

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

\$15

**5 NCAA & 4 NFL BEST BETS + PICKS FOR ALL GAMES
Award Winning Football Newsletter Since 1981**

Dennis Stagliano's Best Bets Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

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CFB Week 11, 2025

NCAA Landscape:

IT WAS AN ALKA-SELTZER SATURDAY, WHERE RANKED TEAMS REACHED FOR RELIEF, WHILE THEIR OPPONENTS DELIVERED HEARTBURN. Ranked teams across the country spent sixty minutes fighting off upsets and acid reflux. No. 10 Miami felt the burn in Dallas after an overtime upset loss at the hands of SMU. No. 8 Georgia Tech got stung by conference foe NC State. Georgia staved off the Zombie Gators in Jacksonville. And Vanderbilt swallowed a bitter loss courtesy of Arch Manning and the Texas offense. It wasn't a weekend for statement wins – instead, it was about doing your best to survive a queasy stomach.

MONDAY SHOCKWAVES

Miami bites the dust in Dallas - For Miami fans, Saturday's 26-20 overtime loss to SMU followed an all-too-familiar script. The Hurricanes secured an early lead, Carson Beck turned the ball over, and for the umpteenth time, a Mario Cristobal-led team found a way to shrink when the spotlight got bright. Mere hours before kickoff, Rhett Lashlee signed a monster new contract to extend his stay in Dallas. Perhaps that was a good omen for what unfolded on Saturday.

This was a strange game if you examine the box score. Miami outgained SMU by over 120 yards on the ground and limited SMU to just 23 rushing yards. But SMU quarterback Kevin Jennings threw them to victory, finishing with 365 yards and a touchdown on the day.

After knocking down a late-game field goal to force overtime, the Mustangs intercepted Miami quarterback Carson Beck on a badly under thrown pass, crushing any chance the Hurricanes had of winning the game.

With the win, SMU moves to 4-1 in ACC play, giving itself a fighting chance to stay in the hunt to make the ACC Championship game. Miami, on the other hand, is likely on the outside looking in of the ACC title race and College Football Playoff picture.

Death, taxes, and Miami fans canceling hotel reservations in Charlotte after another disappointing November loss.

NC State stings previously undefeated Georgia Tech - Last week, we were wondering if Dave Doeren could be out at NC State. Last year was a disaster, and this year was trending toward another listless season. But on Saturday night, Doeren's Wolfpack battered No. 8 Georgia Tech 48-36, sending the hard-hitting Yellow Jackets sliding down to No. 16 in the AP Top 25. NC State quarterback CJ Bailey has all the promise in the world, and on Saturday night, he put his talents on full display. He had a fantastic game, torching Georgia Tech for 340 yards, two passing touchdowns, and another on the ground. The Wolfpack out-physicaled the Yellow Jackets at the point of attack, racking up a mind-boggling 243 yards and four touchdowns on the ground.

Haynes King and company have had a fantastic season up until this point, but the defense let 'em down. With one loss in the ACC, things get a little funky moving forward for the ACC title race, both for Tech and the rest of the conference. I'm fully expecting we'll see some wonky tiebreaker scenarios in the coming weeks.

Texas vanquishes Vanderbilt - No. 20 Texas used a blistering hot start and big third quarter to pull past No. 9 Vanderbilt 34-31, throwing yet another wrench in the SEC and College Football Playoff race. Quarterback Arch Manning had perhaps his best game of the season against the Commodores, who just a week ago limited a good Missouri offense. Manning finished 25-of-33 for 328 yards and three touchdowns, including an opening play score to Ryan Wingo that set the tone for the entire game.

It's taken two-thirds of the season, but Manning has gotten better week to week. Is he All World Good like we thought? Not yet. But he is improving, looks way more comfortable in the pocket, and slowly but surely, he and the Longhorns are stringing together some important wins. Big games against Georgia and undefeated Texas A&M await. But for now, it's been nice to see some progress from a team that had so much preseason hype.

Where does Vanderbilt go from here? Clark Lea's bunch will need to rally. The Commodores still have a monster game against Tennessee in a few weeks and little room for error if they hope to make the CFP. I'm sure Vanderbilt will be a hot topic of discussion when the first iteration of the CFP bracket is released on Tuesday.

The Zombie Gators put a scare in Georgia - No one would've blamed Florida for rolling over against rival Georgia. Billy Napier just got fired. The Gators entered the game 3-4 with little to play for. And throughout the game, injuries piled up. It would've been easy to throw in the towel. But that's the thing about a zombie team like the Gators. Just when you think they're dead, they jump up and bite you.

Florida did its best to take a pound of flesh against No. 5 Georgia, but came up short in the 24-20 loss. Georgia looked sluggish for parts of this game and needed a nifty cutback run from Chauncey Bowens to take the lead down the stretch of the fourth quarter.

Georgia is a good football team that did just enough to win in a tricky spot. No more, no less. "Survive and Advance" is the name of the game this time of year, and Kirby Smart's bunch did just that. A big game against the suddenly thriving Texas Longhorns awaits.

Lincoln Riley's USC finally wins an important Big Ten road game - When 2025 USC and Nebraska met on Saturday night, it felt like the unstoppable force versus the immovable object. USC, under Lincoln Riley, struggled to win Big Ten games outside the state of California. And Nebraska, under Matt Rhule, struggles to win big games of any kind. Something had to give under the floodlights of Memorial Stadium, and in the end, it was the Trojans who found a way to buck traditional wisdom, notching a 21-17 victory to move to 6-2 and 4-1 in conference play.

This game was all about sterling running back play, with Nebraska's Emmett Johnson and USC's King Miller doing the heavy lifting for both offenses. Johnson has been fantastic all season and lit USC up for 165 yards and a touchdown on 29 carries. Miller was no slouch either, breaking off big run after big run, finishing with 129 yards and a score.

Nebraska came out hot and looked comfortable through the early parts of the third quarter, until quarterback Dylan Raiola went out with an injury. With Raiola out, USC did a nice job of loading the

box and speeding up freshman backup quarterback TJ Lateef.

USC quarterback Jayden Maiava had a perplexing night through the air. He was flat-out bad in the first half, but as the game progressed, he connected on some key throws. He also added a running element to the game and finished with 62 yards and one touchdown.

Mere days after signing an extension to stay at Nebraska, Matt Rhule did not have his best game. He burned a few crucial timeouts in the third quarter and made some strange clock management decisions. And to make matters worse, the aforementioned Raiola injury was actually a broken fibula that will sideline him for the rest of the season. Ouch.

If you're Lincoln Riley, it's got to feel good to finally win a big game on the road. And if you're Matt Rhule, you've got to be left wondering when you'll finally notch a big win of your own while being the head man in Lincoln.

The Rich Rodriguez Revenge Tour - Other than the upset of Pitt in the Backyard Brawl in Week 3, it's been a slow go for Rich Rodriguez and West Virginia. The Mountaineers have struggled to get stops and have played musical chairs at quarterback. But on Saturday, the Mountaineers put all that behind them, knocking off previously-once-beaten Houston by a 45-35 score, adding yet another wrinkle to the Big 12 title race.

The Mountaineers started fast and finished strong, racking up 28 points in the first and fourth quarters alone. In traditional Rich Rod fashion, it was all about the run game. West Virginia battered and bruised the Cougars' front seven, racking up 246 yards and four touchdowns on the ground.

In the grand scheme of the season, this game doesn't mean much for West Virginia. But it is proof that, in limited spurts, Rich Rod still has his fastball. For Houston, this is a setback, no doubt about it. Houston's remaining slate includes games against UCF, TCU, and Baylor, all of which still feel winnable.

Sooners survive a trip to Rocky Top - In one of the day's few ranked-on-ranked matchups, No. 18 Oklahoma stopped the bleeding of recent weeks and knocked off No. 14 Tennessee 33-27. This game had a bit of everything. A strong start from the Vols. A 9-0 second quarter from Oklahoma. Five total turnovers. And a second half that saw both teams score 17 apiece down the stretch.

In the end, perhaps the biggest game-changing element of this game was Oklahoma suddenly finding a run game. The Sooners had been woeful at running the ball all season, but on Saturday the Sooners rushed for 192 yards and two crucial touchdowns.

The result of this game muddies the SEC waters, especially when talking about the Meaty Middle of the conference. Can OU use this as a springboard to finish out the season strong? Is Brent Venables' job safe? How will Tennessee hold up against Vandy at the end of the year? So many questions remain!

Happy trails, Hugh Freeze - In what's becoming something of a Sunday tradition, Auburn ended weeks of speculation and officially pulled the plug on Hugh Freeze, who was in his third season with the Tigers. Freeze's buyout is just north of \$15 million, which oddly feels like small potatoes in our current coaching cycle. And, you might be surprised to hear that the list of potential candidates... is almost the exact same list of candidates for most of the SEC's other openings.

Yeah, things are gonna get real weird down the stretch.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

James Madison at Marshall – 12:00 PM ET

Line: James Madison -12.5, O/U 56

James Madison has been playing at a level that looks more like a ranked Power conference team than a mid-major — physical at the line of scrimmage and efficient on standard downs. Marshall's offense has struggled when forced off schedule; long-yardage situations expose protection issues and a passing game that doesn't consistently separate on the outside. James Madison's front should control early downs, squeeze the run, and put Marshall behind the sticks, which is exactly where the Dukes' pressure packages shine. On the other side, the Dukes' offense is diversified enough to attack Marshall's back seven vertically and horizontally, making it hard for the Herd to key on any one element. Double-digit road chalk can be scary, but the gap in trench play and offensive execution suggests this number hasn't fully caught up to where these programs are right now. As long as James Madison avoids giving Marshall short fields through turnovers and special teams miscues, four full quarters should be enough to separate by more than two touchdowns.

TAKE: James Madison -12.5

Ohio State at Purdue – 1:00 PM ET

Line: Ohio State -28.5, O/U 48

Purdue has a history of hanging the occasional surprise on big-name visitors, but this matchup looks like a bad fit for the Boilermakers. Ohio State's defensive front should own the line of scrimmage against a Purdue offense that leans heavily on timing and rhythm; constant pressure and disruption make it hard for the Boilers to sustain drives. Offensively, Ohio State's ability to throw on early downs and force lighter boxes should open up the run game as this wears on. Purdue's defense tends to wilt when opponents can threaten both vertically and on the perimeter, and the Buckeyes have the weapons to stress every blade of grass. The key here is tempo of the game: if Ohio State starts fast and forces Purdue into catch-up mode, this can get sideways quickly, with short possessions and three-and-outs feeding a snowball effect. With a major gap in talent and depth, four touchdowns plus the hook is still within striking distance of reality if the Buckeyes play clean.

TAKE: Ohio State -28.5

Texas A&M at Missouri – 3:30 PM ET

Line: Texas A&M -6.5, O/U 50

Texas A&M's profile is built around a rugged defense and an offense that, while not always explosive, is efficient enough to grind out drives against soft boxes. Missouri, meanwhile, is walking a fine line: the Tigers can move the ball in spurts, but when forced into passing situations against quality fronts, protection cracks start to show. The Aggies' defensive line should be the best unit on the field, and if they win first down consistently, Missouri will be chasing the chains all afternoon. On offense, Texas A&M doesn't need fireworks to cover this number; methodical drives, a modest edge in the run game, and a few explosive plays off play-action can be enough against a Tiger defense that has struggled to hold up for four full quarters. The matchup tilts toward the Aggies' physicality — both in the trenches and in tackling in space — and that usually travels well. Laying less than a touchdown with the better defense and sturdier line play is a spot we're willing to trust.

TAKE: Texas A&M -6.5

Syracuse at Miami – 3:30 PM ET

Line: Miami -28, O/U 47

This is a classic mismatch of depth and physicality. Syracuse can be scrappy, but the Orange often struggle when they step up in class against teams that can dominate the line of scrimmage on both sides. Miami has that kind of profile: a defensive front capable of smothering the run and generating pressure without constant blitzing, and an offense that can lean on the ground game while still threatening vertically. Syracuse's best path to hanging around usually involves creating chaos — turnovers, special teams plays, and busted coverages — but Miami's defense is generally sound enough to limit those cheap scores. Offensively, the Hurricanes should be able to wear down the Orange front over four quarters; once the dam breaks, chunk plays start to stack and the scoreboard can move in a hurry. Big numbers like this always invite backdoor risk, but Miami's edge in talent and depth is so significant that the favorite has multiple pathways to covering — fast start, midgame surge, or late avalanche.

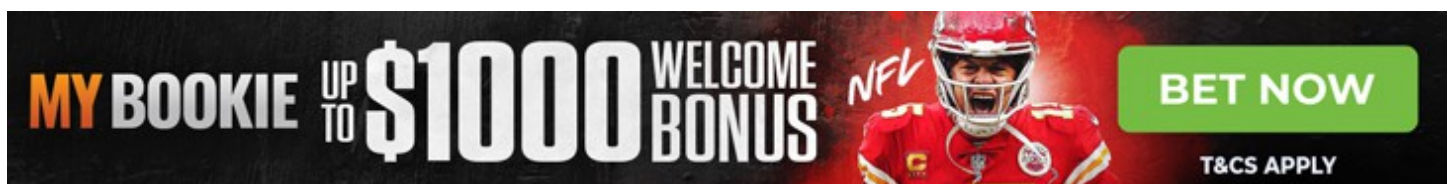
TAKE: Miami -28

LSU at Alabama – 7:30 PM ET

Line: Alabama -10.5, O/U 50

Any time these two meet, the game tends to be decided at the line of scrimmage and in the red zone. Alabama still leans on a suffocating defense that makes opponents earn every yard, and LSU's offense, while dangerous, is far less comfortable when it can't dictate tempo or hit explosives early. The Tide's front seven is built to disrupt run schemes and force quarterbacks to hold the ball a beat longer than they'd like, which is where Alabama's pass rush can tilt the field. On the other side of the ball, Alabama's offense has enough balance to keep LSU guessing: the run game can attack both inside and on the edges, and play-action shots off a downhill run threat can punish aggressive safeties. LSU's defense has shown vulnerability when asked to defend both the deep ball and a physical ground attack, and that's exactly the formula Alabama brings. In a primetime home environment, the Tide's advantages in depth, defense, and special teams should show up over four quarters. Double digits is a statement number, but this sets up as a spot where Alabama can slowly squeeze the game and pull away late.

TAKE: Alabama -10.5

A promotional banner for MyBookie. On the left, it says "MY BOOKIE UP TO \$1000 WELCOME BONUS" in white and orange text. In the center is a red football player in a helmet with "NFL" written on it. On the right is a green button that says "BET NOW" in white, with "T&CS APPLY" in smaller text below it.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL QUICK PICKS

Miami (OH) at Ohio

Line: Ohio -3.5, O/U 50

Ohio's offense is more balanced, with a ground game that can keep the RedHawks' defense honest and open windows in the intermediate passing game. Miami (OH) tends to bog down when it can't establish the run, and that's a problem against a Bobcat front that plays sound gap football. In a tight MAC game, home-field and the slightly more efficient offense matter.

TAKE: Ohio -3.5

Massachusetts at Akron

Line: Akron -10.5, O/U 50

UMass' defense usually has a hard time holding up for four quarters, particularly against any opponent that can maintain offensive rhythm. Akron isn't a powerhouse, but the Zips have enough playmakers to stress a Minutemen unit that gives up too many explosives. If Akron avoids turnovers, their offensive ceiling is simply higher.

TAKE: Akron -10.5

Kent State at Ball State

Line: Ball State -2.5, O/U 46

Kent State is in rebuild mode and has struggled to protect the quarterback and sustain drives. Ball State isn't flashy, but the Cardinals are more stable in the trenches and should be able to lean on their run game to stay ahead of the sticks. In a low total game, the home team with the better line play laying under a field goal is the side.

TAKE: Ball State -2.5

Northern Illinois at Toledo

Line: Toledo -14.5, O/U 42

Toledo usually brings one of the MAC's more explosive offenses, and even in a lower total setup, the Rockets have the firepower to separate. Northern Illinois tends to play a grind-it-out style, but if they fall behind early, their passing game isn't built to chase double-digit deficits. Toledo's speed and depth should show over four quarters.

TAKE: Toledo -14.5

Georgia Southern at Appalachian State

Line: Appalachian State -6.5, O/U 62

Georgia Southern's tempo and passing game can stress secondaries, but they also expose a defense that spends a lot of time on the field. Appalachian State has the more complete profile, with an offense capable of trading scores and a defense better equipped to get the key third-down stops. Laying less than a touchdown at home with the sturdier defense is the preference.

TAKE: Appalachian State -6.5

UTSA at South Florida

Line: South Florida -13.5, O/U 68

Both teams like to push the pace, and defensive consistency isn't a calling card on either side. South Florida's offense, though, has the higher ceiling and more ways to generate chunk gains, especially at home. With a high total and potential for track-meet flow, USF's ability to finish drives in the red zone should be the difference.

TAKE: South Florida -13.5

Houston at UCF

Line: UCF -1, O/U 48

This one sets up as a near pick'em where UCF's home field and slightly better defensive profile tip the scales. Houston's offense can be dangerous when it's in rhythm, but UCF's speed on defense should help limit explosive plays. In a tight game where field position and special teams could matter, the Knights at essentially a coin-flip price are the side.

TAKE: UCF -1

Northwestern at USC

Line: USC -14.5, O/U 52

Northwestern's offense often struggles to generate explosive plays, which is a problem against a USC team that can score in bunches. Even if the Trojans' defense has its lapses, the talent gap on the perimeter should allow USC to create big gains through the air. Over four quarters, it's hard to see Northwestern matching scores often enough to stay within two touchdowns.

TAKE: USC -14.5

Tulane at Memphis

Line: Memphis -6.5, O/U 56

Tulane tends to be disciplined and well-coached, but Memphis brings more offensive juice at home. The Tigers can stretch the field vertically and force Tulane out of its comfort zone if they build an early lead. With both offenses capable, this could turn into a trading-scores game where Memphis' explosiveness eventually pulls it clear of the number.

TAKE: Memphis -6.5

SMU at Boston College

Line: SMU -11.5, O/U 55

SMU's passing attack poses serious matchup problems for a Boston College defense that has struggled against spread concepts and tempo. The Eagles often rely on grinding drives and field position, but that's hard to do if SMU jumps out front and forces them into a chase script. Over four quarters, the Mustangs' speed and depth should produce enough separation to justify double-digits.

TAKE: SMU -11.5

Indiana at Penn State

Line: (Home favorite) -14.5, O/U 49

With a two-score line and both offenses capable of hitting explosives, the total stands out. Indiana's defense can be leaky against both the run and the pass, and the home side should have multiple paths to points. The underdog also has just enough playmaking to contribute to the scoreboard, especially in a game that could loosen up in the second half.

TAKE: Over 49

Georgia at Mississippi State

Line: Georgia -7.5, O/U 58

Georgia's defense is still built to choke off opponents' run games and force them into uncomfortable passing situations. Mississippi State's best chance is to find rhythm through the air, but that's a tough ask against a disciplined back seven. While the total suggests plenty of points, the safer angle is Georgia's superiority in the trenches and depth over four quarters.

TAKE: Georgia -7.5

BYU at Texas Tech

Line: Texas Tech -10.5, O/U 52

BYU's physicality can keep them in a lot of games, but Texas Tech at home is a different animal with tempo and spread concepts that stress defenses horizontally. If the Red Raiders can get BYU into nickel and dime personnel early, they'll open running lanes and screen opportunities. The underdog can grind, but Tech's offensive pressure should eventually stretch this into double-digit territory.

TAKE: Texas Tech -10.5

Colorado at West Virginia

Line: West Virginia -6.5, O/U 56

Colorado's defense has trouble holding up against sustained rushing attacks, and West Virginia is built to lean on the ground game and work play-action off it. The Buffaloes can hit some big plays, but long drives are not their strength. At home, West Virginia's run-game edge and ability to control clock give them multiple paths to winning by a touchdown or more.

TAKE: West Virginia -6.5

Southern Miss at Arkansas State

Line: Southern Miss -6, O/U 58

Both defenses have been prone to giving up chunk yardage, which points to a game where offense drives the narrative. Southern Miss has a bit more balance and should be able to move the ball on the ground and through the air against a leaky Red Wolves defense. Even if Arkansas State trades some scores, the Golden Eagles' ability to finish drives gives them the edge.

TAKE: Southern Miss -6

Temple at Army

Line: Army -6.5, O/U 46

Temple's run defense has struggled with gap discipline, and that's a recipe for trouble against Army's option-based attack. If the Black Knights are consistently ahead of the chains, Temple's offense may spend long stretches on the sideline and feel pressured to force things when it does get the ball. In what projects as a lower-possession game, Army's ground game should be enough to win by a 7.

TAKE: Army -6.5

Missouri State at Liberty

Line: Liberty -7.5, O/U 50

Liberty is usually the more explosive team in these matchups, and Missouri State's defense is likely to have issues handling the Flames' tempo and spacing. The key is whether Liberty can avoid the self-inflicted wounds that sometimes keep opponents hanging around. If they play reasonably clean, their offense should create enough cushion to cover more than a touchdown at home.

TAKE: Liberty -7.5

Bowling Green at Eastern Michigan

Line: Eastern Michigan -2.5, O/U 52

These are two teams comfortable in grinding, field-position games, but Bowling Green has shown a bit more toughness against the run. If the Falcons can win early downs and put Eastern Michigan behind schedule, the home team's offense can bog down. In what feels like a coin-flip MAC game, taking the points with the slightly better defense has value.

TAKE: Bowling Green +2.5

UAB at Rice

Line: Rice -3, O/U 54

Rice has quietly built a competent offense that can throw on early downs and keep defenses from loading the box. UAB's defense can be exploited through the air, and the Owls' passing attack should find favorable matchups. With a spread at a field goal, we'll lean into the home offense with more consistency and upside.

TAKE: Rice -3

Maryland at Rutgers

Line: Maryland -1, O/U 58

Maryland's passing game usually travels well, and Rutgers' secondary can be stressed by tempo and spread formations. The Scarlet Knights will try to shorten the game and lean on their ground attack, but if they fall behind, their offense isn't built to chase scores. With such a short number, the Terrapins' edge in explosive play potential is enough to side with the favorite.

TAKE: Maryland -1

Florida International at Middle Tennessee

Line: FIU -1, O/U 52

This shapes up as a tight Conference USA matchup where neither defense is likely to dominate. Middle Tennessee's offense can be streaky, but at home they typically move the ball better and have more comfort with tempo. Getting the Blue Raiders as a short home dog in what feels like a coin flip is attractive.

TAKE: Middle Tennessee +1

Jacksonville State at UTEP

Line: Jacksonville State -1.5, O/U 48

Jacksonville State's style — physical run game and attacking defense — is tough on teams like UTEP that struggle to consistently win up front. The Miners may find some success with shot plays, but sustaining drives will be difficult against an aggressive front. Laying a small number with the more complete team is the way to go.

TAKE: Jacksonville State -1.5

Louisiana Tech at Delaware

Line: Louisiana Tech -5.5, O/U 58

Louisiana Tech has the more dynamic offense and should be able to stress Delaware vertically and horizontally. The concern is the Bulldogs' defense, which can give up big plays, but Delaware will have to keep pace for four quarters, and that's a tall order. With a clear talent edge and better offensive ceiling, Louisiana Tech is the side.

TAKE: Louisiana Tech -5.5

Charlotte at East Carolina

Line: East Carolina -28.5, O/U 56

Charlotte's rebuild is still in the early stages, and depth is a major concern over four quarters. East Carolina's offense should control the line of scrimmage and generate explosive plays, especially as Charlotte's defense wears down. It's a big number, but the Pirates have the weapons to turn this into a runaway.

TAKE: East Carolina -28.5

Tulsa at Florida Atlantic

Line: Florida Atlantic -4.5, O/U 66

Both teams are comfortable in a high-possession, high-scoring game, but FAU's offense has a bit more balance and red-zone efficiency. Tulsa's defense has holes that can be exploited both on the ground and through the air, which is not ideal against an Owls team that can morph week to week. At home in a likely shootout, FAU's extra gear on offense is enough to lay the small number.

TAKE: Florida Atlantic -4.5

Oregon at Iowa

Line: Oregon -6, O/U 44

Oregon brings the far more potent offense, but Iowa's defensive structure is built to drag even explosive teams into lower-scoring grinders. The Hawkeyes' offense is limited, yet their defense and special teams can keep them in almost any game at home. With a relatively modest total, taking the points with a defense this good is appealing.

TAKE: Iowa +6

Duke at Connecticut

Line: Duke -8.5, O/U 66

Duke's offense should have its way against a UConn defense that lacks depth and struggles against teams with multiple passing threats. The Huskies will try to lean on their run game and shorten the contest, but if they fall behind, their passing attack isn't built to mount a sustained comeback. The Blue Devils' balance and ability to create explosives makes them the right side.

TAKE: Duke -8.5

Kansas at Arizona

Line: Arizona -6, O/U 56

Kansas can move the ball, but its defense often has trouble getting off the field, and that's a bad mix against an Arizona offense that can rev it up at home. The Wildcats should be able to exploit matchups on the outside and stress the Jayhawks vertically. In a game where both teams can score, we'll ride with the home side that has a bit more firepower.

TAKE: Arizona -6

Iowa State at TCU

Line: TCU -6.5, O/U 58

Iowa State's defense is usually sound and can muddy things up for high-powered attacks, but TCU at home is still dangerous with tempo and big-play capability. The Cyclones' offense is more methodical and may struggle to keep pace if this turns into a shootout. Laying under a touchdown with the more explosive team at home is the lean.

TAKE: TCU -6.5

Auburn at Vanderbilt

Line: Vanderbilt -7.5, O/U 46

This is a fascinating number, with Vanderbilt installed as more than a touchdown favorite. The Commodores' defense has been the more reliable unit, and Auburn's offense has struggled with consistency and identity. In a lower-total game, backing the home team with the better defense and just enough offense to edge clear of the number is reasonable.

TAKE: Vanderbilt -7.5

Kennesaw State at New Mexico State

Line: Kennesaw State -7, O/U 54

Kennesaw State's option-oriented approach and physicality can be a lot for defenses that don't see it regularly. New Mexico State has had issues with tackling and gap integrity, which is exactly what you can't have against this style. Over four quarters, Kennesaw's ground game and time-of-possession edge should wear the Aggies down.

TAKE: Kennesaw State -7

Georgia State at Coastal Carolina

Line: Coastal Carolina -7.5, O/U 56

Georgia State can be feisty, but Coastal Carolina at home tends to execute at a higher level on offense, particularly in the passing game. The Chanticleers' scheme stresses defenses horizontally before hitting vertical shots, and Georgia State's back end can be stretched thin. Laying just over a touchdown with the more polished offense at home is acceptable.

TAKE: Coastal Carolina -7.5

Stanford at North Carolina

Line: North Carolina -9, O/U 41

Stanford's offense is still a work in progress, especially when it comes to explosive plays, while North Carolina has more ways to create chunk gains. The Tar Heels' defense isn't elite, but it's good enough here, particularly with the advantage of playing at home. In a game with a modest total, we'll trust UNC's offense to find enough separation to justify the number.

TAKE: North Carolina -9

Washington at Wisconsin

Line: Washington -10.5, O/U 46

Washington's offense is built to push the ball downfield, but Wisconsin's physical style and deliberate pace can limit possessions and shorten the game. The Badgers' offense isn't likely to explode, yet at home they can lean on the run game and play to their strengths. With a modest total, grabbing the double-digit dog in a slugfest-type script makes sense.

TAKE: Wisconsin +10.5

Texas State at Louisiana-Lafayette

Line: Texas State -2.5, O/U 64

This projects as one of the more entertaining shootouts of the day, with both offenses capable of stretching the field and stressing defenses. Texas State may have the slightly more explosive profile, but Louisiana at home is usually tough and can match scores. With a high total and a short line, we'll side with the home dog in what feels like a last-possession-type game.

TAKE: Louisiana-Lafayette +2.5

Air Force at San Jose State

Line: San Jose State -4.5, O/U 66

Air Force's ground-heavy approach often dictates pace, but San Jose State's offense can score quickly and force the Falcons out of their comfort zone if it jumps ahead. The Spartans' passing game should find openings against a defense more accustomed to defending traditional looks than wide-open aerial attacks. At home with better passing weapons, San Jose State is worth laying the points.

TAKE: San Jose State -4.5

Florida State at Clemson

Line: Clemson -2.5, O/U 56

Florida State has enough offensive talent to scare anyone, but Clemson's defense at home remains one of the more physical units in the country. The Tigers' front can disrupt timing and force the 'Noles into uncomfortable down-and-distance situations. With Death Valley behind them and just needing to win by a field goal, Clemson is the side.

TAKE: Clemson -2.5

Wake Forest at Virginia

Line: Virginia -6.5, O/U 48

Wake Forest's offense is designed to create conflict for linebackers and safeties, but Virginia's defense is disciplined enough to limit the worst of the damage. On the other side, the Cavaliers should consistently find favorable matchups against a Wake defense that doesn't excel at getting off the field. At home, Virginia's combination of balance and physicality makes them the right side..

TAKE: Virginia -6.5

California at Louisville

Line: Louisville -18.5, O/U 50

Cal's offense has struggled to find consistent footing, and that's a major issue against a Louisville team that can capitalize on short fields and momentum swings. The Cardinals should control both the tempo and the trenches, forcing the Bears into obvious passing situations where mistakes can pile up. If Louisville avoids a turnover-fueled meltdown, the gap in firepower supports the big number.

TAKE: Louisville -18.5

Florida at Kentucky

Line: Florida -3.5, O/U 46

Florida's offense is more balanced, but Kentucky's physical style and home field make this a tricky spot for the Gators. The Wildcats can muddy things up with their run game and defense, turning it into a lower-scoring slugfest where every possession matters. In that kind of script, taking more than a field goal with the home side has value.

TAKE: Kentucky +3.5

Navy at Notre Dame

Line: Notre Dame -25, O/U 56

Navy's option attack can frustrate opponents, but Notre Dame has the size and discipline up front to limit the damage on early downs. Once the Irish get a lead, their offense should be able to lean on a physical run game and efficient passing to steadily build margin. Service academies fight for 60 minutes, yet the overall talent and depth edge for Notre Dame makes a blowout very feasible.

TAKE: Notre Dame -25

Nevada at Utah State

Line: Utah State -10, O/U 54

Nevada's defense has had a hard time keeping opponents from hitting explosives, and Utah State's offense is built to take advantage of that with tempo and big-play shots. The Wolf Pack may be able to move the ball some, but sustained drives are not their strength. At home, Utah State's offensive edge and ability to create quick scores point to a comfortable win.

TAKE: Utah State -10

Nebraska at UCLA

Line: UCLA -3, O/U 44

Nebraska's defense can keep it in games, but the offense has been too inconsistent to fully trust on the road. UCLA's speed on offense and comfort level at home give the Bruins multiple ways to attack, even against a solid front. With the spread sitting at a field goal, backing the home favorite with more offensive upside is the call.

TAKE: UCLA -3

UNLV at Colorado State

Line: UNLV -6, O/U 62

UNLV has quietly become one of the more entertaining offenses, with a mix of run and pass that can stress defenses in space. Colorado State can throw, but its defense often leaves too many windows open, especially against balanced attacks. In what projects as a high-scoring game, the Rebels' superior offensive consistency makes them worth laying less than a touchdown.

TAKE: UNLV -6

Sam Houston at Oregon State

Line: Oregon State -18.5, O/U 52

Sam Houston is still adjusting to the level of physicality required here, and Oregon State's trench play is likely to be overwhelming. The Beavers can lean on their run game and methodically wear down the Bearcats' front, while their defense should control the line of scrimmage on the other side. With a big edge in both lines, Oregon State has multiple paths of winning by three scores.

TAKE: Oregon State -18.5

San Diego State at Hawaii

Line: San Diego State -6, O/U 50

San Diego State prefers to win with defense, field position, and a conservative offensive approach, while Hawaii leans more on its passing game and home-field energy. The Aztecs' physicality up front should allow them to control the run game and limit the Warriors' balance. Over four quarters, that kind of control typically leads to a cover in this range.

TAKE: San Diego State -6

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