

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

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5 NCAA & 4 NFL BEST BETS + PICKS FOR ALL GAMES
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Dennis Stagliano's Best Bets Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

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CFB Week 2, 2025

Dogs were barking loud in Week 1, as underdogs cashed tickets across the board and reminded bettors that early-season lines can be full of value and tough to beat. With teams still finding rhythm and oddsmakers adjusting power ratings, We've lined up 5 Best Bets with full analysis and a complete run of Quick Picks. Let's roll them out now.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

UL Monroe at Alabama

Bryant–Denny Stadium, Tuscaloosa, AL — Saturday 7:45 PM ET. Line: Alabama -37.5; Total: 51.5.

UL Monroe comes in off a 29–0 shutout of Saint Francis, where running back Braylon McReynolds gashed for 113 yards and quarterback Aidan Armenta managed the game without mistakes. The Warhawks leaned on defense, holding their opponent under 250 total yards and creating steady pressure in the backfield. That kind of discipline is encouraging, but the step up to an SEC powerhouse is massive.

Alabama, meanwhile, stumbled out of the gate with a 31–17 loss to Florida State. Quarterback Ty Simpson threw for 254 yards and two touchdowns, connecting with Germie Bernard for 146 yards receiving, but the Tide run game sputtered at just 87 yards. Defensively, Alabama was bullied on the ground, allowing 230 rushing yards while failing to establish control at the line of scrimmage. Head coach Kalen DeBoer made it clear the focus this week is reestablishing the run game and tightening gaps defensively.

While the Tide should bounce back with a win, laying more than five touchdowns is dangerous against a ULM team that showed offensive competence and a disruptive pass rush. The value is with the underdog to keep this closer than expected.

Projection: Alabama 40, UL Monroe 17 — Take: UL Monroe +37.5.

Memphis at Georgia State

Center Parc Stadium, Atlanta, GA — Saturday 7:00 PM ET. Line: Memphis -13.5; Total: not posted.

Memphis opened with a steady 31–14 win over Arkansas State. Quarterback Seth Henigan threw for 271 yards and two touchdowns while Blake Watson churned out 86 rushing yards and a score. The Tiger defense limited ASU to under 280 total yards and came up with two takeaways, a reassuring start for a group that has been inconsistent the last few years.

Georgia State fell 31–24 to James Madison in a frustrating outing. Quarterback Darren Grainger threw for 212 yards and ran for 70 more, but the Panthers repeatedly stalled inside the 20, converting just 2-of-5 red-zone trips into touchdowns. Marcus Carroll gave them toughness in the run game, but the defense was gashed for over 430 yards and allowed JMU to sustain drives.

Memphis has a stronger passing attack and superior playmaking depth at wide receiver. If Georgia State couldn't contain JMU's balance, they'll struggle against Henigan's ability to stretch the field vertically. The Tigers have every tool to separate and cover the number.

Projection: Memphis 41, Georgia State 17 — Take: Memphis -13.5.

Stanford at BYU

LaVell Edwards Stadium, Provo, UT — Saturday 10:15 PM ET. Line: BYU -18.5; Total: 49.5.

Stanford controlled Hawaii 31–17 in its opener, showcasing a more disciplined attack than last season. Quarterback Ashton Daniels was efficient with 212 yards and two touchdowns, while Casey Filkins added 86 yards on the ground. The Cardinal defense kept Hawaii to 280 total yards and forced two turnovers, an encouraging sign for a unit that lacked playmaking in 2024.

BYU topped Southern Utah 35–14 with a balanced effort. Quarterback Kedon Slovis threw three touchdowns, Aidan Robbins posted a 100-yard rushing game, and Kody Epps paced the receivers with 88 yards and a score. The defense allowed only 260 yards, though Southern Utah broke containment a few times with QB scrambles. The Cougars were workmanlike, but not dominant, against an FCS opponent.

Laying three scores is risky given BYU’s modest offensive tempo and defensive lapses against mobile quarterbacks. Stanford has enough experience and balance to score consistently enough to keep the game within two touchdowns.

Projection: BYU 31, Stanford 24 — Take: Stanford +18.5.

Middle Tennessee at Wisconsin

Camp Randall Stadium, Madison, WI — Saturday 4:00 PM ET. Line: Wisconsin -28.5; Total: 43.5.

Middle Tennessee dispatched FIU 27–17 in Week 1 behind quarterback Nicholas Vattiato’s 244 yards and two touchdowns. Running back Frank Peasant chipped in 87 yards on 16 carries, while DJ England-Chisolm made six catches for 108 yards and a score. The Blue Raiders showed balance and efficiency, racking up nearly 400 yards while their defense forced two turnovers and stiffened in the red zone.

Wisconsin rolled past Western Illinois 31–7, led by Braelon Allen’s 112 rushing yards and a touchdown. Tanner Mordecai hit on 17-of-28 passes for 218 yards and two scores, while the Badgers’ defense limited WIU to under 250 yards. It was classic Wisconsin football: controlling the line of scrimmage on both sides and wearing down an overmatched opponent.

Still, this number looks inflated. Middle Tennessee’s ability to pass efficiently and protect the football makes them a tricky opponent to bury. The Badgers will control, but the Blue Raiders are live for the cover.

Projection: Wisconsin 34, Middle Tennessee 17 — Take: Middle Tennessee +28.5.

Oklahoma State at Oregon

Autzen Stadium, Eugene, OR — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Oregon -27.5; Total: 58.5.

Oklahoma State opened strong with a 45–17 win over South Dakota State. Quarterback Alan Bowman threw three touchdown passes while Ollie Gordon powered the ground game with 114 yards and a score. Brennan Presley proved a matchup problem in the slot with two touchdown receptions, and the defense forced two turnovers to keep the Jackrabbits from hanging around.

Oregon beat Hawaii 42–24 in a game that was less convincing than the score suggests. Quarterback Dillon Gabriel posted 292 yards and three touchdowns, but the Ducks gave up 350 yards, including several big completions downfield. Bucky Irving carried the rushing load with 108 yards, while Tez Johnson stretched the field with over 100 receiving yards. The defense will need to clean up tackling and coverage breakdowns.

Oklahoma State has enough offensive balance to score into the 20s and stress Oregon’s shaky secondary. The Ducks may still win handily, but the spread is too rich against a capable Cowboys team.

Projection: Oregon 42, Oklahoma State 24 — Take: Oklahoma State +27.5.

THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS					
CFB	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
	UL Monroe +37.5	Memphis -13.5	Stanford +18.5	M Tenn St +28.5	Oklahoma St +27.5

COLLEGE FOOTBALL QUICK PICKS

Friday Quick Picks

James Madison at Louisville

L&N Federal Credit Union Stadium, Louisville, KY — Friday 7:00 PM ET. Line: Louisville -16.5; Total: 54.5.

James Madison opened with a 45–10 rout of Weber State, showing balance on offense and a defense that forced multiple turnovers. Louisville rolled Eastern Kentucky 51–17 as quarterback Tyler Shough spread the ball efficiently and the run game piled up nearly 200 yards. The Cardinals are deeper, but the Dukes' defense and track record against the spread suggest this stays closer than expected.

Projection: Louisville 31, James Madison 24 — Take: James Madison +16.5.

Northern Illinois at Maryland

SECU Stadium, College Park, MD — Friday 7:30 PM ET. Line: Maryland -18; Total: not posted.

Northern Illinois struggled to escape with a 19–17 win over Holy Cross, exposing shaky quarterback play and defensive holes. Maryland hammered Florida Atlantic 39–7 as freshman Malik Washington threw three touchdowns and the Terps' defense intercepted six passes. Maryland's speed and depth on both sides make this a tough matchup for NIU.

Projection: Maryland 34, Northern Illinois 13 — Take: Maryland -18.

Saturday Quick Picks

FIU at Penn State

Beaver Stadium, University Park, PA — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Penn State -42.5; Total: 56.5.

FIU leaned on its ground game to edge Central Michigan but showed little explosiveness. Penn State blasted Nevada with Drew Allar throwing confidently and the defense overwhelming the Wolf Pack. The Lions have too much talent in the trenches for FIU to hang around.

Projection: Penn State 52, FIU 10 — Take: Penn State -42.5.

Kent State at Texas Tech

Jones AT&T Stadium, Lubbock, TX — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Texas Tech -48; Total: not posted.

Kent State sputtered offensively in its opener, failing to sustain drives or protect its quarterback. Texas Tech moved the ball at will in its debut, showing speed and explosiveness across the roster. The Red Raiders' pace and depth should lead to an overwhelming margin.

Projection: Texas Tech 56, Kent State 7 — Take: Texas Tech -48.

Virginia at NC State

Carter-Finley Stadium, Raleigh, NC — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: NC State -3; Total: 53.5.

Virginia's offense showed flashes but struggled to finish drives in its opener, while the defense gave up too many chunk plays. NC State relied on its run game and defense to grind out a win, but the secondary remains a concern. This sets up as a tight battle where Virginia's experience can deliver the cover.

Projection: Virginia 27, NC State 24 — Take: Virginia +3.

San Jose State at Texas

Darrell K. Royal–Texas Memorial Stadium, Austin, TX — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Texas -36.5; Total: 52.5.

San Jose State showed offensive balance in its opener but also allowed too many explosive plays defensively. Texas looked dominant with its run game and vertical passing attack, controlling the line of scrimmage throughout. The Longhorns will win comfortably, but the Spartans have the offense to slip inside a big number.

Projection: Texas 45, San Jose State 20 — Take: San Jose State +36.5.

Pittsburgh at Central Michigan

Acrisure Stadium, Pittsburgh, PA — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Pitt -21.5; Total: 52.

Central Michigan failed to get consistent quarterback play in its opener and struggled to slow the run. Pitt leaned on its physical defense and balanced offense in an easy win, looking sharp in all phases. The Panthers' defensive front should control this game from start to finish.

Projection: Pittsburgh 38, Central Michigan 10 — Take: Pittsburgh -21.5.

SMU at Baylor

Gerald J. Ford Stadium, Dallas, TX — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: SMU -3; Total: 64.5.

SMU lit up the scoreboard behind quarterback Preston Stone, spreading the ball efficiently to multiple targets. Baylor's defense showed cracks against the run and pass, leaving too many open lanes. SMU's explosive offense gives them the upper hand in this matchup. **Projection: SMU 34, Baylor 24 — Take: SMU -3.**

Illinois at Duke

Wallace Wade Stadium, Durham, NC — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Illinois -3; Total: 49.5.

Illinois survived Toledo thanks to its defense stiffening late, but offensive inconsistency was evident. Duke rolled Elon behind efficient quarterback play and solid line work on both sides of the ball. Illinois' physicality at the line of scrimmage gives them the edge to cover on the road.

Projection: Illinois 31, Duke 24 — Take: Illinois -3.

Liberty at Jacksonville State

Burgess-Snow Field, Jacksonville, AL — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Liberty -5.5; Total: not posted.

Liberty opened strong with a balanced attack, mixing a run game that moved the chains with efficient passing. Jacksonville State fought but showed cracks defensively, allowing big plays both on the ground and through the air. Liberty's deeper roster and ability to dictate pace should carry the day.

Projection: Liberty 34, Jacksonville State 20 — Take: Liberty -5.5.

Kennesaw State at Indiana

Memorial Stadium, Bloomington, IN — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Indiana -35.5; Total: not posted.

Kennesaw State stepped into FBS competition and lacked consistency on both sides of the ball. Indiana impressed in its opener with suffocating defense and an offensive line that established control early. The Hoosiers have the depth to dominate across four quarters.

Projection: Indiana 42, Kennesaw State 7 — Take: Indiana -35.5.

Utah State at Texas A&M

Kyle Field, College Station, TX — Saturday 12:45 PM ET. Line: Texas A&M -29.5; Total: not posted.

Utah State struggled to contain explosive plays in its opener and leaned too heavily on its quarterback to keep pace. Texas A&M looked polished on both sides of the ball, combining balance on offense with relentless pressure on defense. The Aggies should control this from start to finish.

Projection: Texas A&M 45, Utah State 14 — Take: Texas A&M -29.5.

Iowa at Iowa State

Jack Trice Stadium, Ames, IA — Saturday 12:00 PM ET. Line: Iowa State -2.5; Total: 43.5.

Iowa leaned on its defense and field position to grind out a win, but offensive issues remain. Iowa State sputtered in its opener and lacked explosiveness against the run. In a rivalry game where defense will dominate, Iowa has the stronger unit and looks set to cover.

Projection: Iowa 20, Iowa State 17 — Take: Iowa +2.5.

Kansas at Missouri

Faurot Field, Columbia, MO — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Missouri -6; Total: 53.5.

Kansas showed flashes of offensive rhythm last week but had trouble sustaining drives against a disciplined defense. Missouri leaned on its running game and short passing attack, but their defense surrendered more big plays than expected. This border battle should be tight, and the Jayhawks' balance makes them a live dog.

Projection: Kansas 27, Missouri 24 — Take: Kansas +6.

Western Michigan at North Texas

Waldo Stadium, Kalamazoo, MI — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: North Texas -10; Total: not posted.

Western Michigan moved the ball well on the ground in its opener but struggled to stop the pass. North Texas showed offensive pop but was inconsistent finishing drives, leaving points on the field. In a matchup of shaky defenses, Western Michigan's run game gives them the edge to cover.

Projection: North Texas 31, Western Michigan 27 — Take: Western Michigan +10.

Fresno State at Oregon State

Reser Stadium, Corvallis, OR — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Oregon State -3; Total: not posted.

Fresno State put together a solid opener behind steady quarterback play and timely defense. Oregon State also looked sharp, running the ball effectively and locking down on defense in the second half. With the Beavers at home and stronger up front, they're in position to win by more than a field goal.

Projection: Oregon State 27, Fresno State 20 — Take: Oregon State -3.

Troy at Clemson

Memorial Stadium, Clemson, SC — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Clemson -33.5; Total: 55.5.

Troy lacked consistency on offense last week and struggled against a physical opponent. Clemson dominated in all phases, piling up yardage while its defense shut down every threat. The Tigers have the depth and explosiveness to stretch this margin.

Projection: Clemson 45, Troy 10 — Take: Clemson -33.5.

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Auburn at Ball State

Jordan-Hare Stadium, Auburn, AL — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: Auburn -42.5; Total: not posted.

Ball State couldn't handle pressure in its opener, turning the ball over multiple times. Auburn flexed with a powerful rushing attack and opportunistic defense, smothering its opponent. The Tigers' depth should allow them to cover a huge spread.

Projection: Auburn 52, Ball State 10 — Take: Auburn -42.5.

Rutgers vs Miami (OH)

SHI Stadium, Piscataway, NJ — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Rutgers -14; Total: not posted.

Miami (OH) struggled to find rhythm offensively, relying heavily on its defense to keep the game close. Rutgers dominated with a tough run game and stingy defense that suffocated its opener. The Scarlet Knights' physicality should create separation.

Projection: Rutgers 31, Miami (OH) 14 — Take: Rutgers -14.

Cincinnati vs Bowling Green

Nippert Stadium, Cincinnati, OH — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Cincinnati -21; Total: not posted.

Bowling Green gave up chunks of yardage last week and couldn't finish drives offensively. Cincinnati looked sharp in a tune-up, moving the ball with balance and getting stops on defense when needed. The Bearcats have too much firepower at home.

Projection: Cincinnati 34, Bowling Green 10 — Take: Cincinnati -21.

South Florida at Florida

Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, Gainesville, FL — Saturday 4:15 PM ET. Line: Florida -17; Total: 52.5.

South Florida's defense gave up too many rushing lanes in its opener, and the offense couldn't finish drives. Florida looked sharp at home, leaning on a power run game and a fast secondary that smothered passing attempts. The Gators' depth and athleticism should create a wide margin here.

Projection: Florida 34, South Florida 7 — Take: Florida -17.

Rice at Houston

Rice Stadium, Houston, TX — Saturday 7:00 PM ET. Line: Houston -12.5; Total: 43.

Rice showed improved balance offensively but still struggled with pass protection in its opener. Houston's passing attack looked uneven, but the Cougars' defense stepped up and made plays in key moments. This crosstown matchup should be scrappy, but Rice has enough to hang inside the number.

Projection: Houston 24, Rice 17 — Take: Rice +12.5.

Western Kentucky at Toledo

Glass Bowl, Toledo, OH — Saturday 7:00 PM ET. Line: Toledo -6.5; Total: 53.5.

Western Kentucky leaned on quarterback Austin Reed to open the season, spreading the ball to multiple targets with success. Toledo pounded the ground game in its opener, but the Rockets' secondary showed cracks against the pass. Western Kentucky's passing attack makes them dangerous as a road underdog.

Projection: Western Kentucky 31, Toledo 27 — Take: Western Kentucky +6.5.

Vanderbilt at Virginia Tech

Lane Stadium, Blacksburg, VA — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: Virginia Tech -1; Total: not posted.

Vanderbilt's offense was efficient in its opener, with the passing game connecting on several big plays. Virginia Tech showed inconsistency, moving the ball at times but failing to sustain drives. Vanderbilt's balance and experience give them the edge in a toss-up.

Projection: Vanderbilt 27, Virginia Tech 21 — Take: Vanderbilt +1.

Louisiana Tech at LSU

Tiger Stadium, Baton Rouge, LA — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: LSU -37.5; Total: not posted.

Louisiana Tech failed to generate offense in its opener, relying on short passes that didn't stretch the field. LSU overpowered its opponent with speed on both sides of the ball, dominating the line of scrimmage. The Tigers should roll, and the number looks within reach.

Projection: LSU 48, Louisiana Tech 7 — Take: LSU -37.5.

Michigan at Oklahoma

Memorial Stadium, Norman, OK — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: Oklahoma -5.5; Total: 46.5.

Michigan was sharp in its opener, establishing the run and controlling the pace with its offensive line. Oklahoma leaned on quarterback Dillon Gabriel to move the ball vertically, but the Sooners' defense had coverage lapses. Michigan's physical style gives them a shot to cover on the road in a marquee matchup.

Projection: Oklahoma 24, Michigan 20 — Take: Michigan +5.5.

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Kentucky at Ole Miss

Kroger Field, Lexington, KY — Saturday 3:30 PM ET. Line: Ole Miss -10; Total: 53.5.

Kentucky leaned on its run game and efficient quarterback play to open with a win. Ole Miss moved the ball well but left points on the field with red-zone issues. The Rebels are the more explosive side, but Kentucky's steadiness gives them room to stay close.

Projection: Ole Miss 27, Kentucky 24 — Take: Kentucky +10.

UCLA at UNLV

Allegiant Stadium, Las Vegas, NV — Saturday 8:00 PM ET. Line: UCLA -2.5; Total: 48.5.

UCLA got solid quarterback play in its opener, showing poise and a clean passing game. UNLV leaned heavily on the run but struggled to keep pace through the air. The Bruins' offensive balance makes them the safer side in a close spread.

Projection: UCLA 31, UNLV 24 — Take: UCLA -2.5.

Nebraska vs Akron

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, NE — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: Nebraska -34.5; Total: not posted.

Akron had trouble protecting its quarterback in its opener, giving up multiple sacks and turnovers. Nebraska rolled in its debut with a punishing ground game and an aggressive defense that forced mistakes. The Cornhuskers have the firepower to cover a big spread at home.

Projection: Nebraska 45, Akron 7 — Take: Nebraska -34.5.

Kansas State vs Army

Bill Snyder Family Stadium, Manhattan, KS — Saturday 7:00 PM ET. Line: Kansas State -17; Total: not posted.

Army struggled to finish drives in its opener, and their defense couldn't contain the edge. Kansas State looked well-drilled, using a physical run game and sharp quarterback play to dominate early. At home, the Wildcats' size and depth make them too much for Army to handle.

Projection: Kansas State 34, Army 13 — Take: Kansas State -17.

Tulsa at New Mexico State

Aggie Memorial Stadium, Las Cruces, NM — Saturday 9:00 PM ET. Line: Tulsa -3.5; Total: 52.

Tulsa's offense found rhythm in the passing game to open the year, and their defense generated timely turnovers. New Mexico State stumbled badly, struggling to establish any consistency on either side of the ball. Tulsa's balance gives them the tools to control this one on the road.

Projection: Tulsa 38, New Mexico State 20 — Take: Tulsa -3.5.

Arizona State at Mississippi State

Davis Wade Stadium, Starkville, MS — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: Mississippi State -7; Total: not posted.

Arizona State leaned on an improved passing game to earn a gritty opening win. Mississippi State moved the ball well in spots but showed weaknesses in pass coverage that left them vulnerable. The Sun Devils have the balance to keep this game inside the number.

Projection: Mississippi State 27, Arizona State 24 — Take: Arizona State +7.

Georgia Southern at USC

Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, Los Angeles, CA — Saturday 7:30 PM ET. Line: USC -28; Total: not posted.

Georgia Southern used its spread offense to keep pressure on in Week 1, but their defense surrendered too many yards. USC opened with explosive plays through the air and a quick-strike attack that buried its opponent early. The Trojans will score plenty, but Georgia Southern's tempo could keep it from becoming a total blowout.

Projection: USC 41, Georgia Southern 20 — Take: Georgia Southern +28.

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THIS WEEKS GRIDIRON GOLD SHEET BEST BETS

	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	UL Monroe +37.5	Memphis -13.5	Stanford +18.5	M Tenn St +28.5	Oklahoma St +27.5

CAN YOU PICKEM' - TAKE YOUR SHOT AT WINNING 100K

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The advertisement features a vibrant blue and orange background. On the right, a large, smiling portrait of Philadelphia Eagles player Darius Murray is shown, with his name 'Darius' in script on his jersey. To his left, a smaller image shows him in action on the field. The text on the left side of the ad promotes a '\$500 BET BACK BONUS' for new customers, with a 'DEPOSIT NOW' button at the bottom. The NFLSN logo is at the top left.