Philadelphia 17-16 over Indianapolis

Eagles B

The Eagles (9-1) hadn't faced a fourth-quarter deficit with this kind of adversity in -- six days. This time, Jalen Hurts willed Philadelphia to victory with eight carries for 49 yards and a touchdown in the fourth quarter -- including a game-winning 7-yard touchdown run with 1:20 to play. Hurts took over in the fourth quarter to lead the Eagles to their first 10-point comeback victory in the final 15 minutes since Week 15 of the 2010 season. The Eagles offense had a bunch of miscues in the first half, but the defense kept them in it by holding Jonathan Taylor to 15 carries for 35 yards after having seven carries for 49 yards and a touchdown on the opening drive. Philadelphia didn't play well for a majority of the game, yet the Eagles won anyway. That's the sign of a good team, even though it has some penalties and fumble issues to clean up.

Colts B-

Indianapolis (4-6-1) couldn't hold on in a game it led until the final 1:20. The defense was strong for three quarters, limiting the big-play ability by the Eagles, yet had issues stopping Jalen Hurts in the fourth quarter. A coverage breakdown on third down led to a 39-yard pass interference penalty by Zaire Franklin on the Eagles' winning drive and a missed 50-yard field goal by Chase McLaughlin hurt the Colts' opportunity to go up 16-3 heading into the fourth quarter. This team looks a lot different under Jeff Saturday, but the offensive line still struggles at times and doesn't generate enough offense to put teams away.

Browns C

Jacoby Brissett threw a couple late touchdowns to put a lipstick on the pig that was the Browns' offensive performance in Week 11. He had three passing touchdowns in a game for the first time since his days as the Colts' starting quarterback in 2019, but the offense's mid-game lull was too much to overcome. The Browns defense deserves a lot of credit for limiting the Bills offense to only two touchdowns, but the offense just didn't carry their weight on Sunday.

Bills B+

The Bills bounced back from two straight losses with a 31-23 win that was more dominant than the box score will indicate (The Browns scored two garbage-time touchdowns to make the score look close). Buffalo scored 25 unanswered points from the end of the second quarter through the middle part of the fourth quarter. The Bills' defense shoved the Browns' offense into a locker as Cleveland

had six drives in a row that looked like this: fumble, punt, end of half, turnover on downs, blocked field goal and another punt. The Bills are now 6-0 when safety Jordan Poyer plays this season and 1-3 when he doesn't. Poyer returned after missing Weeks 9 and 10 with an elbow injury. Josh Allen played turnover-free football for the first time since before the team's Week 7 bye, but Buffalo would've probably preferred a few of Tyler Bass' franchise-record six field goals been touchdown instead.

Jets C

The Jets' defense gets an A+ while the offense gets an F-, so they finish with an overall C. Zach Wilson threw for just 77 yards and tossed what probably should have been three interceptions. If you want to know how bad Sunday was, New York (6-4) recorded just two total yards in the second half! As for the guys on defense, the Jets were outstanding. Quinnen Williams and Co. sacked Mac Jones six times, and didn't allow a single touchdown. If only they could have been on the field for the game-deciding special teams play.

Patriots B-

This game was ugly to watch. Mac Jones completed 23-of-27 passes for 246 yards and managed just three points. It was windy, however, and Nick Folk missed two field goals. The defense and special teams made up for the Patriots' offensive struggles, as the defense made Zach Wilson's life hell all afternoon, while Marcus Jones stepped up and scored the game-winning 84-yard punt return touchdown. The Patriots (6-4) were the better team on Sunday, but it took them a while to prove it.

Las Vegas 22-16 over Denver (OT)

Raiders B

It's been a rough season for the Raiders, but Derek Carr and Davante Adams finally gave this team something to smile about. The two friends connected for a 35-yard TD in overtime that won the game for Las Vegas. With two minutes left in the fourth quarter, the Raiders' situation looked hopeless, but then Carr dialed up some magic. On the Raiders' final two possessions (including the one in OT), Carr completed five passes for a total of 139 yards (That's 27.8 yards per catch if you're scoring at home). Defensively, Maxx Crosby recorded two of Vegas' three sacks in a game where the Broncos were held out of the end zone after scoring on their opening drive. The Raiders didn't magically fix their season with this win, but it had to feel good for everyone in that locker room.

Broncos B-

In a season where the offense has been the big disappointment, it was the defense that let the Denver down in this game. With just under two minutes left to play and the Broncos clinging to a 16-13 lead, the defense suffered a total meltdown. First, the unit let the Raiders drive 71 yards to get a game-tying field goal at the end of regulation and then gave up a game-winning TD pass to a WIDE OPEN Davante Adams in overtime. If the Broncos defense is struggling, there's almost no way Denver is going to win and the defense was definitely struggling at the end of this game. A win by Denver might have gotten Nathaniel Hackett off the hot seat for at least a week, but with a loss, there are going to be even more questions swirling about his job security going forward.

Dallas 40-3 over Minnesota

Cowboys A+

Brilliant stuff from "America's Team" coming off an erratic loss to the slumping Packers. They took out all their frustration on Green Bay's rivals. It was evident in the big workload for Tony Pollard, whose explosiveness left Minnesota's linebackers in the dust. It was evident in Dak Prescott's calculated strikes. It was especially evident in the terrorizing way they dominated the Vikings' battered front, with Micah Parsons headlining the most persistent pass rush Kirk Cousins has literally ever faced. Even Brett Maher got in on the action with a perfect 60-yard field goal (and a second one that didn't count).

Dallas has finally teased its potential when everything is clicking, and it's not ludicrous to suggest they, not the Vikings, could be the Eagles' biggest threat to the No. 1 seed.

Vikings D-

It's hard to rail against the entire team for failing to stop Dallas' pass rush when sterling left tackle Christian Darrisaw left early due to a concussion, but even Darrisaw was victimized before exiting. Kirk Cousins had no time to throw, and when he did, he looked almost exclusively to T.J. Hockenson, preferring to dink and dunk rather than absorb another sack. Justin Jefferson, therefore, was all but totally erased, as he was in the team's other blowout loss to an NFC East team this year. Defensively, they weren't much better; Jordan Hicks and Patrick Peterson, two savvy vets on an occasionally feisty unit, both got dusted in key spots as Dallas did whatever it wanted to, whenever it wanted to, throughout Sunday's affair.

Cincinnati 37-30 over Pittsburgh

Bengals A

The Bengals are now 2-0 in their white helmets after netting their first division win of the season. Joe Burrow had his best game yet without Ja'Marr Chase, throwing four touchdown passes, which tied a career high. The Bengals defense played much better than the final score indicates. The unit held the Steelers to just 139 yards in the second half and came up with a big stop after T.J. Watt made an incredible interception off Burrow deep in Bengals territory midway through the third quarter. The Bengals needed to win this game and that's how they played.

Steelers C-

The Steelers played a great first half, but fizzled in the second half. Pittsburgh's offense was unable to keep pace with Cincinnati's while suffering several self-inflicted wounds by way of penalties. The Steelers defense fought but ultimately wasn't able to contain Joe Burrow, who overcame the absences of Joe Mixon and Ja'Marr Chase.

Kansas City 30-27 over L.A. Chargers

Chiefs B+

Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce might have to cut the game ball in half after this game, because they both definitely deserve to take it home, Mahomes was impressive throughout the night, but he was at his best in the final two minutes with his team trailing 27-23. The Chiefs needed a touchdown to win and Mahomes worked up some magic with Kelce to make that happen. The Chargers know that Mahomes loves throwing to Kelce, but they still couldn't stop the duo. The Chiefs tight end caught six passes for 115 yards and THREE touchdowns including the game-winner. They carried the load for Kansas City on Sunday, but they didn't do everything. Isiah Pacheco had a huge night that included 107 rushing yards. The Chiefs don't have the best record in the NFL, but they certainly feel like the best team in the NFL right now.

Chargers B-

Whenever the Chargers lose, they seem to do it in the most painful way possible and you can go ahead and add this game to that list. Justin Herbert led the Chargers to a go-ahead TD in the final two minutes, but the defense couldn't stop Patrick Mahomes, which ended up being the story of the second half for the Chargers. The Chargers didn't force a single punt in the second half and their inability to slow down the Chiefs offense (or stop Travis Kelce) ended up being their doom. The Chargers continue to play second fiddle in a division that is going to be almost impossible for them to win now that they've been swept by the Chiefs.

[Thanksgiving Day Specials & Guaranteed Picks](#)

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Buffalo at DETROIT Over 50 by 8 Thursday

The Buffalo Bills enter this game having lost two of their last three games, but are coming off a 31-23 win against the Cleveland Browns in week 11 which also ended their two-game losing streak.

Meanwhile, the Detroit Lions enter this game having won their previous three matchups in a row and are coming off a 31-18 win on the road against the New York Giants on Sunday in week 11 of the NFL season.

The Buffalo Bills listed as 9.5-point favorites on the road against the Detroit Lions and has set the total for the over/under plays at 50 points.

Will the Lions get their 4th win in a row or will the Bills get the win on the road? Let's take a deeper dive into how these teams are performing this season.

The Buffalo Bills enter this game with an overall record of 7-3 which includes a 31-23 win against the Cleveland Browns. Buffalo lost the time of possession 28:38 to 31:22 and was out gained by Cleveland 357 to 396 but was +1 in the turnover department in the win. The Bills are 5-4-1 ATS overall, 2-2-1 ATS on the road, and 5-4-1 ATS as a favorite this season.

Josh Allen leads the team in passing completing 238 of 368 attempts for 2,930 yards with 21 touchdowns and ten interceptions while also leading the team in rushing with 483 rushing yards and four touchdowns on 71 attempts.

Stefon Diggs leads the team in receiving catching 76 of 104 targets for 1,033 yards and eight touchdowns.

The Detroit Lions enter this game with an overall record of 4-6 which includes a 31-18 win on the road against the New York Giants. Detroit was out gained by New York 325 to 413 total yards offensively but was +3 in the turnover department in the win. The Lions are 6-4 ATS overall, 3-2 ATS at home, and 5-3 ATS as an underdog this season.

Jared Goff leads the team in passing completing 192 of 301 attempts for 2,277 yards with 15 touchdowns and seven interceptions while adding 43 rushing yards.

Jamaal Williams leads the team in rushing with 142 carries for 604 yards and nine touchdowns while adding nine receptions for 57 yards.

Amon-Ra St. Brown leads the team in receiving catching 49 of 70 targets for 518 yards and three touchdowns.

Buffalo has won five of the last six games in the series and has won by an average score of 18 to 14.83 while both teams are 3-3 ATS in those matchups.

The Bills have won the last three games and have won by an average score of 15 to 13 while going 2-1 ATS in those contests.

The under has hit in the last six games with the teams combining for an average of 32.83 points per game in those contests. The under has hit in the last three games with the teams combining for an average of 28 points per game in those matchups.

This is a short week for both teams as this game will be played on Thanksgiving Day. The Lions have shown offensive firepower all season. In their last three games they gave up under 20 points to lesser offensive teams than the Bills. The under has also been the trend in the series hitting in the last six games. Both teams scored 31 points last week. Defenses will not be ready. Take over 50 points.

Projected Score: Buffalo 34, Detroit 24

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

DALLAS - 7 Over NY Giants by 17 **Thursday**

Now the Cowboys and Giants both have a 7-3 record. Dallas is in second place in the NFC East by virtue of the head-to-head tiebreaker, but obviously whoever wins this Sunday will over take the other in the standings.

Dallas has been finding success from an excellent stretch of games by running back Tony Pollard. Pollard has six touchdowns in his last three games and at least 130 yards from scrimmage in each of those. He posted 109 receiving yards against the Vikings.

The Giants will be without Adoree' Jackson, who sprained his MCL against the Lions. Wan'Dale Robinson also exited the game with an apparent knee injury. New York could be down yet another talent, though, with wide receiver Wan'Dale Robinson reportedly suffering a serious knee injury versus the Lions.

The Giants became the latest team to fall prey to the suddenly red-hot Detroit Lions, as they lost to that team at home last Sunday, 31-18.

Daniel Jones didn't play well. He passed for 341 yards but only had a touchdown against two interceptions and was just 27/44.

In the first meeting with Dallas, Jones rushed for 79 yards on just nine carries. Saquon Barkley, meanwhile, is the weapon to be feared the most by the Cowboys. Barkley only had 22 rushing yards against Detroit, but he had 81 and a touchdown on 14 carries in Week 3.

The Cowboys just sent a strong message across the NFL by lighting up the Minnesota Vikings in Week 11, scoring a mammoth 40-3 road loss over a previously one-loss squad.

Dak Prescott passed for 276 yards and two touchdowns with zero interceptions on 22/25 completions. Tony Pollard led Dallas on the ground with 80 rushing yards with a pair of TD catches.

Ezekiel Elliott also finally returned to action after missing a couple of games, and he proceeded to score two rushing TDs. Prescott was not around in the first meeting with New York, but the Cowboys still got the job done then. In other words, they should be scarier for the Giants this time around.

After starting the season 6-1 against the spread (ATS), the Giants have now failed to cover in back-to-back games. While they got out to a 6-3 lead after the first quarter, the G-Men would get outscored 21-0 over the second and third quarter. Things won't get much easier when they travel to Dallas.

The Giants are just 3-7 ATS in their previous 10 games against NFC teams and have not covered in four straight matchups against NFC East opponents. However, New York has had success this time of the year as its covered in eight of its last 11 games in November.

Dallas on the other hand has covered four straight games at home, 22 of their last 30 in the division and in 23 of its last 29 overall. The only negative trends for the Cowboys is they've not done well in recent history this time of year as they're 2-6 ATS in their prior eight matchups in Week 12 and 2-5 in the past seven games in November.

In this head-to-head matchup, the Giants have struggled mightily against Dallas. The G-Men are 1-4 in the last five meetings at AT&T Stadium and haven't covered in nine of the previous 11 games. New York hasn't lost back-to-back games by double digits since Week 17 and 18 of last season but could be in serious trouble of snapping that streak on Thanksgiving Day. The Cowboys are 22-8 against the spread in their last 30 games versus NFC East.

Projected Score: Dallas 31, NY Giants 14

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

New England + 3 Over MINNESOTA by 3 Thursday

The New England Patriots and the Minnesota Vikings meet in week 12 NFL action from US Bank Stadium on Thursday night.

The New England Patriots will be out to build on their 3rd straight win and 5th in the last 6 games after a 10-3 win over the New York Jets last time out.

Mac Jones has thrown for 1,386 yards, 4 touchdowns and 7 interceptions on 68.7% passing, while Bailey Zappe has thrown for 781 yards, 5 touchdowns and 3 interceptions on 70.7% passing in relief.

Damien Harris and Rhamondre Stevenson have combined for 1,011 rushing yards and 7 TDs while Jakobi Meyers has a team-high 509 receiving yards,

DeVante Parker has 340 receiving yards and three other Patriot receivers have 200+ receiving yards this season.

On defense, Ja'Whaun Bentley has a team-high 64 total tackles while Matthew Judon has a team-high 13 sacks and Deatrich Wise Jr. has 6.5 sacks as well this season.

The Minnesota Vikings will hope to bounce back from a 40-3 beat down loss at the hands of Dallas last time out.

Kirk Cousins has thrown for 2,461 yards, 14 touchdowns and 8 interceptions on 63.4% passing.

Dalvin Cook leads the Vikings in rushing with 799 rushing yards and 6 touchdowns this season.

Justin Jefferson leads the Vikings' receiving group with 72 grabs for 1,093 yards and 4 touchdowns while Adam Thielen has 45 grabs for 492 receiving yards this season.

On defense, Jordan Hicks has a team-high 83 total tackles including 59 solo tackles while Za'Darius Smith has 9.5 sacks this season.

New England is 3-0-1 ATS in their last 4 road games and 6-1 ATS in their last 7 games overall while the under is 7-2 in their last 9 games in November.

Minnesota is 3-1-1 ATS in their last 5 games overall and 45-21 ATS in their last 66 games following a loss while the over is 6-0 in their last 6 games following a double-digit loss at home.

I get the case to be made for the Vikings in this game as they'll be eager to get the bad taste out of their mouths from the loss to the Cowboys.

However, this game is setting us up for primetime Kirk Cousins and that's not a good thing as Cousins has struggled under the lights his entire career.

New England's not the flashiest offense as we saw against the Jets, but the defense keeps finding ways to get the job done and they can find a way to keep this close throughout and win it outright. Give me Belichick and give me the points and New England in an upset win.

Projected Score: New England 24, Minnesota 21

SEE ADDITIONAL PICKS IN THE PICKS BOX ON LAST PAGE

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

MIAMI - 11½ Over Houston by 24

The Houston Texans and Miami Dolphins meet Sunday in week 12 NFL action at Hard Rock Stadium.

The Houston Texans have lost 5 straight games. The Miami Dolphins have won 4 straight games.

The Houston Texans have lost 4 of their last 5 road games.

Davis Mills is completing 61.9 percent of his passes for 2,144 yards, 11 touchdowns and 11 interceptions.

Brandin Cooks and Nico Collins have combined for 863 receiving yards and 2 touchdowns, while Chris Moore has 22 receptions.

The Houston Texans ground game is averaging 93.7 yards per contest, and Dameon Pierce leads the way with 780 yards and 3 touchdowns.

Defensively, Houston is allowing 23 points and 389.6 yards per game. Jonathan Owens leads the Houston Texans with 90 tackles, Jerry Hughes has 8 sacks and Jalen Pitre has 2 interceptions.

The Miami Dolphins have won 4 of their last 5 home games.

Tua Tagovailoa is completing 71 percent of his passes for 2,265 yards, 18 touchdowns and 3 interceptions.

Tyreek Hill and Jaylen Waddle have combined for 2,026 receiving yards and 10 touchdowns, while Mike Gesicki has 24 receptions.

The Miami Dolphins ground game is averaging 97.7 yards per contest, and Raheem Mostert leads the way with 543 yards and 3 touchdowns.

Defensively, Miami is allowing 24.1 points and 356.7 yards per game. Elandon Roberts leads the Miami Dolphins with 62 tackles, Melvin Ingram has 4 sacks and Jevon Holland has 2 interceptions.

The Texans are 1-4 ATS in their last 5 games overall. The Dolphins are 8-3 ATS in their last 11 home games and 2-5 ATS in their last 7 games overall.

The under is 9-3 in Texans last 12 road games. The under is 4-1 in Dolphins last 5 home games.

The favorite is 5-0 ATS in their last 5 meetings. The home team is 4-0 ATS in their last 4 meetings.

The Houston Texans don't do anything well on either side of the ball, and they're not covering numbers despite being big underdogs each week.

The Miami Dolphins are scary explosive offensively, and they've had an extra week to rest up and prepare.

The Dolphins are 8-3 ATS in their last 11 home games and the favorite is 5-0 ATS in their last 5 meetings. The home team is 4-0 ATS in their last 4 meetings.

The Texans are 31st in total defense and the Dolphins are third in total offense and sixth in scoring offense. This has the potential to get ugly quick and in a hurry. I'll lay the points with the Fins.

Projected Score: Miami 34, Houston 10

SEE ADDITIONAL PICKS IN THE PICKS BOX BELOW



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING
WE'RE THANKFUL FOR
YOUR PATRONAGE. HAVE
A GREAT TURKEY DAY**

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS

	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
MIDWEEK CFB	Miami O - 2½ Tuesday	E. Michigan + 2 Friday	Tulane + 2½ Friday	Iowa - 10 Friday	Wyoming + 15½ Friday
CFB Saturday	Rice + 14 Rice Over 60	So Alabama -16½	Buffalo - 2½	Houston - 12	N Dame +7 USC Over 57
NFL	Bills Over 50	Cowboys - 7	Patriots + 3	Miami - 11½	Colts - 3½

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