

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

**Only \$1.25
Per Pick**

68 NFL Previews & Picks
68 CFB Previews & Picks

Since 1981

Best Value Football Newsletter in the Nation



Dennis Stagliano's Award Winning Football Newsletters

[Click Here](#)

Volume 42 Issue 5

NFL Week 3, 2023



**BIG GAMES THIS WEEK: FSU @ CLEMSON
UCLA @ UTAH COLORADO @ OREGON
SMU @ TCU OLE MISS @ ALABAMA
TEXAS @ BAYLOR AUBURN @ TEXAS A&M**

NCAA LANDSCAPE:

This is where the ride should've ended. This is the game Colorado looked mortal, looked like there was only so much magic Coach Prime could conjure, only so much that could be done when the Buffaloes' best player, Travis Hunter, left with an injury. And yet, there was really never any doubt.

Colorado erased an 11-point, fourth-quarter deficit, drove 98 yards in the final 2 minutes of action, and pulled off a double-overtime stunner against rival Colorado State.

Our hat is off to Deion Sanders. Coach Prime on win: 'To be great, you have to be resilient'

Colorado had been the story of the season through two weeks, with Sanders proudly announcing he was keeping receipts on all the doubters -- something that seemed difficult considering the countless slights he's endured (both real and imagined) and the three cell phones he supposedly has, too. No man has that many pockets.

Still, Colorado State coach Jay Norvell offered the latest salvo, saying his mother taught him to take off his hat and glasses when talking to an adult, an apparent shot at Coach Prime's too-cool attire during interviews. And for 58 minutes, Norvell's Rams backed up the talk.

But this is Colorado and Coach Prime and the Sanders kids and we all knew the story wouldn't end without some drama. After all, The Rock was on the sideline for this one, and he would never be associated with an over hyped disappointment.

After coming in fifth (out of five) in Coach Prime's child rankings, Shilo Sanders had a pick-six that had Colorado on the board early, but the offense, behind No. 3-ranked kid Shedeur Sanders, couldn't find much traction through three quarters.

The Rams' offense, on the other hand, was humming. Tory Horton had 16 catches, and QB Brayden Fowler-Nicolosi threw for 367 yards, and the Rams seemed capable of moving the ball at will -- until it all fell apart.

Shedeur engineered a drive to cap regulation that will live in Colorado mythology for generations now, culminating with a 45-yard touchdown throw to Jimmy Horn Jr. Shedeur then connected with Michael Harrison on a two-point try to force overtime, and the Rams might as well have gotten on the bus to drive back to Fort Collins then. The football gods had spoken.

Overtime inexplicably began with Colorado winning the toss and still getting the ball first in OT, flouting conventional wisdom. Why? Because Colorado isn't beholden to the rules that govern the rest of mankind.

Shedeur found the end zone twice more in extra frames and delivered a ridiculous pass for a two-point conversion in the second OT. In retrospect, playing so poorly in regulation was a brilliant tactical move that allowed him to pad his stats and burnish his legend in overtime.

In the end, the Buffs won again, 43-35, because that is the only way this could've ended. It's a team with 60 new players, a sieve of an offensive line, virtually no running game whatsoever, a secondary that's been torched by two of three opponents, a coach who, seriously, ranks his own children! -- and none of it matters.

A road trip to Oregon is up next. Who's doubting Colorado can pull another rabbit from the hat? Not that we're suggesting Coach Prime needs to take off his hat.

SEC powers don't seem all too powerful

There are just three weeks of college football in the books, so it's entirely too early to pen a eulogy for the SEC, but Saturday offered some motivation for commissioner Greg Sankey to at least pull his dark suit out of the closet and make sure it still fits.

In Athens, the two-time defending champion Georgia Bulldogs went to the half trailing unranked South Carolina 14-3. Georgia rebounded, but through three games, this hardly seems like the same dominant force we've come to expect.

In soggy Tampa, Florida, mighty Alabama, fresh off a shocking loss to Texas, went to the half tied at 3 with lowly USF. The Tide prevailed, but the QB room is in chaos, and coach Nick Saban doesn't seem to have an answer.

In a rollicking Gainesville, upstart Tennessee saw its long-shot playoff status evaporate at the mercy of a suddenly magical Graham Mertz. Tennessee and Florida both now have a loss, as do LSU and Texas A&M.

None of this was supposed to happen. Saturday was set to be a snooze fest, a week without a single ranked-vs.-ranked matchup and a host of lopsided point spreads. Instead, the SEC's power players nearly sleepwalked into oblivion.

Georgia came to life in the second half against the Gamecocks, with walk-on Cash Jones putting the game on ice with a 13-yard touchdown run midway through the fourth quarter. Perhaps in the absence of Stetson Bennett, the Bulldogs just needed another underdog story to jump-start their season. Still, three weeks into the season, Carson Beck has just three touchdown throws -- none of them to Brock Bowers. It's entirely possible this is just a new offense working through some trial-and-error adjustments, and it certainly wouldn't be out of character for the Bulldogs to bide their time and step on the gas only when absolutely needed. The schedule doesn't indicate those moments will come frequently, and yet, it'd be more reassuring if Georgia would deliver at least one true act of aggression, like dominating an opponent.

For Alabama, the whispers about the end of a dynasty have grown to an audible murmur. Last week's loss to Texas was a cause for concern, of course, but barely cracking 100 passing yards against USF is something far more unsettling. They say a team that has two quarterbacks actually has none, which makes Alabama's situation at least 50% worse than that. Saban benched Jalen Milroe with a clear eye toward determining whether Alabama had an effective Plan B or C on the shelf. Instead, he opened the cupboard to find even less available to him.

For Tennessee, Joe Milton's arm was supposed to be the magic elixir that allowed the Vols' offense to keep piling up points in 2023, but behind a line that couldn't block and with a receiving corps that couldn't get open downfield, it was not going to happen.

When the dust settles, Georgia will still be atop the AP poll, and Alabama, LSU and others still have genuine playoff hopes, even if the road ahead is winding. Perhaps this is all prologue to the real drama that awaits. But the vibes of Week 3 were all off. It's just not how things are done here.

FSU escapes BC

It was a noon kickoff, which in late September in Boston is the perfect setting for the Eagles' annual Red Bandana game, a chance to honor Boston College graduate Welles Crowther, who saved more than a dozen lives by sacrificing his own on 9/11.

It was supposed to be a tune-up for No. 3 Florida State, a game against battered BC to pad the stats before a potentially season defining trip to Clemson in Week 4.

It was a trap so diabolical, and for all the obvious dangers, Florida State managed to trip over its own shoelaces and fall face-first into quicksand.

DJ Lundy hauled in an impressive interception, then bulldozed into the end zone on the ensuing drive to give the Seminoles a 31-10 lead.

Yes, FSU ultimately prevailed 31-29 to keep its national title hopes alive, but along the way, the two teams traded jabs -- or, more often, bullets to their own feet, and the Seminoles secured the win only after Boston College delivered one final self-own.

But let's not skip too far ahead.

The game began in sleepy Chestnut Hill with BC jumping out to a 10-3 lead, stunning a groggy FSU. It felt entirely similar to the biggest test FSU's last national title team faced back in 2013, when a trip to BC began with a quick 17-3 deficit. In that game, Jameis Winston rallied the Seminoles, who dominated the second half en route to a 48-34 win.

On Saturday, Jordan Travis attempted to do the same, and by the time Eagles fans found their seats after halftime, the Noles were up 31-10.

Crisis averted. Bring on the Tigers. Except, BC had other ideas.

An Eagles touchdown was followed by a fumble return for a score and a dynamic 95-yard TD drive, and suddenly BC was within two with 4:37 to play.

If Florida State seemed intent on giving the game away, however, BC was all too happy to take the gift, rewrap it, and hand it right back.

Boston College finished the game with 18 penalties. The Eagles were flagged for offsides, false starts, personal fouls, and just about every other infraction an official could dream up. But it was the 18th penalty that proved the final dagger.

Lawrance Toafili was pushed out of bounds for a 4-yard gain on third-and-7 with just under a minute to play. BC had a chance to get the ball back and win the game. But a face mask flag gave FSU 15 yards and a first down, sealing the game -- a mistake so costly and yet so predictable.

For Florida State, it was a classic trap-game performance, one replete with miscues, mental mistakes and a terror-inducing injury to Travis, who appeared to hurt his left arm before the half -- though he later returned and finished 212 passing yards and two touchdowns.

For Boston College, it was a golden opportunity that slipped through its fingers like a buttered lobster tail.

In other words, it was misery for both sides.

This, of course, is the beauty of those sleepy Saturday mornings in late September. On paper, they're all sweet dreams and flying machines, but by mid-afternoon, contenders and afterthoughts alike can be left in pieces.

Real or not?

In a week with no ranked-vs.-ranked matchups, it's worth checking in with a few teams sitting pretty at 3-0 that haven't truly been tested yet. Are they playoff contenders or paper tigers? Let's find out.

Penn State

The Nittany Lions got off to a slow start against Illinois but were never in any real trouble and ultimately won 30-13. Penn State has been favored by at least 14 in every game and covered each spread. Drew Allar has been good if not representing a seismic shift from the Sean Clifford era. The defense has allowed just 35 points so far this season.

Playoff contender? Probably. Penn State has a ton of talent, but we'll know a lot more after next week's showdown with Iowa in which the first team to 10 might win.

Ohio State

The Buckeyes' offense was lackluster in each of its first two games -- both easy though unremarkable wins -- and it looked to be trending in the same direction early against Western Kentucky on Saturday. But after WKU pulled to within four midway through the second quarter, Ohio State seemed to get things figured out.

Kyle McCord threw for 318 yards and three touchdowns, Marvin Harrison Jr. had a breakout performance with 126 yards and a score, and the Buckeyes won 63-10.

Playoff contender? Absolutely. Ohio State simply didn't want to put anything on tape that suspended Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh could dissect during his down time. Of course, Harbaugh wasn't watching Ohio State film anyway. He was busy mowing his lawn. Something he enjoys doing often.

Oklahoma

The Sooners lost four of their last five in 2022, but those memories have been wiped amid a hot start to 2023. Oklahoma thrashed Tulsa 66-17 on Saturday behind five touchdown passes from Dillon Gabriel. Through three games, Oklahoma has outscored its opposition 167-28.

Playoff contender? Could be. Go back to the start of 2022, and things didn't look much different than they do now. Oklahoma opened last season 3-0 with blowout wins vs. UTEP, Kent State and Nebraska, too. The good news for the Sooners this time around is they won't go into Week 4 with the Nebraska curse attached to them.

Notre Dame

After a slow start, the Irish cruised to a 41-17 win over Central Michigan on Saturday. Sam Hartman threw for 330 yards and three touchdowns, and in his four-game Irish career, he's now accounted for 15 touchdowns and no picks.

Playoff contender? They got the right QB to do it. Notre Dame is 4-0 with each win coming by at least 21 points, but the real test comes next week with a home date against Ohio State. That's followed by games against 3-0 Duke, 3-0 Louisville and 3-0 USC. If the Irish can come out of that gauntlet looking strong, they'll certainly have a resume worth considering.

Washington

The Huskies are 3-0 after demolishing Michigan State on Saturday, and their average margin of victory is about 603. (We rounded up.) Michael Penix Jr. has thrown for 400 yards in all three games this season. Supposedly Washington also has running backs, but no one's bothered to look for them, so who knows?

Playoff contender? An outside shot. Oh, Washington has a star QB, puts up a ton of points, beats bad teams in blowouts and is highly ranked? Welcome to the Pac-12 (for the next five months anyway). The depth of the league makes the likelihood that any one team survives the season largely unscathed unlikely.

Michigan

Life without Harbaugh has gone more or less as expected. The Wolverines beat Bowling Green Falcons 31-6 on Saturday, and they have outscored their opposition 96-16 so far. Like a nice pair of khakis, it's been entirely effective and without a semblance of excitement.

Playoff contender? Sure, but they've got Rutgers on deck, and that's where the real work begins.

Rutgers

The Scarlet Knights are 3-0 and have allowed just 30 points so far. Rutgers beat the Virginia Tech Hokies 35-16 on Saturday despite passing for just 46 yards.

Playoff contender? Heck, yeah. Let's get weird. Calm down, let's get real. I think not.

Heisman Five

A number of college football's best teams seem to have overlooked Week 3, sleep walking through the first half or, in some cases, the entire game against lesser competition. Our Heisman Five would never do such a thing. They're all in, all the time.

1. USC QB Caleb Williams

The Trojans had the week off, yet Williams moves back into our top spot. That's just how good he is.

2. Washington QB Michael Penix Jr.

Penix has thrown for more than 400 yards in five of his past seven games. Every other Power 5 QB combined has just 12 400-yard passing days in that span.

3. Colorado QB Shedeur Sanders

Sanders was a magician on Colorado's final drive to tie the game and send it to overtime. We're docking him points though because we're just way too old to be staying up past 2 a.m. to see the end of games.

4. Notre Dame QB Sam Hartman

In his 5th year of college football, it seems like Hartman's bound to win the Heisman eventually.

5. Florida State QB Jordan Travis

Travis banged up his left arm on a run just before halftime Saturday, which seemed potentially disastrous. He played the whole second half, however, and looks like he'll be good to go in Week 4 in a showdown with Clemson.

Down goes K-State

If FSU managed to elude disaster, Kansas State wasn't so lucky.

Brady Cook threw for 356 yards and accounted for three touchdowns, and Harrison Mevis booted a 61-yard field goal as time expired to give Missouri a 30-27 win over the 15th-ranked Wildcats.

Missouri's win came in spite of a woeful 3-of-13 performance on third down, a missed 53-yard kick by Mevis in the first half, and a delay of game flag before the final kick when Eli Drinkwitz was too slow getting his field goal unit onto the field.

Still, after the kick skirted just over the crossbar, Missouri fans rushed the field in absolute ecstasy

Let's recap Iowa's 41-10 win over Western Michigan: Iowa's defense recorded a safety. Iowa completed just 50% of its passes. Iowa had multiple TD throws and runs in the same game for the first time since 2021. Offensive coordinator Brian Ferentz had a sideline meltdown worthy of fine art.

Thanks to its defense, Iowa had touchdown drives of 25, 53, 17 and 33 yards.

Aided by a final TD with 30 seconds to play, the Hawkeyes scored enough to raise their season average to a whopping 28.3 points per game, putting Ferentz safely into the "Do not fire" tier.

Cyclones get robbed

For teams from the state of Iowa, points are like a lunar eclipse. They happen a few times a year, but they're still rare enough to bring the whole family out into the backyard to gawk.

So it seemed entirely unfair that, when Iowa State had appeared to put three points on the board midway through the fourth quarter, some visually-challenged officials flubbed the call.

What looked like a clearly successful field goal was ruled a miss, and Iowa State ended up losing to Ohio 10-7.

It was the Cyclones' 10th loss in their past 11 games vs. FBS opponents, and they've averaged 11.2 points per game in those 10 losses.

Under-the-radar play of the week

We celebrate all touchdowns by men over 300 pounds here, and Oregon State delivered a beauty on Saturday.

Beavers QB DJ Uiagalelei took the snap, rolled to his right, then tossed back across the field to 305-pound offensive lineman Joshua Gray, who then rumbled 10 yards into the end zone.

Under-the-radar game of the week

The Backyard Brawl is among the great rivalries in college football, but with West Virginia and Pitt both carrying a loss, there was limited enthusiasm for this year's installment.

But overlooking a rivalry game between one fan base that thinks French fries are a salad (I totally love that Pittsburgh steak salad with fries, it's awesome). and another that thinks grain alcohol is a condiment would be a mistake.

What the Panthers and Mountaineers played Saturday was less a football game than a staring contest. The two teams combined to complete just six passes in the first half. Neither offense had anything resembling an effective game plan.

In other words, it was a thing of beauty.

Neither team threw for 100 yards. Neither team tallied 250 total yards. Both teams looked as if they'd been transported onto the field from the days of Woody & Schem in the three clouds of dust days.

The final score -- West Virginia 17, Pitt 6 -- felt entirely too normal for a game that was so perfectly unpleasant, but that's what makes the Backyard Brawl so great.

To simply look at the box score is to only partially understand how brutal it is. You would have had to watch it to fully appreciate just how bad it was. Hey we're not complaining, after all we had the under in this years boring backyard brawl. I just switched channels knowing the under wager was a cash.

Welcome to the best week of the college football season so far.

Week 4 has it all. Two College Football Playoff regulars are in must-win situations at home. A top-10 showdown between storied programs, and a ranked matchup between two more programs who aren't sure which conference they'll be in next season. There's a "Whiteout," and of course, Coach Prime on

network TV. That's all part of a week that will have huge conference and playoff implications across the country.

It's appointment viewing from start to finish with six matchups between teams in the AP Top 25. How awesome is Saturday going to be? A look at the best games:

Week 4 best college football games

MATCHUP	TIME	TV
No. 4 Florida State at Clemson	12 p.m.	ABC
No. 15 Ole Miss at No. 13 Alabama	3:30 p.m.	CBS
No. 22 UCLA at No. 11 Utah	3:30 p.m.	Fox
No. 19 Colorado at No. 10 Oregon	3:30 p.m.	ABC
No. 14 Oregon St at No. 21 Washington St	7:00 p.m.	Fox
No. 6 Ohio State at No. 9 Notre Dame	7:30 p.m.	NBC
No. 24 Iowa at No. 7 Penn State	7:30 p.m.	CBS
No. 4 Florida State at Clemson:	8:00 p.m.	ESPN

Florida State survived a 31-29 victory at Boston College, and that might have some second-guessing whether Jordan Travis can lead the Seminoles to a victory in Death Valley. Florida State still won, however, and Travis has one of the nation's best receiving tandems in Johnny Wilson and Keon Coleman – though Coleman did not have a catch against the Eagles.

Clemson has won the last seven meetings in the series, and the Tigers have won back-to-back blowouts since the season-opening 28-7 loss to Duke. This is a redemption game for quarterback Cade Klubnik, and a chance for Dabo Swinney to play the underdog card. Is this the Tigers' last stand as a CFP contender in 2023?

Given the improvement of other contenders in the ACC, there is no guarantee that this will be a rematch in the ACC championship game. This is a great table-setter for the rest of Saturday's action.

No. 15 Ole Miss at No. 13 Alabama: Who will start at QB for Bama?

Remember when Lane Kiffin was the one who had three quarterbacks to choose from in fall camp. Will he loan one to Nick Saban for this game?

Alabama quarterbacks Tyler Buchner and Ty Simpson combined to hit 10 of 23 passes for 107 yards in an ugly 17-3 victory against South Florida in Week 3. What happened to Jalen Milroe? Will Saban turn back to his original starter against the Rebels?

This quarterback drama is bound to dominate the narrative heading into this game. When was the last time Saban had it this bad at the most-important position?

Kiffin said "Get your popcorn ready" in a pregame interview before the last meeting at Bryant-Denny Stadium in 2021, and the Crimson Tide jumped out to a 28-0 first-half lead in a 42-21 victory. Last year's game was closer at 30-24, but Kiffin has yet to beat his mentor Saban.

No. 22 UCLA at No. 11 Utah: Which freshman QB will steal the show?

The Bruins scored 28 second-half points in a 42-32 victory against Utah last year.

Now, can Chip Kelly repeat that feat on the road? The Bruins have been a complete team through three weeks. Freshman quarterback Dante Moore has 615 passing yards on an average of 17 yards per completion this season, and the Bruins have that vintage two-back attack with Ball State transfer

Carson Steele and TJ Harden.

Winning at Utah, however, is another story. Cam Rising is still rehabbing a torn ACL, and that might mean a start for Nate Johnson, who had 193 passing yards, 71 rushing yards and two TDs in a 31-7 victory against Weber State in Week 3. Underestimate Utes coach Kyle Whittingham at your own risk.

No. 19 Colorado at No. 10 Oregon: How will Deion Sanders make it personal?

Remember when Oregon coach Dan Lanning said this about Colorado when the Buffaloes left the Pac-12 for the Big 12?

Deion Sanders might be back with Nike, but you don't have to wonder whether he will take this personally given the last few weeks. Oregon routed Hawaii 55-10 in Week 3. Colorado beat Colorado State 43-35 in double overtime thanks to Shedeur Sanders' heroics. The Pac-12 opener should carry high ratings with the marquee afternoon spot. What will the Buffaloes do this week?

The quarterback matchup between Sanders and Bo Nix should be superb. The Ducks will be favored – and there might be more on the line for Lanning given those comments back in July.

No. 14 Oregon State at No. 21 Washington State: Who wins 'Left Behind Bowl'?

Oregon State and Washington State – the last two remaining teams in the Pac-12 – are fighting for the right to be the adopt-an-underdog for the rest of the season. The Beavers and Cougars were left out of the realignment shuffle, and both schools have responded with style.

This is a battle of transfer quarterbacks who found the right home. Oregon State's DJ Uiagalelei – a Clemson transfer – is coming off his first rough start of the season against San Diego State. He needs to be better than his 61.7% completion percentage against Washington State.

Cam Ward averages 328.7 passing yards per game with nine TDs and no interceptions for the Cougars, and he's been as advertised in his second year with Jake Dickert.

Don't let this game get lost in the prime-time shuffle.

No. 6 Ohio State at No. 9 Notre Dame: Will Irish upset Buckeyes?

Notre Dame beat Ohio State in the schools' first two meetings in 1935-36. In the modern era, however, Ohio State has won five meetings by an average of 14.6 points per game.

This is the Irish's best chance to end that streak with the big-play passing game of quarterback Sam Hartman – who averages 265.3 passing yards with 13 TDs and no interceptions through four games.

Ohio State's offense, however, started clicking in a 63-10 blowout against Western Kentucky on Saturday. Kyle McCord – who averages 271.7 passing yards with six TDs and one interception – has settled in as the starting quarterback. Is Notre Dame cornerback Benjamin Morrison the answer for Marvin Harrison Jr. on the perimeter?

Which coach needs this one more? Will Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman – a former Ohio State linebacker – score his first signature victory? Or will Ohio State coach Ryan Day improve to 17-6 against ranked teams with top-10 showdowns against Penn State and Michigan looming later this season?

No. 25 Iowa at No. 7 Penn State: Hawkeyes face the 'Whiteout'

Iowa beat Penn State 23-20 on Oct. 9, 2021, but that's not what both sides remember. Coaches James Franklin and Kirk Ferentz had a considerable back and forth on Iowa fans booing injured Nittany Lions' players.

"We don't coach it, haven't really been exposed to it," Ferentz said afterward. "But our fans thought they smelled a rat, I guess, I don't know, so they responded the way they responded."

Now, the Hawkeyes will step into a "Whiteout" for the first time since 2009. It's one of the greatest spectacles in college football, but the hidden fact is Penn State is 7-7 against ranked teams in "Whiteout" situations. The Nittany Lions have looked the part of playoff contender with new quarterback Drew Allar and a talented defense that has outscored opponents 131-35 through three games, but this is the first real test.

Penn State will be a heavy favorite, but Iowa quarterback Cade McNamara led Michigan to a victory in his last start at Beaver Stadium in 2021. Four of the last five meetings have been decided by one score, too.



MY BOOKIE

GRIDIRON GOLD

100% SIGN-UP BONUS
UP TO \$1,000

Enter Your Email Address To Get Started

TIME TO BET

PROMOCODE
GRIDIRONGOLD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

NC State - 9 Over VIRGINIA by 18 Friday Night Game

The Virginia Cavaliers could not be off to a worse start this season, 0-3 after a 42-14 loss to Maryland last Friday,

Now, this Friday, they'll face their first ACC opponent and their former quarterback with Brennan Armstrong back in Charlottesville, but this time leading the 2-1 North Carolina State Wolfpack.

The Wolfpack cruised past VMI in Week 3 and their only loss is to No. 10 Notre Dame. NC State is favored in this conference matchup and we'll get into the odds later.

NC State Brennan Armstrong, QB: This will be a revenge game for Armstrong against his former team. He spent five years at UVA before coming to NC State this season. Now, he is the entire offense for the Wolfpack. Armstrong has thrown for 679 yards while completing 62.9% of his passes with three touchdowns and three interceptions. He is also the team's leading rushing with 161 yards on the ground and three more TDs. Needless to say, he will be stoked to put it to his former team.

Virginia Malik Washington, WR: It's been a rough season at UVA so far, but the Cavaliers have a good 1-2 punch at receiver with Washington and Malachi Fields. Washington has 18 catches for a team high 289 yards and a touchdown. He is averaging 16.1 yards per reception with a long of 63.

The Virginia defense has been just awful this year. The Woos' are 123rd in yards allowed per game and 121st in yards per play given up at 6.4. Last week, they allowed Taulia Tagovailoa of Maryland to throw for 342 yards on just 19 completions.

On offense, the Cavaliers rank almost as poorly as the other side of the ball. They are 115th in yards per game, gaining only 316.7 and at 4.9 yards per play they rank 111th. They are 128th in rushing offense and only average 1.9 yards per rush which is 130th.

NC State typically has a strong secondary to anchor their defense and so far this year they are only allowing 191.7 passing yards per game. Maybe more importantly they rank 15th only giving up 14.3 completions a game and already have two interceptions.

UVA puts everything on Colandrea's shoulders with their nonexistent running game, and pass defense is the strength of NC State. Colandrea got hit a lot last week and will be a bit timid.

Almost everything points to NC State covering as a road favorite except for the fact that the Wolfpack are just 2-8 against the spread in their last 10 games.

That trend is a bit scary, but it's even scarier to back UVA after how poorly they've performed through three weeks. Give me NC State against the spread.

Projected Score: NC State 31, Virginia 13



COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

Oklahoma at CINCINNATI Over 60 by 10

With all of the conference realignment, the Oklahoma Sooners and Cincinnati Bearcats will meet up as Big 12 opponents for just this one time. Like ships passing in the night as Cincinnati makes the step up and Oklahoma prepares for their jump to the SEC.

The Bearcats lost to Miami of Ohio last week, 31-24 to fall to 2-1 after a win over Pitt in Week 2.

Oklahoma meanwhile was stomping Tulsa 66-17 and it looks like Brent Venables has things turned around in Norman. It's the first Big 12 test for Cincinnati and it comes in Week 4.

Oklahoma's Dillon Gabriel, QB: Gabriel was on fire in Week 3 against Tulsa. He went 28/31 for 421 yards with five touchdowns to just one interception. For the year he has thrown for 905 yards while completing 82.5% of his passes which is the best completion percentage of any quarterback in college football who has attempted over 20 passes.

Cincinnati's Emory Jones, QB: There are a combined 11 seasons of college football between the two quarterbacks in this matchup. Jones is on his third team as the QB of the Bearcats and is having a solid year. He threw two interceptions in their loss in Week 3, but has the highest completion percentage of his career and has already met his passing touchdown total from 2022 at Arizona State with seven.

We'll get into the offense for Oklahoma because it's dynamic, but first we have to start with Cincinnati's defense. It's a problem for the Bearcats who allowed 7.3 yards per play to Miami Ohio in Week 3. Turnovers were the reason that they lost that game, because they outgained the Redhawks 538-358, but they also ran 91 plays to Miami's 49.

The Bearcats are giving up 5.5 yards per play this season and Oklahoma is 16th in the country, gaining 7.4. The Sooners are also eighth in yards with 535.3 per game and 37th in plays per game, so this could have a fast pace to it. Cincinnati is fifth in plays per game, which is heavily skewed by their 91 last week.

Dillon Gabriel is fantastic and he makes Oklahoma's offense incredibly efficient. He is averaging 11.3 yards per attempt which is sixth in college football and 13.6 yards per completion. The Sooners also have Tawee Walker ripping off 5.6 yards per carry from the backfield as a nice complement.

Cincinnati might be able to score enough to keep up. As long as Emory Jones doesn't turn the football over, but that potential certainly exists after his two picks last week and that makes me love the over even more. Turnovers are a lot better for overs than punts.

The over is a combined 5-1 between these two teams this year and I'm taking it in this one to fly over the total points of 60.

Projected Score: Oklahoma 42, Cincinnati 28



COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

SMU at TCU Over 63 by 7

The “Battle for the Iron Skillet” returns to Fort Worth as the TCU Horned Frogs host the SMU Mustangs in Week 4 of the college football season.

Both teams enter the rivalry game at 2-1 and coming off a win. Last season, the Horned Frogs took a 42-34 win at SMU and TCU leads the all-time series 52-42-7.

The Horned Frogs are a touchdown favorite in Week 4 over the Mustangs. Now, we let's dig deeper into the “Battle for the Iron Skillet.”

SMU has Preston Stone at QB: With Tanner Mordecai playing for Wisconsin now, the Mustangs needed a replacement and they seem to have found a pretty good one. The sophomore has thrown for 798 yards and nine touchdowns while completing 62.7% of his passes.

TCU has Emani Bailey, a transfer running back: The Horned Frogs not only lost their QB and WR1 from last season, they also lost their top two running backs to the NFL. Bailey, a transfer from Louisiana in his second year at TCU, has taken over and done a nice job in the backfield.

He is rushing for 6.4 yards per carry and has racked up 357 yards and a touchdown through three games. Last time out he went for 126 yards and a touchdown on 23 carries against Houston.

TCU looks like they might be back on track offensively. In Week 3, the Horned Frogs gained 564 yards against Houston and averaged 6.4 yards per play. Morris threw for 314 yards, two touchdowns and one pick. Emani Bailey overtook Trey Sanders as their top running back and ran for 126 yards. This season, TCU is 13th in yards per game at 515.7 and 33rd in yards per play averaging 6.5.

Through three games SMU ranks 16th in opponent yards per play and 25th in yards per rush, only giving up 2.8.

Context is important because Oklahoma ran all over this SMU defense which ranked 123rd in run defense in 2022. They played some weak opponents early, I don't expect this to be a stout unit up front. I expect a big game from TCU's RB Bailey.

SMU will be able to keep up with the Horned Frogs offense. The Mustangs are 25th in passing offense behind Preston Stone and TCU's secondary has been a disaster.

Colorado's QB Shedeur Sanders threw for 510 yards and four touchdowns against them and they are allowing 304.0 passing yards a game, which is 126th in the country.

The over is 7-3 in the last 10 meetings between these two teams and that's my pick this weekend. It helps that they both play at a fast pace, TCU is fourth in plays per game and SMU is 11th, so both sides will have plenty of opportunities to put points on the board against tired defenses. Take over the posted total number of 63.

Projected Score: TCU 38, SMU 32



COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

TEXAS A&M - 7 Over Auburn by 17

There are a lot of frustrations in College Station, but last week Jimbo Fisher's Texas A&M Aggies took out some of them on Louisiana Monroe in a 47-3 win. A&M is now 2-1 after its disappointing Week 2 loss to Miami.

Now, the Aggies are ready for SEC play, and welcome Auburn to Kyle Field on Saturday.

Hugh Freeze has his Auburn Tigers at 3-0 in his first season, though it hasn't been completely smooth sailing. This will be the first big test for Freeze after getting back into the SEC. Week 4 has plenty of storylines, and this is one of them.

Auburn's Jaylin Simpson, CB: One of the best ways to win a football game as an underdog is to force turnovers, and this season Simpson has had a nose for the football. He has three interceptions through three games, one in each contest. Connor Weigman will want to know where No. 36 is at all times and stay aware from his neighborhood.

Texas A&M's Noah Thomas, WR: The Aggies are loaded at wide receiver, but even with all their talent at the position, Thomas is hogging all the touchdowns. He has four of their 10 receiving touchdowns this season and that's on just 10 catches for Thomas.

Keep an eye out for the 6-foot-6 sophomore in the red zone. He'll be the giant wearing No. 3 and I'm expecting a giant game from him.

Payton Thorne has led Auburn to great offensive performances against inferior opponents, but when they faced Cal in Week 2 the Tigers only scored 14 points in the win. Thorne was only 9-14 passing in that game and finished with 94 yards.

Auburn only gained 230 yards in a very slow paced contest. Auburn is 110th in plays per game. That scares me off the over even though the over is 7-3 in Auburn's last 10 games.

This game is a bit hard to judge because Auburn hasn't really played anyone good yet under Hugh Freeze and their only decent opponent nearly beat them. Like I said earlier, when they faced Cal in Week 2 the Tigers only scored 14 points in the win.

Thorne was only 9-14 passing in that game and finished with 94 yards. My hypothesis is that the Aggies are a notch above the Cal Bears.

Texas A&M on the other hand has pounded inferior teams, but got beaten thoroughly by Miami. Since 2018, when Jimbo Fisher first took over at A&M, there haven't been many positives other than recruiting rankings, but the Aggies are 17-11 against the spread as home favorites.

I still believe in A&M's offense. Connor Weigman is completing 70.5% of his passes and averaging 8.7 yards per attempt. He has eight touchdowns to two interceptions and has too many talented receivers to fail.

Miami at least had the players to compete with the Aggies, but Hugh Freeze isn't quite there yet at Auburn. Given that this is at Kyle Field I'm leaning towards A&M to cover. I said I was done believing in A&M after their loss to Miami, and yet here I am again taking the 11th man and the Aggies - 7

Projected Score: Texas AM 34, Auburn 17

A promotional banner for MyBookie.com. On the left, it says "MY BOOKIE" in large orange and white letters, with "PROMOCODE GRIDIRONGOLD" in a smaller box below. In the center, it says "UP TO \$1000 WELCOME BONUS" in large white letters. On the right, there is a green button that says "BET NOW" in white. The background features a green field with a football player in a white jersey and helmet running, and a football in the air.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BET

MICHIGAN - 25 Over Rutgers by 14

The Rutgers Scarlet Knights and Michigan Wolverines meet Saturday in week 4 college football action at Michigan Stadium. Let's preview this game and give out my pick and prediction.

The Rutgers Scarlet Knights take the road for the first time and are looking for their first 4-0 start since 2012. This is easily the biggest game for Rutgers in quite some time.

Gavin Wimsatt is completing 51.5 percent of his passes for 407 yards, 3 touchdowns and 0 interceptions.

JaQuae Jackson and Christian Dremel have combined for 171 receiving yards and 1 touchdown, while Isaiah Washington has 7 receptions.

The Rutgers Scarlet Knights ground game is averaging 210.7 yards per contest, and Kyle Monangai leads the way with 357 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Defensively, Rutgers is allowing 10 points and 273.3 yards per game. Tyreem Powell leads the Rutgers Scarlet Knights with 28 tackles, Aaron Lewis has 1 sack and Max Melton has 1 interception.

The Michigan Wolverines look for a fourth straight home win to start 4-0 for a third straight season.

Michigan hasn't lost to an unranked team since a November 2020 loss to Penn State.

J.J. McCarthy is completing 82.4 percent of his passes for 701 yards, 7 touchdowns and 3 interceptions.

Cornelius Johnson and Roman Wilson have combined for 433 receiving yards and 7 touchdowns, while Colston Loveland has 9 receptions.

The Michigan Wolverines ground game is averaging 156.7 yards per contest, and Blake Corum leads the way with 254 yards and 6 touchdowns.

Defensively, Michigan is allowing 5.3 points and 223 yards per game. Junior Colson leads the Michigan Wolverines with 16 tackles, Jaylen Harrell has 2.5 sacks and Quinten Johnson has 1 interception.

Michigan ranked 1st among FBS teams for Q4 points per game last season (12.9). Michigan ranked 1st among FBS teams for H2 points per game last season (22.8).

The Michigan Wolverines are obviously the more talented and physical team, but this line isn't showing any respect toward Rutgers.

The Rutgers Scarlet Knights are greatly improved defensively, they have the seventh best scoring defense and their offense is 20th in rushing.

Rutgers has the formula for competing on the road in terms of playing defense and being able to run the ball.

We just saw Rutgers break down Virginia Tech last week. Give this team some credit. Michigan likely wins, but we're getting almost 4 touchdowns with the best Rutgers team in quite some time.

Give me the road dog and a bundle of points.

Projected Score: Michigan 30, Rutgers 16



COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICKS

Colorado at Oregon (70) - This spread is high, perhaps because Colorado will be without Travis Hunter, who was knocked out of Week 3's game against Colorado State because of a dirty hit. Oregon's offense will be the best test yet for Colorado's defense, which still allows 5.0 yards per carry. The Buffaloes take their first loss under Deion Sanders, but Shedeur Sanders makes enough plays in the passing game to push this game over the total. **TAKE: Over 70**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

Arkansas at LSU (55) - All three LSU games have hit the over this season, something that looks very feasible with a home game against the Razorbacks. Jayden Daniels will establish an immediate connection with Malik Nabers, who had 239 receiving yards against Mississippi State in Week 3. Together these high powered offenses will top the total of 55. **TAKE: Over 55**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

UAB at Georgia (-41) - UAB allowed an average of 45 points per game in losses to Georgia Southern and Louisiana. The Bulldogs will be able to get their running game going, but they have failed to cover in three games – and the under hit every time. All UAB coach Trent Dilfer has to do is get to 10 points for the cover. But, Kirby will release the Dawg's for ranking purposes. **TAKE: UGA-41**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

Toledo at W Michigan (19) - The Rockets showed that their offense can do great things in the right matchups. Last weekend versus San Jose State, Toledo out-gained the Spartans 229-40 on the ground in their win. That said, Toledo should be able to handle Western Michigan at home if the Rockets play to their capabilities. Western Michigan is not very good. **Take: Toledo - 19**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

Duke at UCONN (22) - The Duke Blue Devils are obviously the more talented team and could blow the doors off here. However, this is a look ahead spot for Duke, with Notre Dame on deck next week. Also, UCONN has found ways to hang around in its losses. UCONN only lost to NC State by 10. We're getting over 3 touchdowns with the Huskies at home. Give me the points. **TAKE: UCONN + 22**

GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET RESOURCES

CLICK TO LAUNCH THESE POPULAR GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET RESOURCES

<u>CFB TV SCHEDULE</u>	<u>NFL TV SCHEDULE</u>
<u>CFB WEATHER REPORT</u>	<u>NFL WEATHER REPORT</u>
<u>COLLEGE FOOTBALL ODDS</u>	<u>NFL FOOTBALL ODDS</u>
<u>COLLEGE FOOTBALL BETTING BLOG</u>	<u>NFL FOOTBALL BETTING BLOG</u>

STATS CENTER:

[COLLEGE & PRO FOOTBALL MATCHUP STATS](#) + [COLLEGE & PRO POWER RATINGS](#)
+ [COLLEGE & PRO INJURY REPORTS](#) + [COLLEGE & PRO TEAM STATISTICS & MORE](#)

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS

	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	NC St - 9	Cincy Ov 60	TCU Ov 63	Texas AM - 7	Rutgers + 25

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET PREFERRED PICKS

CFB	Oregon Ov 70	LSU Ov 55	Georgia – 41	Toledo - 19	UCONN + 22
-----	--------------	-----------	--------------	-------------	------------



Chiefs, Mahomes Are Back; Jets No Match For Cowboys; Giants Amazing Comeback; Bills Bounce Back; Bucs Stay Unbeaten; Tua Beats Patriots Once Again

NFL LANDSCAPE:

The NFL Week 2 slate provided us with an Eagles win over the Vikings to kick things off before a baker's dozen of games Sunday.

Among the best games this weekend includes the Jaguars and Chiefs facing off for the third time since November, the Bengals and Ravens having a rematch of their infamous wild-card game, and the Jets seeing what Zach Wilson could do against the powerful Cowboys defense.

Finally, on Sunday night, it's a battle between Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa and the Patriots defense for a big victory in the AFC East.

Chiefs 17, Jaguars 9

Patrick Mahomes threw a pair of touchdowns on his 28th birthday for more than 300 yards and a couple of touchdowns in the Chiefs win over the Jaguars.

The Chiefs defense has stepped up considerably, allowing 23 points across two games against very good offenses in Detroit and Jacksonville. Oh, and Chris Jones? He had 1.5 sacks with a tackle for loss.

Jacksonville needs to get better up front. The Jaguars allowed four sacks to Kansas City, including 1.5 each to Jones and George Karlaftis. After two weeks, quarterback Trevor Lawrence has been dumped six times. It's not cause for major concern considering left tackle Cam Robinson is suspended and right tackle Anton Harrison is a rookie, but it's worth monitoring.

49ers 30, Rams 23

No team has a better running game than the 49ers, who can beat you in a multitude of ways. On Sunday, San Francisco ran for 159 yards on 5.7 yards per carry after totaling 188 yards on 5.5 YPC. If quarterback Brock Purdy can simply make the easy plays, the Niners are one of the best offenses in the league.

Los Angeles might have found a gem in fifth-round receiver Puka Nacua. After catching 10 balls for 119 yards in his NFL debut, Nacua torched the 49ers for another 15 catches and 147 yards. If the Rams can get Cooper Kupp healthy next month, quarterback Matthew Stafford has a nice group of weapons.

Cowboys 30, Jets 10

Zach Wilson isn't getting it done unless New York scores in unconventional ways. Wilson had a 68-yard touchdown pass to Garrett Wilson, but otherwise was 12-of-27 for 170 yards and three interceptions. While the Cowboys' defense is elite, the Jets couldn't threaten at all. Even though they beat Buffalo in Week 1, it was much of the same last Monday night as well.

Dallas continues to show why it's a Super Bowl contender. The offense has room to improve, but the defense is a dominant unit with Micah Parsons leading the way. Parsons already has three sacks on the season, and against New York had three tackles for loss, four quarterback hits, two sacks, a forced fumble and a recovered fumble.

Commanders 35, Broncos 33

The defensive line can be the reason Washington has real playoff hopes. Over the Commanders' first two games, they've notched nine sacks, including six of Russell Wilson in Sunday's come-from-behind win. The combination of Daron Payne, Jonathan Allen and Chase Young is among the league's scariest for opposing offenses.

Sean Payton is a Super Bowl-winning coach, but this might test everything inside of him. Denver had a 21–3 lead against a quarterback making his third career start, and then was promptly outscored 32–6. Wilson is clearly an issue, but the defense is also part of the problem.

Ravens 27, Bengals 24

Lamar Jackson looked far more comfortable this weekend in Todd Monken's offense. Even without star linemen Tyler Linderbaum and Ronnie Stanley, Jackson threw for 237 yards and two touchdowns while rushing for another 57. He was the star Baltimore needed to notch a key divisional win over the struggling Bengals.

The rushing defense is a major issue. Yes, the Ravens and Browns are maybe the two worst opponents to face in that regard, but Cincinnati has been gashed for a collective 384 yards on 77 carries (4.9 YPC). While Joe Burrow's lackluster start is concerning, that'll be corrected. The defense, right now, is the bigger long-term problem.

Titans 27, Chargers 24 (OT)

Los Angeles has no pass defense. The Chargers allowed a Week 1 high 466 passing yards against Tua Tagovailoa and the Dolphins. Then, facing a pop-gun offense in the Titans and Ryan Tannehill, the Chargers watched as the veteran quarterback went 20-of-24 for 246 yards and a touchdown. In the pass-heavy AFC, that's a certain way for L.A. to lose more than its share of games.

Tennessee can win with its front seven. Last weekend, the Titans allowed only 16 points to the Saints, largely because it sacked Derek Carr four times. On Sunday, Tennessee brought down Justin Herbert on four occasions. This pass rush, plus running the ball, is a winning recipe.

Bills 38, Raiders 10

If Las Vegas is going to be surprisingly competitive this season, it starts with Jimmy Garoppolo not making huge mistakes. Leading 7–0 with the ball early, Garoppolo threw an interception deep in his own territory, and Buffalo took off. The veteran signal-caller needs to take the sack on that screen instead of throwing it into chaos. Hopefully, he takes that lesson moving forward.

The easy takeaway is Josh Allen bouncing back, but that's not surprising. What was surprising is Buffalo, which had the league's worst Week 1 run defense, holding Josh Jacobs to minus-two yards on nine carries. If the front seven can play anything close to that most weeks, Buffalo will notch plenty of blowout wins.

Seahawks 37, Lions 31 (OT)

After an incredible Pro Bowl season in 2022, Geno Smith struggled in Week 1 with 112 passing yards. The big adjustment? Getting Tyler Lockett more involved. After catching just two passes on four targets against the Rams, Lockett had eight receptions on 12 targets, including the game-winning touchdown. Nice job by coordinator Shane Waldron getting Lockett back in the flow.

The pass rush remains an issue. While second-year stud Aidan Hutchinson is on Detroit's front, there isn't much else. Detroit only hit Smith once on Sunday, and against the Chiefs in Week 1, Mahomes was never sacked. It's putting a ton of pressure on the secondary.

Giants 31, Cardinals 28

New York showed fight, led by their much maligned quarterback. Daniel Jones signed a questionable four-year, \$160 million extension this offseason but facing a 20–0 halftime deficit, completed 17-of-21 for 259 yards in the second half of a comeback win. New York has plenty to clean up, but that's the kind of performance from Jones which inspires confidence.

Arizona has been competitive in both of its games, more than most expected from this group with quarterback Kyler Murray rehabbing from a torn ACL. Blowing a 28–7 lead leaves little room for silver linings, but the offense was efficient with Joshua Dobbs under center (21-of-31 for 228 yards) and running back James Conner (23 carries, 106 yards, TD).

Falcons 25, Packers 24

Last weekend, the Bears were stifled by a swarming Green Bay defense. That wasn't the case in Atlanta, as the unit allowed 446 total yards, including four consecutive scoring drives before a kneel-down to end the game. If the Packers are going to fight for the NFC North, the defense must be terrific while the offense finds its way.

The defense, for the second consecutive week, is doing the job. After holding the Panthers to 10 points in Week 1, the Packers only mustered 224 total yards. With a second-year quarterback in Desmond Ridder working into the offense, defensive coordinator Ryan Nielsen is taking significant pressure off him.

Buccaneers 27, Bears 17

Baker Mayfield passes for 317 yards and a touchdown to lead the Buccaneers past the Bears in Week 2. Mayfield kept the Buccaneers unbeaten, passing for 317 yards and a touchdown..

The Bears passing game hasn't improved. Chicago spent the off-season adding guard Nate Davis and tackle Darnell Wright, along with receiver DJ Moore. The result? Horrid play. Quarterback Justin Fields was sacked six times on Sunday, and it could have been more. Chicago has to find a way to generate easy throws.

Who saw this start coming? One of the biggest reasons is quarterback Baker Mayfield, who has yet to throw an interception. If Mayfield can continue to play smart football, allowing his defense to play the leading role, there's a good season ahead for Tampa Bay in the wide open NFC South.

Colts 31, Texans 20

Shane Steichen knows what he's doing. Indianapolis led the Jaguars in the final quarter of Week 1, and then handled the Texans with relative ease. Rookie quarterback Anthony Richardson, who had

two rushing touchdowns, needs to be handled with extra care after his concussion, but the offense is multi-dimensional despite limited weapons.

Houston isn't going to win shootouts, putting the defense in a tough spot. Under a defensive-minded coach in DeMeco Ryans, the Texans can't allow 90 rushing yards in a half, leading to 28 points. The path forward for Houston is playing conservatively and allowing the defense to lead. Last week saw some of that despite a lopsided loss. Not the case against the Colts.

Eagles 34, Vikings 28

The offense has been very one-dimensional to this point. On Thursday, Minnesota ran for 28 yards on only nine attempts. If the Vikings are going to get back to playing winning football, it starts with finding balance.

Philadelphia has played far from perfect the first two weeks, and yet it's 2-0 with wins over a playoff team from last year and Bill Belichick on the road. Jalen Hurts will eventually settle in under new coordinator Brian Johnson, and the offense should return to its terrifying self.

NFL Players Performances:

Raheem Mostert carries Dolphins past Patriots 24-17. Mostert rushed for 121 yards and 2 touchdowns on 18 carries (6.7 ypc). The 31-year-old currently ranks sixth in the NFL in rushing yards (158) and is tied for first in rushing touchdowns (3).

Tua Tagovailoa had a solid game (21/30, 249, 1, 1) and is now a perfect 5-0 against the Patriots. His top receiver was Jaylen Waddle (4 catches for 86 yards), who left in the fourth quarter after taking a nasty hit.

Vic Fangio — the highest-paid defensive coordinator in NFL history (\$4.6 million per year) — oversaw a defense that held New England to under 300 yards of total offense.

The Patriots are 0-2 for the first time since 2001, which was Bill Belichick's second season as coach. The team's offensive line issues are limiting an offense that has shown improvement under new coordinator Bill O'Brien.

Joe Burrow re-injures calf in 27-24 loss to Ravens. Burrow aggravated his strained right calf during the Bengals' last offensive possession. He's unsure if he'll be able to play next week. Burrow hasn't looked right since the season began, completing just 57% of his passes for 304 yards, 2 touchdowns, and 1 interception through two games (both losses).

Burrow has also struggled to connect with Ja'Marr Chase, who is averaging only 5 catches for 39 yards per game. Jake Browning is next up at quarterback, though Cincinnati also has preseason star Will Grier on the practice squad.

The Ravens are off to a 2-0 start and look good under new offensive coordinator Todd Monken. Lamar Jackson accounted for 291 yards (237 passing, 54 rushing), 2 touchdowns, and no turnovers.

Cowboys Micah Parsons and mates stifled Zach Wilson in 30-10 win over Jets. Wilson completed only 12-of-27 (44%) passes for 170 yards, 1 touchdown, and 3 interceptions. 40% of his passing yards came on a 68-yard touchdown pass to Garrett Wilson.

Wilson's struggles led offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett to abandon the running game early, which led to post-game criticism from Breece Hall. Jets' running backs — Hall, Dalvin Cook, and Michael Carter — combined for only 10 carries. Wilson does not appear capable of keeping the Jets competitive in Aaron Rodgers' absence, though coach Robert Saleh was supportive of the third-year quarterback following the game.

Besides excellent Cowboys defensive play, the Cowboys got strong performances out of Dak Prescott (31/38, 255, 2, 0), CeeDee Lamb (11-143), and Tony Pollard (109 scrimmage yards). Dallas is one of eight 2-0 teams, the others are Philadelphia, Atlanta, Baltimore, Tampa Bay, San Francisco, Washington, and Miami.

Star Rookies: Puka Nacua and Bijan Robinson among rookie standouts. Nacua: Nacua caught 15-of-20 targets for 147 yards in the Rams' 30-23 loss to the 49ers. He broke the single-game record for receptions by a rookie. Through his first two career games, Nacua, a fifth-rounder, has 35 targets (most in the league), 25 catches (most in the league), and 266 receiving yards (second-most in the league).

Robinson: Robinson totaled 172 scrimmage yards (124 rushing, 48 receiving) on 23 touches (19 carries, 4 catches) in the Falcons' 25-24 win over the Packers. Through two games, Robinson is up to 180 rushing yards (second-most in the league) and 75 receiving yards.

Anthony Richardson concussed in 31-20 win over Texans. Richardson self-reported concussion symptoms in the second quarter and was pulled from the game. He has entered the concussion protocol, which put his status for Week 3 in question. Richardson played well before exiting, completing 6-of-10 passes for 56 yards and rushing for 35 yards and 2 touchdowns on 3 carries.

Gardner Minshew was solid in relief of Richardson, completing 19-of-23 passes for 171 yards, 1 touchdown, and 0 interceptions.

Zack Moss shined in his season debut, rushing for 88 yards and a touchdown on 18 carries (4.9 ypc). Texans quarterback CJ Stroud had a statistically impressive game, completing 30-of-47 passes for 384 yards, 2 touchdowns, and 0 interceptions. He currently leads all quarterbacks in Week 2 passing yards.

Notable Injuries: Barkley, Montgomery, Adams

Saquon Barkley: Barkley suffered a sprained ankle in the Giants' 31-28 win over the Cardinals.

Montgomery: David Montgomery injured his thigh in the Lions' 37-31 loss to the Seahawks. Jahmyr Gibbs should — theoretically — see increased usage.

Adams: Davante Adams left the Raiders' 38-10 loss to the Bills with a concussion. He caught 6 passes for 84 yards and a touchdown before exiting.

Other Injuries: Packers OL Elgton Jenkins left with a knee (MCL) injury - Commanders TE Logan Thomas left with a concussion - Ravens WR Odell Beckham Jr. left with a minor ankle injury
Rams looking to trade RB Cam Akers - Lions DE Justin Houston (fractured ankle) out 6-8 weeks



PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

LA Chargers P Over MINNESOTA by 11

The Neither the Los Angeles Chargers nor the Minnesota Vikings would have envisioned being winless after the first two weeks of the NFL season, but that is the position they both find themselves in heading into their Week 3 showdown in Minneapolis.

In the offseason, the Vikings elected to part ways with Dalvin Cook and elevate Alexander Mattison to tote the pigskin. Through two games with the New York Jets, Cook has 40 yards on 17 carries, an average of 2.4 yards per carry. So, the decision to cut costs there doesn't look like bad on that end of the move at the moment.

But on their end of the move, the Vikings couldn't be faring much worse heading into Sunday's clash with the Chargers. Mattison is actually outperforming Cook, but that isn't saying much when the bar is near the floor. Through two games, Mattison has run for 62 yards on 19 carries (3.3 yards per carry), and his six receptions have gone for just 21 yards.

Kirk Cousins has started well, and Justin Jefferson is on pace for 170 catches and 2,472 yards, so things aren't disastrous on offense for Minnesota. But the ground game needs to be enough of a threat to keep opposing defenses on their toes, and this lack of production is not helping the Vikings.

Unfortunately, it doesn't look likely to improve against the Chargers. In Week 1, the Bolts allowed 70 rushing yards on 20 attempts (3.5 yards per carry) against the Dolphins. And in Week 2, they did about as good of a job as you can hope for against Derrick Henry, who ran for 80 yards but needed 25 carries to do so (3.2 yards per carry).

At the same time, the Vikings are coming off of a game in which they allowed 259 rushing yards at 5.4 yards a pop, with D'Andre Swift torching them for 175 yards on 28 carries.

The Chargers didn't have a lot of success on the ground against the Titans, who had the NFL's best run defense last season and could again this season. But in Week 1 against the Dolphins, Austin Ekeler (16 carries, 117 yards, TD) and Joshua Kelley (16 carries, 91 yards, TD) combined for 208 yards on 32 carries (6.5 yards per carry).

For all intents and purposes, you can call the aerial attack battle a wash here. Both teams bring a lot to the table in that regard and airing it out shouldn't be a problem on either side.

The Chargers took on Miami in their first matchup of the year. Los Angeles scored points in every quarter (and gave up points in every quarter) during a tough loss 36-34. QB Justin Herbert finished with 229 yards and a score, while Austin Ekeler had 117 yards rushing and a TD. Keenan Allen had 76 receiving yards off six catches.

In game two, the Chargers played another close one and came up on the losing end again. Los Angeles had a 14-10 lead on the Titans at the break but ended up falling 27-24 in overtime. Herbert had 305 pass yards and two scores this time and Joshua Kelley had 39 rushing yards. Allen led the receivers again on 111 yards and two scores from eight grabs.

The Chargers posted a rough 2-of-14 rate on third-down tries in Week 2, and also had a pretty tepid 28:09 in time of possession alongside 61 rushing yards (LA had 233 in Week 1). Minnesota hasn't been good on the ground this year in either game: the Vikings managed 28 rush yards versus the Eagles and 41 versus Tampa. Vikes will not control the game with a one-dimensional offense.

But Minnesota's concerns with the run both offensively and defensively are a major concern, especially in a game that shapes up to be very close.

With that in mind, I'm giving the edge to the Chargers. Both teams are due to come out on the right side in a close game, but I'm backing the Bolts to get it done and pick up their first win of the season.

Projected Score: LA Chargers 30, Minnesota 21

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

Buffalo - 6 Over WASHINGTON by 18

The 1-1 Buffalo Bills will travel to take on the 2-0 Washington Commanders on Sunday in week 3 of the NFL season.

Buffalo enters this game with a record of 1-1 following a loss on the road against the New York Jets by a score of 16-22 and a win at home against the Las Vegas Raiders by a score of 38-10.

The Washington Commanders enter this game with a record of 2-0 following wins at home against the Arizona Cardinals by a score of 20-16 and on the road against the Denver Broncos by a score of 35-33. Will the Commanders remain undefeated or will the Bills win their 2nd game in a row? Let's take a deeper dive into how these teams are performing this season.

The Buffalo Bills enter this game with a record of 1-1 following a 38-10 win at home against the Las Vegas Raiders while covering the 7.5-point spread as a home favorite in week 2 of the NFL season.

Buffalo scored 38 points while compiling 450 total yards offensively which included 274 passing yards and 183 rushing yards while allowing 10 points and 240 total yards defensively which included 185 passing yards and 55 rushing yards.

Josh Allen led the team in passing, completing 31 of 37 attempts for 274 yards and three touchdowns. James Cook led the team in rushing with 17 carries for 123 yards while adding four receptions for 36 yards. Gabe Davis led the team in receiving, catching six of seven targets for 92 yards and a touchdown.

Washington enters this game with a record of 2-0 following a 35-33 win on the road against the Denver Broncos while covering the 4-point spread as a road underdog by winning the game outright in week 2 of the NFL season.

The Commanders scored 35 points while compiling 388 total yards offensively which included 299 passing yards and 122 rushing yards while allowing 33 points and 399 total yards defensively which included 308 passing yards and 122 rushing yards.

Sam Howell led the team in passing, completing 27 of 39 attempts for 299 yards and two touchdowns while rushing for 11 yards.

Brian Robinson Jr. led the team in rushing with 18 carries for 87 yards and two touchdowns while adding two receptions for 42 yards.

Terry McLaurin led the team in receiving, catching five of six targets for 54 yards and a touchdown.

Buffalo Bills is listed as 6-point favorites on the road against the Washington Commanders.

Buffalo has won seven of the last eight and two of the last three games while going 7-1 ATS in the last eight and 2-1 ATS in the last three games in the series. Buffalo is 1-1 ATS overall, 0-1 ATS on the road, and 1-1 ATS as a favorite this season.

The Washington Commanders are 1-1 ATS overall, 0-1 ATS at home, and 1-0 ATS as an underdog this season.

Buffalo is the more talented team this season and has been the better team in the series, winning seven of the last eight and two of the last three games. The Bills are 7-1 ATS in the last eight and 2-1 ATS in the last three games in the series.

After the embarrassing loss in week one where Josh Allen was absolutely terrible, he has steamed the wrinkles out and is playing weel. I am taking the Buffalo Bills -6 on the road against the Washington Commanders.

Projected Score: Buffalo 31, Washington 13

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

DETROIT - 3 Over Atlanta by 11

The Atlanta Falcons travel to take on the 1-1 Detroit Lions on Sunday afternoon in week 3 of the NFL season.

Atlanta enters this game 2-0 following wins at home against the Carolina Panthers by a score of 24-10 and against the Green Bay Packers by a score of 25-24 while the Lions are 1-1 following a win on the road against the Kansas City Chiefs by a score of 21-20 and a loss in overtime at home against the Seattle Seahawks by a score of 31-37.

Will the Falcons improve to 3-0 on the season or will the Lions get the win at home? Let's take a closer look at how these teams are faring this season.

The Atlanta Falcons enter this game with a record of 2-0 following a 25-24 win at home against the Green Bay Packers while failing to cover the 3-point spread as a home favorite in week 2 of the NFL season.

Atlanta scored 25 points while compiling 446 total yards offensively which included 237 passing yards and 211 rushing yards while allowing 24 points and 224 total yards defensively which included 151 passing yards and 84 rushing yards.

Dennis Ridder led the team in passing, completing 19 of 32 attempts for 237 yards with a touchdown and an interception while rushing for 39 yards and a touchdown.

Bijan Robinson led the team in rushing with 19 carries for 124 yards while adding four receptions for 48 yards.

Drake London led the team in receiving, catching six of seven targets for 67 yards and a touchdown.

Detroit enters this game with a record of 1-1 following a 31-37 loss in overtime at home against the Seattle Seahawks while failing to cover the 4.5-point spread as a home favorite in week 2 of the NFL season.

The Lions scored 31 points while compiling 418 total yards offensively which included 323 passing yards and 102 rushing yards while allowing 37 points and 393 total yards defensively which included 328 passing yards and 82 rushing yards.

Jared Goff led the team in passing, completing 28 of 35 attempts for 323 yards with three touchdowns and an interception.

David Montgomery led the team in rushing with 16 carries for 67 yards and a touchdown while adding a reception for seven yards.

Amon-Ra St. Brown led the team in receiving, catching six of seven targets for 102 yards.

Detroit Lions are listed as 4.5-point favorites (just like last week) at home against the Atlanta Falcons.

Atlanta has won six of the last ten and two of the last three games while going 6-4 ATS in the last ten games in the series. Atlanta is 1-1 ATS overall this season.

The Detroit Lions are 1-1 ATS overall, 0-1 ATS at home, and 0-1 ATS as a favorite on the year.

Detroit is the more talented team this season, however, Atlanta has been the better team in the series, winning six of the last ten and two of the last three games. The Falcons are 6-4 ATS in the last ten games in the series.

Nevertheless, the Lions defense played the rush well last week and Ridder is not Geno Smith and his talented receiving corp. As a result, I backing the Detroit Lions in a home field back-to-back game.

Projected Score: Detroit 28, Atlanta 17

PRO FOOTBALL BEST BET

JACKSONVILLE - 9 Over Houston by 18

This matchup features a pair of AFC South rivals when the 0-2 Houston Texans travel to take on the 1-1 Jacksonville Jaguars on Sunday in week 3 of the NFL season.

Houston enters this game with a record of 0-2 following a loss on the road against the Baltimore Ravens by a score of 9-25 and at home against the Indianapolis Colts by a score of 20-31 while the Jaguars are 1-1 following a win on the road against the Indianapolis Colts by a score of 31-21 and at home against the Kansas City Chiefs by a score of 9-17. Let's take a closer look at how these teams are faring this season and I'll come up with my selection.

The Houston Texans enter this game with a record of 0-2 following a 20-31 loss at home against the Indianapolis Colts while failing to cover the 1-point spread as a home favorite in week 2 of the NFL season. Houston scored 20 points while compiling 389 total yards offensively which included 384 passing yards and 52 rushing yards while allowing 31 points and 353 total yards defensively which included 227 passing yards and 126 rushing yards.

C.J. Stroud led the team in passing, completing 30 of 47 attempts for 384 yards and two touchdowns. Dameon Pierce led the team in rushing with 15 carries for 31 yards while adding two receptions for four yards.

Nico Collins led the team in receiving, catching seven of nine targets for 146 yards and a touchdown. Collins was also solid in Week 1, catching 6-of-11 targets for 80 yards. Dell, a rookie third-rounder, caught 7-of-10 targets for 72 yards and 1 touchdown on Sunday. The young duo should continue seeing heavy targets, considering the Texans are likely to be playing catch-up most weeks.

Jacksonville enters this game with a record of 1-1 following a 9-17 loss at home against the Kansas City Chiefs while failing to cover the 3.5-point spread as a home underdog in week 2 of the NFL season. The Jaguars scored 9 points while compiling 271 total yards offensively which included 215 passing yards and 74 rushing yards while allowing 399 total yards defensively which included 305 passing yards and 101 rushing yards.

Trevor Lawrence led the team in passing, completing 22 of 41 attempts for 216 yards while adding 26 rushing yards.

Travis Etienne led the team in rushing with 12 carries for 40 yards while adding two receptions for two yards. Christian Kirk led the team in receiving, catching 11 of 14 targets for 110 yards.

The Jacksonville Jaguars are listed as 8.5-point favorites at home against the Houston Texans.

Houston has won nine of the last ten and two of the last three games while going 7-3 ATS in the last ten and 2-1 ATS in the last three games in the series.

Houston is 0-2 ATS overall, 0-1 ATS on the road, 0-1 ATS as an underdog, and 0-1 ATS in division games.

The Jacksonville Jaguars are 1-1 ATS overall, 0-1 ATS at home, 1-0 ATS as a favorite, and 1-0 ATS in division games.

Jacksonville is the better team this season, however, Houston has been the dominant team in the series, winning nine of the last ten and two of the last three games. The Texans are 7-3 ATS in the last ten and 2-1 ATS in the last three games in the series.

Nevertheless, the Jaguars were held down by a unexpected strong Chiefs defense last week. Second game in a row at home and with a weaker opponent the offense will start clicking.

As a result, I am laying the lumber and backing the Jaguars to right the ship.

Projected Score: Jacksonville 31, Houston 13

PRO FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

San Francisco at NY Giants (45). New York RB Saquon Barkley suffered a sprained right ankle in Sunday's victory and is out for this game. The Giants were unequipped to protect Daniel Jones against the Cowboys, and will have the same issue in this spot. **Take: NYG Under 45**

PRO FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

Philadelphia at Tampa Bay (46½) - The UNDER has cashed in 4 of the Eagles last 5 versus an NFC opponent. The UNDER has cashed in 13 of the Buccaneers last 20. The Eagles defense is first in the NFL in rushing yards allowed at 52.0 yards per game. Tampa Bay is just 17th in points scored and 13th in total offense. **Take: Under 46½**

PRO FOOTBALL PREFERRED PICK

LA Rams at Cincinnati (44.½) - Cincinnati QB Joe Burrow aggravated his calf injury during last week's loss and his status is doubtful. The Bengals have struggled offensively, The total has gone UNDER in 6 of Cincinnati's last 6 games against LA Rams. The total has gone UNDER in 8 of Cincinnati's last 9 games played in September. **Take: Under 44½**



UP TO
\$1000

WELCOME
BONUS



BET NOW

GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET RESOURCES

CLICK TO LAUNCH THESE POPULAR GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET RESOURCES

CFB TV SCHEDULE	NFL TV SCHEDULE
CFB WEATHER REPORT	NFL WEATHER REPORT
COLLEGE FOOTBALL ODDS	NFL FOOTBALL ODDS
COLLEGE FOOTBALL BETTING BLOG	NFL FOOTBALL BETTING BLOG
STATS CENTER: COLLEGE & PRO FOOTBALL MATCHUP STATS + COLLEGE & PRO POWER RATINGS + COLLEGE & PRO INJURY REPORTS + COLLEGE & PRO TEAM STATISTICS & MORE	

[GUARANTEED COLLEGE FOOTBALL PICKS](#)

[GUARANTEED NFL PICKS](#)

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS

	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
NFL	Chargers Pk	Bills – 6	Lions - 3	Jaguars - 9	

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET PREFERRED PICKS

NFL	49er's Un 45	Bucs Un 46½	Rams Un 44½		
-----	--------------	-------------	-------------	--	--



UP TO
\$1000

WELCOME
BONUS



BET NOW

T&CS APPLY