REPEAT

CALEB WILLIAMS WORTHY OF HEISMAN TROPHY WAGER

SEASON WIN TOTALS
SELECTIONS FOR EVERY TEAM

BEST BETS
CONFERENCE AND TITLE GAME PICKS FROM VSIN EXPERTS

TEAM PREVIEWS
BREAKDOWNS, TRENDS AND LINE ESTIMATES FOR EVERY GAME

VSiN

2023 CFB BETTING GUIDE

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FEATURES

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ODDS WITHIN GUIDE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS USED THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE
ATS – Against the Spread • Avg - Average • CL – Closing Line
DC - Defensive Coordinator • Def - Defense • Dog - Underdog
Eff Strg - Steve Makinen Effective Strength Rating • Fav - Favorite
FT – Final Total • HC - Head Coach • H2h – Head-to-Head • L - Losses
L# - Last number of games • LY – Last Year • MOV – Margin of Victory
O - Over • OC - Offensive Coordinator • Off - Offense • OL – Opening Line
OT – Opening Total • Opp – Opponent • O/U – Over/Under
PA - Points Against • Pct - Percentage • PF - Points For • PPG - Points Per Game
PYPG – Passing Yards per Page • RS - Returning Starters
RYPG – Rushing Yards per Game • SM BR - Steve Makinen Bettors' Rating
SM PR - Steve Makinen Power Rating • SU - Straight Up • TO - Turnovers
TYPG – Total Yards per Game • U - Under • W - Wins • YPP – Yards per Play
YPPT – Yards per Point • YPR – Yards per Rush

Friends new and old,

Soon you will be looking live at the college football season and we hope to make it a more profitable one for you with the 2023 College Football Betting Guide and all of our upcoming in-season content. A strong cast of contributors worked tirelessly on the writing, editing, and design of this year's version and we are pleased to bring it to you.

Many of you may have signed up when we released our 2023 NFL Betting Guide earlier than ever before. Many of you have been around for a long time. And many others are just now joining us for the first time as we gear up for another season on the gridiron. Whether you just recently found VSiN, decided to make the leap to being a subscriber, or have been here since the jump, we are honored and privileged to have you with us.

In this year's Guide, you will read:

- Stats, trends, betting systems, all the new head coaches, and the always-popular "Stability Scores" from Steve Makinen
- Matt Youmans' Preseason Top 25 and his previews of the Big 12 and Pac-12
- Zach Cohen's takes on the Heisman Trophy and his previews of the ACC and SEC
- Dave Tuley on the MAC
- Tim Murray on the Mountain West
- Wes Reynolds on the Big Ten
- A How-To Guide on creating your own Power Ratings Model and a home-field advantage system from Adam Burke, along with his previews of the AAC, C-USA, and Sun Belt
- Staff best bets on season win totals, futures, and props
- Division, conference, and College Football Playoff predictions from VSiN writers, hosts, and DraftKings Network personalities

With team previews and season win total picks for ALL 133 FBS teams, this is as comprehensive as it gets for a College Football Guide and you'll find plenty of additional notes and nuggets along the way.

This is just the beginning for us with our college football coverage, as weekly best bets, betting tips, and system plays will come your way throughout the season.

Just like I said in the NFL Guide Welcome Letter, cashin' tickets is what it's all about and that's what we plan to do this season. Thank you for coming along for the ride and for your continued support of VSiN.

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2023 CFB SEASON PREDICTIONS

	TIM MURRAY	MATT YOUMANS	DAVE TULEY	WES REYNOLDS	ZACH COHEN	ADAM BURKE	STEVE MAKINEN POWER RATINGS	BRENT MUSBURGER	JESSICA SMETANA	STEVE MAKINEN	ROSS TUCKER	SHAUN KING	PAULY HOWARD	MITCH MOSS	GILL ALEXANDER	JARED SMITH	JEFF PARLES	JONATHAN VON TOBEL
ACC																		
ACC #1	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	LOUISVILLE	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	CLEMSON
ACC #2	FLORIDA STATE	LOUISVILLE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	NORTH CAROLINA	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE
ACC CHAMPION	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON	CLEMSON	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	FLORIDA STATE	CLEMSON
AMERICAN																		
AAC #1	SMU	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	TULANE	TULANE	MEMPHIS	UTSA	SMU	TULANE	TULANE	UTSA	UTSA
AAC #2	TULANE	SMU	UTSA	SMU	UTSA	TULANE	SMU	SMU	UTSA	SMU	UTSA	TULANE	TULANE	UTSA	SMU	UTSA	TULANE	SMU
AAC CHAMPION	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	TULANE	UTSA	TULANE	UTSA	UTSA	TULANE	TULANE	UTSA	UTSA
BIG TEN																		
EAST #1	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	PENN STATE	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	MICHIGAN	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN
WEST #1	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	IOWA	WISCONSIN	IOWA	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	WISCONSIN	IOWA
BIG TEN CHAMPION	OHIO STATE	WISCONSIN	OHIO STATE	PENN STATE	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	MICHIGAN	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN
BIG 12																		
B12 #1	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	OKLAHOMA	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS
B12 #2	TEXAS TECH	KANSAS STATE	KANSAS STATE	OKLAHOMA	TEXAS	OKLAHOMA	OKLAHOMA	OKLAHOMA	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	KANSAS STATE	KANSAS STATE	OKLAHOMA	KANSAS	TEXAS TECH
BIG 12 CHAMPION	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	TEXAS	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	OKLAHOMA	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS STATE	KANSAS STATE	TEXAS	TEXAS	KANSAS	TEXAS
CONFERENCE USA																		
CUSA #1	WKU	WKU	WKU	UTEP	UTEP	WKU	WKU	WKU	WKU	WKU	WKU	MTSU	WKU	WKU	LIBERTY	WKU	WKU	WKU
CUSA #2	UTEP	UTEP	LIBERTY	WKU	WKU	LIBERTY	LINERTY	MTSU	MTSU	LIBERTY	LIBERTY	NEW MEXICO ST	MTSU	MTSU	WKU	LIBERTY	MTSU	UTEP
CUSA CHAMPION	WKU	WKU	WKU	UTEP	WKU	WKU	WKU	WKU	WKU	WKU	LIBERTY	MTSU	WKU	WKU	LIBERTY	WKU	WKU	WKU
MAC																		
EAST #1	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	MIAMI OH	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	MIAMI OH	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO	OHIO
WEST #1	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	UNI	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO
MAC CHAMPION	TOLEDO	OHIO	TOLEDO	OHIO	TOLEDO	OHIO	TOLEDO	MIAMI OH	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	OHIO		OHIO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	TOLEDO	OHIO
MOUNTAIN WEST																		
MWC #1	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	AIR FORCE	BOISE STATE	AIR FORCE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE
MWC #2	COLORADO ST	AIR FORCE	AIR FORCE	AIR FORCE	AIR FORCE	AIR FORCE	FRESNO STATE	SDSU	AIR FORCE	AIR FORCE	FRESNO STATE	FRESNO STATE	BOISE STATE	SDSU	BOISE STATE	FRESNO STATE	SDSU	FRESNO STATE
MWC CHAMPION	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	SDSU	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	BOISE STATE	FRESNO STATE
PAC-12																		
P12 #1	USC	USC	UTAH	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	UTAH	USC	USC	WASHINGTON	USC	USC	USC	USC	USC	WASHINGTON
P12 #2	WASHINGTON	WASHINGTON	USC	WASHINGTON	UTAH	WASHINGTON	OREGON	WASHINGTON	USC	OREGON	OREGON	USC	UTAH	WASHINGTON	OREGON	OREGON	WASHINGTON	USC
P12 CHAMPION	WASHINGTON	USC	UTAH	WASHINGTON	UTAH	WASHINGTON	USC	USC	UTAH	USC	USC	WASHINGTON	USC	WASHINGTON	USC	USC	USC	WASHINGTON
SEC																		
EAST #1	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA
WEST #1	ALABAMA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	LSU	ALABAMA	ALABAMA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU
SEC CHAMPION	GEORGIA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA
SUN BELT																		
EAST #1	APP STATE	C CAROLINA	APP STATE	C CAROLINA	C CAROLINA	GA SOUTHERN	MARSHALL	JAMES MADISON	C CAROLINA	C CAROLINA	C CAROLINA	JAMES MADISON	APP STATE	JAMES MADISON	JAMES MADISON	APP STATE	C CAROLINA	MARSHALL
WEST #1	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	TROY	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	TROY	LOUISIANA	TROY	TROY	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	TROY	S ALABAMA	TROY	TROY	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA
SBC CHAMPION	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	TROY	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA	TROY	JAMES MADISON	C CAROLINA	TROY	C CAROLINA	S ALABAMA	APP STATE	S ALABAMA	JAMES MADISON	APP STATE	S ALABAMA	S ALABAMA
CFP FINAL FOUR																		
TEAM SEEDED #1	GEORGIA	LSU	ALABAMA	LSU	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA
TEAM SEEDED #2	OHIO STATE	CLEMSON	OHIO STATE	PENN STATE	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	WASHINGTON	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	FLORIDA STATE	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN
TEAM SEEDED #3	CLEMSON	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	FLORIDA STATE	GEORGIA	MICHIGAN	USC	ALABAMA	LSU	USC	PENN STATE	USC	CLEMSON	MICHIGAN	USC	ALABAMA	CLEMSON
TEAM SEEDED #4	WASHINGTON	USC	UTAH	CLEMSON	UTAH	MICHIGAN	ALABAMA	OHIO STATE	OHIO STATE	USC	OHIO STATE	GEORGIA	TEXAS	OHIO ST	USC	TEXAS	USC	LSU
CFP FINAL TWO																		
TEAM #1	GEORGIA	USC	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	MICHIGAN	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	GEORGIA
TEAM #2	OHIO STATE	CLEMSON	UTAH	GEORGIA	MICHIGAN	GEORGIA	OHIO STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	FLORIDA STATE	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	CLEMSON
CFP NATIONAL CHAMPION																		
CHAMPION	OHIO STATE	USC	UTAH	LSU	MICHIGAN	LSU	GEORGIA	OHIO STATE	GEORGIA	GEORGIA	MICHIGAN	PENN STATE	OHIO STATE	MICHIGAN	GEORGIA	LSU	GEORGIA	CLEMSON

VSIN EXPERT SEASON WIN TOTAL

BEST BETS

MATT YOUMANS

LOUISVILLE OVER 8 WINS

The wait for Jeff Brohm to return home as coach will be worth it. The former Louisville quarterback is an aggressive program builder and offensive innovator. Brohm took over a pathetic Purdue team in 2017 and went 7-6 with a bowl win in his first year. He's inheriting a better Louisville team (8-5 last season) and a hospitable schedule that excludes Clemson, Florida State and North Carolina in the ACC. The Cardinals will be favored to win their first four games (Georgia Tech, Murray State, Indiana and Boston College) and should be halfway to reaching this win total by the end of September. The schedule might end up being even easier than it appears on paper. Brohm brought most of his key assistants from Purdue, and he already has formed a solid quarterback depth chart led by Jack Plummer, who played for the Boilermakers in Brohm's system before transferring to California and posting good numbers in 12 starts in the Pac-12. The pieces are falling into place for Brohm, who's a bet-on coach.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNDER 6.5 WINS

It's not easy to doubt Mike Gundy, who has coached his way to 17 consecutive bowl games, but the old Cowboy was a big loser in the transfer portal and might not have enough horses. The departure of Spencer Sanders, the starting quarterback the past two years who left for Mississippi, will prove costly. Even with a relatively soft schedule, Gundy is unlikely to guide a team with a diminished talent level to 7-5, and 6-6 is probably the ceiling for the Cowboys.

WISCONSIN OVER 8.5 WINS

Expectations often get too high for new coaches, but Luke Fickell has everything needed to win big in his debut with the Badgers. The offense essentially returns 11 starters, although quarterback Tanner Mordecai is a transfer from SMU and center Jake Renfro was a two-year starter for Fickell at Cincinnati. Mordecai passed for 33 touchdowns last season for the Mustangs and will be a major upgrade for a stagnant passing offense. Running backs Braelon Allen and Chez Mellusi rank among the conference's elite. The defense, which returns eight starters, will be among the Big Ten's best. Wisconsin will be favored in six of seven home games (excluding Ohio State) and probably will be favored in at least four of five road games. Fickell catches a break because Michigan and Penn State are not on the schedule. I project the Badgers to go 10-2 in the regular season, and 9-3 would be slightly disappointing yet still enough to top a win total that is a tick too low.

DAVE TULEY

UTAH OVER 8.5 WINS

I'm betting Utah to win the Pac-12 and taking a flier to win the national title, so obviously we have to like the Utes to exceed their Over/Under season win total, which seems low (and at a plus-price, thank you very much). Utah returns 13 starters, including starting QB Cameron Rising (assuming the reports are accurate that the rehab on his torn ACL is ahead of schedule). Last year, Utah won nine regular-season games despite dropping its opener, 29-26, vs. Florida in The Swamp. This year, they face the Gators again but get them at home and are 8-point favorites. Utah does have to travel to Baylor and the Pac-12 schedule might be tougher, but the Utes went 7-2 in the Pac-12 last season, including a win vs. USC, with the only losses at UCLA and Oregon. They get both of those teams at home this year. And, even though postseason games don't count in Over/Under season win bets, don't forget that Utah ran all over Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams and much-ballyhooed USC, 47-24, in the Pac-12 Championship Game and this team looks like it's going to be better.

TIM MURRAY

OREGON STATE OVER 8 WINS

Jonathan Smith has done a remarkable job at his alma mater. Smith inherited a 1-11 program in 2018 and the Beavers won 10 games for the third time in school history last year. Oregon State added Clemson transfer QB DJ Uiagalelei in the transfer portal. The former five-star recruit should be an improvement at the quarterback position and I expect Smith to get the best out of him. The Beavers also return their top three running backs including freshman All American Damien Martinez. The Oregon State offensive line is stacked with 109 career starts. Expect the Beavers to be one of the most physical offenses in the country. The defense is a bit worrisome. Oregon State has to replace six starters including leading tackler Omar Speights who transferred to LSU. In the secondary, the Beavers lost Jaydon Grant and Rejzohn Wright. Grant and Wright combined for 15 PBU and five interceptions. Despite the questions on defense, the schedule for Oregon State is quite favorable. The Beavers avoid USC and play Utah, UCLA, and Washington all at home. Oregon State is 12-1 at home over the last two years even with renovations to its stadium. With renovations completed, if Oregon State can win one of those home games, the Beavers should have nine wins entering their season finale at Oregon.

DUKE UNDER 6.5 WINS

Mike Elko did a fantastic job in his first season in Durham. The Blue Devils had a preseason win total of 3, finished the regular season 8-4, and defeated UCF in the Military Bowl. It was Duke's first nine-win season since 2014. QB Riley Leonard enters the year one of the top quarterbacks in the ACC. Leonard led ACC quarterbacks with 699 rushing yards and 13 rushing touchdowns as well as throwing for 2,967 yards and 20 touchdowns. Dane Brugler, The Athletic's NFL Draft analyst, ranked Leonard as the fourth-best quarterback prospect entering the season. The Blue Devils brought back 10 starters on offense and also added Stanford T Jake Hornibrook from portal. So, why play Under their win total? Duke finished second in the country with a +16 turnover margin in 2022. That is not sustainable. Additionally, Duke feasted on weak competition. The Blue Devils went 7-1 last year against teams that did not reach a bowl game and 1-3 versus teams that did reach a bowl. Duke adds Clemson, Florida State, and Notre Dame to the schedule this year, all of which are expected to be preseason Top 15 teams. Duke avoids some of the weaker ACC teams including Georgia Tech, Boston College, Virginia Tech, or Syracuse. Duke has a bunch of toss-up games this year with NC State, Louisville, North Carolina, and Pittsburgh. It is likely that Duke is a better team in 2023 but ends up with a worse record than 2022.

COLORADO STATE OVER 4.5 WINS

Despite having the worst offensive line in the country (59 sacks allowed), Jay Norvell's squad managed three wins in his first year in Fort Collins. Norvell revamped his offensive line via the portal and returns QB Clay Millen and star WR Tory Horton. Horton is the most talented wide receiver in the Mountain West. At Mountain West media day, Norvell said that Horton was approached by multiple SEC teams this offseason but opted to stay at Colorado State. The Rams added to their depth offensively by bringing in SMU WR Dylan Goffney, North Dakota State leading rusher Kobe Johnson, and BYU TE Dallin Holker. Defensively, the Rams will be strong up front anchored by DE Mohamed Kamara (8.5 sacks). S Jack Howell was First-Team All Mountain West last season and the secondary improved by adding Oregon State transfer Ron Hardge to play opposite returning CB starter Chigozie Anusiem. Colorado State will be an underdog in its first three games (Washington State, at Colorado, at Middle Tennessee) but the Rams have the talent to pull an upset in one of those games. In the Mountain West, Colorado State avoids Fresno State and San Jose State but does not play the worst team in the conference, New Mexico. Boise State, Air Force, and San Diego State all come to Fort Collins. With Nevada and a road trip to Hawaii as the final two games of the season, Colorado State should be playing for bowl eligibility and therefore surpassing 4.5 wins.

UTAH STATE UNDER 5.5 WINS

Following a 6-6 season with four close victories (7 points or less) and just nine returning starters, Utah State should be in for some regression in 2023. The Aggies open the season at Iowa and are a 23-point underdog. While Iowa is the lone P5 team on Utah State's schedule, the Aggies host James Madison on Sept. 23 and visit UConn on Sept. 30. James Madison was selected to finish first in the Sun Belt East. UConn should be slightly improved from last year's six-win team. The Aggies are the only team in the Mountain West scheduled to play the top five teams that were voted top five in the preseason poll (Boise State, Air Force., Fresno State, San Diego State, San Jose State).

On personnel front, the Aggies bring back just nine starters as Utah State was crushed due to graduation and in the portal. Leading rusher, Calvin Tyler, and leading receiver, Brian Cobbs, are gone. The offensive line lost four starters including First-Team All Mountain West T Alfred Edwards. Defensively, leading tackler, LB AJ Vongphachanh, transferred to BYU. DE Daniel Grzesiak, who led the Aggies with 8.5 sacks, transferred to Cincinnati. DE Byron Vaughns (Baylor) and DE Patrick Joyner (Kansas) both transferred. In the secondary, CB Ajani Carter (Baylor) and CB Dominic Tatum (Washington State) are both gone. S Hunter Reynolds, who finished last year with 93 tackles, seven PBU, and three interceptions, graduated.

Considering the loss of talent, tough schedule, and regression from close games a year ago, it would be surprising if Utah State reached bowl eligibility this season.

JARED SMITH

NEVADA OVER 4 WINS

I think Ken Wilson's second year in Reno will go significantly better than his first. The Wolf Pack started 2-0, but then finished 0-10 down the stretch and struggled to find any consistency on offense in their first season after Jay Norvell bolted for Colorado State. Now that Wilson has had a full year to get acclimated to being a head coach, he's been able to pull some strings in the transfer portal. The former Oregon DC brought over RB Sean Dollars, who averaged 5.5 yards per carry for the Ducks last season, in addition to two other talented linebackers that will add valuable depth to the defense. Under center it will be Oklahoma State transfer QB Shane Illingsworth, who split time last season with Nate Cox. Now that Cox has transferred out, Illingsworth will hopefully gain traction with second-year OC Derek Sage, who has three years of experience working under Chip Kelly at UCLA. Nevada's schedule is the 19th easiest in the country according to Phil Steele and avoids Boise State, San Jose State, and Air Force in the Mountain West. Circle the game in Week 3 at home against Kansas. If the Wolf Pack can take care of business in a night game at Mackay Stadium against a Power-5 opponent, this win total should sail over. Even if they can't get past the Jayhawks, I just don't see Nevada going 3-9 this season, which is what would need to happen in order for us to lose this wager.

UTEP OVER 5.5 WINS

This is expected to be HC Dana Dimel's best team in his sixth year at the helm, and I expect the Miners to get to the postseason again like they did in 2021, when Dimel took the program to their first ever bowl game. UTEP returns 15 total starters off a team that went 5-7 last year and will have four-year starter Gavin Hardison under center, who played well most of last season before getting hurt and missing the final two games. Tons of skill position depth also returns including top RB Deion Hankins (2nd team all-conference) and top WR Tyrin Smith (1,039 receiving yards, 3rd team all-conference). According to Phil Steele, UTEP has the top rated OL and second-rated DL in the conference, plus the seventh easiest schedule in the country. They play just one conference road game against a team that had a winning record last season and get to face WKU at home. Circle the Week 1 matchup at Jacksonville State, with the line currently set at a pick'em. If UTEP can get past that toss-up game six wins should be well within reach. Even if they lose the opener, I still like their chances of going bowling. Long live the College of Mines!

ADAM BURKE

WESTERN KENTUCKY OVER 8.5 WINS

The class of Conference USA has a good chance at winning at least 10 games, as nonconference matchups at Ohio State and at Troy are very likely to be the only underdog roles for the Hilltoppers this season. I personally have them as a touchdown or more favorite in every other game. The departures of Conference USA's other top teams to the AAC will help and so will the return of Austin Reed, who led the nation in passing yards and has even better talent at wide receiver this season.

WKU has won nine games in each of the last three non-COVID seasons and should be able to get to that number, if not more, based on the schedule, the new-look conference, and the talent on the roster. I have WKU for 9.17 wins in basically 11 games, since they'll be a four-touchdown dog to Ohio State.

MINNESOTA UNDER 7 WINS

PJ Fleck has done a great job with Minnesota, including 29 wins over the last three non-COVID seasons, but the rest of the division has gotten better and this feels like a down year for the Golden Gophers. For the first time since what feels like the Obama Administration, Tanner Morgan won't be the QB. Athan Kaliakmanis will be, and while he was a highly-touted recruit, he didn't really impress in his five starts last season, except for the game against Wisconsin, who will be a lot better this season.

The Golden Gophers face Ohio State and Michigan from the East Division. Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin are all teams that I have rated higher within the division. The Nebraska opener is basically a toss-up. Minnesota also goes to North Carolina and draws an interesting matchup against Louisiana sandwiched between two Big Ten games.

Mohamed Ibrahim took nearly 4,700 yards with him as the program's all-time leading rusher and there are some big losses on the offensive line as well, including a second-round draft pick. Outside of Morgan, the Gophers stayed really healthy on offense, which is always tough to bank on the following season. Seven wins feels like the ceiling for this team, so it should be a push at worst and a win at best. I only have Minnesota for 5.37 wins.

KENTUCKY OVER 7 WINS

Offensive coordinator Liam Coen has returned to Lexington and Devin Leary has transferred in from NC State, so the Wildcats offense looks a lot more robust this season. Kentucky won 10 games in 2021 when Coen was the OC and Will Levis was the quarterback, as the team averaged 32.3 points per game and 6.4 yards per play. Last year's group under Rich Scangarello only mustered 20.4 Points per game and 5.2 YPP.

Leary got some Heisman buzz a couple of years ago, but injuries really derailed his chances. Now he gets a fresh start at Kentucky with Coen and a good cast of receivers, who are basically all returnees. The Wildcats always seem to find a running game as well, and should under Coen, after going from 5.2 yards per carry in 2021 to 3.3 in 2022.

Defensively, Mark Stoops always seems to find a way to field a good unit and DC Brad White has been with the program since 2018. In that span, the Wildcats have only allowed more than 21.7 points once and that was during the COVID year in 2020. Last year's squad only allowed 19.2 points per game and some of the same faces are back, along with some high-upside transfers.

My numbers project 8.24 wins for Kentucky, as they'll be favored 30+ points in all three nonconference games and then over a two-touchdown favorite against Vanderbilt. They do draw Alabama and also get Georgia on the road, but I have them favored in nine games plus a pick 'em spot in the rivalry game against Tennessee.

ZACHARY COHEN

COLORADO UNDER 3.5 WINS

The hype surrounding Colorado is out of control with Deion "Coach Prime" Sanders now running things in Boulder. With that, every casual bettor on the planet is running to take the Over on Colorado, especially with the number being down at 3.5. However, this feels like the ultimate trap from the oddsmakers, who appear to be begging bettors to throw a little something on this. I'm not falling for it.

Sanders might ultimately turn this program around — he has already brought some big-time talent in — but his first year with the team will likely be rough. For starters, the Buffaloes are significantly undermanned after having lost tons of players to the transfer portal. Colorado is also built on players from that portal, so there really isn't much chemistry at play here. And the reports out of the Spring Game weren't exactly strong — unless you care about attendance.

Colorado also happens to have a tough schedule this year, so that won't make things easier. Perhaps Sanders finds a way to double the Buffaloes' win total from last year. However, that would mean just two wins for Colorado, and that's why I like the Under.

MIAMI (FL) OVER 7.5 WINS

I'm normally the type that likes to avoid overhyped teams like Miami, but it feels like the Hurricanes have no buzz heading into the season. This team was something of a disaster last year, but I love both coordinators that Mario Cristobal brought in. Shannon Dawson should be able to overhaul the Miami offense, as he comes from a Houston Cougars program that is known for scoring with ease. His presence should do wonders for Tyler Van Dyke, who has all the talent in the world. And new defensive coordinator Lance Guidry fielded an elite defense with the Marshall Thundering Herd last year, and he inherits a good group of players in Coral Gables.

Lacking good athletes and talented football players will never be much of an issue for a team like Miami but having the right coaches to develop players and get the most out of the roster can be. But this year's team has a great coaching staff and returns a lot of players with experience. That means that the Hurricanes could be one of the biggest surprises in the nation in 2023.

I wouldn't exactly say Miami's schedule is easy, but I don't think it's all that difficult either. Meetings with the Texas A&M Aggies, Clemson Tigers and Florida State Seminoles could be brutal for the Hurricanes. But they'll feel good about their chances in every other game they play. I think they'll win at least eight of those nine, and I love that you can get it at plus-money odds.

WISCONSIN OVER 8.5 WINS

Wisconsin isn't like most teams that hire a new coach in the offseason. The Badgers brought in one of the top coaches in the entire country in Luke Fickell, who led the Cincinnati Bearcats to the College Football Playoff in 2021. Wisconsin also hired one of the best offensive coordinators in the nation in Phil Longo. But the big difference is that the team also has 18 returning starters when you factor in the arrivals of quarterback Tanner Mordecai (SMU) and center Jake Renfro (Cincinnati). This is a very experienced group and there's talent scattered all throughout the depth chart.

With more structure and a clear vision for how this program can win, the Badgers should be ready to go from the jump. And Wisconsin has a very favorable schedule in 2023, making it hard to believe the team won't find a way to win at least nine games. The toughest games on the schedule for the Badgers are road games against the Washington State Cougars, Illinois Fighting Illini and Minnesota Golden Gophers, plus a home game against the Ohio State Buckeyes. That last game is one that could easily get away from Wisconsin. But the Badgers lost to all three of those road opponents in 2022, so revenge will be on their minds

there. It'd be surprising if they don't win at least two of those three, and that makes nine wins seem easy.

Wisconsin feels like a team that is more likely to earn double-digit wins than just eight wins. And the Badgers just might challenge some of the elite teams in the Big Ten rather shortly.

STEVE MAKINEN

KANSAS OVER 6 WINS
Another team that made a quantum leap last season and is looking to build upon the momentum in 2023 is Kansas, and if the pattern follows anything the likes of which HC Lance Leipold accomplished at UW-Whitewater & Buffalo, this team should continue trending upward. The Jayhawks were 6-7 last year, and bring back 17 starters, including QB Jalon Daniels, who, after a fast start, was lost to injury and missed five starts last year. The offense definitely curtailed without him, dropping by about 10 points per game in his absence. This is also one of four teams with 13+ starters returning and coming back after a year that endured a losing record despite outscoring opponents. This is a big improvement scenario usually. With a weaker Big 12 lined up for 2023, I expect Kansas to keep climbing.

RICE OVER 4.5 WINS
During its recent heyday of football success (2012-14), Rice was playing with players obtained in recruiting classes ranked in the low 90's across the country typically, Three of the last four classes under HC Mike Bloomgren were at such a level, and the Owls could be ready to see those efforts bear fruit on the field. One of the key pieces brought in this season is transfer QB JT Daniels, who has the experience and pedigree to post some of the best numbers the Owls have seen at the position in many years. This team won five games last year despite a horrible turnover ratio and brings back 14 starters. Even with a switch to the AAC, I don't see this group being worse than a year ago.

TENNESSEE UNDER 9.5 WINS
The oddsmakers clearly think a lot higher of this year's Tennessee team than I do, as they have set a season win total prop of 9.5 while my power ratings against the '23 schedule show the Vols winning just 8.1 games. Why the disconnect? Well, for me, I'm of the belief that this team may have caught lightning in a bottle last year. Three of their first six wins were by seven points or less, including the memorable 52-49 win over Alabama. If any of those games turned the other way, we aren't thinking nearly as highly of HC Josh Heupel's team. Second, QB Hendon Hooker put it all together last year for this offense. For as much as replacement Joe Milton is a high-quality option, and fared very well in Hooker's absence from injury, I'm not sure he can sustain the magic this offense had for all of 2022. Third, replacing WR Jalin Hyatt and his production is going to be virtually impossible. If that weren't enough, the Vols' SEC division crossover games are against Alabama & Texas A&M. I'm projecting 8-4 or 9-3 tops.

UAB UNDER 5 WINS
The third and final ZERO team for the 2023 season in terms of Stability Scores is UAB, under the leadership of first-time head coach Trent Dilfer, a curious hire at best. Dilfer's first job will be a tough one, as UAB is switching conferences to the AAC (from C-USA) and has only seven starters back. This program has been riding high under Bill Clark and Bryant Vincent, but this hire is a massive shock to the system. The Blazers qualified for a bowl game in every year since returning to FBS football in 2017 after a two-year hiatus. That was a remarkable feat. It's a good bet that streak ends in 2023 as they play what looks like a tougher than usual schedule for the program. In fact, I could see a scenario where this team loses all six of its road games. Going 6-0 at home to beat this win total is not going to happen either.

MITCH MOSS

MIAMI (FLA.) UNDER 7.5 WINS
The Hurricanes were arguably the most disappointing team in the entire country last year. They lost five games at home, but they weren't just losses. They were destroyed in all but one of those performances.

Here is how ugly it was:

Middle Tennessee beat them 45-31. The Hurricanes were outgained 507-367; and 8.3 yards per play to 4.1.

Two weeks later North Carolina traveled to south Florida and won 27-24. This was a close game on the scoreboard and on paper. Each team averaged 6.6 yards per play.

Two weeks later it was Duke's turn. The Blue Devils beat the Hurricanes 45-21. In a season filled with "rock bottom" moments, this game may have taken the cake. Miami had EIGHT turnovers.

Miami lost to Florida State 45-3 at home in early November (7.0 to 3.6 YPP), and closed a dismal regular season with a 42-16 home loss to Pitt (8.1 to 5.8 YPP).

A previous season usually doesn't have much to do with the following year, but there is one thing I can't shake with this program: the head coach. Second year man Mario Cristobal has proven to be a solid recruiter over his time at Oregon and Miami, but that's where the compliments end. He was overmatched with the Ducks, and it remained that way in his first year at Miami.

Thanks to professional sports bettor Paul Stone for this incredible note: Over the past five seasons - when favored by 9.5 or fewer points - the Hurricanes are only 8-13 STRAIGHT UP! Cristobal is also 7-21-2 ATS in his last 30 games as a coach.

I think it's another long year for this once elite program.

CLEMSON OVER 10 WINS
Not many programs can finish the season 11-3 (9-0 in conference) and call it a disappointment. Put Clemson on the short list.

A seemingly broken offense the past two seasons should look much different this year. Cade Klubnik should be an upgrade at QB by default, and the Tigers welcome in new offensive coordinator Garrett Riley. The latter made the move after helping TCU reach the national championship game last year.

I called the offense broken because the unit "only" averaged 33.1 points per game last season. That ranked 24th nationally. They averaged 24.4 points per game the season before. That was good for 85th. The offense averaged 40+ points per game the three seasons before that - ranking fourth in the country every year. They have the right parts in place for the offense to return to the glory year from not that long ago.

I won't call the schedule a gift, but they caught some breaks. Florida State and Notre Dame each have to travel to Death Valley. The Tigers are laying 2.5 points to the Seminoles, and 4.5 points to the Fighting Irish. They're also currently listed as favorites in the following games at DraftKings:

- 12 at Duke on September 4
- 10 at Miami on October 21
- 10.5 at N.C. State on October 28
- 10.5 vs. North Carolina on November 18
- 6.5 at South Carolina (in a major revenge spot) on November 25

A conference record of 53-5 since 2015 is also pretty good. They went 8-0 four times during that stretch in ACC play, and either 7-1 or 8-1 three other times. I expect the same in 2023.

BEN WILSON

MICHIGAN STATE UNDER 5.5 WINS

Towards the back end of an unexpected 11-win season in 2021, head coach Mel Tucker was rewarded with a new 10-year, $95 million contract. But despite being known for his defensive coaching prowess, Tucker's Spartans have ranked outside the top 100 in total defense each of the past two seasons. Without RB Kenneth Walker III to rely on, 2022 turned disastrous early and often, ending with a 5-7 record.

While you'd expect some improvement on the defensive end after 27 different players saw at least one start in 2022, it's hard to be excited about a unit that has been uncompetitive for two years running under Tucker and his embattled DC Scottie Hazelton.

If there's going to be a saving grace for Sparty in 2023, it's the offense. But that side of the ball was thrown into flux after the Spring Game when returning QB Payton Thorne and top returning WR Keon Coleman each entered the transfer portal. While early reports have been promising on new signal caller Noah Kim, the redshirt junior only appeared in four games over his first three years on campus in East Lansing.

Outside of an above-average offensive line that was a top five Big Ten unit in pass protection last year, Michigan State is young and inexperienced across the board. Sparty also faces a consensus top-10 toughest schedule in the country this year and are double-digit 'dogs in four Game of the Year lines (+12 vs. Washington, +19 vs. Michigan, +25.5 at Ohio State, and +13 vs. Penn State in Detroit).

It all adds up to Under in 2023. While -165 is a generous price to pay, a good amount of the market has already moved to 5 with some shops even down to 4.5.

WES REYNOLDS

WAKE FOREST UNDER 6.5 WINS

The next time that fans of the Demon Deacons will see QB Sam Hartman will be on November 18 in South Bend when the former Wake starting signal-caller will be in a Notre Dame uniform. Hartman started 45 games for the Deacs and threw for just under 13,000 yards and 110 TDs vs. just 41 INTs. Wake head coach Dave Clawson, one of the best coaches in the ACC, compares new starter sophomore Mitch Griffis to former Deacs QB John Wolford, but replacing Hartman and leading receiver AT Perry (1096 yards, 81 catches, 11 TD) is a big ask for what was a top 10 passing offense in the country last year.

Wake Forest only brings back two starters on the offensive line and has to replace its entire starting defensive line. Most of the back five is back for defensive coordinator Brad Lambert, but that group ranked 114th nationally in pass defense last season.

After opening with a soft on-ramp to the 2023 season (Elon, Vanderbilt, at Old Dominion, Georgia Tech), Wake's schedule is brutal in October/ November with consecutive road games at Clemson and at Virginia Tech. Next, they get a Pitt club that is one of the more physical teams in the league followed by a Florida State bunch who has the highest expectations that they have had in several seasons. Starting November, a road trip to Duke, who returns its starting QB and entire skill position corps from a nine-win team, then NC State, who upgrades at QB with Virginia transfer Brennan Armstrong. Finally, Wake closes with two straight road games at Notre Dame and at Syracuse.

Clawson has gotten Wake Forest to bowl games in seven straight seasons, and more than likely, he finds a way to make it eight straight, but there are not seven wins on this arduous schedule.

AUBURN OVER 6.5 WINS

It was a long road back, but Hugh Freeze is back in the SEC. Say what you want about Freeze, he is more equipped to deal with an SEC program culture than Bryan Harsin was. Former Tigers great Cadillac Williams did a solid enough job keeping this team engaged with the season after Harsin was fired eight games into the season. Williams was retained by Freeze as the associate head coach, which was a very popular move with the returning lettermen.

The Tigers had a great deal of bad luck last season with injuries, coaching staff changes, and especially turnovers. Auburn finished 122nd in turnover margin. With nine starters back on defense, plus bringing back a dynamic runner at QB with Robby Ashford and the late spring addition of Michigan State transfer Payton Thorne, the turnover number should be substantially improved.

Auburn should have five wins over the following: New Mexico State, Vanderbilt, Samford, Cal and UMass. They have sure losses against the SEC elite: Alabama, Georgia, and LSU. That leaves the coin flip games: Arkansas, Mississippi State, Texas A&M and Ole Miss.

The Tigers played tentatively for most of last season due to the cloud of Harsin's job status hanging over them. They will not have that issue this season.

COLORADO STATE OVER 4.5 WINS

It was a predictably difficult season for Colorado State in the first year under Jay Norvell as the Rams went 3-9. The offensive line allowed 59 sacks, the most in FBS. The Rams were the third worst scoring offense (13.2 points per game) in FBS. However, the team showed improvement late in the season particularly on defense, who returns eight starters, by only allowing 20.0 points per game in conference play.

QB Clay Millen also led FBS in completion percentage (72.2%) and he is back along with receiver Tory Horton, who might be the best receiver in the Mountain West Conference.

While opening with two Pac-12 opponents in Washington State and at Colorado, the schedule is very manageable. They could be favored or a pick'em in three of their four conference road games (Utah State, UNLV, Wyoming, Hawaii). Plus, the tougher conference opponents (Boise State, Air Force, San Diego State) are all at home.

Norvell went 3-9 in his first season at Nevada and turned it around to have the Wolfpack 8-5 by Year 2. As a non-Power Five, the Mountain West does not have much of a talent gap top to bottom, so quick turnarounds can and do happen frequently in this league.

VSIN EXPERT FUTURES AND PROPS

BEST BETS

TIM MURRAY

TEXAS TO WIN BIG 12 (+110)

If not now… when? Texas has been the definition of "overhyped and under deliver" for the past decade. However, this Longhorns team is stacked and is clearly the superior team in the Big 12. In Game of the Year lines at DraftKings Sportsbook, Texas is an eight-point favorite at Baylor, 18-point favorite vs. Kansas, 6.5-point favorite over Oklahoma in Dallas, 9.5-point favorite vs Kansas State, and a six-point favorite at TCU. While Texas did lose a pair of dynamic running backs in Bijan Robinson and Roschon Johnson to the NFL, the Longhorns return 10 starters on offense. The entire offensive line returns with over 100 career starts. WR Xavier Worthy is one of the top returning receivers in the country. WR Jordan Whittington had 652 receiving yards last year and WR Isaiah Neyor will make his Texas debut this fall. Neyor transferred to Texas from Wyoming but tore his ACL in preseason last year. Texas also added Adonai Mitchell from Georgia in the portal. Mitchell was ranked the #3 player in the portal according to 247 Sports. Defensively, Texas returns six starters including LB Jaylan Ford. The Longhorns added S Jalen Catalon from Arkansas to bolster the secondary.

All five of Texas' losses last year were by one possession. The Longhorns also blew 14-point leads against Oklahoma State and Texas Tech. The talent in Austin is there, it is up to Steve Sarkisian to deliver the Longhorns' first conference championship since 2009.

Hook 'em.

MITCH MOSS

WISCONSIN TO WIN BIG TEN WEST DIVISION (+125)

There is a LOT to like about the upcoming Wisconsin football season, and the future of the program. I've been watching this team for as long as I can remember. Let's just say I was pleasantly surprised when they landed Luke Fickell as their new head coach. Going from Paul Chryst to Fickell might be the biggest upgrade in the country.

Other reasons why I really like the 2023 Badgers:
- Phil Longo is the new OC. Think of what the offenses looked like under him while at Ole Miss and North Carolina. We're talking about a complete one hundred and eighty degree turn around with UW. It's no longer four yards and a cloud of dust. Say goodbye to the days of running the football 50 times per game. It's about time.
- Which means hello SMU transfer QB Tanner Mordecai and his 3500 yards plus 33 touchdowns from a year ago.
- And hello to former four-star WR CJ Williams, who transfers in from USC
- Three starters will be back on the O-line, including Trey Wedig and Jack Nelson. Each are former four-star recruits.
- Oh, and Braelon Allen is a phenomenal college RB
- The defense should be fine despite losing proven DC Jim Leonhard. All of the starting LB's are back, and they're strong at the position
- Favorable schedule. at Purdue, at Illinois, at Indiana, and they close at Minnesota. HOME: Iowa, Nebraska, and Ohio State.

I can't wait to watch "Jump Around" at Camp Randall this season.

MICHIGAN TO MAKE THE PLAYOFF YES (+115)

Remember when Jim Harbaugh was in hot water as the head coach of the Wolverines? I do. It wasn't that long ago.

2020 was a strange year for everybody. Harbaugh's bunch finished the pandemic-shortened season with a 2-4 record. They lost to Indiana by 17. Wisconsin blew them out at the Big House by a score of 49-11. It was an ugly season, and countless stories were written suggesting that Harbaugh's time in Ann Arbor was nearing a close.

Since then the maize and blue have won 25 football games and played in consecutive CFB Playoffs. Maybe even more importantly the team has gone 2-0 versus bitter rival Ohio State in that time, including a 45-23 stomping of the Buckeyes at The Horseshoe a season ago. After years of conference domination by Urban Meyer's Columbus crew, it appears Harbaugh has flipped the script and turned Michigan into the best program in the Big Ten.

Upsets happen all the time in this sport, but as of this post, DraftKings has Michigan favored by 18 points at Nebraska, and by 19 points at Michigan State. Landmines must be avoided at Happy Valley on November 11th, and in the final regular season game at home against Ohio State. The Wolverines are small favorites in both of those games.

I believe a trip to the playoff is still feasible if they stub their toe in one of the two latter contests.

ADAM BURKE

GEORGIA SOUTHERN TO WIN SUN BELT (+1800)

The Sun Belt East Division is the most competitive division in the Group of Five, but all of the teams are flawed in some way. Appalachian State has a new QB and only went 6-6 last season, as head coach Shawn Clark is now four seasons removed from Eli Drinkwitz and five from Scott Satterfield, so he's lost a lot of production from previous regimes and the team hasn't been as sharp.

Coastal Carolina has a new head coach in Tim Beck, who many consider to be a big drop-off from Jamey Chadwell. Grayson McCall is back, but he's leading a different offense and the Coastal defense really fell off last season. James Madison has a new QB as well and a ton of losses in Year 2 as a FBS program. Marshall only returns four starters from a defense that held opponents to 16 points per game and the offense only managed 24.5 points per game themselves with a low ceiling.

All of those factors could open the door for Georgia Southern to be the class of the East. Tulsa transfer Davis Brin has thrown for over 5,400 yards in his college career and seems like a great fit for Clay Helton's team and Bryan Ellis's offense. The Eagles return their top rusher and top two receivers, as well as the majority of an offensive line that allowed just seven sacks last season. The Eagles have a new DC in Brandon Bailey, who held their high-powered offense to just 21 points in the Camellia Bowl.

While the Eagles project to be an underdog to either Troy or South Alabama in a hypothetical Sun Belt Championship Game, they might have the most untapped upside in the East Division and I think that makes them worthy of taking the chance that they live up to it.

WESTERN KENTUCKY TO WIN CONFERENCE USA (+130)

My Power Ratings have Western Kentucky at least five points better than every other team in Conference USA. The Hilltoppers should be the biggest benefactor of the defections of UTSA, FAU, UAB, and others. Liberty's awful schedule is the only reason why I have a high win total projection on the Flames, but Louisiana Tech is the only other team I have as reaching bowl eligibility. My projection for Western Kentucky is 9.17 wins, so not only are the 'Tops one of my favorite win total bets, but I'd be shocked if they didn't win this conference.

Given that they'd play the title game at home, I'd currently have them at least a touchdown favorite against everybody in the division and it may even be a larger line by then. QB Austin Reed threw for 4,744 yards and 40 touchdowns last season and the conference is much weaker this year. Even if WKU starts slow, the last three games are against New Mexico State, Sam Houston State, and FIU, so they should roll through those and at least finish first or second to be in the game.

They should be a bigger favorite than this and likely will be when the game rolls around.

TANNER MORDECAI TO WIN THE HEISMAN (+10000)

Tanner Mordecai is not the runner that Drake Maye is. Maye actually led the Tar Heels in rush attempts in Phil Longo's offense last season. However, we could see more Mordecai scrambles, but we'll also see the best QB that the Badgers have had in Madison since Russell Wilson transferred in from NC State.

Mordecai has 72 touchdown passes to his name and over 7,100 yards as he goes into Wisconsin with a chance to really shine. Braelon Allen will still get his fair share of touches, but the Tar Heels ran 1,034 plays last season, so there will be plenty of opportunities to go around. North Carolina was one of three teams to have 500 running plays and 500 passing plays (UTSA, Texas Tech), so this will be a balanced offense capable of explosive plays.

Wisconsin will be favored in every game except one for me and a win against Ohio State on October 28 could be the springboard to really get Mordecai in the national discussion. In the other 11 games, I have Wisconsin at least -6.5, so Mordecai will have the chance to have a great record and great numbers at a noteworthy program.
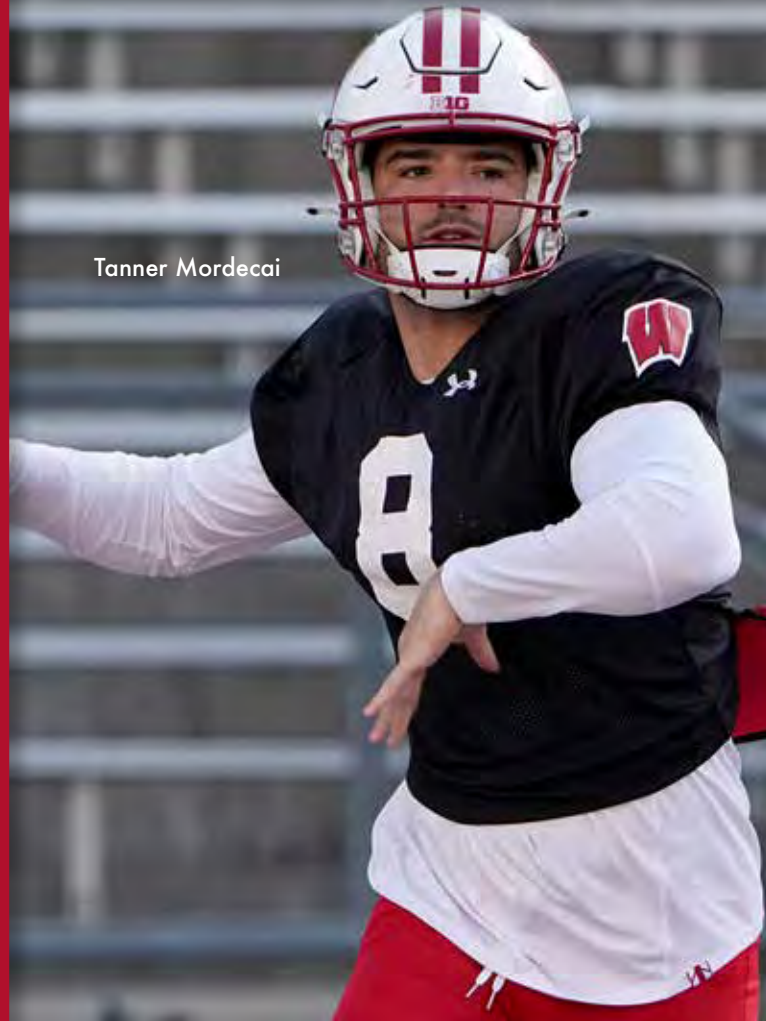
Tanner Mordecai

DAVE TULEY

UTAH TO WIN PAC-12 (+600) AND TO WIN CFB PLAYOFF (+7000)

Utah was my longshot to win the national title in last year's betting guide, but those hopes were crippled with a 29-26 loss to the Florida Gators in The Swamp in the season opener. It seems everyone is jumping on the USC bandwagon with defending Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams, but remember that Utah beat them 43-42 in the regular season and then really ran over them 47-24 in the Pac-12 Championship Game in Las Vegas.

In horse racing, I always say "I'd rather be on a horse sooner rather than later," meaning I want to bet a horse (or team) before everyone else, not when they're on everyone's radar and going off as the chalk. That doesn't always work in college football with the increasing turnover in teams from year to year since the advent of the transfer portal an NIL deals; however, Utah returns 13 starters, including QB Cameron Rising (recovering from a torn ACL in the Rose Bowl) and the core of a defense that allowed just 21.4 points per game.

The opener is against Florida again, but this year the Utes are 8-point home favorites and have a better chance to get off to a strong start and move up the polls.

The one question is Rising's rehab. All reports have him ahead of schedule. We believe the time to bet them is over the summer (DraftKings had them at 6-1 to win the Pac-12 and 70-1 to win the national title in late July when this guide was being produced). I'm pretty confident that when Rising is cleared to play that oddsmakers will lower the Utes' odds and the public will probably bet them even lower.

ZACHARY COHEN

UTAH TO WIN THE PAC-12 (+600) & UTAH TO MAKE THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF (+900)

USC is once again the popular pick to win the Pac-12 and it's hard to blame anybody for loving the Trojans. But Lincoln Riley's team has a few games on the schedule that are absolutely terrifying, with road meetings with the Arizona State Sun Devils, Notre Dame Fighting Irish and Oregon Ducks being three that are extremely dangerous. With that in mind, I don't see the Trojans as a lock to make the Pac-12 Championship Game. But even if they do, I think the Utah Utes will eat their lunch again.

Last year, Utah beat USC 43-42 in an instant classic at Rice-Eccles Stadium, and the Utes then beat the Trojans down in a 47-24 win in the Pac-12 Championship Game. Utah has 16 returning starters from that team, with nine of them coming on the defensive side of the ball. That means that the same defense that had Caleb Williams fighting for his life will once again be on the other side of the ball. Utah also has Cameron Rising back under center, and he's a guy I trust as much as anyone in college football in big-game environments — especially with a great offensive line blocking for him.

I simply view Kyle Whittingham as the best coach in this conference, so I like his chances of going out and making a splash with a very experienced and talented team. Maybe USC will win its home game against Utah during the regular season. But I'd still like the Utes' chances of getting back to the Pac-12 Championship Game, even with a hiccup like that. And on a neutral field, I'd take the team that is more prepared, hungrier for success and tired of being forgotten.

Making the College Football Playoff is a bit tougher, but it's worth a sprinkle if you believe Utah can win the Pac-12. The conference should be better in 2023, so I expect one of the four playoff teams to emerge from here.

WISCONSIN TO WIN BIG TEN WEST (+130)

While Wisconsin hired an Air Raid offensive coordinator, I don't think the Badgers will completely move away from their bread and butter. Sure, Wisconsin is going to open things up and let star quarterback

Tanner Mordecai take his shots, which means opponents won't know exactly what the Badgers are doing on first and second down. But Wisconsin still has an elite running back in Braelon Allen, and he's running behind an experienced offensive line. With that said, this is still going to be a dangerous running team and you're probably going to get the best of both worlds from this Badgers offense in 2023. That will make this a very tough team to defend once everybody is comfortable in the new system. Meanwhile, the Badgers are loaded on the defensive side of the ball, and new defensive coordinator Mike Tressel has gotten a lot out of less talented groups.

If Wisconsin can work out the kinks over the first few weeks of the year, there just isn't much preventing the Badgers from winning the Big Ten West. The biggest challengers in the division are the Iowa Hawkeyes, but Wisconsin will be playing at home when these two meet. That will be a huge advantage for the Badgers, who will also be hoping to get some revenge for last year's 24-10 loss to the Hawkeyes.

Wisconsin also has a renewed energy with Luke Fickell leading the program, and he's a guy that is driven to succeed — and he wants to do it fast. With that in mind, I think you'll see a fired-up squad, and you'll also see a group that is well prepared on a week-to-week basis. That's bad news for teams like the Illinois Fighting Illini and Minnesota Golden Gophers, who got the best of Wisconsin in a down 2022 season.

These Badgers should win 10 games in 2023. That would be more than enough for them to win a weak Big Ten West.

JONATHAN VON TOBEL

FRESNO STATE TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST (+400)

The Bulldogs have lost a great deal of production from last year's Mountain West Championship team, but Jeff Tedford has plenty for a quick turnaround and title defense. Mikey Keene transferred in from UCF to compete with Logan Fife for the quarterback job vacated by Jake Haener. Keene is the leader in the clubhouse to win the job, and Tedford has done tremendous work with quarterbacks in the past so whoever starts will be set up for success.

Malik Sherrod, who ran for nearly 500 yards last season and averaged 5.4 yards per carry, is set to take over the lead running back role, and four players with starting experience are back along the offensive line. The rebuild on offense looks like it could be quick, and if it is, that will be a boon for a defense which brings back seven starters from last season.

Fresno State has to go to San Jose and San Diego at the end of the season, as well as host Boise State, but this team has enough to make it through those challenges and Tedford has proven to be the best head coach in the conference. This team should not have this price to win the Mountain West.

COASTAL CAROLINA TO WIN SUN BELT (+450)

Despite having Grayson McCall back for his fifth season, Coastal Carolina is only the third choice on the board to win the Sun Belt. However, the Chanticleers are the favorite to win its division, which puts them in the driver's seat to make the Sun Belt championship.

First-year head coach Tim Beck also has a roster with a lot of experience, especially on offense. Around McCall are the three leading wide receivers from 2022, the top three rushers and an offensive line which brings back three starters. The defense will be a question with six starters back from a unit that allowed 31.8 points per game last season, but an assumed improvement from the unit paired with an elite offense should keep the group from being a massive weakness.

Coastal also draws a favorable schedule that does not include games against either Troy or South Alabama, and the program gets to host Marshall. The path to a title game berth with a chance to win it is high for the Chanticleers, and the probability of them winning the conference is higher than +450 would indicate.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PRESEASON TOP 25

by Matt Youmans

#1
GEORGIA

Kirby Smart

At the time, Nick Saban was probably unaware he was creating a monster. Saban's singular focus on winning and the process of maintaining dominance made him the king of college football. He has won seven national championships, including six as Alabama coach.

The monster Saban helped create was Kirby Smart, who served as his defensive coordinator from 2008 to 2015, when the Crimson Tide won four titles. Smart got his head-coaching start at Georgia in 2016, and look who's on top now.

The Bulldogs have won 29 of 30 games the past two years and are eyeing a national championship three-peat, a feat not even accomplished by Saban. Smart has become the new dominant force of the Southeastern Conference, and Georgia has earned the right to be the starting point for VSiN's college football power rankings in 2023.

"I still have Georgia No. 1, so I'm definitely buying in," South Point sports book director Chris Andrews said. "It seems like they are reloading every year, and I hate to use that expression, but it's really true."

After winning the 2021 title, the Bulldogs had a record 15 players selected in the 2022 NFL Draft. Smart reloaded and went 15-0 to record back-to-back championships. Georgia lost 10 players in this year's draft, including two-year starting quarterback Stetson Bennett. It's remarkable a program could lose 25 players to the draft in two years and remain preseason No. 1.

The Bulldogs' projected starting quarterback is sophomore Carson Beck, who attempted only 35 passes last year, and some might see a new QB as a sign of weakness. But Alabama and Ohio State also must replace star quarterbacks — Bryce Young and CJ Stroud, respectively — so no other team is an obvious pick to knock Georgia from the top spot.

"I'm just not sure who I would power-rate over Georgia," Fox Sports analyst Chris "The Bear" Fallica said. "Ohio State lost a ton, including on the offensive line, which most are not talking about. I guess Michigan would be the answer, but are we buying into that team which gave up 51 points to TCU in the playoff? It almost feels like a by-default situation. I do know someone who sees Georgia every day and said this is the best two-deep Smart has had. Maybe not the best from an

elite NFL draft-pick standpoint right now, but they are stacked. It's on the QB."

From a quarterback standpoint, USC owns the best starting point in reigning Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams. The Trojans were a win away from the four-team playoff last season before falling to Utah in the Pac-12 title game, and coach Lincoln Riley has more horses in his second season.

Paul Stone, a college football handicapper from Texas, said LSU and USC are teams with second-year coaches that could make the playoff if any other top teams stumble. Brian Kelly won 10 games in his first year with the Tigers and returns quarterback Jayden Daniels.

"I believe the landscape in college football is ripe for a team outside the usual suspects to make the playoff," Stone said. "Georgia, Ohio State and Alabama all have first-time starting quarterbacks, so the door's at least slightly open."

Stone offered his analysis of several teams and provided his power rankings, which I combined with my own rankings to form the VSiN preseason Top 25.

1. GEORGIA

I have suspicions about the superiority of this team, but there's no proof of significant decline, and a soft schedule will help the Bulldogs avoid upsets while their new quarterback matures. Georgia's only true road tests will be at Auburn (Sept. 30) and Tennessee (Nov. 18), so Kirby Smart should be secure at the top until reaching the SEC title game.

2. OHIO STATE

The schedule is stacked against the Buckeyes, who play Notre Dame, Wisconsin and Michigan on the road, so they face a few high hurdles on the way to the playoff.

Stone: "Ohio State has some uncertainty at quarterback entering the season, but if Kyle McCord or Devin Brown can just be good — they don't have to be great — the Buckeyes will once again field one of the nation's premier offenses. Ohio State is absolutely loaded at both receiver and running back and will be better defensively."

Kyle McCord

Quinn Ewers

3. USC

Caleb Williams passed for 4,537 yards and 42 touchdowns with only five interceptions while rushing for 10 touchdowns last season. He's the college version of Patrick Mahomes and the likely No. 1 pick of the draft. A defense that allowed 29.2 points per game returns nine starters and adds several transfers, including tackle Bear Alexander (Georgia) and linebacker Mason Cobb (Oklahoma State). I rank the Trojans No. 2, and Stone ranks them No. 6. "USC's Achilles' heel last year was clearly its defense," Stone said, "but the Trojans will be significantly improved on that side of the ball through transfer additions."

4. MICHIGAN

Wolverines coach Jim Harbaugh has won back-to-back Big Ten titles and brings back his most productive offensive players — quarterback J.J. McCarthy and running backs Blake Corum and Donovan Edwards. The defense is a minor concern after getting exposed in last season's final two games against Purdue and TCU.

5. LSU

Jayden Daniels is the top returning quarterback in the SEC, and linebacker Harold Perkins could be the conference's top defensive player. Brian Kelly's first year in Baton Rouge produced a victory over Alabama and a 20-point loss to Georgia in the SEC title game.

6. ALABAMA

It's tough to rank the Tide outside the top five, but Nick Saban has only 10 starters returning and must replace quarterback Bryce Young and both coordinators. Young worked some miracles to get Alabama to 11-2. Ty Simpson, Jalen Milroe and Notre Dame transfer Tyler Buchner are battling for the starting quarterback job.

7. CLEMSON

Sophomore quarterback Cade Klubnik has some questions to answer after a poor finish to last season, but he's a dual threat with a lot of talent. The Tigers also return running back Will Shipley, an experienced offensive line and eight defensive starters.

8. PENN STATE

The Nittany Lions won 11 games, losing only to Michigan and Ohio State, and return eight starters on both sides of the ball. Nicholas Singleton and Kaytron Allen form an elite backfield tandem, and new quarterback Drew Allar could be an upgrade at the position.

9. TEXAS

The Big 12 preseason favorite, Texas has not won the league since 2009. The Longhorns have stayed Under their win total in 10 of the past 11 years, so underachieving is a long trend. Third-year sophomore Quinn Ewers leads an offense that should be explosive. The schedule is far from easy, and coach Steve Sarkisian is one game over .500 after two seasons in Austin. According to Stone, "Texas clearly has the best roster in the Big 12, and there are no glaring weaknesses. If Ewers can take the next step and fulfill his immense promise, the Longhorns could be one of college football's biggest stories."

10. WASHINGTON

Kalen DeBoer took an offense that averaged 21.5 points the previous year and improved it to 39.7 points per game in his debut as coach. Michael Penix ranked second in the nation with 4,641 passing yards last season, and Jalen McMillan and Rome Odunze are elite receivers. The Huskies will be a legit threat to win the Pac-12, so circle their Nov. 4 game at USC.

11. FLORIDA STATE

The development of quarterback Jordan Travis, who passed for 24 touchdowns and rushed for seven, was the key to coach Mike Norvell's turnaround to 10-3 in his third season in Tallahassee. The Seminoles, who return 17 starters, will get tested against LSU and Clemson in September.

12. NOTRE DAME

Sam Hartman, a transfer from Wake Forest, will give the Irish the quarterback play they need to complement coach Marcus Freeman's veteran defense. Ohio State and USC visit South Bend.

13. WISCONSIN

Expect a big bounce-back season for the Badgers, who return 18 starters and get a quarterback upgrade from SMU transfer Tanner Mordecai. Braelon Allen and Chez Mellusi will lead a powerful running attack. New coach Luke Fickell will design one of the nation's top defenses.

14. OREGON

Ducks coach Dan Lanning, a former Georgia defensive coordinator, enters his second year with eight starters back on both sides of the ball. Senior quarterback Bo Nix, a burnout at Auburn, was rejuvenated last season in a new conference and accounted for 43 total touchdowns.

15. TENNESSEE

The Volunteers must replace star quarterback Hendon Hooker, who beat LSU and Alabama, and former Michigan transfer Joe Milton has been a talented enigma in his career. Still, most signs are encouraging for coach Josh Heupel after an 11-win season and a dominant 31-14 victory over Clemson in the Orange Bowl.

16. UTAH

Kyle Whittingham is a classic tough-guy coach who could have the toughest offensive and defensive lines in the Pac-12. The Utes finished 10-4 in each of the past two seasons and won the conference championship game in a blowout each year. Senior quarterback Cameron Rising suffered a torn ACL in the Rose Bowl loss to Penn State, but he's reportedly ahead of schedule in rehab and expects to be ready for the Aug. 31 opener against Florida.

17. TEXAS A&M

The Aggies (5-7) were a jumbo disappointment for coach Jimbo Fisher last year, but he's got 20 starters returning and gambled on hiring Bobby Petrino as offensive coordinator.

18. KANSAS STATE

Chris Klieman, the Big 12's best coach, knocked off TCU in the conference title game, and he's got eight starters back on offense. Running back Deuce Vaughn will be missed, but veteran quarterback Will Howard is a winner.

19. OREGON STATE

Jonathan Smith's work in Corvallis has been extraordinary, coaching the Beavers from 2-10 in his first year to 10-3 in his fifth year. The new quarterback is Clemson transfer DJ Uiagalelei, who was inconsistent while going 22-6 as the starter. Oregon State went 12-1 at home the past two years and hosts UCLA, Utah and Washington.

20. MISSISSIPPI

Despite his efforts to escape Oxford and get to Auburn, coach Lane Kiffin is back with nine starters on offense and seven on defense. He has three quarterbacks — Jaxson Dart, Oklahoma State transfer Spencer Sanders and freshman Walker Howard — competing for the top job. The schedule will take Kiffin to Alabama, Auburn and Georgia.

21. OKLAHOMA

Brent Venables was a bust in his first year as a head coach. The Sooners finished 6-7 for their first losing record since 1998. Oklahoma, which suffered five losses by seven points or fewer, faces a weaker schedule, and quarterback Dillon Gabriel returns.

22. IOWA

Michigan transfer Cade McNamara will be the new quarterback for the Hawkeyes, who were in desperate need of a competent passer. The defense will be typically strong. Iowa will challenge Wisconsin atop the Big Ten West.

23. TEXAS TECH

Eleven starters return on offense, including quarterback Tyler Shough, and six on defense for underrated coach Joey McGuire. Don't be too surprised if the Red Raiders are playing for a Big 12 title on November 24 at Texas.

24. NORTH CAROLINA

Drake Maye passed for 4,321 yards and 38 touchdowns last season. He also ran for 698 yards and seven scores. He's the likely No. 2 draft pick behind USC's Williams. The Tar Heels bring back 17 starters for coach Mack Brown.

25. TCU

A fall from the Top 25 would not be surprising for the Horned Frogs, who were crushed 65-7 by Georgia in the national title game and waved goodbye to quarterback Max Duggan. TCU coach Sonny Dykes gets the benefit of the doubt with this ranking.

DJ Uiagalelei

TOP 50 COLLEGE FOOTBALL TRENDS FOR YOUR 2023 CALENDAR

by Steve Makinen

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

A piece of information I utilize each week to prepare my college football wagering list is the head-to-head series trends between opponents. In my opinion, certain opponents consistently bring out the best or worst in teams. There are also certain rivalries in which home-field advantage means a ton or nothing. That's just the nature of the series. I found 50 of the more intriguing head-to-head series trends that will be impacting the 2023 CFB season. Feel free to pin these to your calendar and jump on them when they arise because, trust me, many, or perhaps even most of them will continue.

WEEK 1
Saturday, September 2, 2023

OHIO STATE AT INDIANA
Trend: Over the total has converted in the last six matchups
Ohio State has put up some lofty scoring totals over the last six years versus Indiana, averaging 50.2 points per game while topping the 40-point mark each time out. While the Buckeyes have some personnel losses to deal with on offense to start '23, they should still hang a good number on the Hoosiers' inexperienced defense here.

WEEK 2
Saturday, September 9, 2023

IOWA AT IOWA STATE
Trend: Under the total is 14-4 in this rivalry since 2004
The Iowa-Iowa State rivalry typically brings out the fight in both teams, and the offenses seem to have to scratch and claw for points. That said, the 2011 and 2017 games were 44-41 finals. Could 2023 continue that unusual pattern?

NORTH TEXAS AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
Trend: Favorites have won the last seven games both SU and ATS
The North Texas-FIU game on September 9th might not be the first one that grabs your attention in Week 2, but it has produced a noteworthy trend in which favorites have dominated. In fact, despite five of these last seven games showing lines of 10 points or fewer, all but one of them was decided by 15 points or more.

WEEK 3
Saturday, September 16, 2023

SOUTH CAROLINA AT GEORGIA
Trend: Road teams are 5-2 SU and 7-0 ATS since 2016
Count me among the group of prognosticators believing that South

Carolina is headed in the right direction under Shane Beamer. This game at Georgia will go a long way in determining if there is any merit to that argument. Road teams have thrived in the series. Can the Gamecocks keep the trend going in Athens?

WEEK 4
Friday, September 22, 2023

WISCONSIN AT PURDUE
Trend: Wisconsin has gone 9-0 SU and ATS in its last nine trips to Purdue
An intriguing Friday night contest finds a new look Wisconsin facing its first Big Ten test of the season at Purdue. Old Wisconsin always seemed to take care of business in West Lafayette. Can the Badgers continue to do so under head coach Luke Fickell?

Saturday, September 23, 2023

SMU AT TCU
Trend: Road teams have won the last eight games ATS
TCU reached the national championship game last year but has to replace a ton of production in 2023. After having already faced Colorado and Houston, this game versus SMU might prove to be the toughest test to date, as road teams have won the last eight games against the spread in the head-to-head series. SMU is among the favorites in the AAC and won outright in its most recent two trips to Fort Worth.

WEEK 5
Saturday, September 30, 2023

GEORGIA AT AUBURN
Trend: Georgia is on a 9-1 ATS run versus Auburn, including 6-0 SU and ATS in the last six games
In the leadup to this game, it will probably be stated that this will be a big test for the two-time defending national champs. It is one of Georgia's two cross-divisional SEC games. However, the Bulldogs have had their way with the Tigers of late, with five of the last six games being decided by 17 points or more. Don't be afraid to lay what figures to be a smaller number than usual by Georgia standards.

ALABAMA AT MISSISSIPPI STATE
Trend: Under the total is 20-5 in this series since 1998, including 11-1 in Starkville
Simply put, the Alabama defense usually dominates Mississippi State's offense. In fact, in the last five head-to-head meetings, the Bulldogs have scored just 22 points, not per game. That's total. Furthermore, in the last 10 games at Starkville, MSU has scored just 8.0 points per game. The Tide defense has been suffocating, and with that unit expected to be the stronger one in 2023, why should this trend change?

PITTSBURGH AT VIRGINIA TECH
Trend: Pittsburgh is on a 13-2 ATS run versus Virginia Tech
The annual game versus Virginia Tech has been one of the most rewarding for Pittsburgh since joining the ACC back in 2013. The Panthers are 8-2 ATS in this series as conference mates and were 5-0 ATS beforehand. The last three games have been resounding wins for Pitt by a combined score of 120-50.

LSU AT OLE MISS
Trend: Home teams are on a 9-1 ATS run in this series
LSU is looking for a second straight SEC West Division crown, and to get it, they'll probably have to survive this tough contest in Oxford. The Tigers are just 2-3 outright in their last five visits to the Grove, and overall, this has been a series dominated by hosts.

SOUTH CAROLINA AT TENNESSEE

Trend: Underdogs are 6-5 SU and 9-1-1 ATS in the last 11 head-to-head games

I wrote a bit earlier about South Carolina trending upward under Beamer. This will be another big test for the Gamecocks to prove that is true. Tennessee has lost a lot of production but is still commanding respect. With underdogs historically competing well in this series and even pulling several outright upsets, could this be a game the Vols get tripped up?

WEEK 6
Saturday, October 7, 2023

MARYLAND AT OHIO STATE

Trend: Over the total has converted in the last eight matchups

The first trend I discussed in this article found Ohio State lighting up the Indiana defense with regularity. The numbers have been even more dramatic against Maryland, with the Buckeyes putting up a whopping 57.4 points per game in head-to-head play since Maryland joined the Big Ten in 2014. The result has been all Over in the games between the teams.

ARKANSAS AT OLE MISS

Trend: Arkansas is on a 9-1 ATS run versus Ole Miss

The recent head-to-head series between Arkansas and Ole Miss has been captivating, with seven of the last 12 games being decided by five points or fewer. Most of the time, the Rebels have been favored, as they are expected to be this season. Most of the time, it's the Razorbacks getting the job done against the number.

WASHINGTON STATE AT UCLA

Trend: Underdogs are on runs of 6-0 ATS, 10-2 ATS, and 12-3 ATS in this rivalry

Washington State and UCLA haven't squared off since 2019, but the matchups used to occur more frequently, and when they did, it was dog domination. In the most recent matchup, UCLA pulled a 67-63 upset as an 18.5-point dog in Pullman.

TEXAS STATE AT LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Trend: Louisiana-Lafayette has gone 10-0 SU and 9-1 ATS versus TSU since 2013

Louisiana-Lafayette has offered up a pretty rude welcome to Texas State since the latter joined the Sun Belt Conference in 2013. The Ragin' Cajuns have won all 10 of the head-to-head matchups outright while failing to cover just once. The average margin of victory has been 23.7 points per game.

WEEK 7
Saturday, October 14, 2023

KANSAS AT OKLAHOMA STATE

Trend: Favorites are on 8-0 SU and 7-0-1 ATS run in this series

For those of you thinking that this trend would for sure favor Oklahoma State every year because of Kansas' brutal recent history, consider that the Jayhawks turned the tables on the Cowboys last season, winning 37-16 as 3-point chalk. There hasn't been a game decided by closer than 18 points in this head-to-head series since 2014.

WYOMING AT AIR FORCE

Trend: Wyoming is 11-2 ATS in their last 13 versus Air Force

An experienced Wyoming team has its sights set on getting to a Mountain West championship contest this season, and if they are to do so, this game against Air Force will be a crucial one. Recent history shows that this has been a favorable series for the Cowboys, and a second straight upset for head coach Craig Bohl's team could do wonders.

UCLA AT OREGON STATE

Trend: UCLA is on a 5-1 SU and 6-0 ATS run at Oregon State

Oregon State is considered an outside contender in the Pac-12 this season, and like UCLA, will need to take care of the games outside of USC/Oregon/Utah/etc. to reach its goals. The Beavers have struggled recently when hosting the Bruins, however, having lost six straight ATS, including a 41-0 decision in the most recent matchup in 2015.

WEEK 8
Saturday, October 21, 2023

UTAH AT USC

Trend: Over the total is 8-1 in the last nine of this series

This game figures to be one of the premier matchups in the Pac-12 all season long, and fans can only hope for a game as thrilling as the regular season duel these teams put on a year ago when Utah edged USC 43-42. That game, and the latter one in the Pac-12 title contest, continued a recent trend of high-scoring clashes between these rivals.

DUKE AT FLORIDA STATE

Trend: Florida State is on an 8-0 SU and 7-0-1 ATS run versus Duke

If Florida State fulfills its promise as a favorite to reach the ACC title game in December, surely there will be experts looking at this game against Duke as a potential landmine type of contest, as the upstart Blue Devils surprised a lot of teams last season. However, FSU wasn't one of them. In fact, the Seminoles have dominated head-to-head play, winning 20 straight matchups, and only once was the score decided by fewer than 19 points.

ARIZONA STATE AT WASHINGTON

Trend: Arizona State is on an incredible 13-2 SU and 14-1 ATS run against Washington

I thought last year would be the year that Washington finally overcame Arizona State's dominance, but no sir. An expectedly overmatched Sun Devils team pulled a massive upset of the Huskies, winning 45-38 as 13.5-point home dogs. Washington figures to be an even bigger favorite at home this time around. Can Washington get this monkey off their back?

CENTRAL MICHIGAN AT BALL STATE

Trend: Road teams are 13-3 SU and 14-2 ATS in this rivalry

Central Michigan plays to a number of huge head-to-head series trends each year, some of which you have yet to see. In this one, we find road teams dominating their MAC series with Ball State, not only against the spread but outright as well. There have been six upsets by road underdogs among these 16 contests.

UTAH STATE AT SAN JOSE STATE

Trend: Utah State has won 10 straight versus San Jose State while going 9-1 ATS

Utah State has been marginally better as a program overall than San Jose State dating back to 2009, the year this trend started, but that doesn't come close to explaining the dominance in head-to-head play. The Aggies' offense has fattened its' numbers against the Spartans, scoring 43.2 points per game in these last 10 matchups.

OLE MISS AT AUBURN

Trend: Auburn is on an 11-3 SU and 10-2-2 ATS run against Ole Miss

I explained earlier that, for whatever reason, some teams just fare better against certain opponents, regardless of the perceived level of the programs. Auburn and Ole Miss have been comparable-level teams in recent years, yet the Tigers dominate the Rebels in head-to-head play. That said, Ole Miss was a pretty heavy favorite (-15) last year, and Auburn got the scratch cover 34-48. Could that decision propel head coach Lane Kiffin's team to just its third ATS win in the series since 2009 this fall?

WEEK 9
Saturday, October 28, 2023

ARKANSAS STATE AT LOUISIANA-MONROE
Trend: Arkansas State is on a 13-game SU and ATS winning streak in this series
Even though the teams meet on the football field every season, it has been 14 years since Louisiana-Monroe beat Arkansas State. Making matters much worse, the Warhawks haven't even covered a point spread in that time span! How improbable has this run been by Arkansas State? Well, 10 of the 13 games showed lines of 10 points or less, so theoretically, Louisiana-Monroe should have been far more competitive.

FLORIDA STATE AT WAKE FOREST
Trend: The last eight games in this series went Under the total
When you think of recent seasons of Florida State and Wake Forest, the term defensive battle wouldn't have typically come to mind when analyzing the head-to-head games between the teams. In fact, the last three matchups have all shown totals in the 60s and have averaged 66.3. Even still, all three final scores came up at least 14 points short. No matter how enticing an Over looks when this matchup comes around, make these teams prove they can play that type of game.

TENNESSEE AT KENTUCKY
Trend: Tennessee is on an 8-1 ATS run at Kentucky
A year ago, Tennessee throttled Kentucky in their head-to-head game, winning 44-6 in Knoxville. Many experts will look at this year's game as a chance for payback for the Wildcats and, as such, a dangerous contest for head coach Josh Heupel's Vols. That said, Tennessee has played well in Lexington, winning eight of the last nine against the number.

WEEK 10
Tuesday, October 31, 2023

NORTHERN ILLINOIS AT CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Trend: Central Michigan is on an 8-1 ATS run in this series, winning six times outright as an underdog
I mentioned before that several Central Michigan head-to-head trends would be worthy of your attention this season. Here is a good one for Tuesday night MAC-tion bettors, as it finds the Chippewas a difficult foe for NIU. The Huskies are most often favored in the rivalry, but it is CMU that most often comes out on top, including six of the last nine times as the underdog.

Saturday, November 4, 2023

HAWAII AT NEVADA
Trend: The last 10 games of the Hawaii-Nevada series have gone Under the total
Hawaii and Nevada are two programs that very few college football bettors equate with Unders on totals. However, when the teams have gotten together over the last decade, every one of their head-to-head matchups has gone Under. This is despite half of those games having totals in the 60s. It should be noted that the losing teams in these games have averaged just 16.4 points per game.

TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO AT NORTH TEXAS
Trend: Home teams are on a 9-1 ATS surge in this rivalry
This is quite an interesting trend between in-state rivals, and if it continues in 2023, the result could have a big impact on the American Athletic Conference race, as UTSA is expected to be one of the frontrunners. A North Texas win would likely be an upset at this point in the season.

SMU AT RICE
Trend: Rice is on a 10-1 ATS run versus SMU, including covering the last seven games
I have shared Rice as one of my favorite win total Over bets for the season, and if the Owls are to be as improved as I have envisioned, proving it in a game versus in-state rival SMU is a must. While these teams haven't met since 2012, when their regular annual series last left off, at the time, Rice owned SMU.

SOUTH FLORIDA AT MEMPHIS
Trend: Road teams are 8-0-1 ATS in the last nine non-neutral USF-Memphis matchups
South Florida is a team that I have felt has a chance to take a step forward this season, as the program has struggled mightily in recent years. For the Bulls to get better, they will need to compete in games on the road against upper-level AAC teams like Memphis. Recent series history suggests USF will do so in this contest.

KENTUCKY AT MISSISSIPPI ST
Trend: Home teams are on a 9-0 ATS streak in this series
This cross-divisional SEC rivalry game has been played every year since 1990. It has been a series dominated by home teams. In fact, the last road team to win outright in the series was MSU back in 2014. It's been 15 years since Kentucky won in Starkville. I don't see a whole lot of reasons things would change this fall.

BOISE STATE AT FRESNO STATE
Trend: Underdogs are on a 9-1 ATS run in Boise St-Fresno St rivalry
One of the fastest emerging rivalries in the Mountain West Conference, Boise State and Fresno State have squared off multiple times in three of the last six seasons, meaning they met both in the regular season and in the league title game. This includes last year. Underdogs typically do very well in this series, pulling outright upsets five times in the 10 games of this trend.

OKLAHOMA AT OKLAHOMA ST
Trend: Oklahoma has gone 13-4-1 ATS versus Oklahoma State since 2005
The Bedlam Battle for bragging rights in the state of Oklahoma between the Sooners and Cowboys has been pretty one-sided of late, with the last OSU outright win coming in 2014. OU has scored 28 points or more in every game since 2011, averaging 41.9 points per game.

WEEK 11
Tuesday, November 7, 2023

CENTRAL MICHIGAN AT WESTERN MICHIGAN
Trend: Road teams are on a 10-0-1 ATS streak in this rivalry
Yet another definitive Central Michigan head-to-head trend comes into focus, and again it favors the Chippewas in the matchup. If these patterns continue in '23, perhaps CMU could be one of the surprise teams of the MAC. Something to note, besides the 10-0-1 ATS record, visitors are 9-2 outright in these games.

Friday, November 10, 2023

NORTH TEXAS AT SMU
Trend: Favorites have won the last nine SU and ATS in this series
SMU has appeared a few times on this head-to-head trend as well, and it seems the trends always come in games against in-state rivals. For the recent history against North Texas, favorites have dominated. I would assume at this point that the Mustangs will be favored in this mid-November Friday night contest, but you can't be too sure till game week arrives.

TULSA AT TULANE
Trend: Favorites are on a 17-1 SU and ATS run in this rivalry
Regarding success rates and R.O.I., this favorite trend in the Tulsa-Tulane series is the season's No. 1 head-to-head trend. Favorites have absolutely dominated the head-to-head action, with the only underdog victory of the set coming in Tulane's 2014 home upset win. Keep in mind none of the last 10 games had lines higher than 10.5 points, and assuming things go as expected in 2023, Tulane should be a double-digit home favorite in this year's matchup.

MICHIGAN STATE AT OHIO STATE
Trend: Ohio State has won its last six ATS versus Michigan State
Anyone hoping that Ohio State gets tripped up in the weeks prior to the big Michigan rivalry tilt should probably reconsider, as teams like Rutgers, Minnesota, and perhaps most surprisingly, Michigan State haven't exactly challenged the Buckeyes. In fact, in the last six games, all decided by 20 points or more, OSU has outscored the Spartans by 27.8 points per game.

BAYLOR AT KANSAS ST
Trend: Road teams are on a 7-0 ATS streak in this Big 12 rivalry
This game could prove to be a big one in terms of fringe contenders for the 2023 Big 12 title game. If so, recent history suggests it will be advantage Baylor, as road teams hold a 4-3 outright advantage in this time span, with two of the losses coming by three points or fewer. The last five games in Manhattan have also gone Under the total.

WEEK 12
Saturday, November 18, 2023

TEXAS AT IOWA STATE
Trend: The last eight games of this rivalry went Under the total
Sandwiched in between games at TCU and versus Texas Tech, this contest at Iowa State immediately stands out as a potential landmine game in Texas' quest to play in the Big 12 title contest. The Longhorns will need to score better than they have in recent head-to-head action, as they have only averaged 17.5 points per game on ISU in the eight games of this trend, including just 11.3 Points per game in Ames.

EAST CAROLINA AT NAVY
Trend: Navy is on a seven-game SU and ATS winning streak versus. East Carolina
Considering that East Carolina has been at least as good, if not better, than Navy in the years that this trend encompasses (since 2012), you'd have to think that it stems from the Navy system presenting a bad matchup for the Pirates. Even last year, when ECU hosted the Midshipmen as 16.5-point favorites, the latter came out on top, 23-20.

WEEK 13
Thursday, November 23, 2023

OLE MISS AT MISSISSIPPI STATE
Trend: Under the total is 9-1 in the last 10 games of the Egg Bowl series
I believe there is something to the concept that the fiercest rivalries bring out the most pride in teams' defensive efforts. Neither defensive unit wants to be embarrassed by the rival's offense. Such is the case in the Baltimore-Pittsburgh NFL series, and it is the case in the Egg Bowl college football rivalry between Ole Miss and Mississippi State. Despite lofty totals averaging 62.2, nine of the last 10 meetings have gone Under.

ALABAMA AT AUBURN
Trend: Home teams are on a 5-1 SU and 6-0 ATS run in the Iron Bowl rivalry
There are very few rivalries in college football that compare to the Iron Bowl series between Alabama and Auburn. These teams and fan bases hate each other, and every season's annual game is a monumental affair. Well, lately, playing at home in the contest has been quite advantageous, with hosts on a 5-1 SU and 6-0 ATS run. Does Auburn have what it takes to give Alabama a scare this season? Or even pull an upset? Recent history suggests it will.

GEORGIA AT GEORGIA TECH
Trend: Georgia has won 12 straight ATS at Georgia Tech
Anyone hoping Georgia will trip up in its final game before a probable SEC title game appearance should think again, as the Bulldogs own rival Georgia Tech and still take the game seriously, despite the obvious talent difference lately.

LOUISIANA-MONROE AT LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE
Trend: Underdogs are 18-5 ATS in this rivalry since 2000
This is a bit of an underrated rivalry in college football. When road teams and underdogs dominate series trends, the rivalry is probably pretty fierce. Prior to last year's ULM 21-17 home upset, road teams were on an 18-1 ATS run. Obviously, that trend is still powerful.

WISCONSIN AT MINNESOTA
Trend: Underdogs are 12-4 ATS in the Paul Bunyan Axe rivalry series since 2007
The Wisconsin-Minnesota border battle has been a fierce rivalry over the years and has picked up intensity of late, as both teams seem to be regularly in the running for the Big Ten West Division title. In all likelihood, that will be the case once again in 2023. Expect the underdog to put up an intense fight.

OHIO STATE AT MICHIGAN
Trend: The last nine games of this rivalry have gone Over the total
The enormity of the Ohio State-Michigan rivalry has grown in recent years as the teams have added regular national title implications to the already high stakes. The games of recent years have drawn even more fans in as well as they have been offensively explosive contests, with the last four producing 80.3 points per game. Nine straight Overs can definitely enhance a rivalry's appeal.

CALIFORNIA AT UCLA
Trend: Under the total is 9-0-1 in the last 10 games of this series
A lot of bettors make the mistake of believing that blowout games lead to Overs since one team will score a bunch of points. The real truth is that blowouts most often cause games to slow down, particularly in rivalries, where leading teams just want to get the game over with their players intact. In the current 9-0-1 Under trend of the California-UCLA series, seven of the games have been decided by double-digits, and again, despite lofty average totals posted, these games fail to reach their offensive potential.

WEEK 15
Saturday, December 9, 2023

NAVY AT ARMY
Trend: Under the total is 16-1 in the last 17 games of this rivalry but lost last year
This is the only trend I've posted in this article in which the most recent game was a loser on the trend. Last year's Army-Navy contest featured a total of 32.5, easily the lowest in the modern-day era of the rivalry. Army won the game 20-17, putting to rest a 16-game streak of Unders. Does that mean we will start seeing a plethora of scoring in the series? I doubt it.

BUILDING A P*O*WER RATING M*O*DEL

by Adam Burke

For the last several seasons, I have put together college football power ratings. In concert with my home-field advantage values, I use these team ratings to create spreads for every game. That allows me to look at season win total markets, but also to have an idea of where I think a line should be in a given game throughout the season.

Power ratings can be as basic or detailed as you want them to be, depending on how much time and effort you want to dedicate to the process. My process is fairly basic, but my goal is to get ahead of some line moves on Sunday and Monday by taking positions based on my ratings for the teams. If I have a line -7 and the market has -4, I anticipate that line to move towards my line as the week goes along, which gives me some incentive to grab -4.

The measure of a good set of power ratings is to have more lines move toward your numbers than move against them. Sometimes your line will be wrong. Sometimes an injury slips through the cracks. Sometimes bettors with a lot of market influence like the other side, and the line will move in the other direction. Sometimes those bettors will be wrong. Sometimes your power ratings will be wrong.

Starting with a good foundation is important because it can be a cat-and-mouse game throughout the season. Let's start with the foundation and then move into how to adjust and adapt as the season goes along.

I do what I consider to be "Positional Power Ratings". I use seven positions to determine my rating for a team on a scale of basically 40-100. The Georgias and Alabamas of the world will be closer to 100. The FIUs and New Mexicos of the world will be closer to 40. Why a 40-100 scale? I break my position groups down like this: QB, OL, DL, and coaching/special teams are graded up to 15 (60 total points). RB, WR, LB, and DB are graded up to 10 (40 total points). Therefore, a perfect score would be 100.

The position units for the top teams will be closer to the highest possible number, while the best players in Group of Five schools might lead to a rating 2-3 points away from the highest possible number. Mid-tier teams in Power Five conferences would have position groups graded similarly to the best of the best in the Group of Five.

The goal is to look at the rosters, the returning production, and the offensive and defensive schemes to develop these values. On an Air Raid team, the running backs won't be as productive and probably won't be a position of emphasis in recruiting. But a QB and a WR group are going to be weighted differently.

Are these an exact science and 100% accurate? Absolutely not. But, they give me a starting point for the season and something to go off as the season goes along so that I'm not blindly saying things like "this line looks too low" or "that line is too high" without having it based on anything other than opinion or conjecture.

So, let's take the two-time reigning National Champion Georgia Bulldogs, the highest-rated team for me going into the season.

OFFENSE

WIDE RECEIVER: 9.5/10
Brock Bowers might be the best tight end in football (TE are included here), and Ladd McConkey, when healthy, has been a reliable option. There are a bunch of highly-touted recruits here, plus Oscar Delp, who was the No. 1 TE in the class of 2022.

OFFENSIVE LINE: 15/15
Georgia allowed nine total sacks last season, with those 5.5 yards per carry and over seven yards per play. It all starts with the guys up front. Three starters are back, with new starters at the tackle position, but again, these are four and five-star recruits. Remember, a lot of elite programs also have a lot of elite position coaches and awesome recruiters.

QUARTERBACK: 13.5/15
Replacing Stetson Bennett will not be easy as Georgia looks for a three-peat. However, a program like this will recruit at a very high level. The contenders for the job, including last season's backup Carson Beck, are going to be four and five-star guys. Beck, for instance, was a four-star kid in the class of 2020. Brock Vandagriff was a four-star in 2021, while Gunner Stockton was a four-star in 2022. Even though experience is low and returning production is basically non-existent, there's a ton of talent here, and one of them should emerge.

RUNNING BACK: 9.5/10
The Bulldogs don't have a feature back but have a committee full of talented rushers. Kendall Milton and Daijun Edwards combined for over 1,350 yards last season, and Georgia ran for 5.5 yards per carry as a team, so this should be a very productive group again.
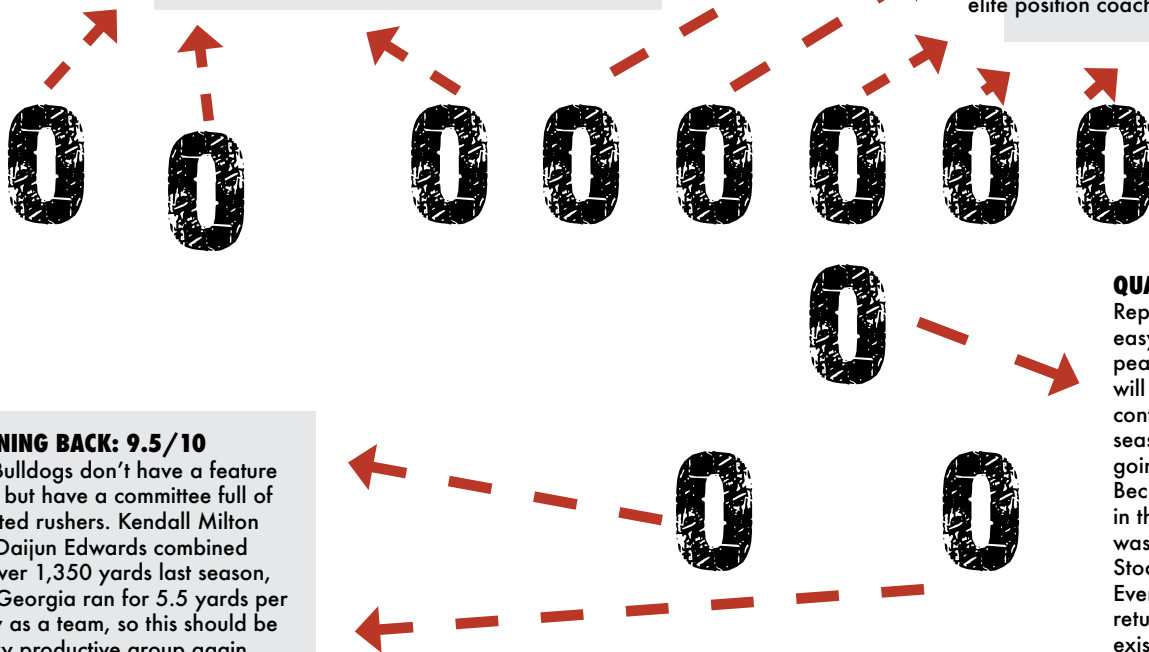
DEFENSIVE LINE: 15/15
If there's anything we know about the Georgia defense, it will reload annually. The Bulldogs have allowed under 80 rushing yards per game in each of the last four seasons. They've allowed under five yards per play in each of the last six—just elite.

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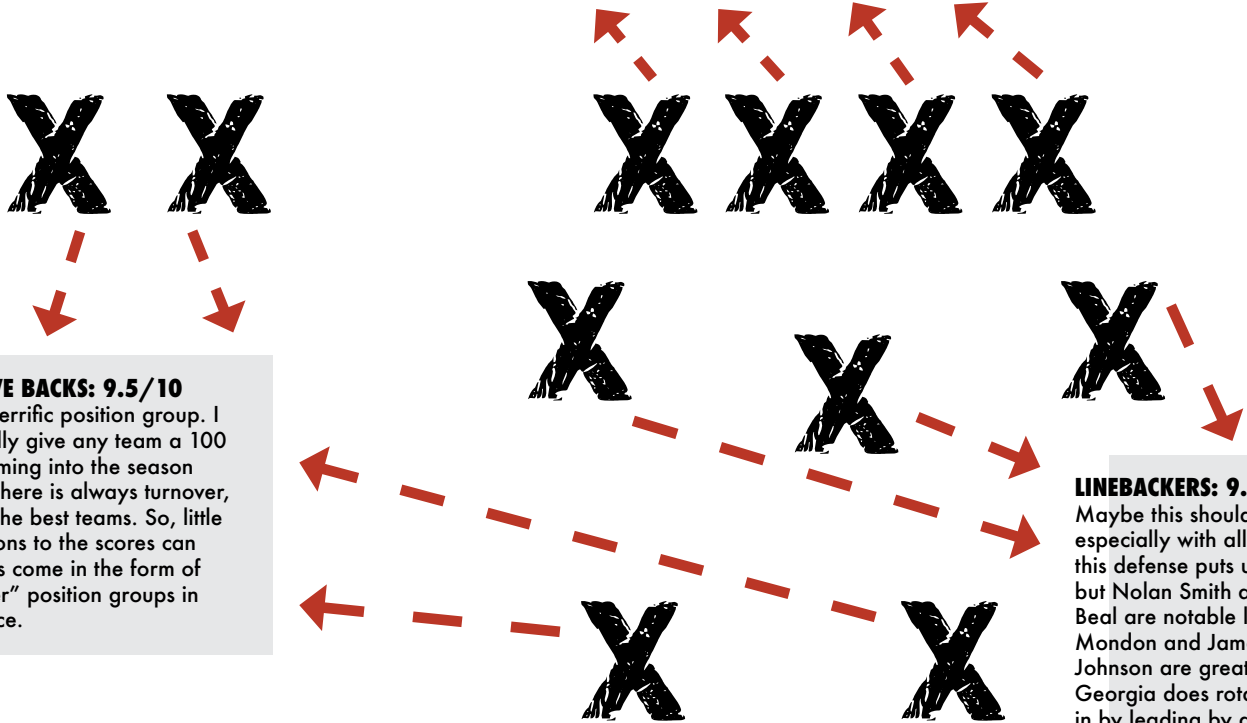
DEFENSIVE BACKS: 9.5/10
Another terrific position group. I don't really give any team a 100 grade coming into the season because there is always turnover, even for the best teams. So, little moderations to the scores can oftentimes come in the form of the "lesser" position groups in importance.

X   X

LINEBACKERS: 9.5/10
Maybe this should be a 10/10, especially with all the special stats this defense puts up year-to-year, but Nolan Smith and Robert Beal are notable losses. Smael Mondon and Jamon Dumas-Johnson are great players, but Georgia does rotate a lot of guys in by leading by a ton more often than not.

TOTAL
96.5/100

COACHING/SPECIAL TEAMS: 15/15
Georgia is 29-1 over the last two seasons. There are other talented teams around the country, but few maximize their potential like the Bulldogs. Kirby Smart is one of the nation's elites, and his coordinators and position coaches are quite good as well. This is also a perennial Top 25 team in special teams, which makes sense when the guys on those units are also four and five-star kids just waiting for the chance to be an every-down player.

Some nitpicking here and there, but this is the No. 1 team in the country for me. If Beck, Vandagriff, or Stockton can take the bull by the horns and make the offense hum, I'll quickly adjust them up. We won't find out for a little while because of the schedule, but until proven otherwise, this is the nation's best team.

By comparison, UTSA is my top Group of Five team at 72.5, which is equal to UCF and right around teams like Tulane and Louisville.

The difference between teams is the line on a neutral field, and then I apply my home-field advantage values to make the spread.

The science of maintaining a good set of Power Ratings throughout the season is where the difficult part comes in. My process of updating them has three steps, and teams will move up or down based on three criteria - the closing spread, the box score, and injuries. That is something I'll do throughout the season on the VSiN website.

For now, focus on putting together a good set of initial ratings, and you can even cross-check and confirm with the lines that are already out there to make sure you have a good foundation.

HANDICAPPING THE HEISMAN

by Zachary Cohen

Dating back to the year 2000, 19 of the 23 players that have won the Heisman Trophy were quarterbacks. That's impossible to ignore when betting on this market. USC quarterback Caleb Williams won the award last year.

Williams is a heavy favorite to win the Heisman in back-to-back years, as the Trojans superstar is listed at +600 to get the job done. The next closest players are Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers, Florida State quarterback Jordan Travis and LSU quarterback Jayden Daniels. In fact, the first 11 players listed in the Heisman Trophy market this year are quarterbacks. That should give you an idea of how hard it is to win if you're not throwing passes.

It does, however, need to be noted that it's not impossible for a skill position player to win. This isn't quite like the NFL MVP race, and wide receiver DeVonta Smith, who now catches passes for the Philadelphia Eagles, gave wide receivers and running backs hope by taking home the award with the Alabama Crimson Tide in 2020. That season, Smith caught 117 passes for 1,857 yards and 23 touchdowns, pacing an Alabama team that won the College Football Playoff.

With that out of the way, let's run through some of the best betting options. I'd personally suggest prioritizing elite quarterbacks as your biggest Heisman bets. But I'll also give you some non-quarterback options I like, as well as some dark horses that could pay off in a big way.

BEST CHALK OPTION

QB JORDAN TRAVIS (+1400), FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES

Travis is one of the most electric dual-threat quarterbacks in college football, and he is pretty easily my favorite Heisman bet this year. Last season, Travis threw for 3,214 yards with 24 touchdowns and only five interceptions for Florida State. He also rushed for 417 yards with seven touchdowns, marking the third year in a row that he reached the seven-touchdown mark in the running game.

Travis used to be known as a runner mostly, but he has really made strides as a passer. His completion percentage was 64.0% last year, way higher than the 55.0% he posted in 2020. I'd expect Travis to continue to grow as a thrower this year, as he is more comfortable than ever in this offense. That should result in some monstrous numbers from the West Palm Beach native. Travis should have a lot more time to throw this season, as Florida State's O-line is no longer a glaring weakness.

With Travis a near-lock to put up great numbers this season, to have a real case for the Heisman, he needs a big year from Florida State. And that is already expected this year, with the Seminoles having a regular season win total of 10. Florida State is also just behind Clemson's odds to win the ACC this year. They are also tied for the seventh-best odds to win a national title. If the Seminoles come close to achieving any of those goals, Travis' fingerprints will be all over it.

Another thing to like about Travis is that he's a "Heisman moment" waiting to happen. He broke a 71-yard run against the NC State Wolfpack last year, and he should add to his highlight reel in 2023. Travis will need to find a way to make plays in the biggest games, and I think he'll do so. It doesn't hurt that he'll play in an offense that returns most of its key starters this year.

BEST VALUE PLAY

QB DILLON GABRIEL (+3500), OKLAHOMA SOONERS

Gabriel was a popular sleeper pick to win the Heisman Trophy last year, but his first season in Oklahoma didn't quite go as planned. The Sooners went only 6-7 on the season, and the year ended in a 35-32 loss to Florida State in the Cheez-It Bowl. For Oklahoma's standards, it was an unacceptable year. But the Sooners should be much better in Year 2 under Brent Venables. The former long-time Clemson defensive coordinator did good work in the transfer portal, and this team returns a good amount of last year's production. Now, Oklahoma has the second-best odds to win the Big 12.

Last year, Gabriel really wasn't to blame for all of Oklahoma's troubles. In fact, the lefty gunslinger threw for 3,168 yards with 25 touchdowns and only six picks in his first year in offensive coordinator Jeff Lebby's offense. Gabriel should be a lot better with a full year in this system under his belt. At the University of Central Florida, the talented signal caller improved drastically from freshman to sophomore year. So, he has proven that he can make a year-over-year leap.

If Gabriel gets back to posting the kind of numbers he did with UCF while continuing to utilize his legs a bit more, I expect him to be in the conversation for this award. Oklahoma will just need to find a way to win 10 or so games. The team's regular season win total is currently 9.5, so that isn't exactly out of the question.

NON-QBS

RB BLAKE CORUM (+2800), MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

Corum suffered a season-ending knee injury in Michigan's win over the Ohio State Buckeyes last December, forcing him out of action for the College Football Playoff. But Corum's recovery is apparently going very well, with the star running back telling The 33rd Team that he's "full-go" back in June. If Corum really is close to 100%, he's one of the few non-quarterbacks that has a legitimate shot at winning the Heisman Trophy.

Corum rushed for 1,463 yards with 18 touchdowns on 247 carries last season while also chipping in 11 catches for 80 yards and a score as a pass catcher. Corum was the engine behind this Michigan offense, which averaged more points per game (40.4) than all but five teams last season. This year, Corum will again be a bell cow in this offense, which still lacks a consistently explosive passing game. The latter is rather important in the context of winning a Heisman, as Corum will likely be credited with any success the Wolverines have offensively — barring an insane leap from quarterback J.J. McCarthy.

Michigan's regular season win total is up at 10.5 this season, with the Wolverines also listed as the second-most likely team to win the Big Ten this year. If Michigan accomplishes all its goals as a team and Corum once again paces the offense, he should give the elite quarterbacks a run for their money.

RB BRAELON ALLEN (+6000), WISCONSIN BADGERS

It shouldn't come as much of a surprise that we're going from one Big Ten running back to another here. This is one of the few conferences in which many of the elite programs still possess run-first offenses. And make no mistake about it: Wisconsin will still emphasize the run, even with Phil Longo implementing his version of the Air Raid offense in his first year with the program.

When Luke Fickell took the head coaching job for Wisconsin, he wanted to bring in a coordinator that could open things up and get more out of the passing game. That's why Longo is now in Madison. But Fickell knows that he can't just abandon the program's bread and butter. He has a very good offensive line in place, and Allen is one of the best running backs in the country. Why would he go away from that?

I think an improved passing game will do wonders for Allen, who rushed for 1,242 yards with 11 touchdowns last season. Defenses used to be able to load up the box against Wisconsin, so Allen was often being met behind the line of scrimmage or just having very little room to work with. But with Tanner Mordecai now playing quarterback for the Badgers, with a good group of pass catchers, opponents can't focus all their attention on Allen. That means that Allen should turn in a career year for Wisconsin, which looks like a legitimate sleeper to win the Big Ten this season.

The Badgers are arguably the best team in the Big Ten West, and they'r the betting favorites to win the division this season. But with Fickell around, Wisconsin hopes to compete with the big boys. If the Badgers can find a way to do it, I wouldn't rule out Allen making his mark on the Heisman race.

DARK HORSES & DART THROWS

QB JALEN MILROE (+6000) & TY SIMPSON (+6000), ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

Currently, it's unclear who will emerge as the starting quarterback for Nick Saban's team. As far as betting goes, it might make sense to put a little something down on Milroe and Simpson. Both are going off at +6000 odds. Milroe's experience should give him a leg up in the competition, but there's some buzz that Simpson will get the nod.

The Crimson Tide have had a top-five passing offense in each of the past five years, and things likely won't be slowing down with Tommy Rees now entrenched as the program's offensive coordinator. Rees is viewed as a brilliant offensive mind, so being the quarterback in his offense should result in tremendous numbers. It doesn't hurt that either one will be surrounded by elite talent all over the field.

Milroe showcased his dual-threat ability in a start against the Texas A&M Aggies last year. That was the only start of his college career, and Milroe threw for three touchdowns and one pick while also adding 81 rushing yards in that game. He broke one run for 33 yards in that one, which shows his big-play ability with his legs. The week before, Milroe had a 77-yard run against the Arkansas Razorbacks in relief of an injured Bryce Young. Simpson has some of that same dual-threat magic, but he isn't quite as electric with his legs. However, he might be a touch more accurate as a passer.

Alabama will obviously play a very tough SEC schedule this season, but the team should find a way to navigate it and flirt with a College Football Playoff berth. That should mean that whoever claims this job will be in the Heisman picture.

QB D.J. UIAGALELEI (+9000), OREGON STATE BEAVERS

Uiagalelei was once considered a contender to win this award for the Clemson Tigers, but things never quite clicked. Uiagalelei struggled with his passing efficiency, and the Tigers were forced to go in another direction. Rather than choosing a flashier option in the transfer market, Uiagalelei decided to continue his playing career in Corvallis. All things considered, I loved the move for the former five-star recruit. Jonathan Smith is an elite head coach that played the quarterback position and has a great offensive mind. If anybody can get everything out of Uiagalelei, it's Smith and a low-pressure Oregon State environment.

The Beavers were a very good football team in 2022, going 10-3 on the season. Oregon State now returns a significant number of starters on the offensive side of the ball, which gives Uigalelei a lot of talent to work with. He will also be facing Pac-12 competition, which should allow him to post some big numbers as both a runner and a passer.

For as bad as Uiagalelei's 2022 season might have seemed, he did throw for 2,521 yards with 22 touchdowns and only seven picks. He also added 545 rushing yards and seven touchdowns. I wouldn't be surprised if he improves those numbers, facing a much easier schedule. And I like Oregon State's chances of emerging from a wide-open Pac-12. That would put Uiagalelei on the national radar.

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STRATEGIES FOR USING THE DRAFTKINGS BETTING SPLITS ON VSIN.COM

by Steve Makinen

One of the most touted features on the VSiN.com website, and a feature that we believe to be a fantastic resource for bettors, are the Betting Splits pages. These are the pages we have built utilizing the data that DraftKings so graciously provides to us detailing the breakdowns of the money and ticket splits for point spreads, moneylines, and totals.

Why is this Betting Splits information so valuable? Well, most specifically, it lets us see which games are the most publicly supported each week. Let's face it, we all know the "betting public" does not win over the long haul, and with the amount of money DraftKings spends on acquiring customers, you have to assume that most of the bettors that play there would be considered "public." In other words, the collective opinions of this group of recreational bettors are right out on display for all of us to analyze and use to our advantage.

With more states regulating sports betting each passing year, this information is more valuable than ever. In the "old days," offshore sportsbooks would share this type of information, but bettors had no way of knowing the type or volume of clientele these groups were taking on. Let's just say it made the betting percentage data offered by these places convoluted. With the DraftKings data, we know their customer strength is in numbers, and that is exactly what we are looking for with this type of analysis.

With that said, the fact that DraftKings shares this data with VSiN, and we proudly break it all down and display it, should be a godsend to bettors. While no analysis or system of betting is ever perfect, using this information in the ways I share below can be a good start or finish to your handicapping routine.

Before digging into some of the system data I was able to uncover during the 2022 college football season, I should start you off with two common betting generalities for recreational players that wager at

places like DraftKings. That is, the majority bets favorites on the point spread and Overs on totals. The numbers are almost staggering. According to the final ticket/handle numbers so far this season, wagers have been on favorites in more than 80% of games and on totals to go Over in about 75% of games. Naturally, with favorite/underdog and Over/Under results designed to be split, this leaves a lot of opportunity for books like DraftKings to win. To be clear, I'm not advising to just automatically bet all underdogs and Unders on totals, as that wouldn't be fun nor profitable, but I'm telling you that in most cases, you would be going "against the public," giving yourself at least a reasonable chance to profit long term.

About 2/3 of the way through the 2022 season, I ran a study collecting the Betting Splits data and analyzing it against actual results of FBS games. You will see that I basically tried to analyze the records of the "majority bettors" at DraftKings and the side/total they preferred for games. I also broke it down further, sometimes by the percentage of the majority. There are two fields of analysis for each wagering option that DraftKings shares the data for both sides and totals: 1) Handle 2) Number of Bets. These can produce varied results, but in general, I would subscribe to the theory that the total handle is a little less "public" than the total number of bets.

At the time, these were the overall records of the majority bettors for the 2022 college football season using the key terms "Handle" and "Number of Bets."

- Majority Handle on point spreads: 171-191 ATS (47.3%)
- Majority Number of Bets on point spreads: 173-191 ATS (47.5%)
- Majority Handle on totals: 190-173 (52.3%)
- Majority Number of Bets on totals: 174-186 (48.3%)

As you can see, in three of the four categories, the majority are seeing noteworthy losses. On top of that, I also found that as the season wore on, the majority was getting worse and worse in backing the right plays. These were some key records in the second half of the season data I analyzed:

- Majority Handle on point spreads: 96-122 ATS (44%)
- Majority Number of Bets on point spreads: 96-123 ATS (43.8%)
- Majority Number of Bets on totals: 99-117 (45.8%)

As you can see, by simply fading the majority figures on the Betting Splits pages for college football for Handle and Number of Bets on point spreads, you would be slightly profitable or at least break even for the season and highly profitable over the latter season games. It's a little more complicated for totals, as the majority handle actually has a winning record thus far. This information gave me a good starting point for developing 13 different systems I recommend putting to use to take advantage of the DraftKings Betting Splits Resource on VSiN.com. Try these yourself this season and build your bankroll.

13 SYSTEMS USING DRAFTKINGS BETTING SPLITS

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #1
When 80% or more of the Handle was on a particular side of an ATS wager, this majority group was just 18-32 ATS (36%). In other words, if you saw the big green lights on the VSiN Betting Splits Handle page 80% or higher, it was best to fade it.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #2
When 75%+ of the Number of Bets were on a particular side of an ATS wager, this majority group was just 38-59 ATS (39.2%). Again, if you see the big green lights on the VSiN Betting Splits Number of Bets page 75% or higher, it was best to fade it.

It's obvious you don't want to be part of the supermajority of DraftKings bettors on ATS wagers.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #3
When the majority of the Handle was on road favorites for an ATS wager, this majority group was just 42-60 ATS (41.1%). More recreational bettors love road favorites because they are usually the better team. The point spread is the great equalizer.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #4
When the majority of the Handle was on home underdogs for an ATS wager, this majority group was 34-26 ATS (56.7%). Now, 56.7% is less than the usual systems I like to present to readers, but this is an advantage of almost 10% against the usual majority win rates, and it goes to show that being on the "smart" side of the majority handle can pay off. Remember, a higher handle feels less "public" than higher bet counts.

The Number of Bets results weren't quite as definitive, but the majority did still struggle at backing road favorites (44.5%), and they did reasonably well (55.3%) when getting behind road dogs.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #5
When the majority of the Handle backed the team with more season wins in an FBS vs. FBS contest for an ATS wager, this majority group was just 60-79 ATS (43.2%). More than not, bettors like to back the "better team" in a matchup, regardless of what the point spread indicates. Again, the point spread is the eternal equalizer.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #6
When the majority of the Number of Bets backed the team with more season wins in an FBS vs. FBS contest for an ATS wager, this majority

group was just 69-90 ATS (43.3%). Following more bet tickets on a better won-lost team was also not a winning strategy.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #7
On games that had totals of 60 or higher, the majority Handle bettors were relatively sharp, going 58-44 (56.9%), choosing over 2/3 of the time to go Over. However, both sides of the totals won at similar rates.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #8
On games with totals of 45 or lower, the majority Handle bettors siding with the Under were 10-3 (76.9%). Because not many public bettors embrace betting Unders, this hadn't produced a lot of plays, but the money handle majority had been sharp.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #9
On games with totals of 45 or lower, the majority Number of Bets bettors bucking the low total and siding with the Over had gone 10-18 (35.7%). Again, not a ton of plays here, but the more public option of Number of Bets had been wrong most often.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #10
On games where the Handle has a majority on totals and the Number of Bets has the opposite majority, the majority Handle plays had gone 57-41 (58.2%). This could be described as more sharp action being displayed by the majority Handle.

These last few systems took into account how lines had moved throughout the week as a result of the betting action for either handle or number of bets:

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #11
When the majority of the Handle was on a home team but the opening line moved towards the road team, the majority side was 51-18 SU and 39-29-1 ATS (57.3%), assumingly a bit of a trap set by DraftKings to entice more action on the road team.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #12
When the majority of the Handle was on a road team but the opening line moved towards the home team, the majority side was just 20-28 ATS (41.7%), the opposite success level of system #11. This seemed random to me, so tread lightly if you choose to utilize the angle this season.

DK BETTING SPLITS SYSTEM #13
When the majority Number of Bets had been on a total going Over but the opening total moved downward, this had shown to be another trap situation, with the majority just 74-95 (44%) at the time.

The Betting Splits on VSiN.com are essentially running live and will change in the days and hours before game time. If you adopt any of these strategies this season, be sure to visit VSiN.com for the latest numbers. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we have redesigned and expanded the VSiN betting splits page, the most popular destination on VSiN.com.

The data, which we get directly from DraftKings Sportsbook, is now updated every five minutes instead of 10. We ping the DraftKings database and see what data has changed and then indicate the change with an arrow next to the percentage.

Another handy new feature is that you can sort the college football splits by Top 25 games and conference. (Use the down-down tab.)

Also, if you want to see the opening line and the line history, click on the visiting team's logo. The updates are timestamped. A nice new touch is that, if the game is over, you will get a summary that includes the final score, Total result, season Over/Under record for each team, and you can compare the result to what Steve Makinen's estimated score was.

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DEFINING COLLEGE FOOTBALL HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE

by Adam Burke

Home-field advantage isn't what it used to be in college football. By the time the players enroll in college, a lot of them are used to playing games in different places. It also doesn't take too many road trips for the players to get accustomed to being road warriors. With big budgets and big booster bucks, the conveniences of modern travel are afforded to most, if not all, teams around the country.

Heck, by this point, many players have moved from one college or university to the next because of the transfer portal, so it isn't like shuffling around towns is a foreign concept. But fans are still in the stands, and some environments will always be more daunting than others.

I wrote in the 2022 VSiN College Football Betting Guide that determining home-field advantage was an inexact science. This may shock you, but it isn't any different a season later. I do think that we can all agree that slapping a standard-issue three points on the home team side is outdated, so I'm using a baseline of two points again this season. Who knows, that may even go down for future seasons, but there is still something to sleeping in a hotel and having thousands of screaming fans rooting for your failure.

In my quest to find something that wasn't random or arbitrary, I decided a couple of seasons ago to look at a team's combined straight-up (SU) and against-the-spread (ATS) record at home over a five-year sample size and use that win percentage to place teams into "buckets" to determine whether or not their home performance warrants a home-field advantage above or below two points.

Based on that calculation (using the SU + ATS home records from Phil Steele's magazine since they were conveniently displayed), I found 51 teams with an HFA value higher than two points and 13 with an HFA value lower than two points. There are 133 FBS teams this season, with Jacksonville State and Sam Houston State added to the mix, so just shy of 50% of the Division I FBS teams fit the criteria to be higher or lower.

Here are those teams for the 2023 season:

3.5 POINTS
(SU + ATS Win % of 70% or higher)

Alabama
Cincinnati
Clemson
Georgia
James Madison
Louisiana
Memphis
Michigan
Notre Dame
Ohio State
Oklahoma
Oklahoma State
Oregon
UAB
UCF
Utah

3 POINTS
(65-69.99%)

Air Force
Appalachian State
Army
Baylor
Boise State
Buffalo
Georgia Southern
Kentucky
Liberty
LSU
Miami (OH)
NC State
SMU
Texas A&M
Tulane
Virginia

2.5 POINTS
(60-64.99%)

Auburn
BYU
Florida Atlantic
Fresno State
Iowa
Iowa State
Kansas State
Kent State
Louisiana Tech
Middle Tennessee
Minnesota
Missouri
Oregon State
Penn State
Utah State
Wake Forest
Washington State
West Virginia
Wyoming

1.5 POINTS
(35.01-39.99%)

Bowling Green
Kansas
Northern Illinois
Northwestern
Old Dominion
Rutgers
South Florida
Stanford

Note Any team between 40-59.99% has a standard HFA of 2 points.

1 POINT
(35% or Lower)

Akron
Georgia Tech
New Mexico
UMass
Vanderbilt

Is this a perfect system? Absolutely not. Is it better than just doing guesswork or something baseless? I'd like to think so.

There will be exceptions to any HFA opinion, like a Penn State White-Out or Death Valley (either one—LSU or Clemson) at night. A night game in a football-crazed venue carries a lot more weight than a sleepy 11 a.m. or noon local kickoff where tailgating couldn't be done the way it should. I consider those things part of my handicap rather than having random situations that may shift HFA a half-point or a point because of the scheduling.

Is five years too many? Well, the COVID-shortened 2020 season and the wide distribution in terms of number of games played is still a factor. Perhaps next season, I can switch to a three-year sample size, which may be more accurate given the transfer portal and the coaching carousel, but a three-year sample size right now would still include teams like Old Dominion that didn't even play the 2020 season or a team that couldn't play at home because of local COVID restrictions.

I do think it probably is too long, as that means a full-fledged roster turnover by recruiting class and a whole lot of coaching movement. Your view may vary on how to calculate home-field advantage, and if you have a system that you trust and believe in, I'd love to hear about it. But this is at least a starting point and based on something tangible. That's good enough for me, but I'll always think about ways to perfect it and consider different ways of looking at it.

Beaver Stadium
University Park, PA
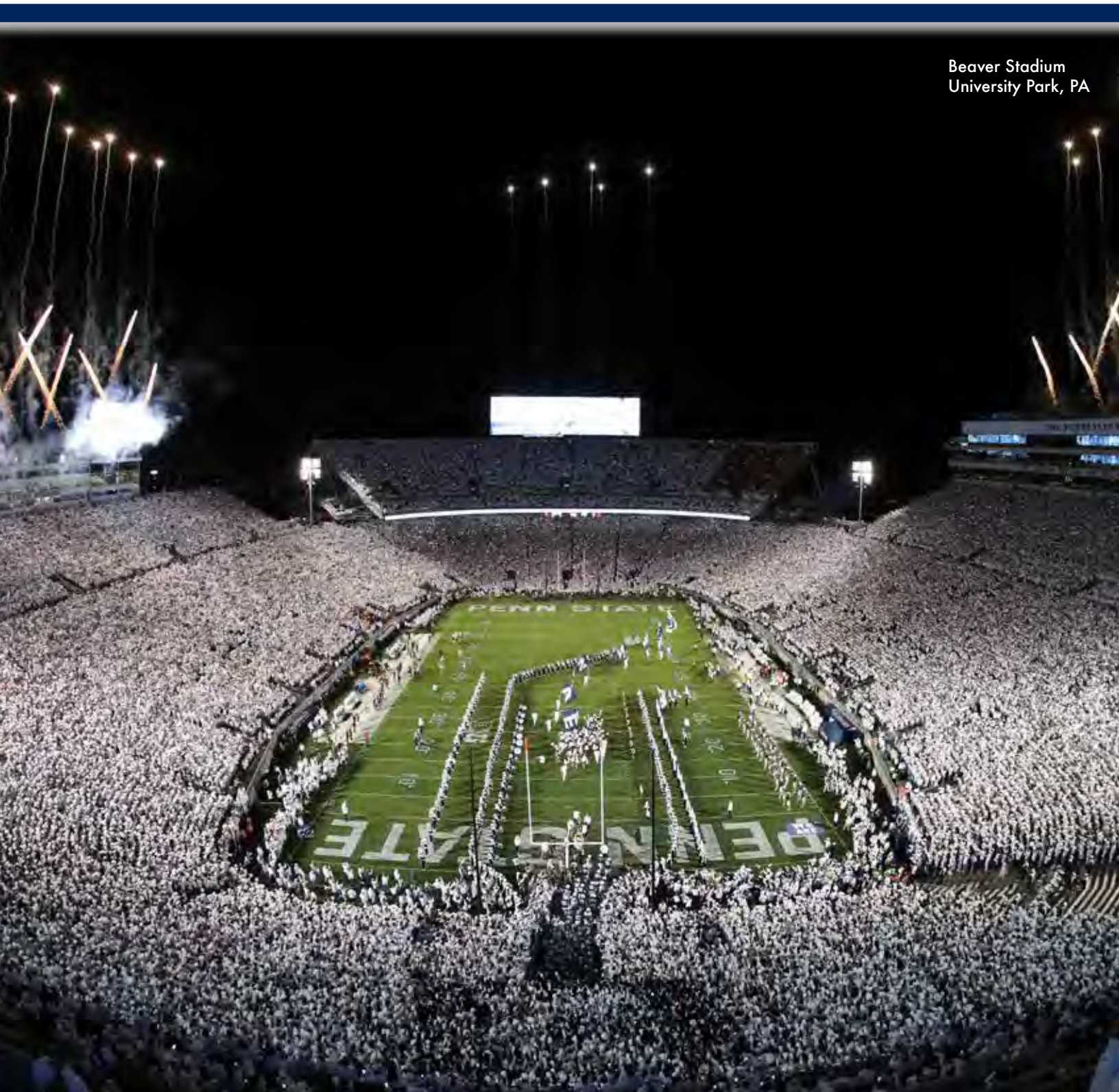
COLLEGE FOOTBALL STABILITY SCORES FOR 2023

by Steve Makinen

Since the opening of the 2017 football season, my first with VSiN, I have been sharing with subscribers my methodology on College Football Stability. I offer the analysis at the beginning of every season and, to be exact, for the first four weeks of every season. It is one of the foremost strategies I employ every year to find value early. The thought behind it is that teams that are in more stable year-to-year situations are better bets early, while those that have undergone a lot of change in the offseason should be faded. The logic is fundamentally sound. Returning fewer starters, starting over at quarterback, and welcoming in new head coaches or coordinators are always hurdles to get over for teams. Eventually, the teams may overcome these hurdles, but the general thought is that it doesn't happen early, and oddsmakers don't account for these factors enough in building their lines.

Having worked with people on both sides of the betting window for many years, I have found that the amount of preseason preparation that people take on can vary greatly from book to book, from bettor to bettor. Because of this, there can be huge misses by those setting the numbers. Doing homework early has become one of the most important aspects for college football bettors hoping to enjoy a successful campaign. Those bettors that scour the various betting publications, such as the VSiN College Football Betting Guide, before the season tend to be best prepared once Week 1 rolls around. Other resources I am certain to take in each spring are the Phil Steele annual pub and the work of Brad Powers, who makes regular VSiN appearances as a college football expert.

There are many reasons why things can change dramatically from one season to the next in college football, among them the four-year eligibility rules, the pressure now placed on coaching staffs at every level program, the ever-growing transfer portal, and of course, player transgressions off the field. The result is that there is always turnover from year to year, both on the field and on the sidelines. Bettors expecting to see the same thing they watched from a team at the end of the prior season can often be startled by the change.

Being a numbers guy and always looking for quantitative advantages in betting, I like to conduct an exercise that quantifies the level of stability for each program. I figure that the higher level of stability, the better the chances for success for any team, particularly early in the

season. Naturally, putting a numerical grade to it makes it easier to spot this stability. Again, the point spread considered, the feeling is that oddsmakers don't adjust enough for the "instability."

Over the last 11 years or so, I have implemented an early season strategy that employs backing the teams with the greatest stability ratings in matchups against those in the most unstable situations. I can tell you that in those 11 years, I have never experienced a losing record by playing the games on the lists for the four weeks of the season. The degree of success has varied during that span, but in all 11 years, I have closed with a profit, including last year, when the plays I shared went 27-20 ATS (57.4%). That is a typical year for this system and had a bettor been playing $100 wagers on each game, they would have profited $480. Of course, these numbers can be improved by factoring in other successful handicapping strategies or by more closely examining the individual factors of instability, but as a stand-alone strategy, the success level is tough to beat.

Just below, I've put together a chart of the College Football Stability Scores for 2023. When the season arrives, I will put together lists in each of the first four weeks detailing the top mismatches. I have found that a Stability Mismatch score of 8 is the minimum on which I will consider a play for this thought process. (UCF hosting Kent State on Thursday, August 31, shows the first playable game with a difference of 14).

Here are the basics for determining each team's Total Stability Score. Essentially, the score is determined from five different stabilizing factors, Head Coach, Offensive Coordinator, Defensive Coordinator, Quarterback, and Overall Returning Starters. Here is how the scores are determined:

RETURNING HEAD COACH POINTS
Yes, same Head Coach as 2022: 4 points
No, new Head Coach for 2023: 0 points

RETURNING OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR POINTS
Yes, same Offensive Coordinator as 2022: 3 points
No, new Offensive Coordinator for 2023: 0 points

RETURNING DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR POINTS
Yes, same Defensive Coordinator as 2022: 3 points
No, new Defensive Coordinator for 2023: 0 points

RETURNING STARTING QUARTERBACK POINTS
Yes, same Starting Quarterback as 2022: 4 points
No, new Starting Quarterback for 2023: 0 points

Very important...I consider a transfer quarterback expected to start for his team as a new quarterback, regardless of the starting experience level he brings to the table. For 2023, numerous recognizable QBs have found new starting homes nationwide. For instance, Sam Hartman at Notre Dame boasts a wealth of college football experience with Wake Forest. While he is not your typical first-year quarterback for the Irish, he is new to that program and its system.

TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNING STARTERS POINTS
0-7 returning offensive & defensive starters: 0 points
8-9: 1 point
10-12: 2 points
13-16: 3 points
17-19: 4 points
20-22: 5 points

As you analyze the charts on the next three pages of the 133 FBS teams, you'll see that there are again teams this season in both very stable and very unsettling situations, more of a return to normal with the super senior rule that was offered before 2021 winding down. Many teams over the last couple of years brought back fifth-year seniors.

TEAM (CONFERENCE)	2022 RECORD	HC?	CHANGE? (0-YES) OC?	DC?	QB?	RET STRS	TOTAL STABILITY
AIR FORCE (MTN WEST)	10-3	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
AKRON (MAC)	2-10	4	0	3	4	3 (15)	14
ALABAMA (SEC)	11-2	4	0	0	0	2 (10)	6
APPALACHIAN ST (SBC)	6-6	4	0	0	0	2 (11)	6
ARIZONA (PAC 12)	5-7	4	3	3	4	2 (11)	16
ARIZONA ST (PAC 12)	3-9	0	0	0	0	2 (12)	2
ARKANSAS (SEC)	7-6	4	0	0	4	2 (10)	10
ARKANSAS ST (SBC)	3-9	4	0	3	0	2 (11)	9
ARMY (IND)	6-6	4	0	3	0	4 (17)	11
AUBURN (SEC)	5-7	0	0	0	4	4 (17)	8
BALL ST (MAC)	6-6	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
BAYLOR (BIG 12)	6-7	4	3	0	4	2 (12)	13
BOISE ST (MTN WEST)	10-4	4	0	3	4	3 (14)	14
BOSTON COLLEGE (ACC)	3-9	4	0	0	0	3 (15)	7
BOWLING GREEN (MAC)	6-7	4	0	0	0	2 (12)	6
BUFFALO (MAC)	7-6	4	0	0	4	2 (10)	10
BYU (B12)	8-5	4	3	0	0	3 (14)	10
C MICHIGAN (MAC)	4-8	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
CALIFORNIA (PAC 12)	4-8	4	0	3	0	4 (17)	11
CHARLOTTE (AAC)	3-9	0	0	0	0	2 (10)	2
CINCINNATI (B12)	9-4	0	0	0	0	1 (8)	1
CLEMSON (ACC)	11-3	4	0	3	0	3 (15)	10
COASTAL CAROLINA (SBC)	9-4	0	0	0	4	3 (14)	7
COLORADO (PAC 12)	1-11	0	0	0	0	1 (8)	1
COLORADO ST (MTN WEST)	3-9	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
CONNECTICUT (IND)	6-7	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18
DUKE (ACC)	9-4	4	3	0	4	4 (18)	15
E MICHIGAN (MAC)	9-4	4	3	0	0	2 (11)	9
EAST CAROLINA (AAC)	8-5	4	3	3	0	2 (10)	12
FLA ATLANTIC (AAC)	5-7	0	0	0	0	4 (17)	4
FLA INTERNATIONAL (CUSA)	4-8	4	3	3	4	2 (12)	16
FLORIDA (SEC)	6-7	4	3	3	0	2 (11)	12
FLORIDA ST (ACC)	10-3	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18
FRESNO ST (MTN WEST)	10-4	4	0	3	0	2 (11)	9
GA SOUTHERN (SBC)	6-7	4	3	0	0	2 (12)	9
GEORGIA (SEC)	15-0	4	0	3	0	3 (13)	10
GEORGIA ST (SBC)	4-8	4	3	0	4	2 (12)	13
GEORGIA TECH (ACC)	5-7	4	0	3	0	2 (12)	9
HAWAII (MTN WEST)	3-10	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17
HOUSTON (B12)	8-5	4	0	3	0	2 (12)	9
ILLINOIS (BIG TEN)	8-5	4	3	0	0	2 (12)	9
INDIANA (BIG TEN)	4-8	4	3	3	0	1 (8)	11
IOWA (BIG TEN)	8-5	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17
IOWA ST (BIG 12)	4-8	4	0	3	4	3 (15)	14
JACKSONVILLE ST (CUSA)	9-2	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17

TEAM (CONFERENCE)	2022 RECORD	HC?	CHANGE? (0-YES) OC?	DC?	QB?	RET STRS	TOTAL STABILITY
JAMES MADISON (SBC)	8-3	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
KANSAS (BIG 12)	6-7	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18
KANSAS ST (BIG 12)	10-4	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17
KENT ST (MAC)	5-7	0	0	0	0	0 (4)	0
KENTUCKY (SEC)	7-6	4	0	3	0	3 (14)	10
LA LAFAYETTE (SBC)	6-7	4	3	3	4	1 (9)	15
LA MONROE (SBC)	4-8	4	3	3	0	2 (10)	12
LIBERTY (CUSA)	8-5	0	0	3	4	1 (8)	8
LOUISIANA TECH (CUSA)	3-9	4	3	3	0	2 (11)	12
LOUISVILLE (ACC)	8-5	0	0	0	0	2 (12)	2
LSU (SEC)	10-4	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
MARSHALL (SBC)	9-4	4	3	0	4	2 (11)	13
MARYLAND (BIG TEN)	8-5	4	0	3	4	2 (11)	13
MASSACHUSETTS (IND)	1-11	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
MEMPHIS (AAC)	7-6	4	3	3	4	2 (12)	16
MIAMI FL (ACC)	5-7	4	0	0	4	4 (19)	12
MIAMI OHIO (MAC)	6-7	4	0	3	4	3 (16)	14
MICHIGAN (BIG TEN)	13-1	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
MICHIGAN ST (BIG TEN)	5-7	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
MIDDLE TENN ST (CUSA)	8-5	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
MINNESOTA (BIG TEN)	9-4	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17
MISSISSIPPI ST (SEC)	9-4	0	0	0	4	2 (12)	6
MISSOURI (SEC)	6-7	4	0	3	4	3 (15)	14
N ILLINOIS (MAC)	3-9	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
NAVY (AAC)	4-8	0	0	0	4	4 (17)	8
NC STATE (ACC)	8-5	4	0	3	0	2 (11)	9
NEBRASKA (BIG TEN)	4-8	0	0	0	0	3 (15)	3
NEVADA (MTN WEST)	2-10	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
NEW MEXICO (MTN WEST)	2-10	4	0	0	0	1 (9)	5
NEW MEXICO ST (CUSA)	7-6	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17
NORTH CAROLINA (ACC)	9-5	4	0	3	4	4 (17)	15
NORTH TEXAS (AAC)	7-7	0	0	0	0	3 (15)	3
NORTHWESTERN (BIG TEN)	1-11	0	3	0	4	2 (12)	9
NOTRE DAME (IND)	9-4	4	0	3	0	3 (13)	10
OHIO ST (BIG TEN)	11-2	4	0	3	0	3 (14)	10
OHIO U (MAC)	10-4	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
OKLAHOMA (BIG 12)	6-7	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17
OKLAHOMA ST (BIG 12)	7-6	4	3	0	0	3 (13)	10
OLD DOMINION (SBC)	3-9	4	0	3	0	0 (7)	7
OLE MISS (SEC)	8-5	4	3	0	4	3 (16)	14
OREGON (PAC 12)	10-3	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17
OREGON ST (PAC 12)	10-3	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17
PENN ST (BIG TEN)	11-2	4	3	3	0	3 (16)	13
PITTSBURGH (ACC)	9-4	4	3	3	0	2 (11)	12
PURDUE (BIG TEN)	8-6	0	0	0	0	2 (11)	2

TEAM (CONFERENCE)	2022 RECORD	HC?	CHANGE? (0-YES) OC?	DC?	QB?	RET STRS	TOTAL STABILITY
RICE (AAC)	5-8	4	3	3	0	3 (14)	13
RUTGERS (BIG TEN)	4-8	4	0	3	4	3 (14)	14
S ALABAMA (SBC)	10-3	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18
SAM HOUSTON ST (CUSA)	5-4	4	0	3	4	3 (16)	14
SAN DIEGO ST (MTN WEST)	7-6	4	0	3	4	2 (12)	13
SAN JOSE ST (MTN WEST)	7-5	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17
SMU (AAC)	7-6	4	3	3	0	3 (16)	13
SOUTH CAROLINA (SEC)	8-5	4	0	3	4	2 (10)	13
SOUTH FLORIDA (AAC)	1-11	0	0	0	4	3 (13)	7
SOUTHERN MISS (SBC)	7-6	4	3	0	4	3 (15)	14
STANFORD (PAC 12)	3-9	0	0	0	0	0 (6)	0
SYRACUSE (ACC)	7-6	4	0	0	4	3 (14)	11
TCU (BIG 12)	13-2	4	3	3	0	2 (10)	12
TEMPLE (AAC)	3-9	4	3	0	4	3 (16)	14
TENNESSEE (SEC)	11-2	4	0	3	0	2 (12)	9
TEXAS (BIG 12)	8-5	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17
TEXAS A&M (SEC)	5-7	4	0	3	4	5 (20)	16
TEXAS ST UNIV (SBC)	4-8	0	0	0	0	2 (11)	2
TEXAS TECH (BIG 12)	8-5	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18
TOLEDO (MAC)	9-5	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17
TROY (SBC)	12-2	4	3	0	4	2 (12)	13
TULANE (AAC)	12-2	4	0	0	4	3 (14)	11
TULSA (AAC)	5-7	0	0	0	0	1 (9)	1
TX-SAN ANTONIO (AAC)	11-3	4	0	3	4	3 (16)	14
UAB (AAC)	7-6	0	0	0	0	0 (7)	0
UCF (B12)	9-5	4	0	3	4	3 (15)	14
UCLA (PAC 12)	9-4	4	3	0	0	3 (16)	10
UNLV (MTN WEST)	6-7	0	0	0	4	3 (13)	7
USC (PAC 12)	11-3	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18
UTAH (PAC 12)	10-4	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17
UTAH ST (MTN WEST)	6-7	4	0	0	4	1 (9)	9
UTEP (CUSA)	5-7	4	0	3	4	3 (15)	14
VANDERBILT (SEC)	5-7	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
VIRGINIA (ACC)	3-7	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13
VIRGINIA TECH (ACC)	3-8	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17
W KENTUCKY (CUSA)	9-5	4	3	3	4	2 (11)	16
W MICHIGAN (MAC)	4-8	0	0	3	0	1 (9)	4
WAKE FOREST (ACC)	8-5	4	3	3	0	2 (11)	12
WASHINGTON (PAC 12)	11-2	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17
WASHINGTON ST (PAC 12)	7-6	4	0	0	4	2 (12)	10
WEST VIRGINIA (BIG 12)	5-7	4	0	3	0	3 (13)	10
WISCONSIN (BIG TEN)	7-6	0	0	0	0	4 (17)	4
WYOMING (MTN WEST)	7-6	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17

We're starting to see less of it. Looking back at the last four years, prior to the 2020 season, there were a total of 19 teams that were returning 17 starters or more. For 2021, there were 69 such teams, more than half of the total FBS programs! Last year there were just 15, and for 2023 there are 16.

Furthermore, in 2021, 89 teams brought back their starting quarterbacks, along with eight entire starting offensive units and nine full defenses. For 2022, those numbers dropped to 78 QBs, zero full offenses, and just one intact defense. In 2023, there are 72 returning starting QBs, and only one intact unit of any kind, that being Texas Tech's offense. That said, there are also 23 new head coaches and 113 coordinator changes, resulting in 14 teams with Stability Scores of 3 or less, the same amount as last year and nine more than in 2021. Again, this is all returning to normalcy after the crazy 2021 season.

Let's dig deeper into the teams on both ends of the stability scale.

HIGHLY STABLE TEAMS WITH SCORES OF 18 OR HIGHER

In 2019, there were seven teams with scores of 18 or higher, and in 2020, there were only three. For 2021, the number ballooned to 30 teams that met that benchmark for stability! Keep in mind, the maximum score is 19. Last year, eight teams reached the 18-point benchmark. For 2023, there are six. These programs are in good shape for the coming season, at least early.

CONNECTICUT (INDEPENDENT) – 18

Jim Mora's Connecticut team was one of the biggest surprises in college football last season in finishing 6-7 and playing in a bowl game for the first time in seven years. There were little to no expectations of the team doing well, but Mora had some sort of magic recipe. With 17 starters back from that team for '23, you'd have to think the Huskies have a good shot at keeping the momentum going. There are only a few games in which it would appear that UConn won't be able to compete for a win. That said, they did win last year as 23+ point underdogs to Fresno State. For a program that won just four games from 2018-21, it's fun to see what's transpiring at Connecticut.

FLORIDA STATE (ACC) - 18

If head coach Mike Norvell has really brought Florida State back into the country's elite ranks, this will be the year his team shows it. They are loaded everywhere, particularly at QB, where Jordan Travis returns for his senior season along with 16 other starters from a team that went 10-3 and beat Oklahoma in the Cheez-It Bowl game. Travis accounted for over 30 TDs last season and is in the mix of Heisman Trophy favorites. The defense allowed just 20.6 points per game as well, the lowest average since the program's national championship season in 2013. The Seminoles are talented, hungry, and stable heading into 2023.

KANSAS (BIG 12) – 18

Another team that made a quantum leap last season and is looking to build upon the momentum in 2023 is Kansas, and like UConn, the Jayhawks are in a very stable position to be able to do so. Back for this fall are 17 total returning starters from the 6-7 team of a year ago, led by QB Jalon Daniels, who, after a fast start, was lost to injury. He missed five starts, and the offense definitely curtailed without him, dropping by about 10 Points per game in his absence. If you recall the 55-53 bowl game loss to Arkansas, Daniels and the Jayhawks put on an absolute show in that game. Lance Leipold has this program trending upward, and this should be his best group yet.

TEXAS TECH (BIG 12) – 18

Another Big 12 team that looks to be in solid shape to take a step forward this season is Texas Tech, who begins its second season under head coach Joey McGuire. The Red Raiders were 8-5 in McGuire's inaugural season, including an impressive 43-25 upset of Ole Miss in the Texas Bowl. QB Tyler Shough is back for his senior season after missing about half of last year with injury woes. He leads the only fully intact offensive unit back for '23 across the country. There are also six defensive starters back, and that group held teams to fewer than 30 Points per game for the first time since '09. The schedule is very manageable as well, and if things come together as they should with such a stable situation, the Red Raiders could surprise a few folks this fall.

USC (PAC-12) – 18

Coming off a double-digit win season for the first time in five years and boasting perhaps the nation's top player in QB Caleb Williams, expectations couldn't be any higher in L.A. for USC and second-year head coach Lincoln Riley. While the bewildering loss to Tulane in this past season's Cotton Bowl left a stain on an otherwise incredible resurgent season for the Trojans, the aspirations for 2023 are even loftier. There are 17 starters back in all, and Riley has returned the program to the elite recruiting standards set in the Pete Carroll days. The Pac-12 is looking pretty strong for 2023, but USC is the team to beat and should be on a 6-0 roll when it arrives in South Bend in mid-October for a clash with Notre Dame. Utah comes right after.

SOUTH ALABAMA (SUN BELT) – 18

There wasn't a lot of reason at this point last year to think that South Alabama was heading for its first winning season since 2011, much less winning 10 games. That is exactly what happened, as Kane Wommack's second Jaguars team put it together for a 10-2 regular season before falling to Western Kentucky in the New Orleans Bowl. Now, for '23, Wommack has even more reason for optimism as all but four starters are back from that benchmark-setting USA team. The offensive stars are QB Carter Bradley and RB La'Damian Webb while the staunch defensive unit that allowed just 21.3 Points per game brings back nine starters. The schedule starts fast with trips to Tulane and Oklahoma State in the first three weeks, but this team is in solid shape and should be competitive in those contests, especially where the point spread is concerned.

UNSTABLE TEAMS WITH SCORES OF 2 OR LOWER

From 2019-21, there were a total of 16 teams going into the fall with Stability Scores of 3 or lower. The combined record of those teams wound up being 76-92 ATS, good for just 45.2%. However, we have reached a new level of instability thanks to the significant uptick in the transfer portal and coaches and coordinators moving from job to job. Last year there were 14 teams alone that scored 3 or less on this stability scale and eight with scores of two or less. This included a first-ever score of zero for Nevada, who wound up going 2-10 SU and 4-8 ATS. For 2023, there are a lofty total of 11 teams that meet the criteria of scoring 2 or less, including three teams with imperfect scores of 0. Let's look at those programs.

ARIZONA STATE (PAC-12) – 2

Arizona State was a train wreck last season, and it was obvious from the outside that head coach Herm Edwards had lost control. In for 2023 is new head coach Kenny Dillingham, who inherits a team that was 3-9 and with just half of its starters back. The new QB will be transfer Drew Pyne, who comes over from Notre Dame. The systems will be new, the Pac-12 is pretty loaded for 2023, meaning this could be a long first season for Dillingham in Tempe.

CHARLOTTE (AMERICAN) – 2

Expectations were reasonably high for Charlotte last year at this time, and why not? The 49ers had some good experience and were led by a fifth-year QB in Chris Reynolds, who has since moved on to the NFL. It turned out to be a disappointing 3-9 season, however, and with head coach Will Healy having been fired, the reins are now turned over to Biff Poggi, who gets his first head coaching chance. Poggi's team has fewer than half of its starters back and figures to be turning to Bethune-Cookman transfer Jalon Jones at quarterback to run the new system. Add in a conference change to the American, and it's easy to understand how this mass instability might impact Charlotte this fall.

CINCINNATI (BIG 12) – 1

Two years ago, Cincinnati became the first Group of Five conference team to reach the CFP. Now, the Bearcats are stepping up into the big time, joining the ranks of the Power Five through the Big 12 Conference. They couldn't have picked a worse time to do it, as they just lost head coach Luke Fickell and most of his staff to Wisconsin. Not only that, but the program was also hit hard by transfers once the Fickell move was announced. In all, just eight starters are back, only two from the offense. The pain should be lessened somewhat by the transfer of new QB Emory Jones in from ASU. However, this is a quantum leap in schedule strength for a team that relied on its togetherness to surprise bigger programs in recent years. With a Stability Score of just 1, I'd stay away from, or better yet, fade this team in its early season FBS tilts.

COLORADO (PAC-12) – 1

Sometimes instability in a season can prove to be a great reason for optimism. Such is the case at Colorado this year, where Deion Sanders takes over as head coach for a program that has been in a rut, having played in bowl games just twice in the last 15 seasons. The early returns are fantastic, however, as Sanders has stepped up the recruiting, and the fans have embraced the change and proved it by setting a Spring Game attendance record. However, instability is exactly that, and there are very few teams that are going to be transitioning as drastically as the Buffaloes are in 2023. Their first task is a contest at defending national runner-up TCU, and the schedule doesn't get very easy at any point. It will be an entertaining situation to watch this season, but I wouldn't back the Buffaloes with your money, especially early.

KENT STATE (MAC) – 0

Nevada became the first team to post a zero stability score on my scale last year, and for 2023, three teams equal that dubious honor. The first is Kent State, who brings back the fewest starters in the country with just four, including none from the offense. That might not be as disastrous of a situation as you might think. With new systems being put in place by first-time head coach Kenni Burns, who comes over from Minnesota, it might make the installation process a little easier. That said, the talent level at KSU is not what it was just two years ago, and it will take some time for this very unstable situation to show any promise.

LOUISVILLE (ACC) – 2

I mentioned the reason for optimism at Colorado despite a high level of instability. Things could be even more promising at Louisville, where one of the all-time great QBs in program history returns to take over as head coach. Fans are definitely excited about the prospects of Jeff Brohm returning to the Cardinals' program, as not only does he bring some nostalgia points with him, but he also sports a pretty strong recent history of explosive offenses while coaching at Purdue. Furthermore, he brings an experienced QB with him in Jack Plummer, who should be able to seamlessly transfer the work he put in for Brohm's Boilermakers' offense to here. The Cardinals were 8-5 last season and put up a good performance in a 24-7 Fenway Bowl win over Cincy. I'll call for cautious optimism in this situation, particularly considering the point spread in the first three FBS games.

PURDUE (BIG 12) – 2

Louisville's gain is Purdue's loss, as Jeff Brohm's departure leaves a void for a program coming off a season that brought its first trip to a Big Ten title game. Ryan Walters takes over as the new head coach and will be leading a team with just half of its starters back for '23. Several prognosticators have pegged the Boilermakers for last in the West Division in the conference so it's quite possible we could be looking at a first to worst scenario in this first transitional campaign. That's the nature of instability, however.

STANFORD (PAC-12) – 0

The second team with an imperfect score of zero on my Stability Scale is Stanford. Remember that Nevada was just 2-10 SU and 4-8 ATS with this challenge facing it a year ago. The Cardinal could have an even bigger challenge than the Wolf Pack did last year, though, as they are playing in what shapes up to be a very strong Pac-12 for 2023. The schedule is treacherous, to put it mildly, for new head coach Troy Taylor, and he'll have only six total starters back, three on each side of the ball. Making it more difficult, Taylor takes over for David Shaw, who set new standards for success at the school in his 12 years but unexpectedly flamed out late.

TEXAS STATE (SUN BELT) – 2

There are doormats every year in the FBS on which teams get healthy, and oddsmakers can't seem to be able to set lines high enough for them. One of those teams in 2023 might just be Texas State. GJ Kinne takes over as head coach and will bring back 11 starters from the 4-8 team of a year ago. I went over it last week, and the recruiting efforts of recent years provide little reason for optimism in 2023 for Kinne and his new staff. That said, the one shining light might be the late addition of transfer QB TJ Finley from Auburn. Still, TSU is a highly unstable situation heading into fall practice, and the first two games on the schedule (at Baylor, at UTSA) wreak of blowout.

TULSA (AMERICAN) – 1

Last year, Tulsa's drop in the AAC was unexpected, especially with QB Davis Brin and an otherwise experienced and winning core group back. A couple of upset losses in their first six games and the Golden Hurricane ended up a disappointing 5-7 and left out of the bowl picture. The results cost head coach Philip Montgomery his job, as he is now replaced by Kevin Wilson, who comes over after serving as offensive coordinator at power Ohio State. That in itself is reason for optimism, but mind you, it figures to be down the road. This year's Tulsa team boasts little experience (nine returning starters) and faces a schedule that finds at Washington and hosting Oklahoma in games 2 and 3. The lines for those contests will have to be massive for me to give any consideration whatsoever, as they will both be qualified as Stability Mismatch System plays for both heavy favorites.

UAB (AMERICAN) – 0

The third and final zero team for the 2023 season in terms of Stability Scores is UAB, under the leadership of first-time head coach Trent Dilfer, who is perhaps known better for either his ESPN analytical career or for having shockingly won a Super Bowl as a starting quarterback. Dilfer's first job will be a tough one, as UAB is switching conferences to the AAC (from C-USA) and has only seven starters back. This program has been riding high under Bill Clark and Bryant Vincent, but this hire is a massive shock to the system. The Blazers qualified for a bowl game every year since returning to FBS football in 2017 after a two-year hiatus. That was a remarkable feat. It's a good bet that streak ends in 2023.

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATINGS

TEAM	POWER RATING	TEAM	POWER RATING	TEAM	POWER RATING
GEORGIA	70.5	PITTSBURGH	47.5	ARMY	36.0
OHIO ST	69.0	SYRACUSE	47.0	EAST CAROLINA	36.0
ALABAMA	67.5	BOISE ST	46.0	SOUTHERN MISS	36.0
MICHIGAN	67.0	BYU	46.0	UAB	35.0
LSU	62.5	KANSAS	46.0	COLORADO	34.5
TEXAS	62.5	MICHIGAN ST	46.0	MIAMI OHIO	34.5
USC	62.0	NEBRASKA	46.0	SAN JOSE ST	34.5
PENN ST	61.5	PURDUE	46.0	GEORGIA ST	34.0
CLEMSON	59.5	WASHINGTON ST	46.0	STANFORD	34.0
FLORIDA ST	59.5	CALIFORNIA	45.5	TEMPLE	33.5
OREGON	59.5	WAKE FOREST	45.5	GA SOUTHERN	33.0
UTAH	59.0	SMU	45.0	RICE	33.0
NOTRE DAME	58.5	WEST VIRGINIA	45.0	C MICHIGAN	32.5
WASHINGTON	58.0	MEMPHIS	44.5	JACKSONVILLE ST	32.5
OKLAHOMA	57.5	TROY	44.5	MIDDLE TENN ST	32.5
TENNESSEE	56.5	TX-SAN ANTONIO	44.5	CONNECTICUT	32.0
OLE MISS	56.0	S ALABAMA	44.0	E MICHIGAN	32.0
TEXAS A&M	56.0	CINCINNATI	43.5	BUFFALO	31.5
TEXAS TECH	54.0	HOUSTON	43.5	N ILLINOIS	31.5
WISCONSIN	54.0	ARIZONA	43.0	SOUTH FLORIDA	31.5
NORTH CAROLINA	53.5	ARIZONA ST	42.5	TULSA	31.5
OREGON ST	53.5	FRESNO ST	42.5	UNLV	31.5
KANSAS ST	53.0	TOLEDO	42.0	BALL ST	30.5
TCU	53.0	AIR FORCE	41.5	COLORADO ST	30.0
KENTUCKY	52.5	MARSHALL	40.5	LOUISIANA TECH	30.0
ARKANSAS	52.0	W KENTUCKY	40.5	UTAH ST	30.0
AUBURN	52.0	FLA ATLANTIC	39.5	UTEP	30.0
BAYLOR	52.0	JAMES MADISON	39.5	ARKANSAS ST	28.0
FLORIDA	52.0	VANDERBILT	39.5	BOWLING GREEN	28.0
IOWA	51.5	VIRGINIA TECH	39.5	OLD DOMINION	27.5
UCLA	51.5	GEORGIA TECH	39.0	TEXAS ST UNIV	27.5
MINNESOTA	50.5	INDIANA	39.0	NEVADA	26.5
MISSISSIPPI ST	50.5	SAN DIEGO ST	39.0	NEW MEXICO ST	26.0
SOUTH CAROLINA	50.5	VIRGINIA	39.0	W MICHIGAN	26.0
ILLINOIS	50.0	BOSTON COLLEGE	38.5	CHARLOTTE	25.0
LOUISVILLE	50.0	LA LAFAYETTE	38.5	LA MONROE	24.5
MARYLAND	50.0	NORTHWESTERN	38.5	AKRON	24.0
UCF	50.0	RUTGERS	38.5	HAWAII	23.0
MIAMI FL	49.5	WYOMING	38.0	SAM HOUSTON ST	23.0
MISSOURI	49.5	APPALACHIAN ST	37.5	FLA INTERNATIONAL	21.5
TULANE	49.0	COASTAL CAROLINA	37.5	NEW MEXICO	21.0
IOWA ST	48.5	NAVY	37.0	KENT ST	20.5
NC STATE	48.5	LIBERTY	36.5	MASSACHUSETTS	17.5
DUKE	47.5	NORTH TEXAS	36.5		
OKLAHOMA ST	47.5	OHIO U	36.5		

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RETURNING	TEAM	RETURNING	TEAM	RETURNING
TEXAS A&M	20	UTEP	15	MEMPHIS	12
MIAMI FL	19	VANDERBILT	15	MISSISSIPPI ST	12
DUKE	18	WASHINGTON	15	NORTHWESTERN	12
S ALABAMA	18	WYOMING	15	SAN DIEGO ST	12
ARMY	17	BOISE ST	14	TENNESSEE	12
AUBURN	17	BYU	14	TROY	12
CALIFORNIA	17	COASTAL CAROLINA	14	WASHINGTON ST	12
CONNECTICUT	17	HAWAII	14	APPALACHIAN ST	11
FLA ATLANTIC	17	KENTUCKY	14	ARIZONA	11
FLORIDA ST	17	OHIO ST	14	ARKANSAS ST	11
KANSAS	17	RICE	14	E MICHIGAN	11
NAVY	17	RUTGERS	14	FLORIDA	11
NORTH CAROLINA	17	SAN JOSE ST	14	FRESNO ST	11
TEXAS TECH	17	SYRACUSE	14	LOUISIANA TECH	11
USC	17	TULANE	14	MARSHALL	11
WISCONSIN	17	VIRGINIA TECH	14	MARYLAND	11
IOWA	16	AIR FORCE	13	NC STATE	11
JACKSONVILLE ST	16	BALL ST	13	PITTSBURGH	11
MIAMI OHIO	16	C MICHIGAN	13	PURDUE	11
OLE MISS	16	GEORGIA	13	TEXAS ST UNIV	11
OREGON	16	JAMES MADISON	13	W KENTUCKY	11
PENN ST	16	KANSAS ST	13	WAKE FOREST	11
SAM HOUSTON ST	16	MICHIGAN ST	13	ALABAMA	10
SMU	16	MIDDLE TENN ST	13	ARKANSAS	10
TEMPLE	16	MINNESOTA	13	BUFFALO	10
TEXAS	16	NEVADA	13	CHARLOTTE	10
TOLEDO	16	NEW MEXICO ST	13	EAST CAROLINA	10
TX-SAN ANTONIO	16	NOTRE DAME	13	LA MONROE	10
UCLA	16	OKLAHOMA	13	SOUTH CAROLINA	10
UTAH	16	OKLAHOMA ST	13	TCU	10
AKRON	15	OREGON ST	13	LA LAFAYETTE	9
BOSTON COLLEGE	15	SOUTH FLORIDA	13	NEW MEXICO	9
CLEMSON	15	UNLV	13	TULSA	9
COLORADO ST	15	VIRGINIA	13	UTAH ST	9
IOWA ST	15	WEST VIRGINIA	13	W MICHIGAN	9
LSU	15	ARIZONA ST	12	CINCINNATI	8
MASSACHUSETTS	15	BAYLOR	12	COLORADO	8
MICHIGAN	15	BOWLING GREEN	12	INDIANA	8
MISSOURI	15	FLA INTERNATIONAL	12	LIBERTY	8
N ILLINOIS	15	GA SOUTHERN	12	OLD DOMINION	7
NEBRASKA	15	GEORGIA ST	12	UAB	7
NORTH TEXAS	15	GEORGIA TECH	12	STANFORD	6
OHIO U	15	HOUSTON	12	KENT ST	4
SOUTHERN MISS	15	ILLINOIS	12		
UCF	15	LOUISVILLE	12		

AAC BETTING PREVIEW

Several conferences in college football got a makeover this offseason, and the American Athletic Conference is one of them. The AAC lost UCF, Houston, and Cincinnati to the Big 12 but picked up UTSA, North Texas, Florida Atlantic, UAB, Rice, and Charlotte from Conference USA. The facelift absolutely weakens the AAC, as two perennial Group of Five New Year's Six bowl teams left to become Power Five programs, and the C-USA additions are a real mixed bag.

Along with the incoming and outgoing teams, the AAC did away with divisions, so the two top teams by the standing will square off on December 2 at the host site of the regular season conference champion.

The new members are hardly the only changes for the conference. The AAC also features seven new head coaches out of the 14 programs, as FAU, Navy, North Texas, UAB, Charlotte, USF, and Tulsa all welcomed in fresh hires.

Not surprisingly, Tulane (+205) is the favorite to run it back as conference champion after finishing No. 9 in the AP Top 25 after beating USC in a thrilling Cotton Bowl Classic with a 46-45 win. Stiff competition will undoubtedly come from UTSA (+450), a program that went 18-3 straight up on Jeff Traylor's watch in Conference USA. The Roadrunners were No. 27 in the AP poll at season's end.

AAC holdovers SMU (+400) and Memphis (+600) are also considered to be top contenders, with newcomer FAU (+650) as the fifth choice before a huge drop-off to the rest of the conference. The mash-up of the AAC and Conference USA will make for a really interesting season.

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
TULANE	49	36.25 (88)	9.2	2.8	6.3	1.7	9.5
SMU	45	35.43 (89)	8.4	3.6	6.1	1.9	8
MEMPHIS	44.5	34.29 (102)	8.4	3.6	5.7	2.3	7.5
TX-SAN ANTONIO	44.5	37.63 (73)	8.0	4.0	5.7	2.3	7.5
FLA ATLANTIC	39.5	37 (78)	6.7	5.3	4.9	3.1	7.5
NAVY	37	33.7 (107)	6.3	5.7	4.3	3.7	6.5
EAST CAROLINA	36	39.41 (70)	5.2	6.8	3.5	4.5	5.5
NORTH TEXAS	36.5	36.61 (84)	5.9	6.1	3.2	4.8	6.5
UAB	35	39.36 (71)	5.0	7.0	3.1	4.9	5
RICE	33	37.13 (75)	4.9	7.1	3.0	5.0	4.5
TEMPLE	33.5	33.88 (106)	5.2	6.8	2.9	5.1	5
SOUTH FLORIDA	31.5	38.05 (72)	4.4	7.6	2.9	5.1	4
TULSA	31.5	36.73 (82)	4.4	7.6	2.9	5.1	4.5
CHARLOTTE	25	36.7 (83)	2.9	9.1	1.5	6.5	2.5

CHARLOTTE
49ERS

HEAD COACH: BIFF POGGI (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE MILLER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RYAN OSBORN

BY ADAM BURKE

The Charlotte 49ers joined the FBS ranks in 2015 and have one winning season and one bowl game appearance in that span. After making what felt like a promising hire in Will Healy, who had a 7-6 debut during the 2019 season, the 49ers have shifted gears and brought in a football lifer in hopes of setting some new standards. With 10 wins in the last 30 games, the job now falls on the shoulders of 63-year-old Biff Poggi, who most recently was the assistant head coach at Michigan.

OFFENSE

This will be virtually a brand-new offense in the Queen City. Only a few returning starters are back, as the 49ers bid adieu to all-time leading passer Chris Reynolds, who amassed over 10,000 yards in five seasons with the program, and also the team's top four receivers. True freshman RB Durell Robinson may usurp Shadrick Byrd, so the 49ers offense might as well have three returning starters. This is basically a completely rebuilt line as well.

Starting from scratch may work out, as the 49ers managed only 24.4 points per game, though they were a very respectable 52nd in yards per play. Charlotte even scored a touchdown on 29 of 37 red-zone trips. Turnovers hurt, as the 49ers were -8 in TO margin, but their 21 giveaways only tied for 95th nationally. This should have been a more productive offense than it was, but it is now Mike Miller's problem after serving as Maryland's co-OC last season.

DEFENSE

This defense was beyond awful last season, and a step up to the AAC probably won't help. The 49ers were one of three teams to allow more than seven yards per play. They gave up over five yards per carry, and opponents completed 70% of their passes. Only conference foe South Florida was worse in that department. Four starters are back, but based on last season's production, that may be a good thing.

Hiring defensive coaches from the Baltimore Ravens or Michigan Wolverines seems like a sound strategy as defensive coordinator Ryan Osborn takes over. There is nowhere to go but up for this defense, but it will have to go up a long way with a new scheme for the holdovers and a brand new team for the transfers, of which there are several in hopes of improving in a lot of areas.

OUTLOOK

At 63, Poggi probably isn't looking for a long-term rebuild, but he may not have much of a choice. He was hired in mid-November, as the team was finishing last season, and he brings a businesslike mentality to the job as a former hedge fund manager. We've seen that strategy work in the pro ranks, at least in terms of front-office executives, and it worked for Jamey Chadwell at Coastal Carolina. We'll see if it works at Charlotte, but expectations are low, with a win total of 2.5. My projection is for 2.65 victories, and the 49ers will only be favored once this season in all likelihood.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 2.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **25**

NATIONAL RANK: #125 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #14 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	S CAROLINA ST	-25	2
9/9	at Maryland	27.5	50
9/16	GEORGIA ST	7	34
9/23	at Florida	30	52
9/30	at SMU	23.5	45
10/14	NAVY	10	37
10/21	at East Carolina	14	36
10/27	FLA ATLANTIC	12.5	39.5
11/4	at Tulsa	8.5	31.5
11/11	MEMPHIS	17.5	44.5
11/18	RICE	6	33
11/25	at South Florida	8.5	31.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **36.70** #83 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

200-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **10**
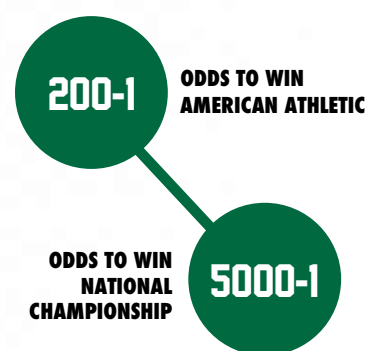
OFFENSE: 4
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.5	80	39.3	128
Yards Per Point	15.9	103	12.2	120
Plays Per Game	69.3	79		
Time of Possession	29:41	71		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.9%	57	45.9%	117
Total Yards Per Game	387.8	62	477.6	126
Yards Per Play	5.6	49	6.8	128
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.4	116		
Rush Yards Per Game	114.7	100	197.1	111
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	84	5.1	117
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.2	30		
Completion %	60.3%	68	70.1%	129
Passing Yards Per Game	273.1	24	280.5	123
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.5	53	9.5	131
Turnovers	1.9	113	1.2	94

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 4-7, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	WILLIAM & MARY (-4.5)	24-41	L	L
9/10	MARYLAND (28)	21-56	L	L
9/17	at Georgia St (19.5)	42-41	W	W
9/24	at South Carolina (23.5)	20-56	L	L
10/1	UTEP (3.5)	35-41	L	L
10/15	at UAB (22.5)	20-34	L	W
10/22	FLA INTERNATIONAL (-14)	15-34	L	L
10/29	at Rice (15)	56-23	W	W
11/5	W KENTUCKY (14.5)	7-59	L	L
11/12	at Middle Tenn St (10)	14-24	L	T
11/19	LOUISIANA TECH (2)	26-21	W	W

EAST CAROLINA
PIRATES

HEAD COACH: MIKE HOUSTON (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DONNIE KIRKPATRICK
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BLAKE HARRELL

BY ADAM BURKE

Head coach Mike Houston has officially put his stamp on the East Carolina program as the Pirates ride back-to-back bowl game appearances into the 2023 season. Well, sort of. The 2021 Military Bowl was canceled, but the Pirates went to the 2022 Birmingham Bowl and rocked a shorthanded Coastal Carolina team for the program's first bowl win since 2013. This may be Houston's last year in Greenville, especially if he excels with a tall task.

OFFENSE

For seemingly the first time in a decade, Holton Ahlers will not be the QB at ECU. Ahlers left as the program's all-time leading passer after five seasons of games in purple and gold. Redshirt sophomore Mason Garcia looks to get the first crack after throwing 12 passes last season, but three-star freshman Raheim Jeter could be knocking on the door very quickly. Nothing is really set in stone at the position.

It isn't just the loss of Ahlers and his 28/5 TD/INT ratio that looms large. The Pirates also have to replace 1,452 rushing yards and 14 scores from Keaton Mitchell, along with replacing two 1,000-yard receivers in Isaiah Winstead and CJ Johnson. With only four starters back from an offense that averaged 5.3 yards per carry and 6.6 yards per play, OC Donnie Kirkpatrick and Houston have a lot to figure out.

DEFENSE

ECU was stout against the run last season, holding opponents to just 3.4 yards per carry and 112 yards per contest, but the Pirates were shredded through the air. They did force 15 interceptions with a high-risk, high-reward strategy from DC Blake Harrell. The Pirates finished +13 in turnover margin, but they gave up over 290 passing yards per game and the 10th-highest completion rate in the nation.

Between injuries and the style of play, the Pirates rotated in a lot of guys, as nobody had more than 87 tackles, and sack leader Jeremy Lewis had 4.5 sacks. Nobody had more than six pass breakups, and that player (Malik Fleming) is gone, along with co-leader Jireh Wilson in interceptions. ECU did have 29 sacks, the program's most since 2018, but still hasn't held an opponent under six yards per play in a decade.

OUTLOOK

This is a huge test for Houston and his staff with only 10 returning starters, a bunch of transfers, and the major loss of production on offense. The 51-year-old FCS National Champion with James Madison in 2016 will be highly sought-after, and you wonder how that will impact the roster as the season goes along. The nonconference schedule is tricky, and the conference slate is also rather tough. My projections call for 5.74 wins, but if anybody can overachieve, it is a coach like Houston. I'd still lean toward a more pessimistic outlook with all the turnover.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 36

NATIONAL RANK: #91 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Michigan	34	67
9/9	MARSHALL	2	40.5
9/16	at Appalachian St	4	37.5
9/23	GARDNER WEBB	-14.5	24.5
9/30	at Rice	-1	33
10/12	SMU	6.5	45
10/21	CHARLOTTE	-14	25
10/28	at TX-San Antonio	11.5	44.5
11/4	TULANE	10	49
11/11	at Fla Atlantic	6	39.5
11/18	at Navy	3.5	37
11/25	TULSA	-7	31.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **39.41** #70 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.8 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

25-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 10
OFFENSE: 4
DEFENSE: 6
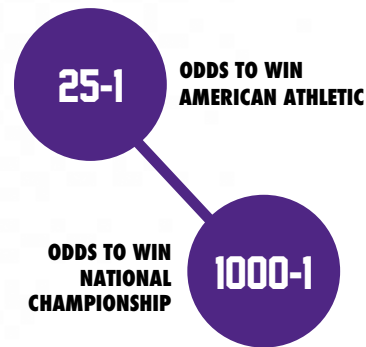
2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.2	36	28.6	76
Yards Per Point	14.5	75	14.4	61
Plays Per Game	71.2	57		
Time of Possession	31:23	32		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.9%	18	43.4%	108
Total Yards Per Game	451.9	23	411.1	88
Yards Per Play	6.4	18	6.1	113
Rush Attempts Per Game	31.9	106		
Rush Yards Per Game	162.4	56	118.9	21
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	22	3.7	31
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.1	20		
Completion %	65.9%	15	66.8%	123
Passing Yards Per Game	289.5	15	292.2	130
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	49	8.8	127
Turnovers	0.6	2	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	NC STATE (12.5)	20-21	L	W
9/10	OLD DOMINION (-13)	39-21	W	W
9/17	CAMPBELL (-32.5)	49-10	W	W
9/24	NAVY (-16.5)	20-23	L	L
10/1	at South Florida (-9.5)	48-28	W	W
10/8	at Tulane (3)	9-24	L	L
10/15	MEMPHIS (-5.5)	47-45	W	L
10/22	UCF (6)	34-13	W	W
10/28	at BYU (3)	27-24	W	W
11/11	at Cincinnati (4.5)	25-27	L	W
11/19	HOUSTON (-6)	3-42	L	L
11/26	at Temple (-9.5)	49-46	W	L
12/27	vs. Coastal Carolina (-7)	53-29	W	W

FLORIDA ATLANTIC
OWLS

HEAD COACH: TOM HERMAN (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHARLIE FRYE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROC BELLANTONI

BY ADAM BURKE

This is a season of new beginnings in Boca Raton. The Florida Atlantic Owls are now members of the AAC and have a new head coach in Tom Herman. Herman is back in the AAC after two years with Houston in 2015-16 and back as the head coach for the first time since 2020, when he was fired from his Texas gig. The Owls had two 11-win seasons under Lane Kiffin in 2017 and 2019 and have only gone 15-18 since Kiffin moved on to Ole Miss.

OFFENSE

To revamp the offense, Herman went to an old friend and got Casey Thompson to transfer in from Nebraska. Thompson was a Herman recruit to Austin, and he comes in with 20 starts worth of experience to replace former Miami (FL) QB N'Kosi Perry. Former Akron Zips and Cleveland Browns QB Charlie Frye is the new offensive coordinator, and he has a lot to work with.

Not only is Thompson a good starting point, but FAU had a 1,000-yard rusher in Larry McCammon last season, and backup RB Zuberi Mobley had 534 yards. With leading receiver LaJohntay Wester, this has the makings of a really good offense. The Owls had 4.9, 5.7, and 5.7 yards per play under Willie Taggart, but I'd bet they get back over six yards per play for the first time since Kiffin's final season in 2019.

DEFENSE

From a scoring standpoint, the FAU defense has been pretty good the last three seasons, holding opponents to 17.4, 25.8, and 26.6 points per game, but the yards-per-play metrics and the sack rates were very low. Ten starters are back from last year's defense, so hopes are high that FAU can build off of an experienced unit with Herman and new defensive coordinator Roc Bellantoni.

The Owls were 64th in scoring defense but 108th in yards per play allowed. In the more explosive AAC, even without Cincinnati, UCF, and Houston, the defense will need to limit big plays and get more of a pass rush. FAU had 34 total sacks over the last two seasons. There were 31 FBS teams with more than 34 sacks last season alone.

OUTLOOK

My projection for FAU is 7.44 wins, so pretty close to the market number. I don't think the step up in conference hurts them too much. The schedule is somewhat kind to the Owls, as they host UTSA and Tulane. There is a lot of talent on this roster that could be better maximized by Herman and his assistants than what Taggart got out of them. Herman will get a good idea of what he has to work with in road games at Clemson and Illinois before a well-timed bye prior to the start of AAC play in early October.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING — 39.5

NATIONAL RANK: #75 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	MONMOUTH NJ	-27.5	14.5
9/9	OHIO U	-6	36.5
9/16	at Clemson	22.5	59.5
9/23	at Illinois	13.5	50
10/7	TULSA	-11	31.5
10/14	at South Florida	-6	31.5
10/21	TX-SAN ANTONIO	2.5	44.5
10/27	at Charlotte	-12.5	25
11/4	at UAB	-2	35
11/11	EAST CAROLINA	-6	36
11/18	TULANE	6.5	49
11/25	at Rice	-4	33

SCHEDULE STRENGTH — 37.00
#78 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS — 3 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+650 — ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

3000-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
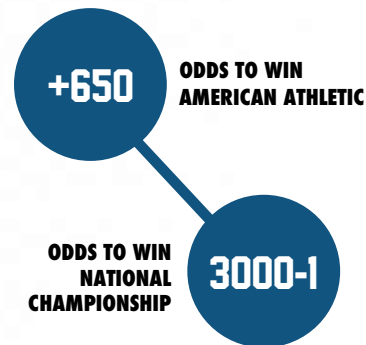
RETURNING STARTERS — 17
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 10

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28.6	54	28.2	71
Yards Per Point	13.7	42	15.7	29
Plays Per Game	72.1	49		
Time of Possession	28:13	105		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.5%	44	37.9%	56
Total Yards Per Game	391.9	57	441.2	110
Yards Per Play	5.4	60	6.1	111
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.5	37		
Rush Yards Per Game	168.2	53	191.5	106
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	63	5.1	120
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.5	68		
Completion %	57.1%	96	61.3%	78
Passing Yards Per Game	223.7	73	249.7	93
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	74	7.4	76
Turnovers	1	16	1.6	36

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	CHARLOTTE (-7)	43-13	W	W
9/3	at Ohio U (-6)	38-41	L	L
9/10	SE LOUISIANA (-12)	42-9	W	W
9/17	UCF (7.5)	14-40	L	L
9/24	at Purdue (16)	26-28	L	W
10/1	at North Texas (-3)	28-45	L	L
10/15	RICE (-4.5)	17-14	W	L
10/22	at UTEP (-3)	21-24	L	L
10/29	UAB (5)	24-17	W	W
11/12	at Fla International (-14.5)	52-7	W	W
11/19	at Middle Tenn St (-4.5)	21-49	L	L
11/26	W KENTUCKY (7.5)	31-32	L	W

MEMPHIS
TIGERS

HEAD COACH: RYAN SILVERFIELD (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM CRAMSEY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT BARNES

BY ADAM BURKE

This feels like a big year for head coach Ryan Silverfield. The Memphis Tigers won 57 games from 2014-19, but they have only gone 13-12 over the last two seasons. Silverfield had a solid 8-3 season during the COVID year, but his teams have underwhelmed in 2021 and 2022. For a program that set some new expectations under Justin Fuente and Mike Norvell, mediocrity is unacceptable.

OFFENSE
This year's Tigers team will have a mostly rebuilt offense. QB Seth Henigan is back after throwing for over 3,500 yards last season, but Memphis's top four pass-catchers moved on, and the running game averaged fewer than four yards per carry for the second straight season. Second-year OC Tim Cramsey elevated the team from 30.1 to 35.3 points per game, but the Tigers went down 0.3 yards per play.

The running game may get a huge boost from Old Dominion transfer Blake Watson, who had over 2,100 yards in four seasons with the Monarchs. Memphis hasn't had a game-changer at that position since Darrell Henderson left in 2018, so that should be a point of emphasis this season to restore some balance.

The Tigers were also -16 in sack margin last season, so they'll need to protect Henigan better.

DEFENSE
While the Tigers' defense only mustered 21 sacks, they had 22 takeaways and held opponents to just 5.3 yards per play. That was the stoutest bunch against the run that Memphis has had in a while, but top tacklers Xavier Cullens and Quindell Johnson are both gone, taking 11 tackles for loss and 188 total tackles with them.

Like most teams, Memphis was active in the transfer portal, both at the FBS and JUCO ranks. Second-year defensive coordinator Matt Barnes will need to mature as a play-caller, as Memphis was in the lower half of the nation in third-down defense and just barely inside the top 100 in red zone TD%. The Tigers were also -3 in TO margin in AAC play after being +7 in nonconference play.

OUTLOOK
My projections have Memphis for 8.25 wins, as they have a pretty friendly schedule. They play a lot of teams moving up from Conference USA and don't face UTSA. They also get Tulane at home, and my home-field advantage numbers give Memphis a 3.5-point HFA, though that is largely thanks to what happened late in the Norvell years because I take a five-year sample. I actually think, despite my projections, I like the Under more than the Over, but the schedule is pretty soft in league play.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **44.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #60 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BETHUNE-COOKMAN	-47	1
9/9	at Arkansas St	-14	28
9/14	NAVY	-10.5	37
9/23	vs. Missouri	5.5	49.5
9/30	BOISE ST	-1	46
10/13	TULANE	1.5	49
10/21	at UAB	-7	35
10/28	at North Texas	-5.5	36.5
11/4	SOUTH FLORIDA	-16.5	31.5
11/11	at Charlotte	-17.5	25
11/18	SMU	-2.5	45
11/25	at Temple	-8.5	33.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.29**
#102 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3 / 0.1** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+600 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **12**
OFFENSE: 6 QB
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	33.3	23	28.2	69
Yards Per Point	12.5	15	13.6	85
Plays Per Game	75.8	18		
Time of Possession	30:27	53		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.6%	21	43.1%	107
Total Yards Per Game	416.6	39	383.3	62
Yards Per Play	5.5	56	5.3	49
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.5	55		
Rush Yards Per Game	133.8	87	123.9	26
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.6	94	3.5	23
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.5	34		
Completion %	64.1%	33	64.2%	107
Passing Yards Per Game	282.8	18	259.4	100
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	35	7.2	68
Turnovers	1.3	48	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Mississippi St (17)	23-49	L	L
9/10	at Navy (-4.5)	37-13	W	W
9/17	ARKANSAS ST (-14.5)	44-32	W	L
9/24	NORTH TEXAS (-13)	44-34	W	L
10/1	TEMPLE (-18.5)	24-3	W	W
10/7	HOUSTON (-1.5)	32-33	L	L
10/15	at East Carolina (5.5)	45-47	L	W
10/22	at Tulane (7)	28-38	L	L
11/5	UCF (3)	28-35	L	L
11/10	TULSA (-6.5)	26-10	W	W
11/19	N ALABAMA (-36.5)	59-0	W	W
11/26	at SMU (4.5)	31-34	L	W
12/27	vs. Utah St (-8)	38-10	W	W

NAVY
MIDSHIPMEN

HEAD COACH: BRIAN NEWBERRY (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GRANT CHESNUT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: P.J. VOLKER

BY ADAM BURKE

For the first time since 2001, Ken Niumatalolo will not be on the Navy sideline. After serving as head coach for 15 seasons from 2007-22 and the offensive coordinator and assistant head coach from 2002-07 under Paul Johnson, Niumatalolo was relieved of his duties at the end of last season. Defensive coordinator Brian Newberry takes over a program that has fallen on hard times with four or fewer wins in four of the last five seasons.

OFFENSE

Kennesaw State will join the FBS ranks next season, but the Owls' former offensive coordinator Grant Chesnut is already there in the same role with Navy. Chesnut was the OC when Newberry was the DC at KSU from 2015-18, so those two have a lot of familiarity working together. It will be a run-heavy offense once again, as Chesnut brings in a successful spread-option concept that regularly gave FCS defenses problems.

The first item of business will be to find a quarterback. Xavier Arline and Tai Lavatai are both holdovers, but neither was all that effective last season when the Middies averaged just 4.1 yards per carry. That was a step up from 3.9 yards per carry in 2021 and 3.7 yards per carry in 2020, but nowhere near good enough. It may come down to the best passer, as Chesnut's spread-option does have more passing concepts than the classic triple-option.

DEFENSE

Navy's defensive numbers aren't always the best barometer of success. Despite a rather ineffective running game, Navy was still second in the nation in time of possession, so the Midshipmen's defense wasn't out there a lot. They allowed 5.8 yards per play and got beaten badly through the air for 250 yards per game and a 63.2% completion rate, despite racking up 34 sacks.

Navy was 10th in red zone TD% against, which helped the numbers tremendously given that they were 87th in yards per play allowed. The defense will largely stay the same with Newberry as the head coach and PJ Volker promoted to defensive coordinator. Plus, Navy does return nine starters on defense, although top tackler and top sack man John Marshall is not one of them. He had over one-third of the team's sacks with 11.5 and led the team in pass breakups.

OUTLOOK

Navy's struggles shouldn't come as a surprise. AAC teams are way more prepared for the option than opponents were when Navy played as an Independent. It took some time for AAC teams to script against it, but they have, and the overall increase in opposing offensive production has hurt the Middies' defense. They return a lot of production from a bad team and also have to adapt to the modified option offense. My projection is for 5.54 wins, well below the 6.5 in the market. Navy does play four Conference USA defenses that haven't seen the option as much as AAC teams, so that could allow them to overachieve.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **37**

NATIONAL RANK: #87 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	vs. Notre Dame	22	58.5
9/9	WAGNER	-53	-13
9/14	at Memphis	10.5	44.5
9/30	SOUTH FLORIDA	-8.5	31.5
10/7	NORTH TEXAS	-3	36.5
10/14	at Charlotte	-10	25
10/21	AIR FORCE	2	41.5
11/4	at Temple	-1	33.5
11/11	UAB	-4.5	35
11/18	EAST CAROLINA	-3.5	36
11/25	at SMU	11	45
12/9	vs. Army	-1.5	36

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.70** #107 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.1** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

30-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **2000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **17**

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23.3	88	25.3	51
Yards Per Point	14.3	68	13.9	74
Plays Per Game	70	67		
Time of Possession	34:50	3		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.3%	68	37.6%	52
Total Yards Per Game	332.3	104	351.7	32
Yards Per Play	4.7	110	5.8	94
Rush Attempts Per Game	58.6	2		
Rush Yards Per Game	250.9	4	96	4
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	61	3.3	10
Pass Attempts Per Game	10.3	129		
Completion %	43.4%	130	63.3%	100
Passing Yards Per Game	81.4	130	255.7	98
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	37	8.9	128
Turnovers	1.1	30	1.5	46

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 7-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	DELAWARE (-13)	7-14	L	L
9/10	MEMPHIS (4.5)	13-37	L	L
9/24	at East Carolina (16.5)	23-20	W	W
10/1	at Air Force (14)	10-13	L	W
10/8	TULSA (4.5)	51-21	W	W
10/14	at SMU (12.5)	34-40	L	W
10/22	HOUSTON (3)	20-38	L	L
10/29	TEMPLE (-14.5)	27-20	W	L
11/5	at Cincinnati (18)	10-20	L	W
11/12	NOTRE DAME (16.5)	32-35	L	W
11/19	at UCF (15.5)	17-14	W	W
12/10	vs. Army (-2.5)	17-20	L	L

NORTH TEXAS
EAGLES

HEAD COACH: ERIC MORRIS (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JORDAN DAVIS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT CAPONI

BY ADAM BURKE

The North Texas Mean Green made three straight bowl game appearances under Seth Littrell, but the administration felt that things had gotten a bit stale and that it was time for a change. The Mean Green have experienced just two winning seasons since 2013, and the move from Conference USA to the AAC requires a bit more upside. Enter Eric Morris and a new era of football in Denton.

OFFENSE

Morris, who went 24-18 in 42 games at UIW from 2018-21, was the offensive coordinator at Washington State last season. With Austin Aune gone, ULM transfer Chandler Rogers will probably get the first crack at running the new offense. Morris is an Air Raid disciple, having played under Mike Leach at Texas Tech. While Wazzu had a good season overall last year, the Cougars only finished 86th in yards per play with 5.41.

North Texas really spread the ball around last season. Three different running backs had at least 100 carries, and all of them are back, while the receiver corps lost 11 touchdowns from Jyaire Shorter and three of the top four in yardage. RB Ayo Adeyi is only 5-7, but he had 7.2 yards per carry last season working in concert with Ikaika Ragsdale (5.3 YPC) and Oscar Adaway (4.9 YPC). In the era of the transfer portal, it surprises me that all three backs stayed, leading me to believe that maybe Morris isn't going to abandon the run, given that it fits his current personnel.

DEFENSE

In looking at the defense, I would hope that UNT is willing to run the rock. The Mean Green defense was objectively bad, allowing 6.1 yards per play and 31.7 points per game. While those numbers don't seem all that awful, UNLV racked up 576 yards of offense, and all but one Conference USA team (FIU) had well over 400 yards against them. Even without Cincinnati, Houston, and UCF, the AAC is a much deeper, more explosive offensive conference than C-USA.

Three of the top four tacklers are gone on defense, including KD Davis and Larry Nixon, who each eclipsed 100 stops. Top sack man Mazin Richards (7.5) and top defensive back Ridge Texada (15 pass breakups) are the anchors of Matt Caponi's unit, as he takes the DC role for the first time after coaching defensive backs at Iowa State. It sure looks like the UNT defense would welcome some ball control.

OUTLOOK

The Mean Green have an early bye week and a rough month of November with UTSA, SMU on a short week, Tulsa with a first-year head coach who could have a much-improved team by then, and UAB. If things come together quickly for Morris's bunch, the first part of the schedule features winnable games, but if not, this looks like a number that they'll chase most of the season. The win total is 6.5 with Under juice, and my projection is 6.32, with that weak schedule doing some heavy lifting.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 36.5

NATIONAL RANK: #89 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	CALIFORNIA	6.5	45.5
9/9	at Fla International	-13	21.5
9/16	at Louisiana Tech	-3.5	30
9/30	ABILENE CHRISTIAN	-19.5	19.5
10/7	at Navy	3	37
10/14	TEMPLE	-5.5	33.5
10/21	at Tulane	16	49
10/28	MEMPHIS	5.5	44.5
11/4	TX-SAN ANTONIO	6	44.5
11/10	at SMU	12	45
11/18	at Tulsa	-3	31.5
11/25	UAB	-3.5	35

SCHEDULE STRENGTH
36.61
#84 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS
2.2 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

25-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

3000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
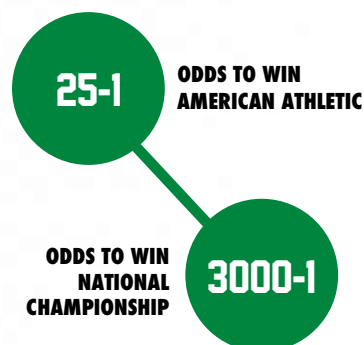
RETURNING STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 8
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.8	31	32.1	107
Yards Per Point	14.1	64	14.3	63
Plays Per Game	69.7	75		
Time of Possession	27:21	118		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.8%	33	46.0%	120
Total Yards Per Game	450.6	25	460.2	122
Yards Per Play	6.5	15	6	109
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.5	53		
Rush Yards Per Game	188.5	33	196.4	110
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	27	4.9	108
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.3	71		
Completion %	56.0%	105	63.3%	101
Passing Yards Per Game	262.2	36	263.8	103
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.4	14	7.5	83
Turnovers	1.6	92	1.1	110

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-7, ATS: 8-6, O/U: 9-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	at UTEP (-1)	31-13	W	W
9/3	SMU (9.5)	10-48	L	L
9/10	TEXAS SOUTHERN (-38.5)	59-27	W	L
9/17	at Unlv (2.5)	27-58	L	L
9/24	at Memphis (13)	34-44	L	W
10/1	FLA ATLANTIC (3)	45-28	W	W
10/15	LOUISIANA TECH (-6.5)	47-27	W	W
10/22	at Tx-San Antonio (10)	27-31	L	W
10/29	at W Kentucky (10)	40-13	W	W
11/5	FLA INTERNATIONAL (-21.5)	52-14	W	W
11/12	at UAB (6.5)	21-41	L	L
11/26	RICE (-14)	21-17	W	L
12/2	at Tx-San Antonio (8)	27-48	L	L
12/17	vs. Boise St (12.5)	32-35	L	W

BY ADAM BURKE

Hooter is no longer the only Owl mascot in the AAC. He has been joined by Sammy, who is the mascot of the Rice Owls. Temple actually has a live mascot named Stella, but Rice only has a student dressed up in costume. In any event, Rice moves from Conference USA to the AAC and does so with a very interesting name at the quarterback position.

OFFENSE

Former Stanford OC Mike Bloomgren hasn't had a lot to work with at QB in his five years with Rice, but he might this season with JT Daniels. Daniels has never really found a home in college football, bouncing from USC to Georgia to West Virginia and now Rice. The sixth-year senior came out of Mater Dei High School as a five-star recruit and has not lived up to the billing, but this is about as low-stress of an environment as possible.

Daniels has a career 45/25 TD/INT ratio with 6,947 passing yards. That would rank second all-time at Rice, so this has never really been a school with a lot of upside at the QB position. It has been a long, slow rebuild at Rice, as Bloomgren is just 16-39 overall, but the offense surpassed 25 points per game for the first time in his tenure, and 5.6 yards per play represented a team-best during this tenure. Leading rusher Cameron Montgomery is gone, but the top two receivers are back, and Bloomgren has options at RB.

DEFENSE

While the offense showed signs of life, the defense continued to play poorly. Bloomgren took over in 2018, and the defense has allowed at least six yards per play in four of those five seasons and all four non-COVID seasons. Defensive coordinator Brian Smith still has his job, but one would think that seat is getting a little warmer by the day. Rice just doesn't generate enough of a pass rush and finished -13 in turnover margin last season.

This has also been one of the worst special teams units in the nation the last two seasons, putting even more pressure on the defense to perform. The special teams coordinator position was filled by a new hire in Pete Alamar, who comes from Stanford. The step up in class to the AAC profiles to be a problem for Rice, as they've had major issues stopping the run the last two seasons.

OUTLOOK

Rice will only leave the state of Texas once in the first five weeks of the season, with the conference opener against USF. They draw former AAC member Houston in nonconference action, along with Texas and Texas Southern. The worst part about the schedule for Rice is that the home games are Houston, Texas Southern, East Carolina, UConn, Tulane, SMU, and FAU, so I only have them down for 4.34 wins and only favored in four games, with one by a half-point.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **33**

NATIONAL RANK: #102 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Texas	32.5	62.5
9/9	HOUSTON	8.5	43.5
9/16	TEXAS SOUTHERN	-26	10
9/23	at South Florida	0.5	31.5
9/30	EAST CAROLINA	1	36
10/7	CONNECTICUT	-4	32
10/19	at Tulsa	0.5	31.5
10/28	TULANE	13.5	49
11/4	SMU	10	45
11/11	at TX-San Antonio	14.5	44.5
11/18	at Charlotte	-6	25
11/25	FLA ATLANTIC	4	39.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **37.13** #75 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.4 / 0.1** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

70-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **3000-1**

RETURNING
STARTERS **14**   OFFENSE: 7   DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23	91	36.2	121
Yards Per Point	15.9	105	11.1	130
Plays Per Game	68.6	87		
Time of Possession	32:22	15		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.9%	60	43.0%	104
Total Yards Per Game	364.8	81	401.4	80
Yards Per Play	5.3	72	6.5	123
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.7	80		
Rush Yards Per Game	135.7	85	183	102
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	79	5.4	123
Pass Attempts Per Game	31	75		
Completion %	57.0%	97	62.7%	96
Passing Yards Per Game	229.2	65	218.4	48
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	58	8.1	111
Turnovers	2.7	131	1.1	108

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-8, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 9-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at USC (32.5)	14-66	L	L
9/10	MCNEESE ST (-7)	52-10	W	W
9/17	LA LAFAYETTE (12.5)	33-21	W	W
9/24	at Houston (17.5)	27-34	L	W
10/1	UAB (10.5)	28-24	W	W
10/15	at Fla Atlantic (4.5)	14-17	L	W
10/22	at Louisiana Tech (-2.5)	42-41	W	L
10/29	CHARLOTTE (-15)	23-56	L	L
11/3	UTEP (-3.5)	37-30	W	W
11/12	at W Kentucky (13.5)	10-45	L	L
11/19	TX-SAN ANTONIO (14)	7-41	L	L
11/26	at North Texas (14)	17-21	L	W
12/17	vs. Southern Miss (6.5)	24-38	L	L

SMU
MUSTANGS

HEAD COACH: RHETT LASHLEE (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CASEY WOODS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT SYMONS

BY ADAM BURKE

The SMU Mustangs actually beat two of the three teams that moved on to the Big 12 and nearly beat Cincinnati as well in a 29-27 loss to the Bearcats. What makes that nugget more interesting is that SMU was only 5-3 in conference play last season. The new-look AAC should help teams like the Mustangs, but that is no sure thing with some roster turnover and a second-year head coach with a lot of questions.

OFFENSE

Preston Stone takes over for Tanner Mordecai, as head coach Rhett Lashlee's offense will have a different look with a less proven QB. In two seasons with the program, Stone only has 55 pass attempts, while Mordecai left as the third-leading passer in program history. The QB position isn't the only one with turnover, as WR Rashee Rice left for the NFL after having 96 catches for 1,355 yards last season. No other receiver caught more than 37 balls or had more than 588 yards.

The Mustangs were 12th in red zone TD% last season, a number sure to go down with the inexperience and drop-off from Mordecai to Stone. The running game might get a boost from Jaylan Knighton, who was at Miami (FL) when Lashlee was the offensive coordinator from 2020-21. Second-year OC Casey Woods is also emerging as a play-caller, and Lashlee has plenty of OC experience, so the Mustangs could wind up with another solid offense.

DEFENSE

Any drop-off on offense is sure to hurt the defense. This unit allowed 33.8 points and six yards per play, including 4.9 yards per carry. The Mustangs were tied for the eighth-most plays of 20+ yards allowed, so they gave up gains in chunks and lost last season's top four tacklers. Of course, with a bad defense and an active offseason in the transfer portal, maybe that's a good thing.

SMU gained 467 yards per game in AAC play, yet they got outgained on a per-game basis. The Mustangs also gave up nearly 40 points per game but gave up 41 to UCF and 63 to Houston, who are both in the Big 12 now. Second-year DC Scott Symons got a huge effort against a depleted BYU team in the New Mexico Bowl, so maybe that was something to build on over the spring and summer.

OUTLOOK

The schedule is rather kind to SMU, as they'll avoid UTSA and Tulane, which makes them an interesting potential No. 2 seed in the conference. It will be all about how the transfers come together, especially the ones from Power Five schools looking for a chance. Most of the transfers came in on defense, which could help Stone and the offense from a field position standpoint. My projections have SMU for 8.06 wins, so I'm close to the market, which is heavily juiced on Over 8. That means a little value on the Under to me.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 45

NATIONAL RANK: #57 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	LOUISIANA TECH	-18.5	30
9/9	at Oklahoma	15	57.5
9/16	PRAIRIE VIEW	-35.5	12.5
9/23	at TCU	10	53
9/30	CHARLOTTE	-23.5	25
10/12	at East Carolina	-6.5	36
10/20	at Temple	-9	33.5
10/28	TULSA	-16.5	31.5
11/4	at Rice	-10	33
11/10	NORTH TEXAS	-12	36.5
11/18	at Memphis	2.5	44.5
11/25	NAVY	-11	37

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **35.43** #89 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.2 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+400 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16 OFFENSE: 8 DEFENSE: 8
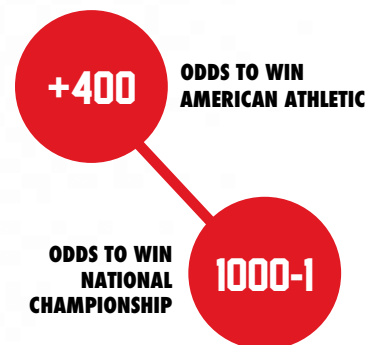
2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	36.6	10	35.3	120
Yards Per Point	13	22	12.7	114
Plays Per Game	79.9	4		
Time of Possession	28:09	110		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.1%	14	40.7%	83
Total Yards Per Game	474.5	10	447.2	114
Yards Per Play	5.9	34	6.1	115
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.5	45		
Rush Yards Per Game	151.8	63	212.8	123
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	77	5.3	121
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.8	13		
Completion %	65.2%	20	58.5%	38
Passing Yards Per Game	322.7	6	234.4	75
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	28	7.7	97
Turnovers	1.4	59	1.3	74

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 5-8, O/U: 5-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at North Texas (-9.5)	48-10	W	W
9/10	LAMAR (-48.5)	45-16	W	L
9/17	at Maryland (2.5)	27-34	L	L
9/24	TCU (2.5)	34-42	L	L
10/5	at UCF (3)	19-41	L	L
10/14	NAVY (-12.5)	40-34	W	L
10/22	CINCINNATI (3.5)	27-29	L	W
10/29	at Tulsa (-1.5)	45-34	W	W
11/5	HOUSTON (-3.5)	77-63	W	W
11/12	at South Florida (-17.5)	41-23	W	W
11/17	at Tulane (3.5)	24-59	L	L
11/26	MEMPHIS (-4.5)	34-31	W	L
12/17	vs. BYU (-4.5)	23-24	L	L

SOUTH FLORIDA
BULLS

HEAD COACH: ALEX GOLESH (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOEL GORDON / MATT MERRITT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TODD ORLANDO

BY ADAM BURKE

The worst defense in college football resided in Tampa last season. The South Florida Bulls were the only FBS team to give up over 40 points per game. Head coach Jeff Scott didn't last the season, as USF comes into 2023 with four wins in the last three seasons. This is a massive rebuilding job for first-time head coach Alex Golesh, who looks to play fast on offense and score enough to overcome the defense.

OFFENSE

So, that doesn't sound like a great plan, does it? The Bulls did score 28 points per game last season with 6.1 yards per play. Baylor transfer Gerry Bohanon wasn't a huge part of the equation, as he only started the first seven games due to injury. Bohanon's job is not safe this season with redshirt freshman Byrum Brown and a couple of transfers in the QB room, but whoever wins the job will run the Tennessee offense that Golesh ran under Josh Heupel, first at UCF and then in Knoxville.

Through it all last season, USF nearly had a 1,200-yard rusher in Brian Battie, but he's gone. Four of the top five receivers, including Battie, are also gone. This will be a fast-paced but inefficient offense. Golesh will call his own plays and probably go with the veteran Bohanon to start, especially for his running ability, but the keys to the car have to go to a younger player at some point.

DEFENSE

The idea of playing fast with this defense is terrifying. USF does return nine starters, but the Bulls gave up 41.2 points per game and 7.4 yards per play. They were the worst pass defense in the nation, and Louisiana Tech barely edged them out for the worst run defense. Longtime defensive coordinator Todd Orlando is tasked with converting this unit into something more than a bunch of traffic cones.

Considering that USF has had 30 sacks total over the last 33 games, a little more pressure on the QB would go a long way. Three of the AAC's stronger rosters are gone, but I'm not sure how much the Conference USA squads will help with a defense this bad. USF's defensive numbers could look really awful for a long time going up against Austin Reed and Western Kentucky in Week 1 followed by a home game against Alabama in Week 3.

OUTLOOK

Not all rebuilding jobs are created equal. Some are like making renovations to a home with good bones. This is like trying to reconstruct something blown apart by an EF-5 tornado. It feels like an eternity ago that Willie Taggart and Charlie Strong had back-to-back double-digit winning seasons in 2016 and '17. USF has eight wins in the last four seasons combined. If this offense shows any shred of competence at a fast tempo, sportsbooks won't be able to set totals high enough on this team. Incredibly, the win total here is 4, but my projections are for 3.41 wins, with USF favored only twice.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 31.5

NATIONAL RANK: #112 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #13 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at W Kentucky	12	40.5
9/9	FLORIDA AM	-15.5	17.5
9/16	ALABAMA	34.5	67.5
9/23	RICE	-0.5	33
9/30	at Navy	8.5	37
10/7	at UAB	6.5	35
10/14	FLA ATLANTIC	6	39.5
10/21	at Connecticut	3.5	32
11/4	at Memphis	16.5	44.5
11/11	TEMPLE	-0.5	33.5
11/17	at TX-San Antonio	16.5	44.5
11/25	CHARLOTTE	-8.5	25

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 38.05
#72 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.9 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

50-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

3000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 4 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.7	67	43.1	130
Yards Per Point	14.6	76	12.2	119
Plays Per Game	65.9	111		
Time of Possession	30:14	57		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.9%	51	50.0%	127
Total Yards Per Game	389.1	61	526.1	131
Yards Per Play	5.9	38	7.6	131
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.5	52		
Rush Yards Per Game	198.5	22	241.2	129
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	11	6.4	131
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.1	108		
Completion %	57.4%	93	73.1%	131
Passing Yards Per Game	190.5	107	284.9	126
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7	76	9.3	130
Turnovers	1.7	101	1.1	104

2022 RESULTS

SU: 1-11, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	BYU (11.5)	21-50	L	L
9/10	HOWARD (-39.5)	42-20	W	L
9/17	at Florida (23)	28-31	L	W
9/24	at Louisville (16)	3-41	L	L
10/1	EAST CAROLINA (9.5)	28-48	L	L
10/8	at Cincinnati (27)	24-28	L	W
10/15	TULANE (12)	31-45	L	L
10/29	at Houston (17.5)	27-42	L	W
11/5	at Temple (-3.5)	28-54	L	L
11/12	SMU (17.5)	23-41	L	L
11/18	at Tulsa (13.5)	42-48	L	W
11/26	UCF (19.5)	39-46	L	W

TEMPLE
OWLS

BY ADAM BURKE

The Temple Owls finished with the same 3-9 record that they had in 2021, but the team showed clear signs of improvement and fell on the wrong side of luck, losing all four one-score games that they played. With more points per game, more yards per play, fewer points allowed per game, and more than double the number of sacks, this just might be a team that you want to bet on early in the season.

OFFENSE

Stan Drayton was primarily brought in as head coach because of his ability to recruit the tri-state area in major markets like Philadelphia and the New York/New Jersey metro area after years of being a successful running backs coach. It turns out that he might not be a bad head coach either. Temple scored 5.6 more points per game with a way more robust passing attack. The Owls still couldn't run the ball worth a lick with 3.1 yards per carry, but that's something that Drayton should be able to fix over time.

EJ Warner (Kurt's son) started 10 games as a true freshman and finished with an 18/12 TD/INT ratio, but the Owls only allowed 10 sacks, so quick decision-making and in-season adjustments really helped the Temple offense. If Warner surpasses 3,000 yards again, he'll knock on the door of third all-time in passing yards in just two seasons. He has to replace top target Jose Barbon, who had 72 catches for 918 yards, but Colorado State transfer Dante Wright and 6-6 QB-turned-WR D'Wan Mathis stand to get a lot of targets.

DEFENSE

Not only did the Owls improve on offense, but they shaved over eight points per game off of their defensive numbers. The Owls still struggled a bit with the run and allowed 5.6 yards per play, but they went from 17 sacks to 38. Of course, the numbers are a tad misleading because of stout performances against Lafayette, Rutgers, and UMass, but the Owls brought in a bunch of Power Five transfers for this season.

New DC Everett Withers is familiar with many parts of the country from his time as a coordinator and a head coach, plus he could be a welcomed asset next to a second-year head coach in Drayton. Five of the top six tacklers are back, plus sack leader Layton Jordan. Despite the sacks and the QB hurries, Temple only had six interceptions and finished -11 in turnover margin. Positive regression in that department is another arrow pointing up.

OUTLOOK

Expectations are quite a bit higher here, as Temple's win total is five with heavy Over juice. The team only has six wins over the last two seasons and seven if you include a 1-6 showing during the COVID year. The talent level is much higher here, and this is a really solid coaching staff with a young QB to build around, and the conference is weaker overall with the departures. Temple also has a chance to get 60% of the way to at least a push with Akron, Rutgers, and Norfolk State in the first three weeks. My projection is for 5.03 wins, but this team has a lot of positive indicators.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **33.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #100 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	AKRON	-12.5	24
9/9	at Rutgers	7	38.5
9/16	NORFOLK ST	-41.5	-5.5
9/23	MIAMI FL	13.5	49.5
9/28	at Tulsa	0.5	31.5
10/7	TX-SAN ANTONIO	9	44.5
10/14	at North Texas	5.5	36.5
10/20	SMU	9	45
11/4	NAVY	1	37
11/11	at South Florida	0.5	31.5
11/18	at UAB	4.5	35
11/25	MEMPHIS	8.5	44.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.88** #106 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)
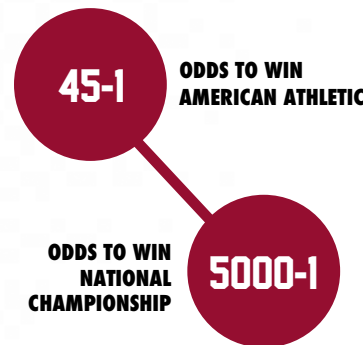
2023 ODDS

45-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **16**

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	21.2	101	30.6	93
Yards Per Point	16.5	111	13.6	84
Plays Per Game	67.6	97		
Time of Possession	26:53	124		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.5%	111	38.0%	58
Total Yards Per Game	349.5	94	417.2	95
Yards Per Play	5.2	84	5.7	89
Rush Attempts Per Game	25.3	130		
Rush Yards Per Game	76.6	129	208.1	122
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3	125	4.9	109
Pass Attempts Per Game	41.5	8		
Completion %	59.3%	78	63.8%	105
Passing Yards Per Game	272.9	25	209.1	32
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.6	96	7.4	81
Turnovers	1.8	106	1.1	104

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 8-4, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	at Duke (9.5)	0-30	L	L
9/10	LAFAYETTE (-14)	30-14	W	W
9/17	RUTGERS (18.5)	14-16	L	W
9/24	MASSACHUSETTS (-10)	28-0	W	W
10/1	at Memphis (18.5)	3-24	L	L
10/13	at UCF (23.5)	13-70	L	L
10/21	TULSA (13.5)	16-27	L	W
10/29	at Navy (14.5)	20-27	L	W
11/5	SOUTH FLORIDA (3.5)	54-28	W	W
11/12	at Houston (20)	36-43	L	W
11/19	CINCINNATI (17)	3-23	L	L
11/26	EAST CAROLINA (9.5)	46-49	L	W

TULANE
GREEN WAVE

HEAD COACH: WILLIE FRITZ (8TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SLADE NAGLE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHIEL WOOD

BY ADAM BURKE

It was a magical year in New Orleans for the Tulane Green Wave. Not only did they finish the season ranked in the Top 10 of the AP Poll, but the win over USC in the Cotton Bowl Classic was the biggest victory in program history. They were down 45-30 with 4:30 left to cap off the nation's most impressive turnaround from 2-10 to 12-2. With success comes expectations, and Tulane now has those in the new-look AAC.

OFFENSE

Star running back Tyjae Spears ran for 1,581 and 19 touchdowns last season, and he headlines a group of departures that also includes last season's top two wide receivers. "Top two receivers" is factually correct, but those two guys had 35 catches for 692 yards and 33 catches for 657 yards. Holdovers Jha'Quan Jackson and Lawrence Keys were each in the 30-reception club, just without the same amount of yardage.

The straw that stirred the historic drink is back in QB Michael Pratt, who amassed just shy of 3,500 total yards through the air and on the ground, along with 37 total touchdowns. Pratt was the team's second-leading rusher with 478 yards, so the Green Wave will need a feature back to emerge. Four offensive line starters return, plus the Green Wave plucked Cameron Wire from nearby LSU, who started 11 games last season.

DEFENSE

The offense did a lot of special things, but it was the defense that allowed Tulane to soar to new heights. Last year's group only allowed 22.2 points per game and just five yards per play. Eight starters are back, but Shiel Wood will serve as the new defensive coordinator after coming over from Troy.

Troy was eighth in yards per play allowed last season, so the Tulane defense may not drop off much, if at all. The Green Wave defense held AAC teams to under 400 yards per game and just 24 points per game. We'll see if the scheme changes make a difference, but the Green Wave allowed the 10th-fewest plays of 20+ yards, which is a huge attribute in the pass-happy AAC, and the conference got easier with the departures.

OUTLOOK

Tulane draws a solid South Alabama team and a quality Ole Miss squad in consecutive home games to open the season. The AAC schedule isn't bad, as the game against UTSA comes at home to end the regular season and may very well be a conference championship game preview. That could be an interesting swing game for season win total bets if one team is already locked into the title game. My numbers are a little lower on Tulane, with a projection of 8.64 wins, so I lean Under, but it's hard to bet against Willie Fritz.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **49**

NATIONAL RANK: #41 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	S ALABAMA	-8.5	44
9/9	OLE MISS	4	56
9/16	at Southern Miss	-11	36
9/23	NICHOLLS ST	-45	7.5
9/30	UAB	-17.5	35
10/13	at Memphis	-1.5	44.5
10/21	NORTH TEXAS	-16	36.5
10/28	at Rice	-13.5	33
11/4	at East Carolina	-10	36
11/11	TULSA	-20.5	31.5
11/18	at Fla Atlantic	-6.5	39.5
11/25	TX-SAN ANTONIO	-7.5	44.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **36.25**
#88 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.3 / 0.1**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+205 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **300-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **14**
OFFENSE: 6 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	34.8	19	23.9	39
Yards Per Point	12.4	11	15.9	26
Plays Per Game	68.5	91		
Time of Possession	29:13	80		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.1%	82	38.7%	62
Total Yards Per Game	432.5	34	379.8	54
Yards Per Play	6.3	20	5	31
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.5	35		
Rush Yards Per Game	208.3	15	159.5	71
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	12	4.1	55
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.8	111		
Completion %	62.1%	51	60.6%	67
Passing Yards Per Game	224.2	72	220.3	50
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.4	13	6.4	15
Turnovers	1.1	22	1.5	59

2022 RESULTS

SU: 12-2, ATS: 12-2, O/U: 8-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MASSACHUSETTS (-28.5)	42-10	W	W
9/10	ALCORN ST (-35.5)	52-0	W	W
9/17	at Kansas St (14)	17-10	W	W
9/24	SOUTHERN MISS (-11.5)	24-27	L	L
9/30	at Houston (5.5)	27-24	W	W
10/8	EAST CAROLINA (-3)	24-9	W	W
10/15	at South Florida (-12)	45-31	W	W
10/22	MEMPHIS (-7)	38-28	W	W
11/5	at Tulsa (-6.5)	27-13	W	W
11/12	UCF (-1)	31-38	L	L
11/17	SMU (-3.5)	59-24	W	W
11/25	at Cincinnati (-1)	27-24	W	W
12/3	UCF (-3.5)	45-28	W	W
1/2	vs. USC (2)	46-45	W	W

BY ADAM BURKE

Even though he resigned from his post at Indiana because of investigations into the mistreatment of players, new Tulsa head coach Kevin Wilson will get a second shot. His final year at Indiana in 2016 was marred by the whispers and the scandals, which came as a shock given the big six-year extension he signed the previous offseason. He more than landed on his feet as Ohio State's offensive coordinator about six weeks later and now gets a team to call his own.

OFFENSE

Wilson won't have the embarrassment of riches he had at Ohio State from a talent standpoint, but Tulsa has a longstanding history of finding good players, especially at quarterback and wide receiver. Braylon Braxton played extremely well last season during an injury-prone campaign for Davis Brin that saw inconsistent work for each guy. Braxton was in the transfer portal after Philip Montgomery's dismissal, but Wilson convinced him to stay, and he'll be the unquestioned starter with no experience behind him.

Braxton had a 10/2 TD/INT ratio, but he'll work with a rebuilt receiving corps. All-time program leader Keylon Stokes took 76 catches and 1,224 yards with him on the way out, and second-leading receiver JuanCarlos Santana had nearly 400 more yards than the next guy on the list. Along with the loss of top running back Deneric Prince, Wilson has his work cut out for him to find skill guys.

DEFENSE

As is often the case in the AAC, Tulsa's defensive numbers were bad. What's crazy is that this was actually a really good defense in 2020 and 2021 by conference standards, but it all fell apart last season with 33.1 points per game allowed and 5.9 yards per play. Tulsa was destroyed in the trenches and gave up 4.9 yards per carry and over 200 yards per game for the first time since 2018.

Six of the seven leading tacklers are gone, but this was a defense that only mustered 16 sacks. Tulsa was actually -29 in sack margin, as the offensive line and a hampered Brin struggled together, putting the defense in some tough spots. Tulsa was also a terrible group on special teams. Chris Polizzi was the defensive coordinator for UT-Martin the last three seasons and wasn't hired until May, so he got a late start and basically no time to recruit.

OUTLOOK

Tulsa rosters generally have something to fall back on, especially in terms of skill-position guys. They don't have that for this season. Braxton might be a star in the making, but with a bad offensive line and nobody to throw to, it looks like a true rebuilding year for the 61-year-old Wilson. However, the schedule is super friendly, as the Golden Hurricane avoid UTSA and have some winnable home games speckled throughout the slate. As lackluster as this roster is, my projections are for 5.09 wins, and their market win total is 4.5.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **31.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #111 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	AK-PINE BLUFF	-40.5	-6.5
9/9	at Washington	29	58
9/16	OKLAHOMA	24.5	57.5
9/23	at N Illinois	1.5	31.5
9/28	TEMPLE	-0.5	33.5
10/7	at Fla Atlantic	11	39.5
10/19	RICE	-0.5	33
10/28	at SMU	16.5	45
11/4	CHARLOTTE	-8.5	25
11/11	at Tulane	20.5	49
11/18	NORTH TEXAS	3	36.5
11/25	at East Carolina	7	36

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **36.73**
#82 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2 / 0.2**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

55-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

3000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
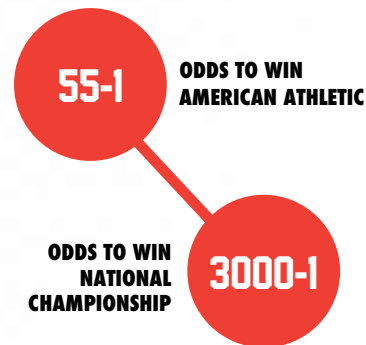
RETURNING STARTERS **9**

OFFENSE: 4

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28.5	55	34.5	117
Yards Per Point	13.8	48	12.3	116
Plays Per Game	73.5	36		
Time of Possession	28:14	104		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.2%	71	37.4%	51
Total Yards Per Game	392.8	55	424.7	103
Yards Per Play	5.3	70	5.9	106
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.7	73		
Rush Yards Per Game	136.4	83	207.5	121
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	82	5	113
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.9	48		
Completion %	56.0%	104	58.6%	40
Passing Yards Per Game	256.5	42	217.2	46
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	52	7.4	80
Turnovers	1.6	93	1.2	94

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 3-8, O/U: 7-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Wyoming (-7)	37-40	L	L
9/10	N ILLINOIS (-6.5)	38-35	W	L
9/17	JACKSONVILLE ST (-12.5)	54-17	W	W
9/24	at Ole Miss (21)	27-35	L	W
10/1	CINCINNATI (10)	21-31	L	T
10/8	at Navy (-4.5)	21-51	L	L
10/21	at Temple (-13.5)	27-16	W	L
10/29	SMU (1.5)	34-45	L	L
11/5	TULANE (6.5)	13-27	L	L
11/10	at Memphis (6.5)	10-26	L	L
11/18	SOUTH FLORIDA (-13.5)	48-42	W	L
11/26	at Houston (13)	37-30	W	W

UTSA
ROADRUNNERS

HEAD COACH: JEFF TRAYLOR (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JUSTIN BURKE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JESS LOEPP

BY ADAM BURKE

UTSA has gone into the last two bowl seasons as a Top 25 team, only to be knocked out of the rankings with losses to San Diego State in the Frisco Bowl and Troy in the Cure Bowl. With a nonconference schedule that features road trips to former AAC member Houston and Tennessee and one in conference against Tulane, a third straight double-digit season is a big ask, but the win total line is only 7.5.

OFFENSE
Fortunately for the Roadrunners, QB Frank Harris is back with 74 career touchdown passes in his three seasons as the starter. Top receiver Zakhari Franklin is gone, taking 15 of the team's 33 receiving touchdowns with him, but Joshua Cephus was a catch or two away from 1,000 yards, and De'Corian Clark returns from a season-ending injury suffered when he led the team in yards.

UTSA scored 36.8 points per game last season and racked up 6.37 yards per play, which ranked 26th nationally. They were one of 12 teams with over 4,000 passing yards, so having Harris and his cavalcade of wideouts back should mean big things for this offense, especially because UCF and Cincinnati had two of the better defenses in the AAC, and they have both moved on to the Big 12.

Harris is a mobile guy with 602 rushing yards on 129 carries, while RB Kevorian Barnes averaged 6.3 yards per pop while in a timeshare, which could be the case again with JUCO transfer Robert Henry and Vanderbilt transfer Rocko Griffin.

DEFENSE
The UTSA defense finished 65th in yards per play allowed, but they forced 22 takeaways in 14 games. The defense also returns eight starters, including leading tackler Jamal Ligon at the LB position, but three of the four top tacklers are gone. Defensive backs Clifford Chattman and Corey Mayfield combined for 26 pass breakups and eight interceptions. Defensive coordinator Jess Loepp's specialty is in the secondary, so he should be able to fashion a good unit, especially with some recruiting success as one of the premier Group of Five programs in the Lone Star State.

Top pass rusher Trey Moore is among the guys who are back and will be expected to shoulder more of the load. Moore had eight of the team's 25 sacks and led the way with nine tackles for loss. Along with the takeaways, UTSA succeeded in the red zone, holding the opposition to a 55.1% TD%, which ranked 37th in the nation.

OUTLOOK
UTSA seems well-equipped to move up to the AAC, especially with the teams that left. The Roadrunners have those aforementioned road games and also play FAU on the road, but they avoid Memphis and SMU, so this should be a top contender to play in the AAC Championship Game and go Over 7.5 wins. My projections have UTSA down for 8.95 wins, so I really like this team.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 44.5

NATIONAL RANK: #59 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Houston	0.5	43.5
9/9	TEXAS ST UNIV	-20.5	27.5
9/15	ARMY	-12	36
9/23	at Tennessee	14.5	56.5
10/7	at Temple	-9	33.5
10/14	UAB	-12.5	35
10/21	at Fla Atlantic	-2.5	39.5
10/28	EAST CAROLINA	-11.5	36
11/4	at North Texas	-6	36.5
11/11	RICE	-14.5	33
11/17	SOUTH FLORIDA	-16.5	31.5
11/25	at Tulane	7.5	49

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **37.63** #73 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.1 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)
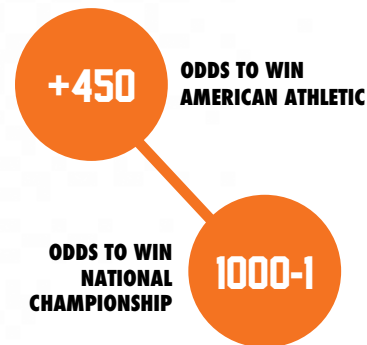
2023 ODDS

+450 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	RANK	DEFENSE STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	35.6	16	26.1	56
Yards Per Point	13.2	30	14.6	55
Plays Per Game	77.4	12		
Time of Possession	30:19	55		
3rd Down Conv. %	50.3%	8	37.2%	50
Total Yards Per Game	470.5	14	381.6	58
Yards Per Play	6.1	25	5.4	58
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.5	35		
Rush Yards Per Game	180.5	42	137.1	41
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	47	3.9	42
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.9	31		
Completion %	68.1%	7	58.2%	32
Passing Yards Per Game	289.9	14	244.5	89
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	31	7.2	65
Turnovers	1.3	45	1.5	50

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-3, ATS: 7-7, O/U: 8-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	HOUSTON (3.5)	35-37	L	W
9/10	at Army (-2)	41-38	W	W
9/17	at Texas (13.5)	20-41	L	L
9/24	TEXAS SOUTHERN (-42)	52-24	W	L
9/30	at Middle Tenn St (-4)	45-30	W	W
10/8	W KENTUCKY (-6)	31-28	W	L
10/14	at Fla International (-33)	30-10	W	L
10/22	NORTH TEXAS (-10)	31-27	W	L
11/5	at UAB (-2.5)	44-38	W	W
11/12	LOUISIANA TECH (-17)	51-7	W	W
11/19	at Rice (-14)	41-7	W	W
11/26	UTEP (-16.5)	34-31	W	L
12/2	NORTH TEXAS (-8)	48-27	W	W
12/16	vs. Troy (-3)	12-18	L	L

UAB
BLAZERS

HEAD COACH: TRENT DILFER (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ALEX MORTENSEN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SIONE TA'UFO'OU

BY ADAM BURKE

Between the transfer portal and the coaching carousel, it is not hard to find teams that look nothing like their previous iterations in college football. But UAB may take it to another level. After stumbling through a 7-6 season under Bryant Vincent when Bill Clark retired for medical reasons, former NFL QB and analyst Trent Dilfer has taken over the program. Despite pleas from the players to hire Vincent full-time, a new era of UAB football has arrived.

OFFENSE

Dilfer coming in is far from the only shake-up. There are only seven returning starters on this roster, and a Group of Five powerhouse may be no more. DeWayne McBride was second in the nation in rushing yards and first in yards per game while also racking up 19 touchdowns. He was taken in the seventh round of the NFL Draft. Starting QB Dylan Hopkins transferred out, leaving behind Jacob Zeno, who made two starts. Louisiana Tech transfer Landry Lyddy made four starts as a true freshman, and his hat is in the mix as well.

But this offense will take a huge step back without McBride. Top wide receiver Trea Shropshire also left after averaging 22.5 yards per reception. Dilfer makes the leap from Lipscomb Academy in Tennessee, where he won back-to-back high school state titles. ESPN NFL analyst Chris Mortenson's son, Alex, is a first-time offensive coordinator. It would appear that skepticism is quite high for this group.

DEFENSE

Meanwhile, the UAB defense under Sione Ta'ufo'ou is also in question. Ta'ufo'ou was also at Lipscomb Academy, and he only has four returning starters to work with. The top four tacklers and eight of the top 10 from last season are all gone, including top CB Starling Thomas, who had 15 pass breakups. Last year's group had its worst season stopping the run since 2017, so maybe the losses aren't as big of a deal, but this is still a rebuild with new systems, schemes, and coaching staff.

It may help that all-name-team member DT Fish McWilliams decided to stick around as the unquestioned leader of the defense. It may also help to see something different and innovative from Ta'ufo'ou, whose defense allowed 5.5 points per game last season, and he's also an Elite 11 QB Coach, so he should be able to pick up on some film tendencies of the AAC QBs.

OUTLOOK

It might be beneficial that UAB only has seven returning starters. This program had deep bonds to Clark and Vincent, especially Clark, who oversaw the return to FBS in 2017 and showed his loyalty with words and actions. Dilfer and his staff have more of a blank slate to work with here and players that have been blocked by entrenched veterans. On the other hand, the leap to college football is a big one, especially with limited playing experience on the roster. I only have UAB down for 4.12 wins with a step up in conference, class, and limited returning production.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 35

NATIONAL RANK: #94 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	N CAROLINA A&T	-24.5	13
9/9	at Ga Southern	1.5	33
9/16	LA LAFAYETTE	1.5	38.5
9/23	at Georgia	38	70.5
9/30	at Tulane	17.5	49
10/7	SOUTH FLORIDA	-6.5	31.5
10/14	at TX-San Antonio	12.5	44.5
10/21	MEMPHIS	7	44.5
11/4	FLA ATLANTIC	2	39.5
11/11	at Navy	4.5	37
11/18	TEMPLE	-4.5	33.5
11/25	at North Texas	3.5	36.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 39.36
#71 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.5 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

45-1 ODDS TO WIN AMERICAN ATHLETIC

2000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 7
OFFENSE: 3
DEFENSE: 4
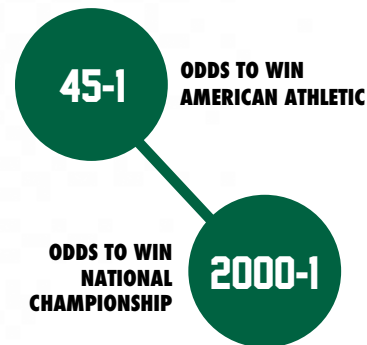
2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	27.7	61	25.1	49
Yards Per Point	15.7	98	14.8	51
Plays Per Game	67	100		
Time of Possession	32:04	19		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.2%	25	41.4%	89
Total Yards Per Game	434.6	31	371.8	47
Yards Per Play	6.5	14	5.4	59
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.9	22		
Rush Yards Per Game	235.7	8	172	87
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.8	2	4.8	103
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.5	121		
Completion %	59.9%	74	57.9%	29
Passing Yards Per Game	198.9	101	199.8	24
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	27	6.4	20
Turnovers	1.4	59	1.2	100

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 4-9, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	ALABAMA A&M (-40.5)	59-0	W	W
9/10	at Liberty (-6)	14-21	L	L
9/17	GA SOUTHERN (-12)	35-21	W	W
10/1	at Rice (-10.5)	24-28	L	L
10/8	MIDDLE TENN ST (-10)	41-14	W	W
10/15	CHARLOTTE (-22.5)	34-20	W	L
10/21	at W Kentucky (1)	17-20	L	L
10/29	at Fla Atlantic (-5)	17-24	L	L
11/5	TX-SAN ANTONIO (2.5)	38-44	L	L
11/12	NORTH TEXAS (-6.5)	41-21	W	W
11/19	at LSU (15)	10-41	L	L
11/26	at Louisiana Tech (-18)	37-27	W	L
12/16	vs. Miami Ohio (-11)	24-20	W	L

ACC BETTING PREVIEW

Even in what was a "down year" for the Clemson Tigers, Dabo Swinney's team still won the ACC Championship. The Tigers absolutely blew out the North Carolina Tar Heels in the ACC Championship Game, earning a 39-10 victory at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina. Quarterback Cade Klubnik was the MVP for Clemson, as he threw for 279 yards with a touchdown and added 30 yards and a score on the ground.

Klubnik is once again set to be under center for the Tigers, who are the betting favorites to repeat as conference champions. Not only does Swinney's team return some of its most talented players, but the program also brings back 15 starters. That's a lot of production that will be back on the field for Clemson. However, Florida State is knocking on the door as a contender in this conference. Mike Norvell's group has a legitimate Heisman Trophy contender in quarterback Jordan Travis, and he's surrounded by elite talent all over the field.

North Carolina isn't a team that can be ignored in this conference either. The Tar Heels bring back quarterback Drake Maye, who is considered a real threat to be the first overall pick in the 2024 NFL Draft. The Louisville Cardinals are another team that will be hoping to make a splash this year. The Cardinals have the fourth-best odds to win the ACC this season, which says a lot about how much respect head coach Jeff Brohm has in the college football world. Brohm did a great job during his time with the Purdue Boilermakers, and he is hoping to bring even more success to Louisville, his alma mater.

Of course, if you're talking about the ACC, you are almost contractually obligated to mention the Miami Hurricanes. Many people pegged the Hurricanes as a sleeper pick to do some damage last year, but head coach Mario Cristobal's first year in Coral Gables didn't quite live up to the hype. Miami now has the sixth-best odds of winning the conference, and 2023 will be a prove-it year for the Hurricanes.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
FLORIDA ST	59.5	44.44 (49)	9.4	2.6	6.4	1.6	10
CLEMSON	59.5	45.01 (41)	9.4	2.6	6.2	1.8	10
NORTH CAROLINA	53.5	43.6 (61)	8.5	3.5	5.4	2.6	8.5
LOUISVILLE	50	40.74 (69)	8.1	3.9	5.4	2.6	8
MIAMI FL	49.5	42.43 (65)	7.3	4.7	4.2	3.8	7.5
NC STATE	48.5	42.98 (62)	7.0	5.0	4.1	3.9	6.5
PITTSBURGH	47.5	44.84 (45)	6.4	5.6	4.1	3.9	7
SYRACUSE	47	41.23 (67)	7.1	4.9	3.8	4.2	6.5
WAKE FOREST	45.5	44.27 (52)	6.3	5.7	3.5	4.5	6
DUKE	47.5	44.84 (43)	6.2	5.8	3.3	4.7	6.5
VIRGINIA	39	45.16 (39)	4.3	7.7	2.7	5.3	3.5
BOSTON COLLEGE	38.5	41.22 (68)	5.2	6.8	2.4	5.6	5.5
VIRGINIA TECH	39.5	44.26 (53)	4.6	7.4	2.4	5.6	5.5
GEORGIA TECH	39	45.33 (37)	4.0	8.0	2.1	5.9	4.5

BOSTON COLLEGE
EAGLES

HEAD COACH: JEFF HAFLEY (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: STEVE SHIMKO
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: AAZAAR ABDUL-RAHIM / SEAN DUGGAN

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Boston College Eagles were a miserable 3-9 in 2022, and that puts them at 15-20 since Jeff Hafley became the head coach of the program. People were excited about the hiring when the former Ohio State Buckeyes defensive coordinator arrived in Chestnut Hill, but Hafley is likely entering a make-or-break year. Boston College will be without quarterback Phil Jurkovec, who transferred to play for Pittsburgh, and wide receiver Zay Flowers, who the Baltimore Ravens drafted with the 22nd pick in the NFL Draft. Despite that, there is some returning talent in place, so Hafley's overhauled coaching staff at least has something to work with. But it's hard to find any reasons to believe that this will be anything but a bottom dweller in the ACC this season.

OFFENSE

It'll be interesting to see how the Eagles do without two key members of last year's offense, but the team does return nine offensive starters. One of them is running back Pat Garwo III, who rushed for 1,045 yards with seven touchdowns two years ago. Garwo couldn't replicate those numbers in 2022, but a lot of that had to do with him splitting touches with other capable backs. However, it's still pretty hard to get excited about this offense.

Quarterback Emmett Morehead did show some flashes in the snaps he got in 2022, but this team is really going to miss Flowers' game-breaking ability at the receiver position. And this was already an offense that averaged the fewest yards per game of any team in the ACC last season. It's hard to imagine things getting prettier with a first-round NFL talent now out the door. The best-case scenario for Boston College is that Morehead continues to show promise as a passer. He has a lot of potential.

DEFENSE

Considering Hafley has a defensive background, it's unacceptable that his Eagles gave up 30.3 points per game last season. The good news is that Boston College's defensive front is expected to be a lot better this season. That would be a great start for the Eagles, as they couldn't stop the run in 2022.

Boston College also has a nice collection of talent in the secondary, as well as the linebacking corps. That said, it wouldn't be surprising if this were more of a middle-of-the-pack unit in 2023. The presence of Donovan Ezeiruaku is big for this group. Last season, Ezeiruaku had 8.5 sacks for this defense. If the Eagles improve on this side of the ball, he'll have a lot to do with it.

OUTLOOK

When looking at the schedule, it's hard to pinpoint five games the Eagles should win. With that said, the Under 5.5 is likely the best way to go when betting on Boston College before the season. However, it wouldn't be too surprising if the Eagles had a winning against-the-spread record this year. This group should be more competitive than it was in 2022, and it wouldn't be shocking if the team returns to bowl eligibility in 2024.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 38.5

NATIONAL RANK: #83 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #14 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	N ILLINOIS	-9.5	31.5
9/9	HOLY CROSS	-12.5	28
9/16	FLORIDA ST	18.5	59.5
9/23	at Louisville	15	50
9/30	VIRGINIA	-2	39
10/7	at Army	0	36
10/21	at Georgia Tech	2	39
10/28	CONNECTICUT	-9	32
11/3	at Syracuse	11	47
11/11	VIRGINIA TECH	-1.5	39.5
11/16	at Pittsburgh	11.5	47.5
11/24	MIAMI FL	9	49.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 41.22
#68 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 9
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	15.9	123	31.5	105
Yards Per Point	18.9	123	12	123
Plays Per Game	70.5	63		
Time of Possession	28:44	92		
3rd Down Conv. %	31.9%	115	36.7%	49
Total Yards Per Game	300.9	119	379.2	53
Yards Per Play	4.3	124	5.5	70
Rush Attempts Per Game	29.9	121		
Rush Yards Per Game	60.5	131	175.1	93
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2	131	4.5	94
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.6	27		
Completion %	58.8%	82	60.5%	66
Passing Yards Per Game	240.5	53	204.1	27
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.6	97	7.4	77
Turnovers	2.4	128	1	113

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 7-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	RUTGERS (-9)	21-22	L	L
9/10	at Virginia Tech (3)	10-27	L	L
9/17	MAINE (-31.5)	38-17	W	L
9/24	at Florida St (18.5)	14-44	L	L
10/1	LOUISVILLE (13.5)	34-33	W	W
10/8	CLEMSON (20.5)	3-31	L	L
10/22	at Wake Forest (20)	15-43	L	L
10/29	at Connecticut (-8)	3-13	L	L
11/4	DUKE (11.5)	31-38	L	W
11/12	at Nc State (18)	21-20	W	W
11/19	at Notre Dame (20)	0-44	L	L
11/26	SYRACUSE (10.5)	23-32	L	W

CLEMSON
TIGERS

HEAD COACH: DABO SWINNEY (16TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GARRETT RILEY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MICKEY CONN / WES GOODWIN

BY ZACHARY COHEN

It says a lot about what Dabo Swinney has built that people view the last two seasons as failures. This team went 10-3 in 2021 and followed it up by going 11-3 last season. But this Clemson Tigers program now plays for nothing but national championships, so that is the measuring stick. And this team made it to six straight College Football Playoffs before missing out the last two years.

This season, the Tigers are listed at +1800 to win a national title. Only six teams have better odds than that, so it's not outrageous to think that quarterback Cade Klubnik will have this team competing for the sport's ultimate prize. But Clemson has a very tough regular season schedule this year, so that will really complicate things. It also doesn't help that Florida State looks ready to start crashing the party in the conference.

OFFENSE

Klubnik is viewed as a future Heisman Trophy winner, as he's a former top recruit that can dazzle with both his arm and his legs. Klubnik has already had some chances to show the world what he can do, and his performance against North Carolina in last year's ACC Championship Game said a lot about his ability. Klubnik was the MVP of that game and will be expected to turn in an entire season's worth of that type of production in 2023.

One thing working in his favor is that Clemson brought in former TCU offensive coordinator Garrett Riley to change up this offense. Things have been stale with the Tigers on this side of the ball, but Riley should get the best out of everybody. Look for Will Shipley to do his part in helping Klubnik move the ball down the field this year. Shipley rushed for 1,182 yards and 15 touchdowns last season, and he should do more damage in a more creative offense. Overall, this should be a very explosive group this season, assuming the offensive line holds up its end of the bargain.

DEFENSE

Clemson had the third-best scoring defense in the conference last year, and eight starters return on that side of the ball. Of course, a program like this one always loses talent to the NFL, and it's no different heading into this year. But the Tigers return a tremendous linebacking duo in Jeremiah Trotter Jr.. and Barrett Carter, and the team has talent along the defensive line. Clemson is also expecting a big season out of cornerback Nate Wiggins, which should help the team improve on last year's mediocre passing defense. If Wiggins helps stabilize that part of the defense, the Tigers will be tough to score on.

OUTLOOK

There's really no denying that this Clemson team is crazy talented, but the Tigers have some tough games on the schedule. This team can easily get tripped up in any of its road games against conference opponents, and home games against Florida State and Notre Dame are also very challenging. Clemson also happens to end the regular season with a road game against South Carolina. With so many games that can feasibly go either way, it's hard not to love the Under on the Tigers' win total.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 10

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **59.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #11 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/4	at Duke	-10.5	47.5
9/9	CHARLESTON SOUT	-53	9
9/16	FLA ATLANTIC	-22.5	39.5
9/23	FLORIDA ST	-2.5	59.5
9/30	at Syracuse	-10.5	47
10/7	WAKE FOREST	-16.5	45.5
10/21	at Miami FL	-8.5	49.5
10/28	at NC State	-8.5	48.5
11/4	NOTRE DAME	-3	58.5
11/11	GEORGIA TECH	-23.5	39
11/18	NORTH CAROLINA	-8.5	53.5
11/25	at South Carolina	-7	50.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.01**
#41 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.5 / 0.4**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+145 ODDS TO WIN ACC

18-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **15**

OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	33.1	24	21.5	20
Yards Per Point	12.5	14	15.3	39
Plays Per Game	76.4	16		
Time of Possession	31:39	29		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.5%	10	33.2%	19
Total Yards Per Game	412.9	41	330.5	19
Yards Per Play	5.4	61	4.8	17
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.9	28		
Rush Yards Per Game	180.8	41	100.9	7
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	50	3.2	7
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.4	40		
Completion %	61.5%	58	59.8%	53
Passing Yards Per Game	232.2	61	229.6	65
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	86	6.7	32
Turnovers	1.5	81	1.5	59

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-3, ATS: 7-7, O/U: 7-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/5	vs. Georgia Tech (-24.5)	41-10	W	W
9/10	FURMAN (-45)	35-12	W	L
9/17	LOUISIANA TECH (-33.5)	48-20	W	L
9/24	at Wake Forest (-8)	51-45	W	L
10/1	NC STATE (-6.5)	30-20	W	W
10/8	at Boston College (-20.5)	31-3	W	W
10/15	at Florida St (-4.5)	34-28	W	W
10/22	SYRACUSE (-14)	27-21	W	L
11/5	at Notre Dame (-3.5)	14-35	L	L
11/12	LOUISVILLE (-7)	31-16	W	W
11/19	MIAMI FL (-19)	40-10	W	W
11/26	SOUTH CAROLINA (-14)	30-31	L	L
12/3	vs. North Carolina (-7)	39-10	W	W
12/30	vs. Tennessee (-3.5)	14-31	L	L

DUKE
BLUE DEVILS

HEAD COACH: MIKE ELKO (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN JOHNS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TYLER SANTUCCI

BY ZACHARY COHEN

It's hard to do much better than head coach Mike Elko did in his first year with the Duke Blue Devils. The former Texas A&M defensive coordinator inherited a Duke team that went 3-9 in 2021, but the Blue Devils went 9-4 last season. They also won their Military Bowl matchup with the UCF Knights, earning a 30-13 victory.

Now, Duke enters this season in the unfamiliar position of having legitimate expectations. People are excited to see where Elko and quarterback Riley Leonard can take this program, but the team's win total is only 6.5 and you can get plus-money odds if you want to take the Over. So, if the Blue Devils are going to find a way to match last year's nine-win season, the oddsmakers clearly believe that they'll have their work cut out for them.

OFFENSE
Duke went from averaging 22.8 points per game in 2021 to 32.8 points per game in 2022. For the Blue Devils to have another winning season, this unit will need to be efficient in 2023. And with Leonard back under center, there's no reason to believe Duke will slow down soon. Leonard was ridiculous in his first year as the Blue Devils starting quarterback, throwing for 2,967 yards with 20 touchdowns and only six picks while also adding 699 yards and 13 scores on the ground. He's a star in the making and is part of a Duke offense that brings back a large majority of last year's starters. This offense can be scary in 2023, even with teams having more film on the Blue Devils.

DEFENSE
Duke's defense gave up only 22.8 points per game last season, going from miserable in 2021 to rock-solid in 2022. However, things weren't perfect on that side of the ball. The Blue Devils had trouble defending the pass against better aerial attacks, as they gave up 262.2 passing yards per game. That was the second-most in the ACC, and it's a number that will need to improve in Elko's second year at the helm. But Duke does bring back eight starters from last year's unit, and more time in the system should yield better results at every level of the defense. Elko got this head coaching job because of his defensive chops, so I'd expect him to figure out how to address most issues. The Blue Devils have a lot of promising talent in the secondary, so it wouldn't be surprising if things flipped in a big way in the back of the defense.

OUTLOOK
Duke plays a much tougher schedule in 2023 than in 2022, but the Blue Devils shouldn't be sitting at plus-money odds to win seven games. This team has five or six surefire wins on the schedule, and Duke should find a way to come away with another couple of victories in some of the toss-ups. Look for the Blue Devils to build on last season's success, and this is a program to look out for over the next couple of years.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **47.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #46 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/4	CLEMSON	10.5	59.5
9/9	LAFAYETTE	-45	5
9/16	NORTHWESTERN	-11.5	38.5
9/23	at Connecticut	-12.5	32
9/30	NOTRE DAME	9.5	58.5
10/14	NC STATE	-1.5	48.5
10/21	at Florida St	14.5	59.5
10/28	at Louisville	6	50
11/2	WAKE FOREST	-4	45.5
11/11	at North Carolina	9	53.5
11/18	at Virginia	-5	39
11/25	PITTSBURGH	-1.5	47.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.84** #43 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.1 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

40-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **18**

OFFENSE: 10 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.5	34	22.3	25
Yards Per Point	13.2	29	17.1	14
Plays Per Game	70.3	64		
Time of Possession	33:31	8		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.5%	43	41.8%	94
Total Yards Per Game	415.6	40	380.3	56
Yards Per Play	5.9	36	5.3	50
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.3	60		
Rush Yards Per Game	181.3	39	112.9	17
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	35	3.5	20
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.8	66		
Completion %	62.7%	45	61.0%	73
Passing Yards Per Game	234.3	59	267.3	107
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	60	7.2	69
Turnovers	0.8	6	2	8

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 9-4, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	TEMPLE (-9.5)	30-0	W	W
9/10	at Northwestern (10)	31-23	W	W
9/17	N CAROLINA A&T (-31)	49-20	W	L
9/24	at Kansas (7)	27-35	L	L
10/1	VIRGINIA (-2)	38-17	W	W
10/8	at Georgia Tech (-3.5)	20-23	L	L
10/15	NORTH CAROLINA (7)	35-38	L	W
10/22	at Miami Fl (10)	45-21	W	W
11/4	at Boston College (-11.5)	38-31	W	L
11/12	VIRGINIA TECH (-10)	24-7	W	W
11/19	at Pittsburgh (6.5)	26-28	L	W
11/26	WAKE FOREST (3)	34-31	W	W
12/28	vs. UCF (-3)	30-13	W	W

FLORIDA STATE
SEMINOLES

HEAD COACH: MIKE NORVELL (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ALEX ATKINS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ADAM FULLER

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Patience can be hard to have at a big program, but the Florida State Seminoles had it with Mike Norvell. People called for the former Memphis coach's head after his Florida State career began with an 8-13 record over the first two seasons. But Florida State bounced back and went 10-3 last year, and the Seminoles earned a 35-32 win over Oklahoma in the Cheez-It Bowl.

Norvell's team now enters this season as one of the favorites to win the ACC, and only six teams have better odds than the Seminoles to win the College Football Playoff. With Heisman candidate Jordan Travis running the show for a team that brings back 17 starters from last season, it truly feels like the sky's the limit in Tallahassee. How will this group deal with expectations?

OFFENSE

Good luck slowing down this Florida State offense in 2023. Travis is arguably the most explosive quarterback in the country, as he is dynamic with his legs and now has the ability to carve defenses up with his arm. On top of that, running back Trey Benson looks like a guy that will be the highest-draft player at his position when he eventually heads to the NFL. Benson rushed for 990 yards with nine touchdowns last season, but he should easily eclipse the 1,000-yard mark in 2023.

The Seminoles probably have a future NFL standout at wideout, too. Johnny Wilson stands at a ridiculous 6-7 and hauled in 43 passes for 897 yards and five scores last year. Wilson also had eight catches for 202 yards in the Cheez-It Bowl. He'll likely be Travis' favorite target in the passing game this year. Overall, if Florida State's offensive line does its job, the Seminoles should have one of the nation's top-scoring offenses. And this is supposed to be their best group up front in years.

DEFENSE

Florida State had the second-best scoring defense in the conference last year, giving up 19.7 points per game. This unit should be great again in 2023. The Seminoles are absolutely loaded along the defensive line, and the secondary is expected to be a big strength this season. Fentrell Cypress II was a stud for the Virginia Cavaliers last year and was a big transfer market addition for Norvell's defense. If there's anywhere Florida State might be lacking, it's in the middle of the defense. This group of linebackers could be better, but it should be good enough for them to accomplish their goals.

OUTLOOK

Florida State could very well win the ACC, and I actually like the Seminoles to do so at +150 odds. As far as the win total goes, meetings with LSU, Clemson and Florida are all capable of tripping Norvell's group up, and there's always a possibility that the Seminoles will lose a random game on the road in conference play. But I tend to think that 11 wins is a bit more likely than nine this year, and Florida State is one of my picks to make the College Football Playoff this season.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 10

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 59.5

NATIONAL RANK: #10 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/3	vs. LSU	3	62.5
9/9	SOUTHERN MISS	-25.5	36
9/16	at Boston College	-18.5	38.5
9/23	at Clemson	2.5	59.5
10/7	VIRGINIA TECH	-22.5	39.5
10/14	SYRACUSE	-15	47
10/21	DUKE	-14.5	47.5
10/28	at Wake Forest	-10.5	45.5
11/4	at Pittsburgh	-9.5	47.5
11/11	MIAMI FL	-12	49.5
11/18	N ALABAMA	-54.5	7.5
11/25	at Florida	-4.5	52

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.44
#49 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.1 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+150 ODDS TO WIN ACC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 18-1

RETURNING STARTERS 17
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	35.2	18	21.8	23
Yards Per Point	13.4	35	15.4	36
Plays Per Game	70.6	60		
Time of Possession	30:43	47		
3rd Down Conv. %	51.3%	5	36.5%	45
Total Yards Per Game	471.4	13	334.9	22
Yards Per Play	6.7	11	4.7	14
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.8	51		
Rush Yards Per Game	198.1	23	161.7	75
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.2	15	4	50
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.1	74		
Completion %	63.0%	40	57.4%	26
Passing Yards Per Game	273.3	23	173.3	6
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.8	9	6.2	13
Turnovers	1.1	26	1.3	74

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-3, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	DUQUESNE (-42)	47-7	W	L
9/4	vs. LSU (4)	24-23	W	W
9/16	at Louisville (-2.5)	35-31	W	W
9/24	BOSTON COLLEGE (-18.5)	44-14	W	W
10/1	WAKE FOREST (-6)	21-31	L	L
10/8	at Nc State (3.5)	17-19	L	W
10/15	CLEMSON (4.5)	28-34	L	L
10/29	GEORGIA TECH (-24)	41-16	W	W
11/5	at Miami Fl (-6.5)	45-3	W	W
11/12	at Syracuse (-7)	38-3	W	W
11/19	LA LAFAYETTE (-25)	49-17	W	W
11/25	FLORIDA (-9.5)	45-38	W	L
12/29	vs. Oklahoma (-10)	35-32	W	L

GEORGIA TECH
YELLOW JACKETS

HEAD COACH: GEOFF COLLINS (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BUSTER FAULKNER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN SHERRER / ANDREW THACKER

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets haven't had any success since ditching Paul Johnson and the triple-option offense. The Yellow Jackets were miserable under Geoff Collins, going 10-28 in his three-and-a-half years with the program. Now, it's Brent Key's turn to lead this team. Key was the interim coach for Georgia Tech last season, and the Yellow Jackets actually went 4-4 under his watch. That was also a very young football team, so there is definitely some hope that real strides will be made in 2023. The question is whether the talent is there on either side of the ball. This should be a better team in 2023, but will that be reflected in the record? The ACC should be better than it was a year ago, and the Yellow Jackets have nonconference games against Ole Miss and Georgia.

OFFENSE
The loss of quarterback Jeff Sims might seem big, but the team should be in good hands with either Zach Pyron or Texas A&M transfer Haynes King taking over under center. Both players are very talented and the winner of this battle should be just fine. The Yellow Jackets also added some real talent at wide receiver, with Dominick Blaylock coming from Georgia and Christian Leary transferring from the Alabama. Both players were four-star recruits that landed in the SEC for a reason, so they should be able to stand out in the ACC.

The only issue is that the Georgia Tech offensive line was something of a disaster last season. The team will need that to change if it wants to improve on last year's embarrassing 17.2 points per game. Luckily for them, Key's specialty is the offensive line. He'll work to get that group in shape, and a year of experience might do that naturally.

DEFENSE
The Yellow Jackets gave up a miserable 189.2 rushing yards per game last season, which was the most in the ACC by far. In fact, only 21 teams in all of college football gave up more yards per game on the ground. Unless Georgia Tech finds a way to clean things up along the defensive line, this will be a miserable defensive unit. The Yellow Jackets actually do have some talent in the secondary, but that's not going to matter much if nobody is getting in the backfield. Even the best corners in the country can't stick with wideouts forever.

OUTLOOK
When you look at Georgia Tech's schedule, only two games stand out as ones the team should absolutely win. Outside of meetings with South Carolina State and Bowling Green, are you confident in saying the Yellow Jackets should be favored in any of them? This looks like a football team destined to win three games, and four seems like an outside possibility. But winning five really seems out of the question, which is why you have to lay some juice to take the Under.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 39

NATIONAL RANK: #77 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #13 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	vs. Louisville	10.5	50
9/9	S CAROLINA ST	-38.5	2
9/16	at Ole Miss	20	56
9/23	at Wake Forest	10	45.5
9/30	BOWLING GREEN	-13	28
10/7	at Miami FL	13	49.5
10/21	BOSTON COLLEGE	-2	38.5
10/28	NORTH CAROLINA	13	53.5
11/4	at Virginia	3.5	39
11/11	at Clemson	23.5	59.5
11/18	SYRACUSE	6	47
11/25	GEORGIA	30.5	70.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.33** #37 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.6 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

200-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **500-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	15.5	124	29.5	83
Yards Per Point	20.8	127	13.7	83
Plays Per Game	72.3	45		
Time of Possession	29:15	78		
3rd Down Conv. %	29.6%	120	38.2%	59
Total Yards Per Game	323.2	110	402.9	83
Yards Per Play	4.5	118	5.4	63
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.6	74		
Rush Yards Per Game	122.6	93	196.3	109
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	102	4.7	99
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.1	51		
Completion %	58.0%	90	57.1%	22
Passing Yards Per Game	200.5	100	206.6	31
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.1	117	6.9	41
Turnovers	1.1	30	1.8	17

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 4-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/5	vs. Clemson (24.5)	10-41	L	L
9/10	W CAROLINA (-24.5)	35-17	W	L
9/17	OLE MISS (17)	0-42	L	L
9/24	at UCF (21)	10-27	L	W
10/1	at Pittsburgh (21.5)	26-21	W	W
10/8	DUKE (3.5)	23-20	W	W
10/20	VIRGINIA (-3.5)	9-16	L	L
10/29	at Florida St (24)	16-41	L	L
11/5	at Virginia Tech (4)	28-27	W	W
11/12	MIAMI FL (-2.5)	14-35	L	L
11/19	at North Carolina (21)	21-17	W	W
11/26	at Georgia (36.5)	14-37	L	W

LOUISVILLE
CARDINALS

HEAD COACH: JEFF BROHM (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN BROHM
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RON ENGLISH

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Jeff Brohm has been linked to the Louisville Cardinals head coaching job for years, but he finally took the plunge in the offseason. Brohm turned in back-to-back winning seasons on his way out with Purdue, which is impressive considering it's a hard program to win with. Brohm brings an offensive pedigree, but he's also a culture setter and should be able to do good work with the resources he'll have at his disposal.

Given he played for the program and held numerous assistant coaching jobs with the Cardinals from 2003 to 2008, Brohm knows exactly what it takes to get the job done in the area. He was a successful quarterback himself, so players will likely want to learn from him. This hire should pay big dividends in the future but don't sleep on Louisville right now. The Cardinals have a good number of returning starters, and Brohm brought in Jack Plummer at quarterback. He spent some time at Purdue before transferring to start for Cal.

OFFENSE
Plummer isn't the most talented quarterback in the world, but he knows Brohm's system inside and out. Plummer likely won't have many games in which he racks up numbers, but he can be trusted to take care of the football and get the ball in the hands of Louisville's playmakers. There should be quite a few of those for the Cardinals, as Brohm completely overhauled the wide receiver room.

Louisville also has some real talent in the backfield, as Jawhar Jordan returns after rushing for 815 yards and four scores last year — along with Maurice Turner, who was also impressive last season. The Cardinals also brought Isaac Guerendo over from Wisconsin. Guerendo had difficulty carving out a consistent role with the Badgers, but he was effective when he got touches. If this offensive line is even average, Louisville's offense should look much better in 2023.

DEFENSE
There's quite a bit to like about Louisville's defense heading into this season. The Cardinals only gave up 20.2 points per game last year, and there's a good amount of talent returning from that unit. Louisville figures to be very good in the secondary this year, as cornerback Jarvis Brownlee is back after a big 2022 season. The Cardinals also brought in some noteworthy Power Five transfers to help him. If Louisville gets more than expected out of the pass rush, this Cardinals defense could be one of the best groups in the ACC.

OUTLOOK
This is a play that is very likely going to push, as the number seems pretty spot on when you look at the schedule. But Louisville is a lot more likely to win seven games than nine this year, which is why the Under is the right call. For what it's worth, Cardinals fans would very likely sign up for eight wins in Year 1 of Brohm. Scott Satterfield won eight games in his first year with Louisville, but he didn't reach that mark again after that.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 50

NATIONAL RANK: #35 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	vs. Georgia Tech	-10	39
9/7	MURRAY ST	-49.5	4
9/16	vs. Indiana	-10	39
9/23	BOSTON COLLEGE	-15	38.5
9/29	at NC State	1.5	48.5
10/7	NOTRE DAME	5.5	58.5
10/14	at Pittsburgh	0	47.5
10/28	DUKE	-6	47.5
11/4	VIRGINIA TECH	-14	39.5
11/9	VIRGINIA	-14.5	39
11/18	at Miami FL	1.5	49.5
11/25	KENTUCKY	-1	52.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 40.74
#69 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

10-1 — ODDS TO WIN ACC

200-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.9	65	19.2	10
Yards Per Point	15.1	84	17.3	13
Plays Per Game	69.8	72		
Time of Possession	29:39	72		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.9%	75	33.1%	18
Total Yards Per Game	407.1	43	332.2	20
Yards Per Play	5.8	42	4.8	22
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.6	34		
Rush Yards Per Game	201.5	17	135.1	38
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	23	3.6	28
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.3	99		
Completion %	59.2%	79	58.3%	35
Passing Yards Per Game	205.5	94	197.1	21
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	67	7.1	56
Turnovers	1.8	105	2.2	3

2022 RESULTS
SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 4-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Syracuse (-5)	7-31	L	L
9/9	at UCF (5.5)	20-14	W	W
9/16	FLORIDA ST (2.5)	31-35	L	L
9/24	SOUTH FLORIDA (-16)	41-3	W	W
10/1	at Boston College (-13.5)	33-34	L	L
10/8	at Virginia (1.5)	34-17	W	W
10/22	PITTSBURGH (-1.5)	24-10	W	W
10/29	WAKE FOREST (3)	48-21	W	W
11/5	JAMES MADISON (-6.5)	34-10	W	W
11/12	at Clemson (7)	16-31	L	L
11/19	NC STATE (-4)	25-10	W	W
11/26	at Kentucky (3.5)	13-26	L	L
12/17	vs. Cincinnati (-2.5)	24-7	W	W

HEAD COACH: MARIO CRISTOBAL (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHANNON DAWSON
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LANCE GUIDRY

BY ZACHARY COHEN

After four years in which Mario Cristobal guided Oregon to winning records, the Miami Hurricanes went 5-7 in his first year in Coral Gables. Expectations were rather high heading into the season, but Miami never quite looked like a good football team. Cristobal does, however, return a lot of talent, and he has done a very good job of recruiting elite players to the program.

On top of that, Cristobal brought in Shannon Dawson as the team's offensive coordinator. Dawson was the mind behind an unstoppable Houston Air Raid attack, so there is hope he can get Tyler Van Dyke back on track. If he does that, there isn't much preventing Miami from having a winning record and playing in a solid bowl game.

OFFENSE

Miami hopes that Dawson can work some of his magic on Van Dyke. Dawson helped Clayton Tune get drafted in the fifth round of the 2023 NFL Draft, and Van Dyke is a more talented player than the former Houston quarterback. Perhaps Van Dyke will finally live up to his potential in what should be a much better passing attack in 2023.

It should be a big help that the Hurricanes really beefed up the offensive line in the offseason, bringing in two high-level starters to make the group up front better. Van Dyke should have plenty of time to throw this year, and the running game will be able to take a lot of pressure off him. Somebody will just need to emerge as a consistent receiving option.

DEFENSE

The Hurricanes weren't a great defensive team last year, but the talent is in place for that to change in a hurry. There are legitimate five-star players scattered throughout this defense, and it'll just be up to Lance Guidry to figure it all out. Guidry was with Marshall last season, and he put together the nation's seventh-ranked scoring defense in 2022. With that in mind, you would think he could do a lot of damage with all the athletes he'll have at his disposal in Florida. It also doesn't hurt that All-American Kamren Kinchens is back. The Hurricanes have some question marks in the secondary, but having a guy like Kinchens in the back of the defense definitely helps.

OUTLOOK

One can argue that it's not a great thing Miami returns most of its starters after a 5-7 year, but experience goes a long way in college football. And that's especially true when it's a team full of players that were highly regarded as recruits. The Hurricanes should be better on both sides of the ball, and nothing about this schedule looks daunting. Miami even gets Clemson at home, which gives the Hurricanes an outside shot at pulling an upset. But even if that game goes as expected, there should be eight wins out there for Cristobal and Co. This Over looks like one of the better bets in the conference, and you can get it at plus-money odds.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **49.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #40 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	MIAMI OHIO	-17.5	34.5
9/9	TEXAS A&M	4.5	56
9/14	BETHUNE-COOKMAN	-51	1
9/23	at Temple	-13.5	33.5
10/7	GEORGIA TECH	-13	39
10/14	at North Carolina	6.5	53.5
10/21	CLEMSON	8.5	59.5
10/28	VIRGINIA	-12.5	39
11/4	at NC State	1.5	48.5
11/11	at Florida St	12	59.5
11/18	LOUISVILLE	-1.5	50
11/24	at Boston College	-9	38.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **42.43** #65 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

20-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

150-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **19**

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 10

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.4	114	28	66
Yards Per Point	18	119	13.5	89
Plays Per Game	72.5	44		
Time of Possession	30:38	50		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.7%	77	42.6%	100
Total Yards Per Game	348.5	97	378.3	52
Yards Per Play	4.8	104	5.6	80
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.9	90		
Rush Yards Per Game	112.5	106	147.2	53
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	110	4.1	57
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.3	35		
Completion %	60.6%	67	61.6%	82
Passing Yards Per Game	236	58	231.1	68
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	91	8.3	117
Turnovers	2.2	124	1.7	26

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 2-10, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	BETHUNE-COOKMAN (-49.5)	70-13	W	W
9/10	SOUTHERN MISS (-27.5)	30-7	W	L
9/17	at Texas A&M (6.5)	9-17	L	L
9/24	MIDDLE TENN ST (-25.5)	31-45	L	L
10/8	NORTH CAROLINA (-4)	24-27	L	L
10/15	at Virginia Tech (-9.5)	20-14	W	L
10/22	DUKE (-10)	21-45	L	L
10/29	at Virginia (-3)	14-12	W	L
11/5	FLORIDA ST (6.5)	3-45	L	L
11/12	at Georgia Tech (2.5)	35-14	W	W
11/19	at Clemson (19)	10-40	L	L
11/26	PITTSBURGH (4.5)	16-42	L	L

NORTH CAROLINA
TAR HEELS

HEAD COACH: MACK BROWN (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHIP LINDSEY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GENE CHIZIK / CHARLTON WARREN

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Mack Brown's return to the North Carolina Tar Heels has felt like a failure at times, but he did win nine games in 2022. That was the most the Tar Heels have won since Brown came back, and they'll now look to improve upon that in 2023. Fortunately for North Carolina, Drake Maye is back and hoping to show NFL scouts that he's a better player than USC quarterback Caleb Williams.

Maye might miss Phil Longo this season, as the offensive coordinator left to take a job with Wisconsin. But Maye is a good fit in any offense, and he happens to have a good group of pass catchers to throw to. This season will just come down to how the Tar Heels' defense plays. North Carolina was atrocious on that side of the ball last year, and it's hard to win games when you can't get stops.

OFFENSE
Not only is Maye back after throwing for 4,321 yards with 38 touchdowns and only seven picks last year, but the Tar Heels were able to add transfer Devontez Walker from Kent State. Walker caught 58 passes for 921 yards and 11 touchdowns last year, so he should be a huge asset for North Carolina.

The question is whether the offensive line will give Maye the time to work his magic. Maye is a legitimate candidate to be the top pick in the 2024 NFL Draft, but that'll mean nothing if he isn't kept upright. The Tar Heels will also need a little more out of their running game, which hasn't been the same since Michael Carter and Javonte Williams went to the NFL.

DEFENSE
For as good as North Carolina's offense has looked in recent years, the defense has been equally as horrible. Last year, the Tar Heels gave up a miserable 31.0 points per game, giving them the worst scoring defense in the ACC. This group simply has to be better in 2023, as it puts far too much pressure on Maye and the offense to score whenever they're on the field.

The Tar Heels did add some reinforcements in the secondary, as Brown was able to land some key transfer portal additions. If those moves work out for North Carolina, this team will have a chance of achieving its goals next season. The Tar Heels can also use more consistency up front.

OUTLOOK
It wouldn't be all that surprising if the Tar Heels' defense doesn't come around. And if that's the case, North Carolina will have a very hard time reaching nine wins in 2023. Something else to consider is that a slow start for the Tar Heels could lead to Maye sitting some games at the end of the season. He needs to protect his body for the NFL Draft, much like former North Carolina quarterback Sam Howell had to do a few years ago.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **53.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #21 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	vs. South Carolina	-3.5	50.5
9/9	APPALACHIAN ST	-18.5	37.5
9/16	MINNESOTA	-5.5	50.5
9/23	at Pittsburgh	-4	47.5
10/7	SYRACUSE	-9.5	47
10/14	MIAMI FL	-6.5	49.5
10/21	VIRGINIA	-17.5	39
10/28	at Georgia Tech	-13	39
11/4	CAMPBELL	-38	19
11/11	DUKE	-9	47.5
11/18	at Clemson	8.5	59.5
11/25	at NC State	-2	48.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **43.60**
#61 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.9 / 0.1**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

10-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

100-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **17**
OFFENSE: 9 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	32.8	27	31.3	104
Yards Per Point	13.8	49	14.2	68
Plays Per Game	76.6	15		
Time of Possession	29:50	66		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.0%	16	42.1%	95
Total Yards Per Game	452.6	22	444.3	111
Yards Per Play	5.9	37	6.1	114
Rush Attempts Per Game	36	67		
Rush Yards Per Game	142.2	73	173.6	92
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	76	4.6	97
Pass Attempts Per Game	37.5	23		
Completion %	64.6%	28	65.2%	118
Passing Yards Per Game	310.5	10	270.7	111
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	19	7.9	105
Turnovers	1.1	22	0.9	119

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-5, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 6-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	FLORIDA AM (-46)	56-24	W	L
9/3	at Appalachian St (3)	63-61	W	W
9/10	at Georgia St (-7)	35-28	W	T
9/24	NOTRE DAME (-2.5)	32-45	L	L
10/1	VIRGINIA TECH (-9.5)	41-10	W	W
10/8	at Miami Fl (4)	27-24	W	W
10/15	at Duke (-7)	38-35	W	L
10/29	PITTSBURGH (-3)	42-24	W	W
11/5	at Virginia (-7.5)	31-28	W	L
11/12	at Wake Forest (4.5)	36-34	W	W
11/19	GEORGIA TECH (-21)	17-21	L	L
11/25	NC State (-6.5)	27-30	L	L
12/3	vs. Clemson (7)	10-39	L	L
12/28	vs. Oregon (13.5)	27-28	L	W

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The North Carolina State Wolfpack had crazy hype heading into the 2022 season. NC State had quarterback Devin Leary coming back after having thrown for 3,433 yards with 35 touchdowns and only five picks in 2021. And the Wolfpack had plenty of returning starters elsewhere, and the team's defense was a force to be reckoned with.

The problem is that none of that really amounted to anything. NC State went just 8-5 on the season, finishing the year with a loss to Maryland in the Duke's Mayo Bowl. This year, the Wolfpack face much more uncertainty heading into the season. But maybe they're better off in that position than having true expectations. But one thing NC State can probably count on is another winning season. The Wolfpack have finished above .500 in eight of the last nine years.

OFFENSE

Leary decided to transfer to Kentucky after the season, but Dave Doeren was able to act quickly and bring Brennan Armstrong over from Virginia. Armstrong was miserable last season, but he did throw for 4,449 yards with 31 touchdowns and 10 picks two years ago. He also has a good set of wheels, so it's not outrageous to think that this is an upgrade at the position.

Unfortunately, the Wolfpack are relatively weak everywhere else. NC State rolls with a committee in the backfield, with none of the options being special. And the Wolfpack don't have a great offensive line or wide receiver group — although the latter could change with the team adding 6-5 wideout Bradley Rozner from the Rice Owls. That means there will be a lot of pressure on Armstrong to improvise and make plays. Fortunately, he's a guy that is comfortable being uncomfortable. Armstrong is also reuniting with offensive coordinator Robert Anae, who brought the best out of him at Virginia.

DEFENSE

NC State had one of the best defenses in the country last year, and things shouldn't be very different in 2023. The Wolfpack brought back quite a bit of talent from last year's team. Payton Wilson is one of the best linebackers in the nation, and he'll make plays all over the field — alongside a talented group of linebackers.

NC State also has some playmakers along the defensive line, while Shyheim Battle and Aydan White make up a great duo in the secondary. Look for the Wolfpack to be very tough to score on this year. The only question is whether the offense will do its part in helping these guys stay off the field.

OUTLOOK

There aren't many bets that look better than the NC State Over, at least on paper. The Wolfpack have a tough schedule this season, but their defense should win them a lot of games this year. The offense is definitely a little concerning, but the group won't be counted on to score too many points. And this number is just too low for a team that has proven it can win games.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 48.5

NATIONAL RANK: #43 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	at Connecticut	-14	32
9/9	NOTRE DAME	7.5	58.5
9/16	VMI	-45.5	6
9/22	at Virginia	-6.5	39
9/29	LOUISVILLE	-1.5	50
10/7	MARSHALL	-10.5	40.5
10/14	at Duke	1.5	47.5
10/28	CLEMSON	8.5	59.5
11/4	MIAMI FL	-1.5	49.5
11/11	at Wake Forest	0.5	45.5
11/18	at Virginia Tech	-6.5	39.5
11/25	NORTH CAROLINA	2	53.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 42.98
#62 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

22-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 11
OFFENSE: 6
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	21.8	99	20.5	15
Yards Per Point	14.9	81	16.7	19
Plays Per Game	71.4	55		
Time of Possession	30:59	38		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.2%	96	35.0%	29
Total Yards Per Game	323.3	109	341.7	26
Yards Per Play	4.5	116	5	32
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.3	95		
Rush Yards Per Game	105.2	115	106.1	13
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	120	3.4	15
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.9	32		
Completion %	57.1%	95	58.5%	37
Passing Yards Per Game	218.2	83	235.6	80
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.1	116	6.8	40
Turnovers	1.3	42	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 4-9, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at East Carolina (-12.5)	21-20	W	L
9/10	CHARLESTON SOUT (-45.5)	55-3	W	W
9/17	TEXAS TECH (-10.5)	27-14	W	W
9/24	CONNECTICUT (-38)	41-10	W	L
10/1	at Clemson (6.5)	20-30	L	L
10/8	FLORIDA ST (-3.5)	19-17	W	L
10/15	at Syracuse (3)	9-24	L	L
10/27	VIRGINIA TECH (-13.5)	22-21	W	L
11/5	WAKE FOREST (3)	30-21	W	W
11/12	BOSTON COLLEGE (-18)	20-21	L	L
11/19	at Louisville (4)	10-25	L	L
11/25	at North Carolina (6.5)	30-27	W	W
12/30	vs. Maryland (-2.5)	12-16	L	L

BY ZACHARY COHEN

It has gone a bit under the radar amongst college football fans and bettors, but the Pittsburgh Panthers have won 20 games over the last two seasons. Pat Narduzzi has done a very good job since taking over this program, turning in winning seasons in six of his eight years. This year, the Panthers' win total sits at seven.

It'll be interesting to see which way it goes, as the team brings back fewer starters than most of its competition in the ACC. Pittsburgh did, however, bring in transfer quarterback Phil Jurkovec, who put a lot of good things on film in his time with Boston College. The hope for the Panthers is that Jurkovec can stabilize the position after a year in which the running game really carried the offense.

OFFENSE

After Kenny Pickett lit it up for the Panthers in 2021, Pittsburgh brought in USC transfer Kedon Slovis to lead the offense in 2022. Slovis never found his footing for the Panthers, leaving a lot on the shoulders of running back Israel Abanikanda. Luckily for Pittsburgh, the running back delivered with 1,431 yards and 20 touchdowns. The running game, combined with a solid defense, allowed Pittsburgh to win nine games.

But the Panthers need to get back to being an efficient passing game. Jurkovec should really help with that, as he has all the tools to be a very good quarterback. This offense should bring out the best in him, too. Pittsburgh does a good job of blending the running and passing games, and the team has a good offensive line. The Panthers also have a decent stable of receivers, so everything is in place if Jurkovec holds up his end of the bargain.

DEFENSE

There's not a lot preventing this Pittsburgh defense from being one of the better units in the ACC this year. The Panthers have a very good group of defensive backs, with Marquis Williams and MJ Devonshire making for one heck of a pass-defending duo. And Narduzzi is a coach that always gets the most out of his pass rushers. Last season, Pitt gave up just 23.4 points per game, which was the seventh-lowest number in the ACC. Not many players are back from that group, but the Panthers are going to be confident in the guys that are being called on for bigger roles.

OUTLOOK

The Panthers don't have the easiest schedule in the world, which is why it's hard to say this is going to be an eight-win football team in 2023. But this is a team that has a good amount of talent on both sides of the ball, and the Panthers tend to do a good job of getting prepared on a weekly basis. With that in mind, it's a little more likely that Pittsburgh will win eight games than six. For those reasons, the Panthers are worth going Over for their season win total, even if it's rather likely they'll push.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 47.5

NATIONAL RANK: #45 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	WOFFORD	-37.5	12.5
9/9	CINCINNATI	-6	43.5
9/16	at West Virginia	0	45
9/23	NORTH CAROLINA	4	53.5
9/30	at Virginia Tech	-6	39.5
10/14	LOUISVILLE	0	50
10/21	at Wake Forest	1	45.5
10/28	at Notre Dame	13.5	58.5
11/4	FLORIDA ST	9.5	59.5
11/11	vs. Syracuse	-1	47
11/16	BOSTON COLLEGE	-11.5	38.5
11/25	at Duke	1.5	47.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.84** #45 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

20-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 11

OFFENSE: 6
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	30.2	43	24.3	42
Yards Per Point	13.3	33	13.7	81
Plays Per Game	71.7	52		
Time of Possession	33:04	11		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.0%	84	31.7%	12
Total Yards Per Game	401.2	48	333.4	21
Yards Per Play	5.6	50	4.8	24
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.8	31		
Rush Yards Per Game	175.5	47	102	8
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	55	3.4	14
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.3	80		
Completion %	55.8%	107	55.7%	13
Passing Yards Per Game	225.7	69	231.4	70
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	55	6.6	29
Turnovers	1.7	97	1.8	16

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	WEST VIRGINIA (-7.5)	38-31	W	L
9/10	TENNESSEE (6)	27-34	L	L
9/17	at W Michigan (-10.5)	34-13	W	W
9/24	RHODE ISLAND (-33)	45-24	W	L
10/1	GEORGIA TECH (-21.5)	21-26	L	L
10/8	VIRGINIA TECH (-14.5)	45-29	W	W
10/22	at Louisville (1.5)	10-24	L	L
10/29	at North Carolina (3)	24-42	L	L
11/5	SYRACUSE (-3.5)	19-9	W	W
11/12	at Virginia (-5.5)	37-7	W	W
11/19	DUKE (-6.5)	28-26	W	L
11/26	at Miami Fl (-4.5)	42-16	W	W
12/30	vs. UCLA (8.5)	37-35	W	W

SYRACUSE
ORANGE

BY ZACHARY COHEN

After three losing seasons in a row, the Syracuse Orange went 7-6 in 2023. The year ended with a 28-20 loss to Minnesota in the Pinstripe Bowl, but it was still a step in the right direction for Dino Babers. With five losing seasons in his seven years as the head coach of the Orange, Babers badly needed to go over .500 and show the Syracuse decision-makers that he could right the ship. However, the former Bowling Green head coach is likely still on the hot seat. The good news for Babers is that last year's team found success despite being very young. Now, the Orange bring back 14 starters from last year's squad, and one would think that a lot of those players will make some year-over-year improvements.

OFFENSE

This offense will go as far as the offensive line takes it. The Orange really struggled to block last year, but Syracuse is hoping that the transfer portal addition of Richmond Spiders tackle Joe More will help stabilize the unit. Quarterback Garrett Shrader did some great things in 2022, especially with his legs. However, this passing game needs to take a step forward in 2023, and Shrader is going to have a hard time being accurate if he is constantly worried about being hit. The Orange will also need LeQuint Allen to be ready to rock with star running back Sean Tucker now playing on Sundays. Allen was impressive whenever he got chances last year, so this running game shouldn't suffer too much from Tucker's absence.

DEFENSE

This defense has the potential to be great in 2023. Syracuse gave up only 22.7 points per game in 2022, and the team brings back eight starters on that side of the ball. The Orange have real talent at every level of the defense, and they also have the legendary Rocky Long to tie it all together as the team's defensive coordinator. The 73-year-old, who was a very successful head coach throughout his career, is one of the brightest defensive minds in college football. He will love having all these pieces to work with, and he has the potential to help Syracuse steal some wins with a few complete defensive performances.

OUTLOOK

Syracuse was 6-0 to start last season, but the team went 1-6 the rest of the way. I don't think the Orange were as good as their first half of the year or as bad as their second half. I think the truth was somewhere in between, but I expect this team to improve in 2023. And I see seven wins as a very attainable goal with their schedule. They'll just need to win a game or two on the road against teams at their level. At plus-money odds, that's a shot worth taking.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 47

NATIONAL RANK: #47 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	COLGATE	-42.5	7.5
9/9	W MICHIGAN	-24	26
9/16	at Purdue	1.5	46
9/23	ARMY	-14	36
9/30	CLEMSON	10.5	59.5
10/7	at North Carolina	9.5	53.5
10/14	at Florida St	15	59.5
10/26	at Virginia Tech	-5	39.5
11/3	BOSTON COLLEGE	-11	38.5
11/11	vs. Pittsburgh	1	47.5
11/18	at Georgia Tech	-6	39
11/25	WAKE FOREST	-4	45.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **41.23** #67 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 14

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	25.1	77	25	47
Yards Per Point	14.1	60	14.1	69
Plays Per Game	66.7	106		
Time of Possession	28:27	100		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.7%	99	41.5%	90
Total Yards Per Game	353.8	91	353.3	34
Yards Per Play	5.3	74	4.9	26
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.8	91		
Rush Yards Per Game	122.7	92	154.7	68
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.6	91	3.9	46
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.3	92		
Completion %	59.7%	76	67.4%	126
Passing Yards Per Game	231.1	63	198.7	23
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	39	6.6	27
Turnovers	1.1	26	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	LOUISVILLE (5)	31-7	W	W
9/10	at Connecticut (-23.5)	48-14	W	W
9/17	PURDUE (-1.5)	32-29	W	W
9/23	VIRGINIA (-10)	22-20	W	L
10/1	WAGNER (-54)	59-0	W	W
10/15	NC STATE (-3)	24-9	W	W
10/22	at Clemson (14)	21-27	L	W
10/29	NOTRE DAME (1)	24-41	L	L
11/5	at Pittsburgh (3.5)	9-19	L	L
11/12	FLORIDA ST (7)	3-38	L	L
11/19	at Wake Forest (9.5)	35-45	L	L
11/26	at Boston College (-10.5)	32-23	W	L
12/29	vs. Minnesota (10.5)	20-28	L	W

VIRGINIA
CAVALIERS

HEAD COACH: TONY ELLIOTT (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DES KITCHINGS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOHN RUDZINSKI

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Virginia Cavaliers' first season under former Clemson offensive coordinator Tony Elliott was a bit of a disaster. The Cavaliers went 3-7 on the season and 1-6 in ACC play. Virginia's offense was absolutely putrid, even with Elliott having an offensive background. If that doesn't change significantly in Year 2, it wouldn't be surprising if Elliott enters 2024 with one of the hottest seats in college football. The bright side is that Virginia's defense was tougher than expected in 2022, and nine starters from that unit are back in 2023. So, if the Cavaliers can find a way to get things fixed offensively, it isn't out of the question that Virginia is a much better football team this season.

OFFENSE
There isn't much to be optimistic about when it comes to this offense. The team is very inexperienced along the offensive line, and there isn't much talent at the wide receiver position. Perhaps that could have been overlooked if the Cavaliers had an elite quarterback, but that couldn't be further from reality.

It seems like Tony Muskett will be the starting quarterback for Virginia. Muskett threw for only 1,997 yards with 17 touchdowns and eight picks last year, and he did that with Monmouth. That's an FCS program, and the competition in the ACC might be a little overwhelming for him.

DEFENSE
After giving up 31.8 points per game in 2021, the Cavaliers only allowed 24.0 points per game in 2022. That was a massive improvement that really prevented Virginia from being even worse than it already was. Now, the Cavaliers will be hoping for a bigger jump on that side of the ball, as the team brought back most of last year's starters.

However, cornerback Fentrell Cypress II decided to transfer to Florida State. He was one of the better defensive backs in the conference last year, so it won't be easy to replace him. But if Virginia can adequately do so, this will be a very good defense in 2023. The Cavaliers have some good players along the defensive line, and they are pretty loaded at safety.

OUTLOOK
This might not be a play you'll want to track every Saturday, as this Cavaliers team likely won't be very fun to watch. But I think Virginia has a very realistic shot at winning four games this year. The team has a very manageable schedule, so all it will take is a few decent performances at home.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 39

NATIONAL RANK: #76 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Tennessee	20.5	56.5
9/9	JAMES MADISON	-2	39.5
9/15	at Maryland	13.5	50
9/22	NC STATE	6.5	48.5
9/30	at Boston College	2	38.5
10/7	WILLIAM & MARY	-10	31.5
10/21	at North Carolina	17.5	53.5
10/28	at Miami FL	12.5	49.5
11/4	GEORGIA TECH	-3.5	39
11/9	at Louisville	14.5	50
11/18	DUKE	5	47.5
11/25	VIRGINIA TECH	-3	39.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.16** #39 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

300-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **1000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	15.1	126	24.8	46
Yards Per Point	21.8	129	14.6	57
Plays Per Game	69.6	76		
Time of Possession	26:59	123		
3rd Down Conv. %	30.2%	119	36.7%	47
Total Yards Per Game	329.3	107	361.2	41
Yards Per Play	4.7	111	4.8	23
Rush Attempts Per Game	31.7	108		
Rush Yards Per Game	111.1	108	151.9	62
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	98	3.7	32
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.3	42		
Completion %	53.1%	119	60.9%	72
Passing Yards Per Game	218.2	82	209.3	33
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	106	6.8	39
Turnovers	2.2	126	1.4	64

2022 RESULTS
SU: 3-7, ATS: 4-6, O/U: 2-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	RICHMOND (-21.5)	34-17	W	L
9/10	at Illinois (4)	3-24	L	L
9/17	OLD DOMINION (-9)	16-14	W	L
9/23	at Syracuse (10)	20-22	L	W
10/1	at Duke (2)	17-38	L	L
10/8	LOUISVILLE (-1.5)	17-34	L	L
10/20	at Georgia Tech (3.5)	16-9	W	W
10/29	MIAMI FL (3)	12-14	L	W
11/5	NORTH CAROLINA (7.5)	28-31	L	W
11/12	PITTSBURGH (5.5)	7-37	L	L

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Virginia Tech Hokies went 3-8 in Brent Pry's first year at the helm. Things are expected to be a little bit better in 2023, as the Hokies return 14 starters and know exactly what they need to improve on after a season in which they really just lacked toughness on both sides of the ball.

However, this is still a program that is relatively low on talent compared to the rest of the ACC, and it just feels like they're destined for another year in which neither side of the ball really strikes fear in opponents. Maybe Virginia Tech claws its way to four or five wins this year, which would be an improvement upon last year's three-win season. But the team's win total seems a little overly optimistic.

OFFENSE

Grant Wells will be back under center for Virginia Tech after a year in which he threw for 2,171 yards with only nine touchdowns. Wells also threw nine interceptions on this season, and his uninspiring play makes it a little hard to believe in this Hokies offense in 2023.

The team did, however, have a nonexistent running game last year, so Wells was always in inopportune positions. Perhaps getting the ground game going will get more out of Wells, who was a pretty solid quarterback in his time with Marshall. But the offensive line is expected to be a weakness for the Hokies, so it's hard to envision that happening. That'll also do its part in negating the fact that Pry did a good job of landing transfer portal talent at the wide receiver position.

DEFENSE

While the offense might be miserable in 2023, Pry needs to get more out of his defense this season. Pry did great work as the defensive coordinator for Penn State, so you'd expect him to figure it out in Blacksburg. He did, however, stop calling plays at the end of last season.

So, things could look a little different in 2023. One thing to note is that the Hokies do have an outstanding secondary. The problem is that the team is very weak along the defensive line. So, Virginia Tech's corners are constantly in tough situations on second and third down. The Hokies will continue to struggle to get stops if they don't do a better job of hitting ball carriers in the backfield.

OUTLOOK

Things might improve in Year 2 under Pry, but that doesn't mean the Hokies are going Over their season win total. A five-win season would be a two-game improvement from 2022, but it would still allow bettors to cash on Under tickets. And four or five wins feels right when looking at this roster and schedule.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING   39.5

NATIONAL RANK: #74 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	OLD DOMINION	-14.5	27.5
9/9	PURDUE	4.5	46
9/16	at Rutgers	1	38.5
9/23	at Marshall	3	40.5
9/30	PITTSBURGH	6	47.5
10/7	at Florida St	22.5	59.5
10/14	WAKE FOREST	4	45.5
10/26	SYRACUSE	5	47
11/4	at Louisville	14	50
11/11	at Boston College	1.5	38.5
11/18	NC STATE	6.5	48.5
11/25	at Virginia	3	39

SCHEDULE STRENGTH   44.26   #53 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS   2.2 / 0.3   (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1   ODDS TO WIN ACC

500-1   ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS   14

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	/RANK	DEFENSE STAT	/RANK
Points Per Game	18.5	118	26.5	58
Yards Per Point	16.4	110	14.7	54
Plays Per Game	68.5	90		
Time of Possession	28:34	98		
3rd Down Conv. %	29.5%	122	35.1%	32
Total Yards Per Game	303.4	118	389.1	67
Yards Per Play	4.4	121	5.3	52
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.6	81		
Rush Yards Per Game	114	103	145.6	52
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	113	4.1	60
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.8	77		
Completion %	56.8%	98	58.8%	44
Passing Yards Per Game	189.4	109	243.5	87
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.1	114	6.9	42
Turnovers	1.5	72	0.9	126

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-8, ATS: 4-7, O/U: 3-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	at Old Dominion (-6)	17-20	L	L
9/10	BOSTON COLLEGE (-3)	27-10	W	W
9/17	WOFFORD (-38)	27-7	W	L
9/22	WEST VIRGINIA (2)	10-33	L	L
10/1	at North Carolina (9.5)	10-41	L	L
10/8	at Pittsburgh (14.5)	29-45	L	L
10/15	MIAMI FL (9.5)	14-20	L	W
10/27	at Nc State (13.5)	21-22	L	W
11/5	GEORGIA TECH (-4)	27-28	L	L
11/12	at Duke (10)	7-24	L	L
11/19	at Liberty (10.5)	23-22	W	W

WAKE FOREST
DEMON DEACONS

HEAD COACH: DAVE CLAWSON (10TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WARREN RUGGIERO
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRAD LAMBERT

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Sam Hartman is no longer the starting quarterback for the Wake Forest Demon Deacons, as he will now be under center for Notre Dame. It's going to be a little bizarre seeing their offense without Hartman, and the team will actually have to face him when the Demon Deacons travel to South Bend on November 18th.

Overall, this feels like it could be a retooling year for head coach Dave Clawson, who has turned in winning seasons in six of the last seven years. Wake Forest doesn't have a lot of talent returning from last year, and Mitch Griffis will likely take some bumps in his first season as the team's quarterback. But Clawson is a good coach, and he should have this figured out soon.

OFFENSE
Griffis had a very good game against VMI last year, throwing for 288 yards with three touchdowns and no picks. ACC competition will, however, be a lot different than that, and it's hard to see Griffis not having an up-and-down season in his first year of action. The only real positive is that Hartman's absence early last season gave Griffis some valuable reps with the first-team offense.

If Wake Forest's rushing attack can improve in 2023, it might help Griffis make an instant impact. That would also potentially allow the Demon Deacons to be an under-the-radar threat in the ACC. But there are a lot of moving parts with this group, and there's not much that suggests this will be an above-average unit this season. The most important thing these players can do is learn to make waves in 2024.

DEFENSE
Last year's Demon Deacons defense was miserable, and there isn't much to be optimistic about heading into 2023. One of the few things Wake Forest did well last year was defend the run, but the team's defensive line is actually a question mark right now. If the Demon Deacons don't find a way to replicate the success of their 2022 run defense, opponents will score against them at will. Wake Forest doesn't have the talent required in the secondary to slow down some of the better quarterbacks in this conference. The only thing helping in that regard is that the Demon Deacons should have a decent pass rush.

OUTLOOK
Wake Forest is normally a team that can be counted on to exceed expectations, but the path to seven wins seems nonexistent in 2023. The Demon Deacons have a number of difficult road games, and the team will also have trouble with some of its home opponents. Overall, this feels like a relatively low-risk play. Even if the Under doesn't win, it's highly unlikely you won't push. But don't get used to going Under on a Clawson-led group. He'll find somebody he's comfortable with to fill Hartman's shoes and Wake Forest will get back to consistently winning football games quickly.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 45.5

NATIONAL RANK: #55 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	ELON	-24	25
9/9	VANDERBILT	-9.5	39.5
9/16	at Old Dominion	-16	27.5
9/23	GEORGIA TECH	-10	39
10/7	at Clemson	16.5	59.5
10/14	at Virginia Tech	-4	39.5
10/21	PITTSBURGH	-1	47.5
10/28	FLORIDA ST	10.5	59.5
11/2	at Duke	4	47.5
11/11	NC STATE	-0.5	48.5
11/18	at Notre Dame	15.5	58.5
11/25	at Syracuse	4	47

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.27
#52 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.4 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN ACC

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 11
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	RANK	DEFENSE STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	35.4	17	29.8	87
Yards Per Point	12.4	10	14.1	71
Plays Per Game	78.1	8		
Time of Possession	28:15	103		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.8%	19	43.4%	109
Total Yards Per Game	439.8	30	419.9	97
Yards Per Play	5.6	48	5.7	84
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.3	48		
Rush Yards Per Game	126.4	89	140.8	43
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	111	3.9	44
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.7	26		
Completion %	63.2%	38	60.7%	69
Passing Yards Per Game	313.4	8	279.2	121
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.5	12	7.8	101
Turnovers	1.5	72	1.3	86

2022 RESULTS
SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 5-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	VMI (-33.5)	44-10	W	W
9/10	at Vanderbilt (-13.5)	45-25	W	W
9/17	LIBERTY (-18)	37-36	W	L
9/24	CLEMSON (8)	45-51	L	W
10/1	at Florida St (6)	31-21	W	W
10/8	ARMY (-16.5)	45-10	W	W
10/22	BOSTON COLLEGE (-20)	43-15	W	W
10/29	at Louisville (-3)	21-48	L	L
11/5	at Nc State (-3)	21-30	L	L
11/12	NORTH CAROLINA (-4.5)	34-36	L	L
11/19	SYRACUSE (-9.5)	45-35	W	W
11/26	at Duke (-3)	31-34	L	L
12/23	vs. Missouri (-2.5)	27-17	W	W

BIG TEN BETTING PREVIEW

For the last two seasons, the road to the Big Ten Championship hasn't gone through Columbus. It has gone through Ann Arbor as Jim Harbaugh and the Michigan Wolverines won back-to-back conference titles and earned consecutive bids to the College Football Playoff. The Big Ten could look the same as it ever was (before USC and UCLA join in 2024) this season as Michigan and Ohio State have combined to win the last six conference titles, and they are the co-favorites to do so again at +165.

Michigan has gone 25-3 over the last two seasons, and Harbaugh arguably has his most talented team led by quarterback JJ McCarthy against one of the softest schedules in the Power Five. However, they will host Ohio State in the season finale. Ryan Day and the Buckeyes bring back their typical stockpile of five-star talent on both sides of the ball. Brian Hartline, one of the nation's best recruiters, gets the keys to the offense as the new offensive coordinator.

Penn State (6/1) could have James Franklin's most talented club in his tenure with five-star quarterback Drew Allar and a renewed potent running game.

In the West, it looks wide open with Wisconsin (+750) in its typical role as the favorite under first-year head coach Luke Fickell. But Fickell is not the only first-year coach, as Nebraska (60/1) brings in Matt Rhule, Ryan Walters leaves as Illinois' defensive coordinator to take the top job at Purdue (100/1), plus first-year defensive coordinator David Braun becomes the interim head man at Northwestern (300/1), replacing Pat Fitzgerald, who was terminated due to a hazing scandal.

Along with Wisconsin, Iowa (12/1) hopes a new transfer quarterback can revitalize sluggish offenses. Illinois (30/1) and Minnesota (40/1) are also lurking in a wild, wild West division. Nevertheless, the West Division Champion will be in its typical spot as an underdog in Indianapolis for the Big Ten Championship Game.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
EAST DIVISION							
OHIO ST	69	47.65 (17)	10.6	1.4	7.9	1.1	10.5
MICHIGAN	67	44.02 (57)	10.7	1.3	7.7	1.3	10.5
PENN ST	61.5	44.3 (51)	9.6	2.4	6.7	2.3	9.5
MARYLAND	50	44.24 (54)	7.3	4.7	4.4	4.6	7
MICHIGAN ST	46	49.47 (2)	5.1	6.9	3.1	5.9	5.5
RUTGERS	38.5	44.65 (47)	4.1	7.9	1.8	7.2	4.5
INDIANA	39	47.45 (21)	3.8	8.2	1.7	7.3	3.5
WEST DIVISION							
WISCONSIN	54	44.37 (50)	8.6	3.4	6.0	3.0	8.5
IOWA	51.5	43.77 (59)	8.0	4.0	5.5	3.5	8
ILLINOIS	50	46.13 (31)	7.1	4.9	4.9	4.1	6.5
MINNESOTA	50.5	48.83 (8)	6.6	5.4	4.4	4.6	7
PURDUE	46	49.28 (4)	5.3	6.7	3.5	5.5	5.5
NEBRASKA	46	45.96 (32)	6.0	6.0	3.4	5.6	6
NORTHWESTERN	38.5	44.83 (46)	3.9	8.1	1.9	7.1	3.5

ILLINOIS
FIGHTING ILLINI

HEAD COACH: BRET BIELEMA (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BARRY LUNNEY JR.
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: AARON HENRY

BY WES REYNOLDS

In his second season in Champaign, Bret Bielema delivered the first winning season of Illinois Football in 11 years despite going 1-4 in one-score games. The Illini started 7-1 but suffered losses by eight, seven, and two points before easily dispatching Northwestern in the season finale.

This year, Illinois loses 32 lettermen including its quarterback, leading rusher, and three of its top four tacklers, plus first-round cornerback Devon Witherspoon, and defensive coordinator Ryan Walters left to take the head coaching job at Purdue. The Illini are attempting to post back-to-back winning seasons for the first time since 2010-2011 the way Bielema did it at Wisconsin. Balance on offense and play good defense.

OFFENSE

Illinois averaged 4.1 more points per game and increased its passing yardage by 55.6 yards per game under offensive coordinator Barry Lunney in his first season. However, the Illini must replace starting quarterback Tommy DeVito and running back Chase Brown, who led the Power Five in rushing yards (1,643). Josh McCray and Reggie Love III will attempt to replace Brown, and Ole Miss transfer Luke Altmyer will be Bielema's third signal-caller in three years.

Four of the top six receivers are back, including former quarterback Isaiah Williams (82-715-5), Pat Bryant (34-453-2), Casey Washington (31-306), and tight end Tip Reiman. Three starters also return for an offensive line that was a semifinalist for the Joe Moore Award. Josh Kreutz, son of former Chicago Bears center Olin, takes over at the same position.

DEFENSE

The Fighting Illini had the nation's No. 1 scoring defense (12.8 points per game) and No. 3 total defense (273.5 yards per game). Witherspoon is gone as is Walters, but new defensive coordinator Aaron Henry is promoted from defensive backs coach, and he brings back seven starters, including Jer'Zhan Newton (5.5 sacks, 14 TFLs) and Keith Randolph up front in the 3-3-5 defense. Gabe Jacas (a Freshman All-American), Seth Coleman, and Tarique Barnes also return for the linebacker group. Tahveon Nicholson takes over as the top corner but has a great deal of inexperience around him.

OUTLOOK

Bielema has certainly built the culture he wants at Illinois which is to play sound football and be tough and physical in the trenches — just like he did at Wisconsin. Illinois is probably more Wisconsin than Wisconsin at this point. There is a fair amount of roster and coaching staff turnover; however, Illinois gets a bit of a break in the conference schedule avoiding Ohio State and Michigan and getting to host Penn State at home. Much will depend on the quarterback play from Altmyer. The cupboard is not barren with 10 All-B1G players (most in the West Division) returning. They did benefit from a +15 turnover margin, so more often than not, there is a little bit of regression in that department year to year.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **50**

NATIONAL RANK: #37 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	TOLEDO	-11	42
9/8	at Kansas	-2.5	46
9/16	PENN ST	9	61.5
9/23	FLA ATLANTIC	-13.5	39.5
9/30	at Purdue	-2	46
10/6	NEBRASKA	-7	46
10/14	at Maryland	2	50
10/21	WISCONSIN	1.5	54
11/4	at Minnesota	3	50.5
11/11	INDIANA	-14	39
11/18	at Iowa	4	51.5
11/25	NORTHWESTERN	-15	38.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **46.13** #31 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

30-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
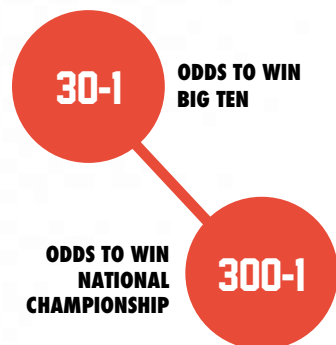
RETURNING STARTERS **12**

OFFENSE: 6
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23.7	86	13.8	2
Yards Per Point	15.6	93	20.7	2
Plays Per Game	74.2	32		
Time of Possession	32:46	12		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.2%	81	30.6%	9
Total Yards Per Game	368.2	77	286.8	4
Yards Per Play	5	97	4.4	2
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.1	17		
Rush Yards Per Game	166.9	55	102.6	9
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	74	3.4	16
Pass Attempts Per Game	30	85		
Completion %	69.2%	3	52.3%	3
Passing Yards Per Game	201.3	98	184.2	11
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	89	5.6	2
Turnovers	1.3	48	2.4	1

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 4-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	WYOMING (-14)	38-6	W	W
9/2	at Indiana (0)	20-23	L	L
9/10	VIRGINIA (-4)	24-3	W	W
9/22	CHATTANOOGA (-20)	31-0	W	W
10/1	at Wisconsin (6)	34-10	W	W
10/8	IOWA (-4)	9-6	W	L
10/15	MINNESOTA (4.5)	26-14	W	W
10/29	at Nebraska (-7.5)	26-9	W	W
11/5	MICHIGAN ST (-16)	15-23	L	L
11/12	PURDUE (-6)	24-31	L	L
11/19	at Michigan (17.5)	17-19	L	W
11/26	at Northwestern (-15)	41-3	W	W
1/2	vs. Mississippi St (3.5)	10-19	L	L

INDIANA
HOOSIERS

HEAD COACH: TOM ALLEN (7TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WALT BELL / ANTHONY TUCKER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT GUERRIERI / CHAD WILT

BY WES REYNOLDS

Indiana had a 6-2 record during the COVID season in 2020 and earned a New Year's Day appearance in the Outback Bowl. It looked like this program had some momentum, but that disappeared quickly as the Hoosiers have gone a combined 6-18 in the last two seasons. Only eight combined starters (5 offense, 3 defense) return. Indiana also has new co-coordinators on both sides of the ball as Tom Allen looks to stop the bleeding in Bloomington.

OFFENSE
While the quarterback battle was not settled in the spring, it is widely expected that Tennessee transfer Tayven Jackson, the brother of former Indiana basketball All-American Trayce Jackson-Davis, will get the nod. However, the Hoosiers' biggest offseason acquisition could be offensive line coach Bob Bostad, who returns three starters and two other veterans from a group that struggled in a major way last season.

In the backfield, the Hoosiers return Josh Henderson (90-398-4) and All-American kick returner Jaylin Lucas (49-271-2) to go along with Wake Forest transfer Christian Turner (1022 yards in two seasons). Receiver Cam Camper (569 yards, 12.4 YPC, 2 TD) was lost after eight games with a torn ACL. He returns to lead an inexperienced group of receivers for an offense that ranked 10th in scoring and 12th in total offense.

DEFENSE
With heavy losses to graduation, Indiana went heavy into the transfer portal to help a unit that only posted 37 sacks in the last two seasons. Western Michigan transfer Andre Carter (7 sacks, 13.5 TFL in 2022) leads an incoming class with several Power Five transfers, including Stanford linebacker Jacob Mangum-Farrar (85 tackles in two seasons). Aaron Casey (86 tackles, 10.5 TFL) is the returning leader of this group.

The Hoosiers lost their top four corners from last season and have new starters at safety as well. Speaking of brand new, after calling the defense last year, Allen turns that responsibility over to new co-defensive coordinator Matt Guerrieri (Duke DC 2018-2021), who spent last season as a defensive analyst at Ohio State.

OUTLOOK
With the loss of 30 seniors and the addition of 25 transfers, Indiana is a hard team to project. What was considered momentum in 2019 and 2020 (14-7 combined record) is now gone. The portal additions seem to be a stopgap as Allen and company are not gaining enough in recruiting largely due to turnover on the coaching staff plus a lack of support from the university.

The Hoosiers open with Ohio State and likely earn wins over Indiana State and Akron in nonconference play. The only conference game in which they will likely be favored is against Rutgers. Indiana ranks as ESPN's 10th-most difficult schedule this season. There is too much roster turnover and uncertainty to be optimistic about the Hoosiers in 2023.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 39

NATIONAL RANK: #78 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	OHIO ST	28	69
9/8	INDIANA ST	-27	14.5
9/16	vs. Louisville	10	50
9/23	AKRON	-18	24
9/30	at Maryland	13.5	50
10/14	at Michigan	31.5	67
10/21	RUTGERS	-2.5	38.5
10/28	at Penn St	25	61.5
11/4	WISCONSIN	13	54
11/11	at Illinois	14	50
11/18	MICHIGAN ST	4.5	46
11/25	at Purdue	9.5	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.45
#21 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

500-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 8
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	/RANK	DEFENSE STAT	/RANK
Points Per Game	22.2	95	35	118
Yards Per Point	14.4	69	13.1	100
Plays Per Game	77.5	10		
Time of Possession	26:04	128		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.0%	114	42.3%	98
Total Yards Per Game	318.5	112	460.1	121
Yards Per Play	4.1	128	5.8	101
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.7	97		
Rush Yards Per Game	99.2	121	179.5	98
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3	126	4.3	74
Pass Attempts Per Game	41.3	9		
Completion %	54.0%	115	64.5%	111
Passing Yards Per Game	219.3	81	280.5	123
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.3	127	8	107
Turnovers	1.5	65	1.2	94

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 7-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	ILLINOIS (0)	23-20	W	W
9/10	IDAHO (-25)	35-22	W	L
9/17	W KENTUCKY (-7)	33-30	W	L
9/24	at Cincinnati (16.5)	24-45	L	L
10/1	at Nebraska (6.5)	21-35	L	L
10/8	MICHIGAN (23.5)	10-31	L	W
10/15	MARYLAND (11)	33-38	L	W
10/22	at Rutgers (3)	17-24	L	L
11/5	PENN ST (14)	14-45	L	L
11/12	at Ohio St (40)	14-56	L	L
11/19	at Michigan St (12)	39-31	W	W
11/26	PURDUE (10)	16-30	L	L

IOWA
HAWKEYES

HEAD COACH: KIRK FERENTZ (25TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN FERENTZ
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHIL PARKER

BY WES REYNOLDS

The Hawkeyes won eight games last season, capped off by a Music City Bowl victory in what was an up-and-down campaign. The offense, or lack thereof, was the story of the 2022 season. Kirk Ferentz is the longest-tenured coach in FBS, having taken over at Iowa in 1999. His son Brian is the offensive coordinator and the program's main lightning rod, so much so that Iowa athletic director Gary Barta put together a revised one-year contract including a slight pay cut and stipulations that require the offense to average 25 points per game and for the team to win seven games. If those terms are met, then he receives a new two-year contract. As for the father, he is going nowhere, having signed an extension last year through 2029.

OFFENSE

Brian Ferentz's new contract will require massive improvement for a unit that averaged just 17.7 points per game and 251.1 yards per game and was in the bottom 10 of every major offensive category in college football. New starting quarterback Cade McNamara led Michigan to the CFP two years ago and then lost his starting quarterback job after three games. He's also coming off knee surgery. Tight end Erick All also comes in with McNamara from Ann Arbor to team with Luke Lachey (28-398-4). Wide receiver Nico Ragaini is the leading returning pass catcher with just 34 receptions. Kaleb Johnson and Leshon Williams combined for 1,191 yards and eight touchdowns behind an offensive line that returns all five starters but was a major disappointment (38 sacks allowed) compared to previous units that ranked amongst the nation's best.

DEFENSE

As much as the offense had a meager output, the defense was one of the best in the country, ranking second in scoring (13.3 points) and total (270.8 yards per game) defense. Iowa won a game 7-3 (vs. South Dakota State) and lost games 9-6 (at Illinois) and 10-7 (vs. Iowa State). Three starters return on the defensive line, with Logan Lee and Noah Shannon leading the charge, plus Joe Evans (18.5 career sacks) on the edge.

Butkus Award winner Jack Campbell, defensive lineman Lukas Van Ness, along with corner Riley Moss and strong safety Kaevon Merriweather are gone and must be replaced. Jay Higgins and Virginia transfer Nick Jackson become the new starters at linebacker. All-Big Ten corner Cooper DeJean returned three interceptions for touchdowns last season and was third on the team with 75 tackles. Xavier Nwankpa had a pick-six in the Music City Bowl and replaces Merriweather at safety. Even with significant personnel losses, defensive coordinator Phil Parker's group could be even better than last year.

OUTLOOK

There is a lot of pressure on McNamara to make things happen, like saving Brian Ferentz's job for one. He will also not have near the number of offensive weapons, particularly at receiver, that he had at Michigan. While Iowa arguably has the best punter-kicker combination with Tory Taylor and Drew Stevens, the Hawkeyes cannot count on the kicking game to win them ball games for another season. They should be at least a little better at offense (can't be any worse), but defense is still the strength of this club. And Iowa does avoid Ohio State and Michigan (no rematch for McNamara and All). The Hawkeyes will likely have another campaign of being good but not great.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 51.5

NATIONAL RANK: #30 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	UTAH ST	-24	30
9/9	at Iowa St	-0.5	48.5
9/16	W MICHIGAN	-28.5	26
9/23	at Penn St	12	61.5
9/30	MICHIGAN ST	-8.5	46
10/7	PURDUE	-8	46
10/14	at Wisconsin	5	54
10/21	MINNESOTA	-3.5	50.5
11/4	vs. Northwestern	-12.5	38.5
11/11	RUTGERS	-16	38.5
11/18	ILLINOIS	-4	50
11/24	at Nebraska	-4	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **43.77** #59 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.9 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

12-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

150-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 16

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	18.6	117	14.2	3
Yards Per Point	13.9	52	20	4
Plays Per Game	62.2	127		
Time of Possession	28:10	108		
3rd Down Conv. %	28.3%	126	31.6%	11
Total Yards Per Game	258.5	129	283.3	3
Yards Per Play	4.2	126	4	1
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.3	104		
Rush Yards Per Game	97.8	122	107	14
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3	124	3	3
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.9	110		
Completion %	56.0%	103	60.0%	55
Passing Yards Per Game	160.7	121	176.3	9
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6	118	5.4	1
Turnovers	1.2	36	1.9	12

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 4-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	S DAKOTA ST (-10)	7-3	W	L
9/10	IOWA ST (-4)	7-10	L	L
9/17	NEVADA (-24)	27-0	W	W
9/24	at Rutgers (-7.5)	27-10	W	W
10/1	MICHIGAN (10.5)	14-27	L	L
10/8	at Illinois (4)	6-9	L	W
10/22	at Ohio St (29)	10-54	L	L
10/29	NORTHWESTERN (-11)	33-13	W	W
11/5	at Purdue (3.5)	24-3	W	W
11/12	WISCONSIN (-1)	24-10	W	W
11/19	at Minnesota (1.5)	13-10	W	W
11/25	NEBRASKA (-10.5)	17-24	L	L
12/31	vs. Kentucky (-3)	21-0	W	W

MARYLAND
TERRAPINS

HEAD COACH: MIKE LOCKSLEY (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOSH GATTIS / KEVIN SUMLIN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN WILLIAMS

BY WES REYNOLDS

Mike Locksley had his best team in four seasons at College Park and went 8-5, finishing the season with a Duke's Mayo Bowl victory over NC State. The Terrapins were competitive with the big boys in 2022, having covered against Michigan and Ohio State, but they have not been able to get over the hump against the top teams. Locksley received an extension in 2021 and has delivered on recruiting by ranking in the top half of the conference each year. The next step is to deliver results on the field.

OFFENSE

Taulia Tagovailoa elected to return for his senior season and add to his legacy, as he is already the school's all-time leading passer with 51 touchdown passes and 7,879 yards. However, he will be working with a mostly new group as four of his offensive line starters must be replaced, plus several receivers.

Running back Roman Hemby scored 10 touchdowns and had 1,287 yards from scrimmage as a freshman. The Terps always have talent at receiver, and this year is no exception with Jeshaun Jones (44-557-4), tight end Corey Dyches (39-494-3), plus FIU transfer Tyrese Chambers (1618 yards in two seasons) and true freshman Shaleak Knotts. Josh Gattis was supposed to come to Maryland with Locksley in 2018 but took the offensive coordinator job at Michigan instead. Now he and Locksley, who were co-OCs at Alabama in 2018, are reunited.

DEFENSE

Maryland gave up too many chunk plays last year in the passing game. Tarheeb Still returns at corner, and Cincinnati transfer Ja'Quan Sheppard plugs right in. Beau Brade, the team's leading tackler with 85, and Dante Trader Jr.. return at safety. Miami (FL) transfer Avantae Williams could also help.

Jaishawn Barham and Ruben Hyppolite are both star linebackers that could take the leap this year. The Terps hit the portal for help up front with Tennessee transfer Jordan Phillips and FCS All-American Donnell Brown (St. Francis PA) to help a unit that only had 24 sacks last year.

OUTLOOK

Maryland has two straight bowl victories and are getting one more season with the best quarterback in program history. Locksley brings in Gattis and former Houston, Texas A&M, and Arizona head coach Kevin Sumlin as offensive coordinators. Although the Terps will likely have some growing pains early on offense with four new offensive line starters, they open with three nonconference home games in which they will be favored and could also be favored in all three games against their West Division opponents. A third straight bowl appearance is likely for "Lia's" swan song in College Park.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 50

NATIONAL RANK: #38 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	TOWSON	-38	14
9/9	CHARLOTTE	-27.5	25
9/15	VIRGINIA	-13.5	39
9/23	at Michigan St	-1.5	46
9/30	INDIANA	-13.5	39
10/7	at Ohio St	22.5	69
10/14	ILLINOIS	-2	50
10/28	at Northwestern	-9.5	38.5
11/4	PENN ST	9.5	61.5
11/11	at Nebraska	-2	46
11/18	MICHIGAN	15.5	67
11/25	at Rutgers	-9.5	38.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.24** #54 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

100-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 11

OFFENSE: 5 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	/RANK	DEFENSE STAT	/RANK
Points Per Game	28.2	57	23.2	34
Yards Per Point	14.3	67	15.4	35
Plays Per Game	73.5	37		
Time of Possession	30:55	41		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.5%	38	38.9%	64
Total Yards Per Game	401.8	47	357.1	37
Yards Per Play	5.5	59	4.9	25
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.8	70		
Rush Yards Per Game	141.6	76	133.8	37
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	75	3.8	37
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.3	44		
Completion %	65.9%	14	57.2%	23
Passing Yards Per Game	260.2	38	223.3	51
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	50	6.2	11
Turnovers	1.2	34	1.2	90

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 5-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	BUFFALO (-24)	31-10	W	L
9/10	at Charlotte (-28)	56-21	W	W
9/17	SMU (-2.5)	34-27	W	W
9/24	at Michigan (17.5)	27-34	L	W
10/1	MICHIGAN ST (-7.5)	27-13	W	W
10/8	PURDUE (-3)	29-31	L	L
10/15	at Indiana (-11)	38-33	W	L
10/22	NORTHWESTERN (-14)	31-24	W	L
11/5	at Wisconsin (5)	10-23	L	L
11/12	at Penn St (10.5)	0-30	L	L
11/19	OHIO ST (26)	30-43	L	W
11/26	RUTGERS (-14.5)	37-0	W	W
12/30	vs. Nc State (2.5)	16-12	W	W

MICHIGAN
WOLVERINES

HEAD COACH: JIM HARBAUGH (9TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHERRONE MOORE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JESSE MINTER

BY WES REYNOLDS

The Wolverines went back-to-back last year, winning the Big Ten for the first time since 2004. They beat Ohio State for the second consecutive year and had an undefeated regular season for the first time since 1997. Then, they fell behind 21-3 to TCU in the CFP National Semifinal and could not quite complete the comeback. Jim Harbaugh and the Wolverines have accomplished the goal of getting back on the level of their archrival down in Columbus, but now they have had a taste and want more, having been to the College Football Playoff the last two years. With one of the softest schedules in the Power Five, Michigan looks primed to get to the big stage for the third year in a row.

OFFENSE

Junior quarterback JJ McCarthy (2,719 yards, 22-5 TD-INT) is back after winning the starting job for good in Week 3 of last season and will likely be allowed to take more deep shots with another year of experience. Nevertheless, Michigan will run the ball and run it often with All-American Blake Corum (1,463 yards, 18 TD), back from left knee surgery, and Donovan Edwards (991 yards, 7 TD).

The Wolverines' offensive line has won the Joe Moore Award for the past two seasons and return three starters up front. Tight ends Colston Loveland and Indiana transfer AJ Barner make for a potentially potent combination. The receiving unit is not stocked with elite talent and lacks that true go-to guy but Cornelius Johnson (32-449-6) and Roman Wilson (25-376-4) return.

DEFENSE

Michigan was rated sixth nationally in total defense last season, and despite losing three draft picks, they return seven starters. Seniors Kris Jenkins and Jaylen Harrell man the right side and will be looking for young players to step up on the other side.

The linebacker corps is as deep as it has ever been, which returns All-Big Ten middle backer Junior Colson and sixth-year Michael Barrett, along with Earnest Hausmann, who started as a freshman at Nebraska.

Will Johnson is one of the best corners in the country and started five games as a freshman last year. Safeties Rod Moore and Makari Paige return along with nickel back Mike Sainristil. Amorion Walker moves from receiver to the other starting corner, so there could be some growing pains there early on.

OUTLOOK

JJ McCarthy finally goes into the season knowing that he is the guy at quarterback. Michigan wants to open the offense more, but someone must step up from the receiver group that, on paper, lacks that elite talent. Nonetheless, Michigan will run the ball well and play great defense.

The nonconference schedule of East Carolina, UNLV, and Bowling Green is as easy as you can get for a Power Five program. They do have to travel to Penn State on November 11 and host the Buckeyes in the finale on November 25, but this is a different program that now needs to be considered a bona fide National Championship contender.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 10.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 67

NATIONAL RANK: #4 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	EAST CAROLINA	-34	36
9/9	UNLV	-39	31.5
9/16	BOWLING GREEN	-42.5	28
9/23	RUTGERS	-31.5	38.5
9/30	at Nebraska	-19.5	46
10/7	at Minnesota	-14.5	50.5
10/14	INDIANA	-31.5	39
10/21	at Michigan St	-19.5	46
11/4	PURDUE	-24	46
11/11	at Penn St	-3.5	61.5
11/18	at Maryland	-15.5	50
11/25	OHIO ST	-1	69

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.02 #57 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.3 / 0.5 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+165 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

+850 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	40.4	6	16.1	6
Yards Per Point	11.3	2	18.2	7
Plays Per Game	70.5	61		
Time of Possession	33:47	5		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.2%	27	33.8%	22
Total Yards Per Game	458.8	19	292.1	5
Yards Per Play	6.5	13	4.5	4
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.9	13		
Rush Yards Per Game	238.9	7	97.9	5
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.6	4	3.3	9
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.4	113		
Completion %	64.3%	29	55.9%	15
Passing Yards Per Game	219.9	79	194.2	18
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	17	5.9	5
Turnovers	0.7	5	1.3	81

2022 RESULTS

SU: 13-1, ATS: 9-5, O/U: 5-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	COLORADO ST (-31)	51-7	W	W
9/10	HAWAII (-53)	56-10	W	L
9/17	CONNECTICUT (-47.5)	59-0	W	W
9/24	MARYLAND (-17.5)	34-27	W	L
10/1	at Iowa (-10.5)	27-14	W	W
10/8	at Indiana (-23.5)	31-10	W	L
10/15	PENN ST (-7)	41-17	W	W
10/29	MICHIGAN ST (-21.5)	29-7	W	W
11/5	at Rutgers (-26)	52-17	W	W
11/12	NEBRASKA (-30.5)	34-3	W	W
11/19	ILLINOIS (-17.5)	19-17	W	L
11/26	at Ohio St (9)	45-23	W	W
12/3	vs. Purdue (-15)	43-22	W	W
12/31	vs. TCU (-8)	45-51	L	L

MICHIGAN STATE
SPARTANS

HEAD COACH: MEL TUCKER (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAY JOHNSON
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTTIE HAZELTON

BY WES REYNOLDS

After an 11-2 season in 2021, which included wins over Michigan, Penn State, and Miami (FL), Mel Tucker was given a 10-year, $95 million contract. The Spartans fan base is already expressing buyer's remorse as Michigan State fell to 5-7 last year, including six double-digit losses.

The bottom was missing a 22-yard FG versus Indiana that cost the Spartans a bowl bid as they lost to the Hoosiers in overtime. The recruiting looks to be improving in the high schools, but they are still a bit reliant on the transfer portal. Michigan State is still a middling program in the Big Ten, and $95 million should be able to buy more.

OFFENSE
Two-year starter Payton Thorne was challenged in spring practice by Noah Kim and Katin Houser. Thorne exited the quarterback competition by transferring to Auburn. He was not alone as a late transfer as top receiver Keon Coleman left for Florida State.

The offensive line returns all five starters from the season finale last year at Penn State, but this group has been mediocre at best in recent years.

Jalen Berger (148-683-6) returns as the starting running back, and that room has some depth with transfers Nathan Carter (Connecticut) and Jaren Mangham (South Florida). Receiver Tre Mosley (35-359-4) and tight end Maliq Carr (16-209-2) are the top returning targets for whoever wins the quarterback job between Kim and Houser.

DEFENSE
This group was ravaged by injuries early last season, plus had eight defensive players suspended for the final four games of the season. A whopping 27 different players earned starts in 2022, and that is a main reason why they ranked 101st nationally in total defense. Cal Haladay and Jacoby Windmon, who plays a little off the edge in pass rush situations, are a good linebacker duo. Texas A&M transfer Tunmise Adeleye should help on the edge allowing Windmon to play primarily at 'backer. The secondary is still a question mark, and it has been subpar throughout Tucker's tenure.

OUTLOOK
Was Michigan State's drop from 11-2 to 5-7 just a blip on the radar screen or something more? The truth likely lies somewhere in the middle. The nonconference schedule includes a rematch with Washington and Heisman candidate quarterback Michael Penix Jr..

The Spartans also lost their quarterback and top receiver after the spring, so they could be behind the eight-ball early in the season. They also only have three true home games in conference play, with the game versus Penn State being held at Ford Field in Detroit, so they will have to battle for bowl eligibility.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 46

NATIONAL RANK: #52 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	C MICHIGAN	-15.5	32.5
9/9	RICHMOND	-17.5	30.5
9/16	WASHINGTON	9.5	58
9/23	MARYLAND	1.5	50
9/30	at Iowa	8.5	51.5
10/14	at Rutgers	-5.5	38.5
10/21	MICHIGAN	19.5	67
10/28	at Minnesota	7	50.5
11/4	NEBRASKA	-2.5	46
11/11	at Ohio St	26.5	69
11/18	at Indiana	-4.5	39
11/24	vs. Penn St	15	61.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 49.47 #2 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.2 / 0 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

400-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13 OFFENSE: 6 DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.4	81	27.4	63
Yards Per Point	14.5	74	15.2	42
Plays Per Game	65.8	113		
Time of Possession	26:13	126		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.8%	62	43.5%	110
Total Yards Per Game	353.2	92	416.5	94
Yards Per Play	5.4	67	5.6	79
Rush Attempts Per Game	30	118		
Rush Yards Per Game	113.2	104	178.6	96
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	85	4.3	77
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.3	45		
Completion %	62.8%	43	66.4%	122
Passing Yards Per Game	240	54	237.9	82
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7	77	7.9	104
Turnovers	1.3	48	1	113

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 4-7, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	W MICHIGAN (-21.5)	35-13	W	W
9/10	AKRON (-34.5)	52-0	W	W
9/17	at Washington (3.5)	28-39	L	L
9/24	MINNESOTA (2.5)	7-34	L	L
10/1	at Maryland (7.5)	13-27	L	L
10/8	OHIO ST (27.5)	20-49	L	L
10/15	WISCONSIN (7)	34-28	W	W
10/29	at Michigan (21.5)	7-29	L	L
11/5	at Illinois (16)	23-15	W	W
11/12	RUTGERS (-10)	27-21	W	L
11/19	INDIANA (-12)	31-39	L	L
11/26	at Penn St (19)	16-35	L	T

MINNESOTA
GOLDEN GOPHERS

HEAD COACH: P. J. FLECK (7TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GREG HARBAUGH JR. / MATT SIMON
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NICK MONROE / JOE ROSSI

BY WES REYNOLDS

Excluding the 2020 COVID season, Minnesota has had four straight winning seasons and four consecutive bowl game victories. This season, the Gophers must make a bit of a transition after losing Tanner Morgan, who was the starter at quarterback for the better part of the last four seasons. Also departing are the program's all-time leading rusher, Mo Ibrahim, and three interior offensive linemen, including Rimington Trophy finalist John Michael Schmitz. Minnesota has been a model of consistency in recent years. They are never picked to win the West Division and have not reached the Big Ten Championship Game, but they are always in the division mix.

OFFENSE

There will have to be at least a slight switch in offensive identity with the departure of Ibrahim. P.J. Fleck always wants a strong running game (2nd in the Big Ten in rushing, 12th in passing last season), but without Ibrahim and Schmitz, there will have to be more balance offensively. Kirk Ciarrocca leaves to be the offensive coordinator at Rutgers, so Greg Harbaugh Jr. (quarterbacks coach) and Matt Simon (wide receivers coach) will team up as co-offensive coordinators.

Big-armed quarterback Athan Kaliakmanis started five games last year. He will have transfer Sean Tyler, who had two 1,000-yard seasons at Western Michigan, behind him at running back. Fleck might have the best group of pass catchers that he has ever had here with 6-7 tight end Brevyn Spann-Ford and rising star Daniel Jackson, plus transfers Elijah Spencer (Charlotte) and Corey Crooms Jr.. (Western Michigan).

DEFENSE

Minnesota ranked fourth nationally in scoring defense (13.8 points per game) and ninth in total defense (295.1 yards per game) last season. The secondary gets hit the hardest with safety Jordan Howden and corner Terell Smith off to the NFL, plus nickel Michael Smith transferring to Rutgers. There is still talent back there with potential first-round safety Tyler Nubin and corner Justin Walley.

Even with the impressive numbers of the defense last year, the Gophers still ranked 13th in the conference and 118th nationally for sacks. With the secondary needing some time to gel, Minnesota must generate more of a pass rush if they want to get over the hump in the Big Ten West.

OUTLOOK

The Gophers have a difficult schedule drawing both Michigan and Ohio State. They also have a road trip to Iowa, who has owned the series, as Fleck is 0-6 all-time against Kirk Ferentz. With only nine combined returning starters, it is easy to see that Minnesota could take at least a small step back.

The passing game will be better, but the running game will fall far below previous production without Ibrahim and the bulk of last year's interior line. The defense also lost a great deal of personnel from last year's elite unit. The Gophers should reach bowl eligibility, but reaching nine wins as they have the last two seasons is too tall of an order.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **50.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #32 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	NEBRASKA	-7.5	46
9/9	E MICHIGAN	-21	32
9/16	at North Carolina	5.5	53.5
9/23	at Northwestern	-10.5	38.5
9/30	LA LAFAYETTE	-14.5	38.5
10/7	MICHIGAN	14.5	67
10/21	at Iowa	3.5	51.5
10/28	MICHIGAN ST	-7	46
11/4	ILLINOIS	-3	50
11/11	at Purdue	-2.5	46
11/18	at Ohio St	21.5	69
11/25	WISCONSIN	1	54

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **48.83** #8 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.7 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

40-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS **13**

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	25.4	73	14.2	3
Yards Per Point	14.4	71	21.4	1
Plays Per Game	66.5	107		
Time of Possession	34:07	4		
3rd Down Conv. %	51.0%	6	29.6%	7
Total Yards Per Game	366.4	79	303.1	7
Yards Per Play	5.5	54	4.9	28
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.9	9		
Rush Yards Per Game	200	19	115.2	18
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	49	3.9	39
Pass Attempts Per Game	21.3	127		
Completion %	60.2%	70	58.8%	45
Passing Yards Per Game	166.4	119	187.9	14
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.8	41	6.2	12
Turnovers	1	16	1.4	66

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	NEW MEXICO ST (-36)	38-0	W	W
9/10	W ILLINOIS (-41)	62-10	W	W
9/17	COLORADO (-28)	49-7	W	W
9/24	at Michigan St (-2.5)	34-7	W	W
10/1	PURDUE (-9)	10-20	L	L
10/15	at Illinois (-4.5)	14-26	L	L
10/22	at Penn St (5.5)	17-45	L	L
10/29	RUTGERS (-14)	31-0	W	W
11/5	at Nebraska (-15)	20-13	W	L
11/12	NORTHWESTERN (-17)	31-3	W	W
11/19	IOWA (-1.5)	10-13	L	L
11/26	at Wisconsin (3)	23-16	W	W
12/29	vs. Syracuse (-10.5)	28-20	W	L

NEBRASKA
CORNHUSKERS

HEAD COACH: MATT RHULE (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MARCUS SATTERFIELD
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TONY WHITE

BY WES REYNOLDS

While Matt Rhule's tenure with the Carolina Panthers did not go well, he is a proven rebuilder and culture-changer, as evident by his stops at Temple (2-10 in his first year and 10 wins by his third year) and Baylor (1-11 to 11-1 in three years). Nebraska athletic director and former football great Trev Alberts finally decided to go outside the family, which is what the program needs, to hire Rhule. He is coming in to win right away but getting this program back into a bowl game for the first time since 2016 would be a great accomplishment. And there is some talent to work with here.

OFFENSE

New offensive coordinator Marcus Satterfield comes in from the same role at South Carolina and is bringing back the huddle and ditching the up-tempo spread from previous coach Scott Frost. The Huskers clearly want to be more of a ball-control offense. Running that offense will be Georgia Tech transfer quarterback Jeff Sims, who impressed coaches enough in the spring to send 2022 starter Casey Thompson into the portal. Sims is a pocket passer but also adds a running threat (1,153 yards in three years with the Yellow Jackets).

Nebraska wants to run the ball and the new staff inherits the return of its top four rushers led by Anthony Grant (218-915-6). The offensive line brings back four starters, including Arizona State transfer center Ben Scott. There is very little depth at wide receiver behind transfers Marcus Washington (Texas) and Billy Kemp (Virginia), so Rhule and Satterfield will use a lot of formations with fullbacks and multiple tight ends, including Georgia transfer Arik Gilbert.

DEFENSE

Nebraska ranked 11th in the conference for total defense. Enter Tony White, who comes in from Syracuse as defensive coordinator. White was a protégé of Rocky Long and brought in the 3-3-5 defense. However, White will switch from a 3-3-5 base to a 4-2-5, a 4-3, or even a 3-4. The Huskers want to create chaos to control the line of scrimmage.

The group returns its top three tacklers – linebacker Luke Reimer (86), defensive back Myles Farmer (73), and nickel Isaac Gifford (70). Linebacker Nick Heinrich was limited to five starts last season after starting all of 2021. The backer corps adds two Power Five transfers with MJ Sherman (Georgia) and Chief Borders (Florida). The entire defensive line is new except for Ty Robinson. The secondary could be the unit's strength with all five starters returning, including Farmer, plus two good cover corners with Quinton Newsome and Malcolm Hartzog.

OUTLOOK

Rhule has proven he can turn around programs in a rapid manner, and he has never had the resources that he will have at Nebraska. However, he has never had this kind of pressure at the college level. Nebraska could be a sleeping giant, and the university leadership finally elected to bring in a fresh perspective instead of looking for the next Tom Osborne.

This program will likely be very good again in due time and can tap into a wide array of NIL sources. They will show signs this year, and they get a break in the schedule, avoiding both Penn State and Ohio State. However, they will show growing pains learning new schemes on both sides of the ball. A six-win season and bowl eligibility could happen, but that looks to be the ceiling for Year 1 under the new regime.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 46

NATIONAL RANK: #54 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	at Minnesota	7.5	50.5
9/9	at Colorado	-8.5	34.5
9/16	N ILLINOIS	-16.5	31.5
9/23	LOUISIANA TECH	-18	30
9/30	MICHIGAN	19.5	67
10/6	at Illinois	7	50
10/21	NORTHWESTERN	-9.5	38.5
10/28	PURDUE	-1.5	46
11/4	at Michigan St	2.5	46
11/11	MARYLAND	2	50
11/18	at Wisconsin	11	54
11/24	IOWA	4	51.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.96** #32 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.8 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

60-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	21.2	101	28.5	75
Yards Per Point	15.9	102	14.9	48
Plays Per Game	66.2	109		
Time of Possession	27:04	122		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.0%	56	42.6%	102
Total Yards Per Game	335.8	102	424.3	102
Yards Per Play	5.1	88	5.5	64
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.4	85		
Rush Yards Per Game	112.5	107	190.4	105
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	115	4.5	93
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.1	94		
Completion %	59.7%	75	59.0%	47
Passing Yards Per Game	223.4	74	233.9	73
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.7	47	6.9	44
Turnovers	1.5	83	1.4	70

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 4-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	vs. Northwestern (-11)	28-31	L	L
9/3	N DAKOTA (-29)	38-17	W	L
9/10	GA SOUTHERN (-23.5)	42-45	L	L
9/17	OKLAHOMA (11)	14-49	L	L
10/1	INDIANA (-6.5)	35-21	W	W
10/7	at Rutgers (-3)	14-13	W	L
10/15	at Purdue (14)	37-43	L	W
10/29	ILLINOIS (7.5)	9-26	L	L
11/5	MINNESOTA (15)	13-20	L	W
11/12	at Michigan (30.5)	3-34	L	L
11/19	WISCONSIN (10)	14-15	L	W
11/25	at Iowa (10.5)	24-17	W	W

NORTHWESTERN
WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: DAVID BRAUN (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE BAJAKIAN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID BRAUN

BY WES REYNOLDS

The Northwestern Wildcats were 1-11 and 1-8 in the conference last year and were coming into 2023 with a great deal of uncertainty. However, one thing was constant and steady, and that was head coach Pat Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald was a two-time Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year and two-time All-American here at his alma mater and had been on the Northwestern staff since 2001, serving as head coach since 2006. Even with the Wildcats' recent struggles on the field, Fitzgerald was safe as the program's steward, until he was not. On July 10th, he was terminated amid allegations of hazing towards players who had poor performance. Now David Braun, who was hired as defensive coordinator from North Dakota State, will serve as the Wildcats interim head coach.

OFFENSE

Offensive coordinator Mike Bajakian was retained despite the offense finishing 128th nationally in scoring (13.8 points per game), 123rd in yards per play (4.54), and 130th in turnovers (31). Ben Bryant (2731 yards, 61% completions, 21-7 TD-INT last season) was brought in from Cincinnati after spring practice and should be the starter at quarterback. Brendan Sullivan and Ryan Hilinski split starts last season.

The top three receivers are gone from last year, but there may be more talent at the position with Arizona State transfer Cam Johnson coming over, plus Bryce Kirtz and Jacob Gill stepping into bigger roles. The biggest holes on offense are at running back, where Evan Hull and his 2,732 yards of offense the last two seasons must be replaced. Plus, tackle Peter Skoronski was a first-round draft pick last spring and departs from an offensive line that returns just one starter. Cam Porter is back after limited 2022 action while recovering from a torn ACL.

DEFENSE

Braun will still maintain his role as defensive coordinator in addition to his responsibilities as interim head coach. He mainly uses a 4-2-5 alignment. The secondary is probably the strongest unit in this group, with safety Rod Heard II. Coco Azema suffered a season-ending injury and returns to the back five, along with Jeremiah Lewis (70 tackles).

Leading tackler (100) Bryce Gallagher returns at linebacker, along with Xander Mueller (87 tackles). Sean McLaughlin and Aidan Hubbard return at end, but the Wildcats only had one scholarship tackle on the roster, Najee Story, so they picked up Matt Lawson (Fresno State) and Richie Hagarty (Southern Illinois) in the portal. Braun wants this group to think less and play faster, but this group still lacks the speed to compete.

OUTLOOK

Northwestern lost 11 straight games last season after defeating Nebraska in the season opener held in Dublin, Ireland. They are 4-20 over the last two seasons. While the facilities have been upgraded, the product on the field was declining and apparently off the field as well. There were already five new assistant coaches on defense, including Braun. Now the program's leader over the last 17 years is gone. Perhaps, the Wildcats show character to rally and give an honest effort week in and week out, but this season's prospects look bleak in Evanston.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 38.5

NATIONAL RANK: #80 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #13 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/3	at Rutgers	2	38.5
9/9	UTEP	-10.5	30
9/16	at Duke	11.5	47.5
9/23	MINNESOTA	10.5	50.5
9/30	PENN ST	21.5	61.5
10/7	HOWARD	-30.5	10.5
10/21	at Nebraska	9.5	46
10/28	MARYLAND	9.5	50
11/4	vs. Iowa	12.5	51.5
11/11	at Wisconsin	18.5	54
11/18	PURDUE	6	46
11/25	at Illinois	15	50

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.83
#46 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.8 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

300-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **1000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 4 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	12.8	129	28.1	68
Yards Per Point	25.9	131	13.4	90
Plays Per Game	74.2	31		
Time of Possession	29:01	84		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.5%	78	43.0%	104
Total Yards Per Game	331.5	105	376.1	50
Yards Per Play	4.5	119	5.5	66
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.5	43		
Rush Yards Per Game	121.5	96	199.7	113
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	121	4.8	100
Pass Attempts Per Game	34	46		
Completion %	58.3%	87	58.2%	32
Passing Yards Per Game	210.1	89	176.4	10
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.2	113	7.1	55
Turnovers	2.4	128	1	113

2022 RESULTS

SU: 1-11, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	vs. Nebraska (11)	31-28	W	W
9/10	DUKE (-10)	23-31	L	L
9/17	S ILLINOIS (-13.5)	24-31	L	L
9/24	MIAMI OHIO (-8)	14-17	L	L
10/1	at Penn St (25)	7-17	L	W
10/8	WISCONSIN (10.5)	7-42	L	L
10/22	at Maryland (14)	24-31	L	W
10/29	at Iowa (11)	13-33	L	L
11/5	OHIO ST (37.5)	7-21	L	W
11/12	at Minnesota (17)	3-31	L	L
11/19	at Purdue (17.5)	9-17	L	W
11/26	ILLINOIS (15)	3-41	L	L

OHIO STATE
BUCKEYES

BY WES REYNOLDS

Ohio State was a missed field goal away from advancing to the National Championship Game. They were 11-2 and finished fourth in the AP Poll, but that is not good enough in Columbus, as the Buckeyes went away empty-handed last year in the trophy department.

Three first-round picks – quarterback CJ Stroud, wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba, and tackle Paris Johnson Jr. – are gone from the offense, but Ohio State always reloads on that side of the ball and still has the best skill position group in the country courtesy of one of the nation's best recruiters in Brian Hartline, who takes over this year as offensive coordinator and returns seven starters. The big question is the same as it was last year in Columbus. Can this defense play at a championship level?

OFFENSE
Even without CJ Stroud, this will be a top-five offense in FBS. Kyle McCord is still the favorite to get the nod at quarterback, but Devin Brown will challenge. The offense starts with wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr.. (77-1263-14), McCord's high school teammate at St. Joseph's Prep in Philadelphia. Emeka Egbuka (74-1151-10), Julian Fleming (34-533-6), and tight end Cade Stover (36-406-5) round out the nation's top receiving corps.

The Buckeyes also have a two-headed monster in the backfield with TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan Williams (combined 1,396 rushing yards and 21 touchdowns).

The offensive line is a bit of a question mark, losing three starters, including both tackles, to the NFL, but there are loads of high-level recruits waiting to take their place. Hartline is the new offensive coordinator, but how much of the play-calling responsibilities will Ryan Day cede to him?

DEFENSE
Jim Knowles made some improvements with this group in his first season as defensive coordinator. However, this unit was gashed in its two biggest games – Michigan and Georgia – allowing an average of 43.5 points and 8.9 yards per play. Nevertheless, the group did allow 50 yards less per game while learning Knowles's new 4-2-5 scheme.

JT Tuimoloau and Jack Sawyer are arguably the best defensive end tandem in college football but need to produce more than the eight combined sacks of last season. Michael Hall Jr. is also a disruptor against the run. Tommy Eichenberg (120 tackles) and Steele Chambers had breakout seasons last year at linebacker.

Denzel Burke may be the shutdown corner they have been looking for the last few seasons. Jim Thorpe Award semifinalist Lathan Ransom is also back at safety, but Sonny Styles may be the star of the group.

OUTLOOK
Michigan has certainly closed the gap with Ohio State, but the Buckeyes still have the most talented roster in the conference, player for player. While both highly touted, McCord and Brown are still unproven at the quarterback position; however, the skill position players can make any signal-caller look great. The defense also must create a more substantial pass rush.

Ohio State has ended its season with back-to-back losses in consecutive years for the first time since 2011. The schedule is also much tougher with road trips to Notre Dame, Wisconsin, and of course, Michigan. The total of 10.5 is the right number. The Buckeyes likely lose at least one of those road trips and could be upset at home by a rejuvenated Penn State program.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 10.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 69

NATIONAL RANK: #2 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Indiana	-28	39
9/9	YOUNGSTOWN ST	-45	28
9/16	W KENTUCKY	-31.5	40.5
9/23	at Notre Dame	-8	58.5
10/7	MARYLAND	-22.5	50
10/14	at Purdue	-21.5	46
10/21	PENN ST	-10.5	61.5
10/28	at Wisconsin	-13	54
11/4	at Rutgers	-29	38.5
11/11	MICHIGAN ST	-26.5	46
11/18	MINNESOTA	-21.5	50.5
11/25	at Michigan	1	67

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.65
#17 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.4 / 0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+165 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

+650 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 14
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	44.2	2	21	17
Yards Per Point	11.1	1	15.3	41
Plays Per Game	68.3	93		
Time of Possession	30:44	46		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.2%	26	30.0%	8
Total Yards Per Game	490.7	9	321.5	12
Yards Per Play	7.2	1	5	29
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.8	70		
Rush Yards Per Game	192.4	27	121.1	23
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.4	9	3.5	21
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.5	69		
Completion %	66.8%	11	58.9%	46
Passing Yards Per Game	298.3	12	200.5	26
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.5	3	7.2	67
Turnovers	0.8	7	1.4	68

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-2, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 10-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	NOTRE DAME (-17)	21-10	W	L
9/10	ARKANSAS ST (-44.5)	45-12	W	L
9/17	TOLEDO (-31)	77-21	W	W
9/24	WISCONSIN (-19)	52-21	W	W
10/1	RUTGERS (-39)	49-10	W	T
10/8	at Michigan St (-27.5)	49-20	W	W
10/22	IOWA (-29)	54-10	W	W
10/29	at Penn St (-16)	44-31	W	L
11/5	at Northwestern (-37.5)	21-7	W	L
11/12	INDIANA (-40)	56-14	W	W
11/19	at Maryland (-26)	43-30	W	L
11/26	MICHIGAN (-9)	23-45	L	L
12/31	vs. Georgia (5)	41-42	L	W

PENN STATE
NITTANY LIONS

HEAD COACH: JAMES FRANKLIN (10TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE YURCICH
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MANNY DIAZ / ANTHONY POINDEXTER

BY WES REYNOLDS

After two down years in Happy Valley, James Franklin and the Nittany Lions re-emerged with an 11-2 season and a Rose Bowl victory over Utah. On the downside, they did not beat Michigan or Ohio State and were swept by the "big two" for the second straight season.

Despite still being picked in their usual spot of third in the Big Ten East, expectations are high in State College with five-star Drew Allar, a former Mr. Football in Ohio, taking over at quarterback, plus the rediscovery of the running game led by Nicholas Singleton and Kaytron Allen. Manny Diaz also revitalized the defense in his first year as defensive coordinator. Franklin could have his best team at Penn State this year, but they are 3-9 combined against Michigan and Ohio State since 2017.

OFFENSE
True freshmen Singleton and Allen combined to rush for 1,928 yards and 22 touchdowns last year, and Penn State's sluggish running game became a thing of the past. Expect that production to continue behind an offensive line that returns six that started at least five games in 2022, including likely first-rounder Olu Fashanu at left tackle. That is music to Allar's ears as he takes over at quarterback for Sean Clifford.

However, the Nittany Lions have struggled to develop receiver depth in recent years which led Franklin to not only make a position coach change there, but to also hit the transfer portal, nabbing Dante Cephas (Kent State) and Malik McClain (Florida State). KeAndre Lambert-Smith is the leading returner, and he had an 88-yard touchdown catch in the Rose Bowl. Penn State is always good at tight end and will be again with Theo Johnson and Tyler Warren.

DEFENSE
Diaz returns eight starters from a group that ranked in the top 10 nationally for points allowed, yards per play, red zone defense, takeaways, and opponent completion percentage. Safety Keaton Ellis and corner Kalen King (21 passes defended – No. 1 in Big Ten) return for a secondary that only gave up 12 touchdown passes last season, leading the Nittany Lions to rank second nationally in pass efficiency defense. They will have to replace Joey Porter Jr. and Ji'Ayir Brown though.

Outside linebacker Abdul Carter (6.5 sacks, 10.5 TFL) had a breakout season last year. Curtis Jacobs (four sacks) returns alongside him. Up front, Penn State brings back 10 of their top 12 linemen, including ends Adisa Isaac and Chop Robinson, who combined for 9.5 sacks and 21 tackles for loss. Dani Dennis-Sutton could emerge as the next great pass rusher in the program as he dominated the Spring Game.

OUTLOOK
Penn State's talent is not that far below Michigan or Ohio State. In fact, at most positions, it is on par. However, toughness has not been on par with those programs until it showed late last season. The Nittany Lions played a lot more physically last year and a lot less finesse. Michigan started doing that a couple of years ago and they have had two straight CFP appearances.

If Allar lives up to expectations, Penn State has the team to challenge for its first Big Ten title since 2016 and could be a dark horse CFP contender. They must at least win one of the two against Michigan and Ohio State, but this year they could win both.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 61.5

NATIONAL RANK: #8 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	WEST VIRGINIA	-19.5	45
9/9	DELAWARE	-36.5	27.5
9/16	at Illinois	-9	50
9/23	IOWA	-12	51.5
9/30	at Northwestern	-21.5	38.5
10/14	MASSACHUSETTS	-47	17.5
10/21	at Ohio St	10.5	69
10/28	INDIANA	-25	39
11/4	at Maryland	-9.5	50
11/11	MICHIGAN	3.5	67
11/18	RUTGERS	-25.5	38.5
11/24	vs. Michigan St	-15	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.30** #51 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.5 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+600 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

25-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16
OFFENSE: 8
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	35.8	15	18.2	9
Yards Per Point	12.1	7	17.8	10
Plays Per Game	71.6	53		
Time of Possession	30:36	51		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.8%	76	33.5%	21
Total Yards Per Game	433.8	32	323.8	14
Yards Per Play	6.1	26	4.4	3
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.5	53		
Rush Yards Per Game	181.2	40	112.2	16
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	37	3.3	13
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.5	57		
Completion %	64.0%	34	52.0%	2
Passing Yards Per Game	252.5	45	211.6	36
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.8	42	5.8	4
Turnovers	1.1	22	2	8

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-2, ATS: 9-3, O/U: 9-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	at Purdue (-3.5)	35-31	W	W
9/10	OHIO U (-28)	46-10	W	W
9/17	at Auburn (-2.5)	41-12	W	W
9/24	C MICHIGAN (-28)	33-14	W	L
10/1	NORTHWESTERN (-25)	17-7	W	L
10/15	at Michigan (7)	17-41	L	L
10/22	MINNESOTA (-5.5)	45-17	W	W
10/29	OHIO ST (16)	31-44	L	W
11/5	at Indiana (-14)	45-14	W	W
11/12	MARYLAND (-10.5)	30-0	W	W
11/19	at Rutgers (-18.5)	55-10	W	W
11/26	MICHIGAN ST (-19)	35-16	W	T
1/2	vs. Utah (-1.5)	35-21	W	W

PURDUE
BOILERMAKERS

BY WES REYNOLDS

The allure of returning home to his alma mater was too much for Jeff Brohm to turn down, as he is now back at Louisville. Brohm was clearly an offensive-first guy, so what typically happens is that the next hire is the opposite, and Ryan Walters is a defense-first coach, having served last as the defensive coordinator at Illinois.

The Boilermakers benefitted from the easiest schedule and won the battle of attrition that was the Big Ten West in 2022. They ended their season being blown out by Michigan in the Big Ten Championship Game and embarrassed in the Citrus Bowl by LSU, 63-7. Only 11 starters (6 offense, 5 defense) come back for Walters and his new staff's first year in West Lafayette.

OFFENSE

Although the Brohms (head coach Jeff and offensive coordinator brother Brian) are gone, Purdue will still throw the ball a great deal. New offensive coordinator Graham Harrell comes in from West Virginia, and his offenses are more balanced. However, Harrell played at Texas Tech, where he learned this Air Raid offense under the late Mike Leach.

Aidan O'Connell has gone to the NFL, but Hudson Card (1,523 yards, 11 TDs in three seasons) transfers in from Texas and will inherit the starting job. Devin Mockobee (195-968-9) is a former walk-on but is probably the best back Purdue has had in years. Tyrone Tracy Jr. also moves from receiver to running back to give a speed option and complement Mockobee's inside running. Four starters return up front, so perhaps there will be a more run-heavy emphasis at least early in the season. TJ Sheffield (46-480-4) and Mershawn Rice (23-283-1) are the leading returning receivers.

DEFENSE

Kevin Kane comes in with Walters from the Illinois staff and will serve as the new defensive coordinator. He likes to put five players at or around the line scrimmage with a 3-4 scheme. Under Walters, Illinois led the nation in scoring defense and were third for total defense in 2022.

The strength of this group is at outside linebacker, as Kydran Jenkins (four sacks, seven QB hurries, forced fumble) and potential star Nic Caraway return. In the secondary, Purdue returns safeties Cam Allen (three interceptions, two fumble recoveries) and leading tackler Sanoussi Kane (72 tackles, 4.5 TFLs). Salim Turner-Muhammad transfers in from Stanford to start at corner. The defensive line is brand new, and transfer Isaiah Nichols (Arkansas) will need to make an immediate impact.

OUTLOOK

Brohm always looked at Purdue as a stepping stone, and a parting of the ways could benefit both sides here. The Boilers will be better defensively than most would think. They had to rely on the portal a little more with the coaching change in its first year. The schedule is tough with a road trip to Virginia Tech and having to play Ohio State and Michigan, which is why the 5.5-win total is heavily juiced to the Under, but this could be the surprising team in the West. It will all depend on how quickly Card picks up the offense.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 46

NATIONAL RANK: #50 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	FRESNO ST	-5.5	42.5
9/9	at Virginia Tech	-4.5	39.5
9/16	SYRACUSE	-1.5	47
9/22	WISCONSIN	6	54
9/30	ILLINOIS	2	50
10/7	at Iowa	8	51.5
10/14	OHIO ST	21.5	69
10/28	at Nebraska	1.5	46
11/4	at Michigan	24	67
11/11	MINNESOTA	2.5	50.5
11/18	at Northwestern	-6	38.5
11/25	INDIANA	-9.5	39

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **49.28** #4 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

100-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 11

OFFENSE: 6

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.3	83	29.5	84
Yards Per Point	16.1	109	13.1	106
Plays Per Game	77.1	14		
Time of Possession	31:46	26		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.8%	87	35.8%	39
Total Yards Per Game	390.5	60	384.6	64
Yards Per Play	5.1	89	5.8	98
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.5	100		
Rush Yards Per Game	113.2	105	149.6	58
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	101	4.4	88
Pass Attempts Per Game	42.4	6		
Completion %	62.3%	49	58.0%	31
Passing Yards Per Game	277.3	21	235	77
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.5	98	7.7	99
Turnovers	1.7	100	1.3	79

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-6, ATS: 5-9, O/U: 9-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	PENN ST (3.5)	31-35	L	L
9/10	INDIANA ST (-37)	56-0	W	W
9/17	at Syracuse (1.5)	29-32	L	L
9/24	FLA ATLANTIC (-16)	28-26	W	L
10/1	at Minnesota (9)	20-10	W	W
10/8	at Maryland (3)	31-29	W	W
10/15	NEBRASKA (-14)	43-37	W	L
10/22	at Wisconsin (1.5)	24-35	L	L
11/5	IOWA (-3.5)	3-24	L	L
11/12	at Illinois (6)	31-24	W	W
11/19	NORTHWESTERN (-17.5)	17-9	W	L
11/26	at Indiana (-10)	30-16	W	W
12/3	vs. Michigan (15)	22-43	L	L
1/2	vs. LSU (15)	7-63	L	L

RUTGERS
SCARLET KNIGHTS

HEAD COACH: GREG SCHIANO (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KIRK CIARROCCA
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE HARASYMIAK

BY WES REYNOLDS

In the mid-2000s, Greg Schiano turned around a dormant Rutgers program and led them to winning seasons and bowl appearances in six of his last seven seasons in Piscataway before leaving to become the head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2012. However, that was when Rutgers was a member of the Big East. Engineering a turnaround, the second time around, is substantially more difficult in the Big Ten, as Schiano is finding out. There has been a great deal of turnover in the coaching staff in recent years and the buzz around Schiano's second act has dissipated.

OFFENSE

Rutgers had one of the worst offenses in the Power Five last season, averaging just 13 points per game (128th nationally) and 254.5 yards per game (130th nationally) against FBS opponents. Schiano revamped the staff and brought back Kirk Ciarrocca as offensive coordinator for his second stint with the program, as well as receivers coach Dave Brock and offensive line coach Pat Flaherty.

Gavin Wimsatt returns at quarterback but only completed 44.8 percent of his passes (second lowest in FBS). That should improve with a more run-based offense with simpler concepts. The Scarlet Knights do lose their top three receivers so expect H-back/tight end Johnny Langan and Northern Illinois transfer Naseim Brantley to pick up more of the load. Samuel Brown V was emerging as a potential star back before a foot injury midseason.

DEFENSE

Eight starters are back for a solid defense that unlike the offense keeps its entire coaching staff intact. Also, 14 of the top 19 tacklers are back, including linebackers Deion Jennings (91 tackles) and Tyreem Powell (71 tackles, three sacks). Mohamed Toure and Moses Walker also return from knee injuries to provide depth for a strong backer group. This unit ranked top 25 in multiple categories last season but often ran out of gas because the anemic offense forced them to be on the field far too often.

OUTLOOK

The defense will keep this team in some games, so they will have opportunities to cover as big underdogs, but the schedule is tough with a home date versus Virginia Tech and crossover games on the road against Big Ten West opponents Wisconsin and Iowa.

Offensively, they are still a work in progress despite the upgrade at offensive coordinator with Ciarrocca. They did not bring in any help at quarterback from the transfer portal, and that will show again because both Wimsatt and Evan Simon played poorly last year. The Rutgers brass still has way too high expectations, and this is going to take time to get this program competitive in the Big Ten.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 38.5

NATIONAL RANK: #81 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #14 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/3	NORTHWESTERN	-2	38.5
9/9	TEMPLE	-7	33.5
9/16	VIRGINIA TECH	-1	39.5
9/23	at Michigan	31.5	67
9/30	WAGNER	-54	-13
10/7	at Wisconsin	18	54
10/14	MICHIGAN ST	5.5	46
10/21	at Indiana	2.5	39
11/4	OHIO ST	29	69
11/11	at Iowa	16	51.5
11/18	at Penn St	25.5	61.5
11/25	MARYLAND	9.5	50

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.65 #47 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.8 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

990-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 14

OFFENSE: 6 QB

DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	OFFENSE RANK	DEFENSE STAT	DEFENSE RANK
Points Per Game	13	128	31.3	103
Yards Per Point	19.7	124	11.8	126
Plays Per Game	64.3	122		
Time of Possession	28:54	87		
3rd Down Conv. %	25.8%	129	35.0%	31
Total Yards Per Game	255.5	130	368.5	45
Yards Per Play	4	129	5.2	47
Rush Attempts Per Game	34	88		
Rush Yards Per Game	110.9	109	154.3	67
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	117	4.3	72
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.9	100		
Completion %	49.8%	124	59.2%	50
Passing Yards Per Game	144.5	123	214.2	40
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.2	128	6.6	26
Turnovers	1.7	101	1.1	104

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-6, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Boston College (9)	22-21	W	W
9/10	WAGNER (-48.5)	66-7	W	W
9/17	at Temple (-18.5)	16-14	W	L
9/24	IOWA (7.5)	10-27	L	L
10/1	at Ohio St (39)	10-49	L	T
10/7	NEBRASKA (3)	13-14	L	W
10/22	INDIANA (-3)	24-17	W	W
10/29	at Minnesota (14)	0-31	L	L
11/5	MICHIGAN (26)	17-52	L	L
11/12	at Michigan St (10)	21-27	L	W
11/19	PENN ST (18.5)	10-55	L	L
11/26	at Maryland (14.5)	0-37	L	L

WISCONSIN
BADGERS

HEAD COACH: LUKE FICKELL (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHIL LONGO
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: COLIN HITSCHLER / MIKE TRESSEL

BY WES REYNOLDS

The Badgers had a disappointing season at 7-6. Paul Chryst was let go midseason, and former Badger and defensive coordinator Jim Leonhard served as interim coach. Wisconsin elected to go outside the family and go big with the hire of Luke Fickell, who took non-Power Five Cincinnati to the CFP two years ago. Fickell is back in the Big Ten, where he spent nearly two decades as a player and coach at Ohio State. Expectations are certainly high in Madison with this hire, and they are hungry for a winner considering the Badgers suffered their first losing conference record since 2008.

OFFENSE

Fickell hired North Carolina offensive coordinator Phil Longo to install an up-tempo Air Raid attack. The trigger for said attack is SMU transfer Tanner Mordecai, who threw for 7,152 yards and 72 touchdowns the past two seasons. Despite the philosophical change on offense, this is Wisconsin after all, and they will still run the football frequently.

Fickell brought two transfers from Cincinnati – Jake Renfro and Joe Huber – to start on the offensive line. Braelon Allen and Chez Mellusi are one of the nation's best running back tandems, combining for 3,798 yards and 30 touchdowns over the past two seasons.

The Badgers return their top three receivers with Chimere Dike, Skyler Bell, and Keontez Lewis, but they only combined for 97 receptions. Fickell and Longo hit the portal to bring in Bryson Green (Oklahoma State), Will Pauling and Quincy Burroughs (Cincinnati), and CJ Williams (USC).

DEFENSE

Mike Tressel replaces Leonhard as defensive coordinator and will blend some of his successful schemes with the 3-3-5 that he and Fickell used with a lot of success in Cincinnati. Inside linebacker Maema Njongmeta led last year's group with 95 tackles. He returns along with Jordan Turner (68 tackles). Strong safety Hunter Wohler missed seven games with a leg injury last year and now inherits a hybrid safety/linebacker role. Alexander Smith and Ricardo Hallman return as the starting corners. Up front, defensive linemen Isaiah Mullens, Rodas Johnson, and James Thompson Jr.. combined for 14 tackles for loss last season but will be expected to make more plays.

OUTLOOK

Fickell looks to be the most impactful new hire in 2023. His offenses at Cincinnati were very good with less talent than he has and will be able to recruit to Wisconsin. He has always been an excellent defensive mind dating back to his time at Ohio State. It will be interesting to see how Wisconsin balances an offense built to run the football and the new installation of the Air Raid.

The Badgers avoid Penn State and Michigan on the schedule and get Ohio State, the week after the Buckeyes host the Nittany Lions, at home, on October 28. Fickell gets a crack at his alma mater that did not trust him to be the head coach before they hired Urban Meyer. The nonconference schedule does have a tricky early trip to Washington State, but overall, this is a manageable slate. The West is wide open, but the Badgers, despite all the transition, still are the justifiable favorite as they have the most talent in the division.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 54

NATIONAL RANK: #19 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BUFFALO	-25	31.5
9/9	at Washington St	-5.5	46
9/16	GA SOUTHERN	-24	33
9/22	at Purdue	-6	46
10/7	RUTGERS	-18	38.5
10/14	IOWA	-5	51.5
10/21	at Illinois	-1.5	50
10/28	OHIO ST	13	69
11/4	at Indiana	-13	39
11/11	NORTHWESTERN	-18.5	38.5
11/18	NEBRASKA	-11	46
11/25	at Minnesota	-1	50.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.37** #50 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.7 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+750 ODDS TO WIN BIG TEN

70-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 17

OFFENSE: 9
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	25.3	74	21.9	24
Yards Per Point	14.1	59	14.1	70
Plays Per Game	66.5	107		
Time of Possession	31:15	34		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.0%	48	32.5%	15
Total Yards Per Game	357.3	89	308.6	9
Yards Per Play	5.4	66	4.6	11
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.7	41		
Rush Yards Per Game	176.3	45	102.8	10
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	48	3	2
Pass Attempts Per Game	25.8	119		
Completion %	56.1%	102	58.5%	39
Passing Yards Per Game	180.9	115	205.8	30
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7	78	7	51
Turnovers	1.5	72	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	ILLINOIS ST (-36.5)	38-0	W	W
9/10	WASHINGTON ST (-17.5)	14-17	L	L
9/17	NEW MEXICO ST (-37.5)	66-7	W	W
9/24	at Ohio St (19)	21-52	L	L
10/1	ILLINOIS (-6)	10-34	L	L
10/8	at Northwestern (-10.5)	42-7	W	W
10/15	at Michigan St (-7)	28-34	L	L
10/22	PURDUE (-1.5)	35-24	W	W
11/5	MARYLAND (-5)	23-10	W	W
11/12	at Iowa (1)	10-24	L	L
11/19	at Nebraska (-10)	15-14	W	L
11/26	MINNESOTA (-3)	16-23	L	L
12/27	vs. Oklahoma St (-5.5)	24-17	W	W

BIG 12 BETTING PREVIEW

Oddsmakers and the Big 12 media poll agree on Texas as the preseason favorite to win the conference, but it's unlikely to be that simple. Often underachievers, the Longhorns have not won the league since 2009. Will coach Steve Sarkisian, who's 13-12 after a shaky two seasons in Austin, end the embarrassing dry spell? Sarkisian is not the best coach in the conference, and third-year sophomore Quinn Ewers is probably not the top quarterback in the conference, yet Texas has the most talented team on paper. This is the Longhorns' last chance because Texas and Oklahoma are leaving the Big 12 for the SEC after this season.

The new-look Big 12 has 14 teams, so it's bigger — with additions BYU, Cincinnati, Houston and UCF — and could briefly be better than ever. Oklahoma, which won six straight conference titles from 2015 to 2020, and Texas often shape the national perception of this league. However, Kansas State is the conference's defending champion, and TCU reached last season's national championship game. The gap between the Big 12 and SEC was obvious in the bowl season when the Horned Frogs were crushed 65-7 by Georgia and the Wildcats were manhandled by Alabama. The preseason media poll ranks Kansas State second, Oklahoma third, Texas Tech fourth and TCU fifth. The Wildcats have arguably the conference's best coach in Chris Klieman, and the Sooners have the top-rated quarterback, Dillon Gabriel.

DraftKings lists Texas at 22-1 odds to win the national championship. The Longhorns are +105 favorites in the Big 12, followed by Oklahoma (+340), Kansas State (+500), Texas Tech (12-1), TCU (16-1) and Baylor (18-1). Texas can make an early statement, for better or worse, in its heavyweight fight at Alabama on September 9. The Longhorns should have won last season's battle in Austin, but that was a familiar frustration for a program that has allowed too many opportunities to slip away.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
TEXAS	62.5	49.02 (6)	9.4	2.6	7.2	1.8	9.5
OKLAHOMA	57.5	45.09 (40)	9.4	2.6	6.6	2.4	9.5
TEXAS TECH	54	47.5 (20)	7.6	4.4	5.3	3.7	7.5
KANSAS ST	53	47.58 (18)	7.6	4.4	5.2	3.8	7.5
BAYLOR	52	43.78 (58)	7.4	4.6	5.1	3.9	7.5
TCU	53	45.39 (36)	7.5	4.5	4.8	4.2	7.5
UCF	50	44.03 (56)	7.2	4.8	4.7	4.3	6.5
OKLAHOMA ST	47.5	44.51 (48)	6.7	5.3	4.5	4.5	6.5
IOWA ST	48.5	48.85 (7)	5.9	6.1	3.8	5.2	5.5
CINCINNATI	43.5	44.1 (55)	5.6	6.4	3.5	5.5	5.5
BYU	46	45.53 (35)	5.6	6.4	3.4	5.6	5.5
WEST VIRGINIA	45	46.83 (24)	4.9	7.1	3.3	5.7	4.5
KANSAS	46	47.9 (15)	5.3	6.7	3.1	5.9	6
HOUSTON	43.5	46.77 (25)	4.9	7.1	2.7	6.3	4.5

BAYLOR
BEARS

BY MATT YOUMANS

After a 12-2 finish and Sugar Bowl win in coach Dave Aranda's second season, some picked Baylor to win the Big 12 in 2022. The Bears were 6-3 before dropping their final four games to Kansas State, TCU, Texas and Air Force. The 29-28 loss to the Horned Frogs in Waco was a big disappointment, but it showed Baylor's potential. Aranda has the quarterback in place for a bounce-back year.

OFFENSE

He's not hyped as one of the league's elite quarterbacks, but junior Blake Shapen has that ability. Shapen passed for 18 touchdowns last year and will get better. Dominic Richardson, a transfer from Oklahoma State, could be the top running back. Richard Reese, the leading returning rusher with 972 yards and 14 touchdowns, also will get carries in a backfield loaded with talent. While the tight ends and wideouts are experienced, the line is inexperienced and may go through growing pains. Still, the offense should stay around last year's 32.2 points per game because Shapen is more of a passing threat, and the ground attack will be potent.

DEFENSE

Aranda, a former defensive coordinator at LSU and Wisconsin, can be counted on to develop a strong defense. He's got a few of the conference's best to build around in senior end Gabe Hall and linebackers Matt Jones and Mike Smith. Only five starters are returning, but Aranda will get the job done.

OUTLOOK

Baylor is picked sixth in the league's preseason media poll and has a chance to crack the top four with some close-game luck, unlike a year ago when it was more bad luck. Texas State and Long Island are a couple of cupcake home opponents. The Bears should be live 'dogs in September home games against Utah and Texas. If Aranda is 3-3 through six games, he'll be OK with that coming out of the bye because the schedule softens a lot in the second half of the season. Aside from a November 11 game at Kansas State, Baylor will have a good shot to win five of six down the stretch and at least push the win total of 7, so lean Over. In a league full of good quarterbacks, the Bears will need Shapen to step up and win some of the close ones.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 52

NATIONAL RANK: #26 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	TEXAS ST UNIV	-28	27.5
9/9	UTAH	4	59
9/16	LIU POST	-53.5	2
9/23	TEXAS	7	62.5
9/30	at UCF	0.5	50
10/7	TEXAS TECH	-1.5	54
10/21	at Cincinnati	-5.5	43.5
10/28	IOWA ST	-6.5	48.5
11/4	HOUSTON	-11.5	43.5
11/11	at Kansas St	4	53
11/18	at TCU	3	53
11/25	WEST VIRGINIA	-10.5	45

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 43.78
#58 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.2 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

18-1 — ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

200-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	29.1	51	28.3	72
Yards Per Point	13.8	46	13.5	87
Plays Per Game	73.1	40		
Time of Possession	31:40	28		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.7%	64	47.5%	122
Total Yards Per Game	400.8	50	382.2	59
Yards Per Play	5.5	58	5.3	53
Rush Attempts Per Game	41	20		
Rush Yards Per Game	176.2	46	153.3	65
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	59	3.9	45
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.4	79		
Completion %	61.6%	55	62.4%	91
Passing Yards Per Game	224.6	71	228.8	63
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	59	7.4	75
Turnovers	1.4	59	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 9-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	ALBANY (-42.5)	69-10	W	W
9/10	at BYU (2.5)	20-26	L	L
9/17	TEXAS ST UNIV (-30)	42-7	W	W
9/24	at Iowa St (2.5)	31-24	W	W
10/1	OKLAHOMA ST (-2.5)	25-36	L	L
10/13	at West Virginia (-3)	40-43	L	L
10/22	KANSAS (-10.5)	35-23	W	W
10/29	at Texas Tech (1.5)	45-17	W	W
11/5	at Oklahoma (3)	38-35	W	W
11/12	KANSAS ST (-2.5)	3-31	L	L
11/19	TCU (2)	28-29	L	W
11/25	at Texas (10)	27-38	L	L
12/22	vs. Air Force (-3.5)	15-30	L	L

BYU
COUGARS

BY MATT YOUMANS

BYU could get buyer's remorse about joining a power conference, especially a brutally tough one. The Cougars went a combined 29-9 from 2020 to 2022, but their strength of schedule is seriously cranked up this year with one SEC opponent and nine in the Big 12. The good news for coach Kalani Sitake is he has 15 starters returning and two cupcake opponents on the schedule in early September.

OFFENSE

Kedon Slovis, who had success early in his career at USC before transferring to Pittsburgh, makes his third campus stop in Provo. Slovis posted pedestrian numbers last year for the Panthers and is not guaranteed to win the starting quarterback job, but he's the favorite going to camp. Slovis passed for 30 touchdowns as a USC freshman in 2019, yet his numbers have declined each year. His competitors are junior college transfer Jake Retzlaff and Boise State transfer Cade Fennegan.

The Cougars must replace Jaren Hall, who passed for 31 touchdowns last season before becoming a fifth-round pick by the Minnesota Vikings. BYU returns eight starters and has its typical big, physical offensive line. Running back Aidan Robbins transferred from UNLV, where he rushed for 1,011 yards, and should make a major impact. The pass-catching group looks solid with wideouts Kody Epps and Keanu Hill and 6-6 tight end Isaac Rex. While the offensive numbers are likely to decline against a tougher schedule, BYU could be dangerous if the QB position is in good hands.

DEFENSE

Stopping the run was a problem a year ago, and that was never more evident than in a 52-35 home loss to Arkansas. Junior end Tyler Batty is the top returner on a line that adds Boise State transfers Jackson Cravens and Isaiah Bagnah. The unit returns seven starters and appears improved, but the move up to the Big 12 means there are better opposing offenses on the schedule.

OUTLOOK

The Cougars can handle a power conference, which they proved by going 5-0 against Pac-12 opponents in 2021. BYU also beat Baylor in double overtime last season. Sitake is not a strong game-management coach and could get exposed further in the Big 12. The schedule is softer in the first half when BYU will be favored at home against Sam Houston, Southern Utah and Cincinnati. If the Cougars are favorites in only one of their final seven games, it's tough to find six wins, so this call is a lean Under the total.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 46

NATIONAL RANK: #53 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	SAM HOUSTON ST	-25	23
9/9	S UTAH	-33.5	15.5
9/16	at Arkansas	8	52
9/23	at Kansas	1.5	46
9/29	CINCINNATI	-5	43.5
10/14	at TCU	9	53
10/21	TEXAS TECH	5	54
10/28	at Texas	19	62.5
11/4	at West Virginia	2	45
11/11	IOWA ST	0	48.5
11/18	OKLAHOMA	9.5	57.5
11/25	at Oklahoma St	4	47.5

RETURNING
STARTERS 14   OFFENSE: 7   DEFENSE: 7

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.53** #35 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

400-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	/RANK	DEFENSE STAT	/RANK
Points Per Game	29.6	47	29.8	86
Yards Per Point	13.7	43	13.7	82
Plays Per Game	63.3	125		
Time of Possession	28:55	86		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.5%	29	48.2%	124
Total Yards Per Game	405.7	44	407.3	86
Yards Per Play	6.4	17	5.8	93
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.6	99		
Rush Yards Per Game	173.2	50	181.8	100
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	10	4.6	96
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.8	88		
Completion %	65.6%	19	69.5%	128
Passing Yards Per Game	232.5	60	225.5	57
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.8	40	7.6	85
Turnovers	0.7	3	0.9	120

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 5-8, O/U: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at South Florida (-11.5)	50-21	W	W
9/10	BAYLOR (-2.5)	26-20	W	W
9/17	at Oregon (4)	20-41	L	L
9/24	WYOMING (-20.5)	38-24	W	L
9/29	UTAH ST (-26)	38-26	W	L
10/8	vs. Notre Dame (3.5)	20-28	L	L
10/15	ARKANSAS (-1)	35-52	L	L
10/22	at Liberty (-7)	14-41	L	L
10/28	EAST CAROLINA (-3)	24-27	L	L
11/5	at Boise St (9.5)	31-28	W	W
11/19	UTAH TECH (-38.5)	52-26	W	L
11/26	at Stanford (-6.5)	35-26	W	W
12/17	vs. SMU (4.5)	24-23	W	W

CINCINNATI
BEARCATS

HEAD COACH: SCOTT SATTERFIELD (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRAD GLENN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRYAN BROWN / NATE FUQUA

BY MATT YOUMANS

It's a new era at Cincinnati, and new will not mean improved in this case. Scott Satterfield was hired from Louisville to replace Luke Fickell, who coached the Bearcats to a 31-5 record the past three years. Fickell left for Wisconsin prior to Cincinnati's 24-7 loss to Louisville in the Fenway Bowl. Satterfield did a respectable job as Cardinals coach, but few fans there were sad to see him go.

OFFENSE

Desmond Ridder and Ben Bryant were highly successful quarterbacks for the Bearcats. The new starter will be Emory Jones, who won six games at Florida in 2021 but went 1-6 at Arizona State last year before transferring. Jones has posted solid passing numbers yet is more of a running threat. Cincinnati returns only two offensive starters after losing its leading rusher and every wide receiver who contributed last year. Corey Kiner, a former LSU transfer, will be the starting running back in Satterfield's ground-based attack. Unless Jones turns into an electrifying playmaker in a new system, this should be one of the Big 12's worst offenses.

DEFENSE

It's not all bad news for the Bearcats, who expect their defensive line to be among the league's best. Jowon Briggs and Dontay Corleone anchor the front, which is the strength of the team. Six starters come back, but linebacker Ivan Pace will be difficult to replace after the All-American led the team with 137 tackles and 10 sacks. A defense that allowed only 16.9 points per game in 2021 and 20.6 points per game last year will continue to slip without Fickell and the NFL-caliber talent he recruited to Cincinnati.

OUTLOOK

While the move up to the Big 12 obviously means a much more challenging schedule, the Bearcats do miss Texas, Kansas State and TCU this season. A case can be made for Cincinnati winning six games as it has Eastern Kentucky, Miami (OH), Iowa State, Central Florida and Kansas on the home schedule. On the road portion, Houston and West Virginia are two of the weakest teams in the conference, and BYU is far from unbeatable.

However, the reality is the Bearcats are rebuilding, and Satterfield is walking into an unenviable situation following Fickell and with only nine starters returning. Satterfield was highly regarded when he left Appalachian State, though he was exposed to a degree at Louisville. He's fortunate to draw a manageable schedule but is likely headed for a losing season. Under 5.5 is the bet.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **43.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #63 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #13 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	E KENTUCKY	-23	23.5
9/9	at Pittsburgh	6	47.5
9/16	MIAMI OHIO	-12.5	34.5
9/23	OKLAHOMA	11	57.5
9/29	at BYU	5	46
10/14	IOWA ST	1.5	48.5
10/21	BAYLOR	5.5	52
10/28	at Oklahoma St	6.5	47.5
11/4	UCF	3	50
11/11	at Houston	1.5	43.5
11/18	at West Virginia	4	45
11/25	KANSAS	-1.5	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.10** #55 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.4 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

120-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS **8**

OFFENSE: 2

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.4	69	21.5	19
Yards Per Point	13.6	41	15.9	25
Plays Per Game	68.3	92		
Time of Possession	28:47	91		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.1%	98	38.4%	60
Total Yards Per Game	360.2	86	342.3	27
Yards Per Play	5.3	78	4.5	7
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.7	98		
Rush Yards Per Game	121.7	95	154.2	66
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	87	3.8	35
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.7	53		
Completion %	58.2%	89	55.2%	12
Passing Yards Per Game	238.5	55	188.2	15
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	64	6	8
Turnovers	1.1	26	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 3-9, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Arkansas (6.5)	24-31	L	L
9/10	KENNESAW ST (-29)	63-10	W	W
9/17	vs. Miami Ohio (-24)	38-17	W	L
9/24	INDIANA (-16.5)	45-24	W	W
10/1	at Tulsa (-10)	31-21	W	T
10/8	SOUTH FLORIDA (-27)	28-24	W	L
10/22	at SMU (-3.5)	29-27	W	L
10/29	at UCF (2)	21-25	L	L
11/5	NAVY (-18)	20-10	W	L
11/11	EAST CAROLINA (-4.5)	27-25	W	L
11/19	at Temple (-17)	23-3	W	W
11/25	TULANE (1)	24-27	L	L
12/17	vs. Louisville (2.5)	7-24	L	L

HOUSTON
COUGARS

BY MATT YOUMANS

The Cougars and coach Dana Holgorsen have had a good two-year run, going a combined 20-7 with bowl victories over Auburn and Louisiana. Holgorsen will be playing to a different tune this season, however. Veteran quarterback Clayton Tune must be replaced, and only 12 starters return for a Houston team that is unlikely to return to a bowl game.

OFFENSE

Donovan Smith transferred to Houston after two years of riding a quarterback carousel at Texas Tech. The 6-5, 240-pound Smith was productive for the Red Raiders. In fact, Smith completed 36-of-58 passes for 350 yards and two touchdowns — and also rushed for 31 yards and a touchdown — in a 33-30 double-overtime victory over the Cougars in Lubbock last year.

Smith steps in for Tune, who finished the season by passing for 4,074 yards and 40 touchdowns while leading the team in rushing with 544 yards. Tune was a fifth-round pick by the Cardinals. Also lost to the NFL was leading receiver Tank Dell, who had 109 catches and 17 touchdowns before getting drafted in the third round by the Texans. West Virginia transfer Tony Mathis is the top running back, sophomore wideout Matthew Golden shows promise, and the starting line is made up of all seniors and juniors. The offense will decline from 36 points per game, but it should be fine and will compete in the Big 12.

DEFENSE

Junior end Nelson Ceaser is among seven returning starters for a defense that allowed 32.2 points per game and could be a problem. The move from the AAC means the Cougars will face better offenses this season, although Oklahoma is not on the schedule, so that's a plus.

OUTLOOK

The Cougars opened last season with a 37-35 triple-overtime win at Texas-San Antonio, and their home opener is against UTSA. Rice and Sam Houston are the other nonconference opponents. Houston has a manageable Big 12 home schedule against TCU, West Virginia, Texas, Cincinnati and Oklahoma State. Holgorsen's team might not win a league game on the road and faces Texas Tech, Kansas State, Baylor and UCF. The win total is correctly set at 4.5, so this is only a lean Over, with a 5-7 record appearing realistic. Don't expect the Cougars to go bowling again.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **43.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #64 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #14 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	TX-SAN ANTONIO	-0.5	44.5
9/9	at Rice	-8.5	33
9/16	TCU	8	53
9/23	SAM HOUSTON ST	-22	23
9/30	at Texas Tech	12.5	54
10/12	WEST VIRGINIA	-0.5	45
10/21	TEXAS	17	62.5
10/28	at Kansas St	12.5	53
11/4	at Baylor	11.5	52
11/11	CINCINNATI	-1.5	43.5
11/18	OKLAHOMA ST	2.5	47.5
11/25	at UCF	9	50

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **46.77** #25 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.9 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

200-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **12**

OFFENSE: 5

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	36.1	13	32.2	108
Yards Per Point	12.6	17	13.1	102
Plays Per Game	71	59		
Time of Possession	29:43	69		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.7%	20	43.0%	106
Total Yards Per Game	456.1	21	421.8	100
Yards Per Play	6.4	16	5.7	91
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.8	113		
Rush Yards Per Game	142.1	75	143.1	48
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	45	4.2	63
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.5	18		
Completion %	67.4%	8	63.7%	104
Passing Yards Per Game	314	7	278.7	120
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	24	7.6	88
Turnovers	1.5	70	1.1	110

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 5-8, O/U: 10-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Tx-San Antonio (-3.5)	37-35	W	L
9/10	at Texas Tech (4)	30-33	L	W
9/17	KANSAS (-8.5)	30-48	L	L
9/24	RICE (-17.5)	34-27	W	L
9/30	TULANE (-5.5)	24-27	L	L
10/7	at Memphis (1.5)	33-32	W	W
10/22	at Navy (-3)	38-20	W	W
10/29	SOUTH FLORIDA (-17.5)	42-27	W	L
11/5	at SMU (3.5)	63-77	L	L
11/12	TEMPLE (-20)	43-36	W	L
11/19	at East Carolina (6)	42-3	W	W
11/26	TULSA (-13)	30-37	L	L
12/23	vs. La Lafayette (-6)	23-16	W	W

IOWA STATE
CYCLONES

HEAD COACH: MATT CAMPBELL (8TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NATHAN SCHEELHAASE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JON HEACOCK

BY MATT YOUMANS

Once a hot coaching commodity, Matt Campbell opted to stay at Iowa State to continue building a successful program. Campbell might be regretting it. The Cyclones went 9-3 in 2020, when they lost to Oklahoma in the Big 12 title game and beat Oregon in the Fiesta Bowl. Campbell's record since is 11-14. Iowa State does bring back 15 starters, but those starters return from a 4-8 team, and Campbell does not have an elite quarterback.

OFFENSE

The Cyclones were at their best when they had future NFL stars Brock Purdy at quarterback and Breece Hall at running back. The offense dipped to 20.2 points per game last year, when Iowa State scored 14 points or fewer in seven games. Hunter Dekkers' development as a quarterback will define this unit, if the quarterback even sees the field. Dekkers looks like he could be hit with a suspension for violating the NCAA's gambling policy. That said, expect to see a lot of Rocco Becht or JJ Kohl this season. The two freshmen were previously battling for the backup job.

The return of the top two running backs — Jirehl Brock and Cartevious Norton – is obviously a positive, although neither is a star. Leading receiver Xavier Hutchinson, who had 107 catches for 1,171 yards and six touchdowns, will be missed. The biggest positive is an experienced and physical line that ranks in the top half of the Big 12. The offense will be improved, but that's not saying a lot after last year's misery.

DEFENSE

Will McDonald was the leader of the line, but he was the 15th overall pick in the first round by the Jets, and only one starter returns on the defensive front. The top returning player is junior cornerback TJ Tampa, who made the all-Big 12 second team. The defense kept the team in most games and allowed 20.3 points per game, even after surrendering 62 points in an embarrassing loss at TCU to end the year.

OUTLOOK

The first quarter of the schedule — Northern Iowa, Iowa, at Ohio, Oklahoma State — will be the Cyclones' chance to make hay. That's what happened last year, when Iowa State started 3-0, but then it lost five straight games and eight of nine. The offense should be improved, though not significantly, and the defense is a mystery.

The Cyclones will likely be in most games yet lose many of them, especially when they get into a Big 12 schedule that includes Oklahoma, TCU, Baylor, Kansas, Texas and Kansas State. It looks like 6-6 is the best-case scenario for Campbell, and it's always risky betting on a best-case scenario when the quarterback is mediocre, so this is a lean Under.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **48.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #42 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	N IOWA	-14	37
9/9	IOWA	0.5	51.5
9/16	at Ohio U	-10	36.5
9/23	OKLAHOMA ST	-3.5	47.5
9/30	at Oklahoma	11.5	57.5
10/7	TCU	2	53
10/14	at Cincinnati	-1.5	43.5
10/28	at Baylor	6.5	52
11/4	KANSAS	-5.5	46
11/11	at BYU	0	46
11/18	TEXAS	11	62.5
11/25	at Kansas St	7.5	53

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **48.85** #7 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.8 / 0.1** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **15**

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	18.2	119	21.2	18
Yards Per Point	19.8	125	13.3	94
Plays Per Game	75.5	22		
Time of Possession	32:04	20		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.2%	46	28.9%	5
Total Yards Per Game	360.7	84	282.5	2
Yards Per Play	4.8	107	4.6	8
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.5	101		
Rush Yards Per Game	101.8	117	108.2	15
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.1	122	3.1	5
Pass Attempts Per Game	40.7	10		
Completion %	64.3%	30	60.4%	64
Passing Yards Per Game	258.9	39	174.3	8
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	105	6.8	35
Turnovers	1.9	113	1.2	94

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 4-7, O/U: 3-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	SE MISSOURI ST (-33.5)	42-10	W	L
9/10	at Iowa (4)	10-7	W	W
9/17	OHIO U (-20)	43-10	W	W
9/24	BAYLOR (-2.5)	24-31	L	L
10/1	at Kansas (-3.5)	11-14	L	L
10/8	KANSAS ST (1)	9-10	L	T
10/15	at Texas (15.5)	21-24	L	W
10/29	OKLAHOMA (2)	13-27	L	L
11/5	WEST VIRGINIA (-6.5)	31-14	W	W
11/12	at Oklahoma St (-2.5)	14-20	L	L
11/19	TEXAS TECH (-3.5)	10-14	L	L
11/26	at TCU (9.5)	14-62	L	L

KANSAS
JAYHAWKS

BY MATT YOUMANS

The record shows Kansas had a losing season at 6-7, but the reality is it was a huge success. The Jayhawks went from 2-10 in coach Lance Leipold's first year to a bowl game for the first time since 2008. Leipold is a rising star, and he's got 17 starters returning, including 10 on offense. Despite a difficult schedule, Kansas should reach back-to-back bowls.

OFFENSE

Jalon Daniels' dual-threat playmaking was the primary reason the Jayhawks started 5-0. He went down to injury in the next game, a 38-31 loss to TCU, and the team lost six of seven to finish the regular season. Backup quarterback Jason Bean put up good numbers in Daniels' absence, and Daniels and Bean both return.

The top three running backs also come back, including Devin Neal, who rushed for 1,090 yards and nine touchdowns. The top three receivers and four of five linemen return for an offense that scored 35.6 points per game. Even in most of Kansas' losses, the offense was potent. The Jayhawks fell 52-42 at Oklahoma and 55-53 to Arkansas in the Liberty Bowl, a game Kansas covered as a 2.5-point underdog.

DEFENSE

The line lost all four starters and is being rebuilt with the help of transfers. All three starting linebackers and the four starters in the secondary return. It's worth mentioning the Jayhawks' top defensive player is junior corner Cobee Bryant. How a new-look line develops is important to Kansas' ability to pressure quarterbacks and stop the run, and the run defense was weak in the second half of last season.

OUTLOOK

The Jayhawks have a great opportunity to open 4-0 with home games against Missouri State, Illinois and BYU and a road game at Nevada. The September 30 trip to Texas calls for a brief history lesson. In 2021, Kansas stunned the Longhorns 57-56 as 31-point road dogs. Last year, the Longhorns got revenge with a 55-14 win in Lawrence.

Kansas' toughest remaining league games are at home versus Oklahoma, Texas Tech and Kansas State. Oklahoma State, Iowa State and Cincinnati are beatable opponents away from home. If Daniels stays healthy, the Jayhawks can win seven or eight, so go Over 6 with a push seemingly a worst-case scenario. Leipold, a coach worth betting on, is still building in his third year.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 46

NATIONAL RANK: #48 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	MISSOURI ST	-17.5	30.5
9/8	ILLINOIS	2.5	50
9/16	at Nevada	-16.5	26.5
9/23	BYU	-1.5	46
9/30	at Texas	20	62.5
10/7	UCF	2.5	50
10/14	at Oklahoma St	5	47.5
10/28	OKLAHOMA	10	57.5
11/4	at Iowa St	5.5	48.5
11/11	TEXAS TECH	6	54
11/18	KANSAS ST	5.5	53
11/25	at Cincinnati	1.5	43.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **47.90** #15 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.7 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

35-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 17

OFFENSE: 10 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	33.9	22	37.6	127
Yards Per Point	12.8	19	13.1	103
Plays Per Game	64.8	119		
Time of Possession	29:13	81		
3rd Down Conv. %	49.3%	9	50.0%	127
Total Yards Per Game	432.8	33	492.6	128
Yards Per Play	6.7	12	6.3	120
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.5	82		
Rush Yards Per Game	174.3	48	218.8	125
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	26	5	116
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.3	92		
Completion %	64.2%	31	65.2%	117
Passing Yards Per Game	258.5	40	273.8	117
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.8	8	8.2	113
Turnovers	1.3	48	1.8	20

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 8-4, O/U: 9-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	TENNESSEE TECH (-30)	56-10	W	W
9/10	at West Virginia (14)	55-42	W	W
9/17	at Houston (8.5)	48-30	W	W
9/24	DUKE (-7)	35-27	W	W
10/1	IOWA ST (3.5)	14-11	W	W
10/8	TCU (7)	31-38	L	T
10/15	at Oklahoma (10.5)	42-52	L	W
10/22	at Baylor (10.5)	23-35	L	L
11/5	OKLAHOMA ST (-3)	37-16	W	W
11/12	at Texas Tech (4)	28-43	L	L
11/19	TEXAS (9)	14-55	L	L
11/26	at Kansas St (12)	27-47	L	L
12/28	vs. Arkansas (2.5)	53-55	L	W

KANSAS STATE
WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: KRIS KLEIMAN (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: COLLIN KLEIN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE KLANDERMAN

BY MATT YOUMANS

After Texas and Oklahoma, Kansas State should be the third-best team in the league. It's possible the Wildcats climb a little higher for fifth-year coach Chris Klieman. K-State won the Big 12 title game by knocking off TCU before getting outclassed by Alabama in a 45-20 Sugar Bowl loss. Klieman is a much better coach than the Longhorns' Steve Sarkisian and the Sooners' Brent Venables, so that counts for something.

OFFENSE

Deuce Vaughn was a dynamite running back who rolled up 1,558 yards and nine touchdowns on the ground. He was a sixth-round draft pick by the Cowboys and would have been drafted higher if not for being 5-5. Florida State transfer Treshaun Ward and sophomore DJ Giddens are good replacements for Vaughn.

Adrian Martinez and Will Howard split time at quarterback, and only Howard returns, but he was the better of the two passers. K-State scored 38.8 points per game in Howard's five starts. The line ranks among the nation's 10 best, with five starters returning and plenty of depth. Klieman wants his offenses to run the ball and be physical, and the Wildcats have the personnel to do that.

DEFENSE

Six starters departed, the most significant being edge rusher Felix Anudike-Uzomah, a first-round pick by the Chiefs. A lot of production was lost, but end Khalid Duke and linebacker Austin Moore, the team's top tackler, do return to lead a defense that will be fine because Klieman brought in several transfers.

OUTLOOK

September should be a winning month with Southeast Missouri, Troy and UCF on the home schedule. A trip to Missouri in the third week will be a tough test. The Wildcats will be favored in their last four home games (TCU, Houston, Baylor, Iowa State) in Big 12 play, but they go to Texas and Texas Tech.

The key to this win total is what's missing from the schedule, and that's three of the worst teams in the conference in BYU, Cincinnati and West Virginia. Klieman is definitely a coach to believe in, Howard is a winner at quarterback, and the offensive line is elite. However, it's tough to count on 9-3 and go Over the total with Vaughn departing and the defense losing its top player, Anudike-Uzomah. It would not be a surprise if K-State returns to the league title game, but with a tough road schedule, this call is a lean Under 8.5.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 53

NATIONAL RANK: #24 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	SE MISSOURI ST	-27	29
9/9	TROY	-11.5	44.5
9/16	at Missouri	-1	49.5
9/23	UCF	-6	50
10/6	at Oklahoma St	-3	47.5
10/14	at Texas Tech	3.5	54
10/21	TCU	-3	53
10/28	HOUSTON	-12.5	43.5
11/4	at Texas	12	62.5
11/11	BAYLOR	-4	52
11/18	at Kansas	-5.5	46
11/25	IOWA ST	-7.5	48.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.58
#18 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.2 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+500 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

100-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	32.2	28	23.5	38
Yards Per Point	13.1	25	16.3	24
Plays Per Game	70	67		
Time of Possession	31:41	27		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.2%	54	34.3%	23
Total Yards Per Game	420.9	36	383.2	61
Yards Per Play	6	30	5.5	67
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.2	26		
Rush Yards Per Game	201.5	17	152.3	63
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	29	4.4	87
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.5	97		
Completion %	61.4%	59	58.7%	43
Passing Yards Per Game	219.4	80	230.9	67
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.7	46	7	48
Turnovers	0.9	14	1.8	19

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-4, ATS: 9-4, O/U: 7-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	S DAKOTA (-27)	34-0	W	W
9/10	MISSOURI (-7.5)	40-12	W	W
9/17	TULANE (-14)	10-17	L	L
9/24	at Oklahoma (14)	41-34	W	W
10/1	TEXAS TECH (-7.5)	37-28	W	W
10/8	at Iowa St (-1)	10-9	W	T
10/22	at TCU (3.5)	28-38	L	L
10/29	OKLAHOMA ST (-2.5)	48-0	W	W
11/5	TEXAS (3)	27-34	L	L
11/12	at Baylor (2.5)	31-3	W	W
11/19	at West Virginia (-8)	48-31	W	W
11/26	KANSAS (-12)	47-27	W	W
12/3	vs. TCU (-1)	31-28	W	W
12/31	vs. Alabama (7.5)	20-45	L	L

OKLAHOMA
SOONERS

HEAD COACH: BRENT VENABLES (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF LEBBY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TODD BATES / TED ROOF / JAY VALAI

BY MATT YOUMANS

In his first year as a head coach, Brent Venables was a bust. The Sooners finished 6-7 for their first losing record since 1998. Venables, a longtime defensive coordinator at Clemson and Oklahoma, appeared in over his head as the leader of a program. But he also was the unlucky victim of several close calls — five losses by seven points or fewer — and now catches a lucky break with a much weaker schedule in his second year.

OFFENSE

Injuries to quarterback Dillon Gabriel were a big factor in Oklahoma's most embarrassing defeats, 55-24 at TCU and 49-0 to Texas. The left-handed Gabriel was accurate and effective when healthy, completing 62.7% of his passes for 25 touchdowns with six interceptions. He rates as the top returning passer in the conference.

However, the Sooners will miss leading rusher Eric Gray and top wide receiver Marvin Mims. While there is plenty of skill-position talent on the depth chart, go-to players need to emerge. The line is experienced and should be among the league's best, and 6-6, 315-pound left tackle Walter Rouse will help the cause after transferring from Stanford. Based on what happened last year when Gabriel was out, keeping the star quarterback healthy is imperative.

DEFENSE

Venables is regarded as a mad genius at designing defenses, but his reputation took a hit as the Sooners were shredded too often in Big 12 play and allowed 29.6 points per game overall. Venables went to the transfer portal to beef up the line and added seniors Jacob Lacey from Notre Dame and Rondell Bothroyd from Wake Forest, among others. With more talent and time to instill his system, Venables will put a stronger defense on the field.

OUTLOOK

What's missing from Oklahoma's schedule — Big 12 contenders Kansas State and Baylor — is important when analyzing the win total and projecting this team's success. It would be a surprise if the Sooners are not 5-0 going into the Texas game on October 7.

The three road games in the season's second half (Kansas, Oklahoma State and BYU) are not layups before the home finale against TCU. In reality, a 9-3 regular season would be a disappointment considering the schedule, but it's fair to expect the Sooners to fall to Texas and Kansas and slip up in one more spot somewhere along the way. Venables has a lot to prove as a head coach, making this win total a lean Under.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **57.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #15 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	ARKANSAS ST	-32.5	28
9/9	SMU	-15	45
9/16	at Tulsa	-24.5	31.5
9/23	at Cincinnati	-11	43.5
9/30	IOWA ST	-11.5	48.5
10/7	vs. Texas	4.5	62.5
10/21	UCF	-10	50
10/28	at Kansas	-10	46
11/4	at Oklahoma St	-7.5	47.5
11/11	WEST VIRGINIA	-15.5	45
11/18	at BYU	-9.5	46
11/24	TCU	-7	53

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.09** #40 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+340 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

60-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **13**

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	32.8	25	30	90
Yards Per Point	14.4	73	15.4	37
Plays Per Game	78.4	6		
Time of Possession	26:11	127		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.5%	42	40.4%	81
Total Yards Per Game	474	11	461	123
Yards Per Play	6	27	5.6	76
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.7	7		
Rush Yards Per Game	219.4	10	187.5	104
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	31	4.5	91
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.3	71		
Completion %	61.7%	53	61.9%	87
Passing Yards Per Game	254.6	44	273.5	116
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	26	7.1	60
Turnovers	1.2	34	1.6	37

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 5-8, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	UTEP (-31)	45-13	W	W
9/10	KENT ST (-33)	33-3	W	L
9/17	at Nebraska (-11)	49-14	W	W
9/24	KANSAS ST (-14)	34-41	L	L
10/1	at TCU (-5)	24-55	L	L
10/8	vs. Texas (7)	0-49	L	L
10/15	KANSAS (-10.5)	52-42	W	L
10/29	at Iowa St (-2)	27-13	W	W
11/5	BAYLOR (-3)	35-38	L	L
11/12	at West Virginia (-8.5)	20-23	L	L
11/19	OKLAHOMA ST (-7)	28-13	W	W
11/26	at Texas Tech (-1.5)	48-51	L	L
12/29	vs. Florida St (10)	32-35	L	W

OKLAHOMA STATE
COWBOYS

HEAD COACH: MIKE GUNDY (19TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KASEY DUNN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JIM BOB CLEMENTS / BRYAN NARDO

BY MATT YOUMANS

The rivalry with Oklahoma will come to an end after this season, and that's a good thing for coach Mike Gundy, who's 3-15 against the Sooners. Gundy has criticized Oklahoma for leaving for the SEC, but he should be happy about it. Entering his 19th season in Stillwater, Gundy has made 17 consecutive bowl games. He's off a seven-win season and facing a relatively soft schedule, but this Cowboy might not have enough horses to go bowling this time.

OFFENSE

The departure of Spencer Sanders, the starting quarterback for the past two years, will prove costly. The Cowboys were 6-1 last season before Sanders encountered injury issues and went to the sideline. He rarely got back on the field, and Oklahoma State lost five of its final six games.

Alan Bowman, a former starter at Texas Tech and little-used reserve at Michigan, is the favorite to win the job. His competition is Garret Rangel and Gunner Gundy, and both backups failed to impress a year ago. If Bowman wins the job, he can count on a veteran line and a good receiving corps, highlighted by Brennan Presley, who led the team with 67 receptions. The Cowboys failed to score more than 20 points in any of the final six games of 2022, including a 48-0 loss at Kansas State. The offense could get ugly again.

DEFENSE

Gundy was a loser in the transfer portal. He brought in some talent but lost star linebacker Mason Cobb to USC and cornerback Jabbar Muhammad to Washington. A defense that allowed 28.9 points per game could get worse, especially if the Oklahoma State offense is as weak as it appears on paper.

OUTLOOK

This win total is set correctly at 6.5 based on the schedule and Gundy's track record. The schedule excludes Texas, TCU and Baylor and includes all four Big 12 newcomers — BYU, Cincinnati, Houston and UCF.

Two years ago, the Cowboys pulled off a big comeback to beat Notre Dame 37-35 in the Fiesta Bowl, but this is no longer a program competing for a conference title because of a dropoff in quarterback play and the diminished talent level. It's difficult to envision Gundy going 7-5 unless Oklahoma State manages to sweep tricky nonconference games against Arizona State and South Alabama, a pair of teams that could be surprisingly good. While it rarely pays to doubt Gundy, this is a time to do that and stay Under.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 47.5

NATIONAL RANK: #44 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	C ARKANSAS	-27	23.5
9/9	at Arizona St	-3	42.5
9/16	S ALABAMA	-6.5	44
9/23	at Iowa St	3.5	48.5
10/6	KANSAS ST	3	53
10/14	KANSAS	-5	46
10/21	at West Virginia	0	45
10/28	CINCINNATI	-6.5	43.5
11/4	OKLAHOMA	7.5	57.5
11/11	at UCF	5	50
11/18	at Houston	-2.5	43.5
11/25	BYU	-4	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.51** #48 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.9 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

40-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13

OFFENSE: 7

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	27.9	60	30.8	97
Yards Per Point	14.1	63	14.7	53
Plays Per Game	80	3		
Time of Possession	28:13	106		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.2%	104	27.2%	2
Total Yards Per Game	394.1	54	452.8	118
Yards Per Play	4.9	99	5.8	92
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.4	57		
Rush Yards Per Game	122.1	94	186.1	103
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	116	4.8	105
Pass Attempts Per Game	40.5	12		
Completion %	54.9%	109	59.1%	48
Passing Yards Per Game	272	26	266.8	106
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	88	7	50
Turnovers	1.8	103	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	C MICHIGAN (-20.5)	58-44	W	L
9/10	ARIZONA ST (-12)	34-17	W	W
9/17	AK-PINE BLUFF (-54.5)	63-7	W	W
10/1	at Baylor (2.5)	36-25	W	W
10/8	TEXAS TECH (-11)	41-31	W	L
10/15	at TCU (5)	40-43	L	W
10/22	TEXAS (6.5)	41-34	W	W
10/29	at Kansas St (2.5)	0-48	L	L
11/5	at Kansas (3)	16-37	L	L
11/12	IOWA ST (2.5)	20-14	W	W
11/19	at Oklahoma (7)	13-28	L	L
11/26	WEST VIRGINIA (-5.5)	19-24	L	L
12/27	vs. Wisconsin (5.5)	17-24	L	L

TCU
HORNED FROGS

HEAD COACH: SONNY DYKES (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KENDAL BRILES / A. J. RICKER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE GILLESPIE

BY MATT YOUMANS

Sonny Dykes will be his own tough act to follow. In his first season in Fort Worth, Dykes coached the Horned Frogs to the national championship game. Yes, that Monday night title game was a nightmare, a 65-7 loss to Georgia, but TCU beat Michigan in a semifinal and finished 13-2 so it's better to focus on the positives. Max Duggan, the quarterback who ignited the Cinderella season, is gone, and that's a negative. The Frogs look like a fringe Top 25 team.

OFFENSE

Chandler Morris, a third-year sophomore with three career starts, is likely to replace Duggan. The Frogs must replace much more than their quarterback. Leading rusher Kendre Miller and leading receiver Quentin Johnston also departed. Only three starters return, but two of those are mammoth tackles Andrew Coker (6-7, 315) and Brandon Coleman (6-6, 325).

The running back position should be in good shape with Alabama transfer Trey Sanders and returning junior Emani Bailey. Dykes has a sharp offensive mind and his new coordinator, Kendall Briles, was a smart hire from Arkansas. The former OC, Garrett Riley, left for Clemson. TCU is rebuilding on this side of the ball, but the offense will probably be better than most expect, considering the high-profile losses.

DEFENSE

Nose tackle Damonic Williams, middle linebacker Jamoi Hodge and cornerback Josh Newton are among the Big 12's best defenders and three of seven returning starters. The defense should be better — and it was good last year, when the Frogs held Texas to 10 points. The defense was nowhere near as bad as it appeared in the disaster that was the Georgia game, so erase that from memory and look at the big picture.

OUTLOOK

The ball bounced TCU's way last year. The Frogs were fortunate to beat Oklahoma State 43-40 and Baylor 29-28 on their way to 12-0. They will not be catching opponents by surprise this year, and there probably will be some close-game regression. The schedule is soft early, likely allowing TCU to be 6-2 or so going into its late October bye. The schedule gets tough late with road games at Texas Tech and Oklahoma and home games versus Texas and Baylor. The win total is set right at 7.5 because it's most likely a seven- or eight-win team, but lean Under. It's a lot to ask to lose Duggan, Johnston and Miller and still win eight games.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 53

NATIONAL RANK: #23 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	COLORADO	-21	34.5
9/9	NICHOLLS ST	-48	7.5
9/16	at Houston	-8	43.5
9/23	SMU	-10	45
9/30	WEST VIRGINIA	-10.5	45
10/7	at Iowa St	-2	48.5
10/14	BYU	-9	46
10/21	at Kansas St	3	53
11/2	at Texas Tech	3.5	54
11/11	TEXAS	7	62.5
11/18	BAYLOR	-3	52
11/24	at Oklahoma	7	57.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.39** #36 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.3 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

16-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

100-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 10

OFFENSE: 3

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	37.4	9	29.9	89
Yards Per Point	11.8	5	13.9	73
Plays Per Game	69.9	71		
Time of Possession	30:09	60		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.6%	65	36.5%	46
Total Yards Per Game	442.5	28	415.9	93
Yards Per Play	6.3	19	5.6	71
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.8	50		
Rush Yards Per Game	194.2	25	163.7	78
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	17	4.3	83
Pass Attempts Per Game	30	85		
Completion %	62.9%	41	55.9%	16
Passing Yards Per Game	248.3	47	252.1	97
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	18	7.2	66
Turnovers	1.1	21	1.4	65

2022 RESULTS

SU: 13-2, ATS: 10-4, O/U: 9-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	at Colorado (-13.5)	38-13	W	W
9/10	TARLETON ST (-40)	59-17	W	W
9/24	at SMU (-2.5)	42-34	W	W
10/1	OKLAHOMA (5)	55-24	W	W
10/8	at Kansas (-7)	38-31	W	T
10/15	OKLAHOMA ST (-5)	43-40	W	L
10/22	KANSAS ST (-3.5)	38-28	W	W
10/29	at West Virginia (-7)	41-31	W	W
11/5	TEXAS TECH (-8.5)	34-24	W	W
11/12	at Texas (7.5)	17-10	W	W
11/19	at Baylor (-2)	29-28	W	L
11/26	IOWA ST (-9.5)	62-14	W	W
12/3	vs. Kansas St (1)	28-31	L	L
12/31	vs. Michigan (8)	51-45	W	W
1/9	vs. Georgia (13.5)	7-65	L	L

TEXAS
LONGHORNS

HEAD COACH: STEVE SARKISIAN (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KYLE FLOOD
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF CHOATE / PETE KWIATKOWSKI

BY MATT YOUMANS

The first two years of the Steve Sarkisian era at Texas were forgettable. In 2021, Sarkisian went 5-7, including a loss to Kansas as a 31-point favorite. Last year was an improvement as the Longhorns finished 8-5, yet lost in the Alamo Bowl. This year, Texas hopes to win the Big 12 title for the first time since 2009. In 2024, the Longhorns will move to the SEC, and Sarkisian's most hyped recruit, quarterback Arch Manning, will get his shot to shine.

OFFENSE

The Manning era in Austin will have to wait. Third-year sophomore Quinn Ewers, who started his career on the sidelines at Ohio State, will try to play his way into the first round of the NFL Draft. Ewers started 10 games last season and put up pedestrian numbers (58% completions, 15 touchdown passes) while missing time with injuries. But Ewers showed promise, especially in an early-season 20-19 loss to Alabama. His backup, Hudson Card, transferred to Purdue to leave the No. 2 spot to Manning.

While the offense returns 10 starters, the one who was lost — running back Bijan Robinson — was a top-10 draft pick by the Falcons. Robinson rushed for 1,580 yards and 18 TDs. The depth chart in the backfield is loaded and led by freshman CJ Baxter. The receiver group is impressive, with Xavier Worthy returning and Georgia transfer Adonai Mitchell as a key addition. The line returns a combined 101 combined career starts and ranks among the nation's best. Sarkisian has all the pieces and this offense should top last season's 34.5 points per game.

DEFENSE

With six starters back, Texas is in a decent spot. But the key to the defense avoiding a decline will be the development of several top recruits and transfers, including corner Ryan Watts from Ohio State. The Longhorns allowed only 21.6 points per game a year ago and whipped Oklahoma 49-0 in the highlight of the Sarkisian era.

OUTLOOK

The Longhorns are the conference favorites, but preseason hype has amounted to hot air for this program for too long. Texas has stayed Under its posted win total 10 of the past 11 years, which is tough to do. Road games against Alabama and Baylor in September will tell a lot prior to the October 7 rivalry game with Oklahoma. Sarkisian does draw a favorable league schedule by getting Kansas State and Texas Tech at home. On paper, Sark's third team has enough talent to go Over 9.5 wins and contend for a playoff spot, but Texas' track record of underachieving calls for a lean Under.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 62.5

NATIONAL RANK: #5 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	RICE	-32.5	33
9/9	at Alabama	8	67.5
9/16	WYOMING	-27.5	38
9/23	at Baylor	-7	52
9/30	KANSAS	-20	46
10/7	vs. Oklahoma	-4.5	57.5
10/21	at Houston	-17	43.5
10/28	BYU	-19	46
11/4	KANSAS ST	-12	53
11/11	at TCU	-7	53
11/18	at Iowa St	-11	48.5
11/24	TEXAS TECH	-12	54

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 49.02
#6 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.9 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+105 — ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP — 22-1

RETURNING STARTERS 16
OFFENSE: 10 QB
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	34.5	20	21.6	21
Yards Per Point	12.5	12	17	15
Plays Per Game	68.8	85		
Time of Possession	27:18	120		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.8%	63	41.3%	88
Total Yards Per Game	429.5	35	368.4	44
Yards Per Play	6.2	23	4.8	18
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.2	66		
Rush Yards Per Game	188.2	34	125.7	30
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.2	16	3.5	19
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.2	73		
Completion %	61.2%	62	63.0%	97
Passing Yards Per Game	241.4	50	242.7	86
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.7	43	6.3	14
Turnovers	0.9	14	1.1	110

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	LA MONROE (-37.5)	52-10	W	W
9/10	ALABAMA (21)	19-20	L	W
9/17	TX-SAN ANTONIO (-13.5)	41-20	W	W
9/24	at Texas Tech (-7)	34-37	L	L
10/1	WEST VIRGINIA (-7.5)	38-20	W	W
10/8	vs. Oklahoma (-7)	49-0	W	W
10/15	IOWA ST (-15.5)	24-21	W	L
10/22	at Oklahoma St (-6.5)	34-41	L	L
11/5	at Kansas St (-3)	34-27	W	W
11/12	TCU (-7.5)	10-17	L	L
11/19	at Kansas (-9)	55-14	W	W
11/25	BAYLOR (-10)	38-27	W	W
12/29	vs. Washington (-3)	20-27	L	L

TEXAS TECH
RED RAIDERS

HEAD COACH: JOEY MCGUIRE (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ZACH KITTLEY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM DERUYTER

BY MATT YOUMANS

If experience matters, and it should, watch out for Texas Tech as a sleeper in the Big 12 title race. The Red Raiders return 11 starters on offense and are led by a coach, Joey McGuire, who upset Texas and Oklahoma in his eight-win debut season in Lubbock. A lot could be on the line on November 24, when the Raiders ride into Austin to face the Longhorns.

OFFENSE

McGuire and his offensive coordinator, Zach Kittley, will call the shots for an offense primed to put up big numbers. Senior quarterback Tyler Shough, who began his career at Oregon, is expected to start and can lean on Tahj Brooks, last year's leading rusher. Shough was one of three quarterbacks who passed for more than 1,000 yards last year as McGuire rotated starters. There is plenty of talent on the depth chart at quarterback, running back and wide receiver, plus three seniors anchor the line, which features a combined 142 career starts. This offense will be one of the Big 12's best.

DEFENSE

Five of the most productive defensive players departed, so any concerns about the team involve this unit. Tim DeRuyter returns as coordinator, and DeRuyter is a former head coach at Fresno State and DC at Oregon. Ironically, a home game against the Ducks on September 9 might be the biggest test DeRuyter's defense faces all season.

OUTLOOK

The Red Raiders open the season as two-touchdown favorites at Wyoming, which has one of the strongest defenses in the Mountain West. The trip to Laramie will be tricky and is followed by a home game with Oregon. There is no easing into the schedule. Texas Tech avoids Oklahoma and gets Kansas State and TCU to visit Lubbock, but five road games in the Big 12 (West Virginia, Baylor, BYU, Kansas, Texas) will make topping the win total of 7.5 a tall hill to climb.

That said, Tech is strong on the offensive and defensive lines and has an offense that will be tough to contain. McGuire has the look of a rising star as a coach and gets the benefit of the doubt, so this is a lean Over. The Red Raiders are a sleeper pick and a potential surprise team in the league. The schedule just makes it difficult to be overly optimistic.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 54

NATIONAL RANK: #20 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Wyoming	-12.5	38
9/9	OREGON	3.5	59.5
9/16	TARLETON ST	-41	15.5
9/23	at West Virginia	-5.5	45
9/30	HOUSTON	-12.5	43.5
10/7	at Baylor	1.5	52
10/14	KANSAS ST	-3.5	53
10/21	at BYU	-5	46
11/2	TCU	-3.5	53
11/11	at Kansas	-6	46
11/18	UCF	-6.5	50
11/24	at Texas	12	62.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **47.50** #20 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.5 / 0.5** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

12-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 17

OFFENSE: 11 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.8	32	30.8	97
Yards Per Point	14.1	62	14.3	65
Plays Per Game	89.2	1		
Time of Possession	30:14	56		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.3%	95	40.2%	78
Total Yards Per Game	449.1	26	439.6	109
Yards Per Play	5	93	5.8	102
Rush Attempts Per Game	41.3	18		
Rush Yards Per Game	161.2	58	178.8	97
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	80	4.5	95
Pass Attempts Per Game	44.5	5		
Completion %	60.3%	69	60.2%	60
Passing Yards Per Game	287.9	16	260.8	102
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.5	102	7.8	100
Turnovers	2	119	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MURRAY ST (-38)	63-10	W	W
9/10	HOUSTON (-4)	33-30	W	L
9/17	at Nc State (10.5)	14-27	L	L
9/24	TEXAS (7)	37-34	W	W
10/1	at Kansas St (7.5)	28-37	L	L
10/8	at Oklahoma St (11)	31-41	L	W
10/22	WEST VIRGINIA (-5)	48-10	W	W
10/29	BAYLOR (-1.5)	17-45	L	L
11/5	at TCU (8.5)	24-34	L	L
11/12	KANSAS (-4)	43-28	W	W
11/19	at Iowa St (3.5)	14-10	W	W
11/26	OKLAHOMA (1.5)	51-48	W	W
12/28	vs. Ole Miss (3.5)	42-25	W	W

UCF
GOLDEN KNIGHTS

HEAD COACH: GUS MALZAHN (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DARIN HINSHAW
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID GIBBS / ADDISON WILLIAMS

BY MATT YOUMANS

Gus Malzahn was chased out after eight years at Auburn, where he did a good job yet found it impossible to survive in Nick Saban's shadow at Alabama. In two years as UCF coach, Malzahn has a record of 18-9 with a pair of nine-win finishes. He has 15 starters returning, including a quarterback with SEC experience, so moving to the Big 12 will not be intimidating to Malzahn. But the Knights do draw a much tougher schedule.

OFFENSE

John Rhys Plumlee, who started occasionally in three years at Mississippi, passed for 14 touchdowns in his first year as a starter in the AAC. Plumlee, who missed some time while injured, also was effective as a runner with 862 yards and 11 touchdowns. The Knights also bring back 5-foot-8 running back RJ Harvey, who had 796 yards and five touchdowns, and top receiver Javon Baker. The depth and size of the offensive line are up to the Big 12's high standards. Malzahn always produces high-scoring offenses and will do so again.

DEFENSE

Georgia transfer linebacker Rian Davis has been added to a unit with seven returning starters. A veteran line led by Ricky Barber and Tre'Mon Morris-Brash will be a strength. The defense allowed 23.6 points per game last year, but it will face better offenses on this schedule.

OUTLOOK

The bad news for the Knights is they play Boise State, Kansas State, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech on the road. UCF also visits Cincinnati, but the Knights are the best team of the four newcomers to the conference. The good news for UCF is it hosts Kent State, Villanova, Baylor, West Virginia, Oklahoma State and Houston and should win four or five of its six home games.

More good news: Texas and TCU are not on the schedule. There appears to be no obvious edge in betting this win total, which is set at 6.5, so the lean is Under due to that side being priced +145 at DraftKings. With a rigorous road schedule, the Knights' ceiling is probably 7-5, and their most likely result is 6-6. Malzahn is usually a bet-on coach, but his team is taking a big step up in class to a power conference, so it's tough to be too optimistic.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 50

NATIONAL RANK: #36 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	KENT ST	-32.5	20.5
9/9	at Boise St	-1	46
9/16	VILLANOVA	-32.5	20
9/23	at Kansas St	6	53
9/30	BAYLOR	-0.5	52
10/7	at Kansas	-2.5	46
10/21	at Oklahoma	10	57.5
10/28	WEST VIRGINIA	-8	45
11/4	at Cincinnati	-3	43.5
11/11	OKLAHOMA ST	-5	47.5
11/18	at Texas Tech	6.5	54
11/25	HOUSTON	-9	43.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.03 #56 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.8 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

35-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 15

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.1	37	24.7	45
Yards Per Point	14.8	78	16.3	23
Plays Per Game	78.3	7		
Time of Possession	30:43	48		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.4%	24	40.5%	82
Total Yards Per Game	459.2	18	402.8	82
Yards Per Play	5.9	40	5.8	97
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.5	11		
Rush Yards Per Game	223.1	9	167.7	84
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	18	4.8	106
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.2	60		
Completion %	64.7%	25	60.7%	69
Passing Yards Per Game	236.1	57	235.1	78
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	62	7.1	58
Turnovers	1.5	70	1.2	90

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-5, ATS: 7-7, O/U: 6-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	S CAROLINA ST (-43.5)	56-10	W	W
9/9	LOUISVILLE (-5.5)	14-20	L	L
9/17	at Fla Atlantic (-7.5)	40-14	W	W
9/24	GEORGIA TECH (-21)	27-10	W	L
10/5	SMU (-3)	41-19	W	W
10/13	TEMPLE (-23.5)	70-13	W	W
10/22	at East Carolina (-6)	13-34	L	L
10/29	CINCINNATI (-2)	25-21	W	W
11/5	at Memphis (-3)	35-28	W	W
11/12	at Tulane (1)	38-31	W	W
11/19	NAVY (-15.5)	14-17	L	L
11/26	at South Florida (-19.5)	46-39	W	L
12/3	at Tulane (3.5)	28-45	L	L
12/28	vs. Duke (3)	13-30	L	L

WEST VIRGINIA
MOUNTAINEERS

HEAD COACH: NEAL BROWN (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHAD SCOTT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHADON BROWN / JORDAN LESLEY

BY MATT YOUMANS

Neal Brown enters his fifth season in Morgantown on the coaching hot seat. He's got a losing record (22-25), opens the season at Penn State, and is seeing predictions that put his Mountaineers near the bottom of a 14-team conference. The one break he catches this year is a schedule that excludes Big 12 favorite Texas.

OFFENSE

Garrett Greene is the wild card for the Mountaineers. The dual-threat quarterback triggered a comeback victory over Oklahoma and should be an upgrade from last year's starter, JT Daniels. Greene's running ability is what's most exciting about the potential of this offense.

CJ Donaldson, who rushed for 526 yards and 6.0 per carry last season, is the top returning running back for an offense that loses the top three receivers and will attempt to control games on the ground. Running the ball will be easier, with five veterans starting along one of the league's strongest lines. As respected college football handicapper Phil Steele noted, West Virginia is 18-4 under Brown when rushing for 100-plus yards, and the Mountaineers might be doing that regularly this season.

DEFENSE

Junior end Sean Martin will lead a defense returning seven starters, yet there is much improvement to make after allowing 32.9 points per game. West Virginia's ability to run the ball offensively should lead to complementary football and allow the defense more time off the field. Brown is not a bad coach, but he has struggled to find a consistent quarterback, and his defenses have suffered. He needs all of that change in a hurry.

OUTLOOK

The September schedule lines up Penn State, Duquesne, Pittsburgh, Texas Tech and TCU, and with only one obvious soft spot, it will make it difficult for the Mountaineers to emerge better than 2-3. West Virginia does play all four Big 12 newcomers — Houston, Central Florida, BYU and Cincinnati — and those are all winnable games. Greene, Donaldson, and a dangerous running attack will be the key to the season. West Virginia could win four of its six home games or fall apart, meaning this is a tough team to predict. A six-win season and a bowl are realistic goals. Another 5-7 finish is the call and the lean Over, but that might also get Brown fired.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 45

NATIONAL RANK: #58 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Penn St	19.5	61.5
9/9	DUQUESNE	-42	6
9/16	PITTSBURGH	0	47.5
9/23	TEXAS TECH	5.5	54
9/30	at TCU	10.5	53
10/12	at Houston	0.5	43.5
10/21	OKLAHOMA ST	0	47.5
10/28	at UCF	8	50
11/4	BYU	-2	46
11/11	at Oklahoma	15.5	57.5
11/18	CINCINNATI	-4	43.5
11/25	at Baylor	10.5	52

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **46.83** #24 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN BIG 12

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13

OFFENSE: 6

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	27.5	63	35.3	119
Yards Per Point	13.8	47	12.3	117
Plays Per Game	73.1	39		
Time of Possession	30:53	42		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.5%	52	42.6%	100
Total Yards Per Game	378.5	67	433.5	107
Yards Per Play	5.2	83	6.1	112
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.4	64		
Rush Yards Per Game	158.4	60	155.8	69
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	57	4.3	75
Pass Attempts Per Game	35	37		
Completion %	59.0%	81	60.3%	62
Passing Yards Per Game	220.2	77	277.6	118
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	111	8.4	120
Turnovers	1.6	93	0.8	127

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	at Pittsburgh (7.5)	31-38	L	W
9/10	KANSAS (-14)	42-55	L	L
9/17	TOWSON (-41)	65-7	W	W
9/22	at Virginia Tech (-2)	33-10	W	W
10/1	at Texas (7.5)	20-38	L	L
10/13	BAYLOR (3)	43-40	W	W
10/22	at Texas Tech (5)	10-48	L	L
10/29	TCU (7)	31-41	L	L
11/5	at Iowa St (6.5)	14-31	L	L
11/12	OKLAHOMA (8.5)	23-20	W	W
11/19	KANSAS ST (8)	31-48	L	L
11/26	at Oklahoma St (5.5)	24-19	W	W

CONFERENCE USA BETTING PREVIEW

College football realignment has impacted each Group of Five conference differently, but the changes to Conference USA are really significant for the 2023 season. UTSA, UAB, Charlotte, North Texas, Florida Atlantic, and Rice all moved to the AAC, paving the way for former Independents Liberty and New Mexico State to join C-USA, along with FBS newcomers Sam Houston State and Jacksonville State.

The conference goes from 11 teams to nine (no divisions) and has been substantially weakened by the departures. It was never that strong of a conference anyway, but teams like UTSA, UAB, and FAU have at least made noise in the Top 25 at times. If I were to rank the conferences 1 through 10, Conference USA would now be the worst, even with some of the awful teams in the MAC.

Western Kentucky is the only holdover to have a winning record in conference play last season and one of two to reach bowl eligibility. The only other team in the conference to go bowling is New Mexico State, who joins a conference for the first time since leaving the Sun Belt in 2017.

Futures intrigue is pretty limited here, as Western Kentucky (+130) looks quite a bit better than anybody else, though Liberty (+240) and Middle Tennessee (+450) are also considered contenders. Sam Houston State and Jacksonville State are not eligible for the conference title game until the 2024 season, so only seven of the nine teams have a chance to win the conference crown.

On the plus side, one cool wrinkle is that this will be the only conference in which teams will play every single conference opponent. That will change next season when Kennesaw State joins the league.

Another cool wrinkle is that the conference will play games on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in September and October, so it would benefit you to be familiar with the teams to wager on those mid-week matchups.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
WESTERN KENTUCKY	40.5	30.74 (126)	8.5	3.5	6.3	1.7	8.5
LIBERTY	36.5	27.24 (133)	8.7	3.3	5.6	2.4	8.5
JACKSONVILLE ST	32.5	31.58 (123)	6.4	5.6	4.6	3.4	5
MIDDLE TENN ST	32.5	32.46 (119)	6.3	5.7	4.6	3.4	6.5
LOUISIANA TECH	30	31.26 (125)	5.5	6.5	3.9	4.1	5.5
UTEP	30	33.21 (111)	5.0	7.0	3.9	4.1	5.5
NEW MEXICO ST	26	28.78 (132)	5.7	7.3	2.9	5.1	5.5
SAM HOUSTON ST	23	32.99 (113)	3.3	8.7	2.4	5.6	4
FLA INTERNATIONAL	21.5	32.78 (116)	2.9	9.1	1.8	6.2	3

BY ADAM BURKE

Florida International was 4-4 last season after eight games, and I was saying on the VSiN College Football Podcast that Mike MacIntyre should get serious consideration as the Coach of the Year. The program was in total disarray when he took over, as previous head coach Butch Davis shed some light on the lackluster facilities, hand-me-down uniforms, and the lack of raises for his assistants. MacIntyre came in, and all of a sudden, had a team looking bowl eligibility in the face. Well, FIU lost the final four games by a combined 122 points, and the season ended with a whimper.

OFFENSE

Even though things were really bad in 2021 with a 1-11 record, the offense was a lot better. FIU managed just 18.7 points per game and a measly 4.7 yards per play. While the Panthers cut 23 sacks off of their total from the previous season, they threw for less yardage, made very small gains on the ground, and posted a 16/16 TD/INT ratio. Grayson James had 11 of the 16 TD passes but also 11 of the interceptions while throwing for under 2,000 yards in 10 starts. Perhaps Year 2 under respected offensive coordinator David Yost will go better, but his favorite target, Tyrese Chambers, is gone.

The low sack total was one of the few bright spots for the Panthers last season, but they'll have to work in three new starters on the offensive line and are thin with upperclassmen, so experience is an issue. James is fairly mobile, which helped the sack numbers last season, but it might make sense for Yost recruit Keyone Jenkins to play in his freshman season.

DEFENSE

The FIU defense was one of the worst in the nation in 2021, and that side of the ball did improve under MacIntyre, at least until the complete lack of depth caught up with them late in the season. The Panthers only shaved 2.4 points per game off their ledger but did shave 0.7 yards per play off and had seven more sacks. This side of the ball does return seven starters and seven of the top nine tacklers.

At least MacIntyre had the full 85 scholarships to work with this season, which was not the case previously, so there's some hope that this side of the ball can continue its upward trajectory, especially with a lot of underclassmen playing big roles last season. MacIntyre knows defense, and it could really show through this season.

OUTLOOK

UTSA, North Texas, and FAU all rolled over FIU last season, and they've gone to the AAC, but Western Kentucky and UTEP are still around. So, there's some give and take in the schedule. FIU plays in Week 0 against Louisiana Tech, which means two byes during the regular season and some opportunities for a young, depth-shy roster to catch its breath. I only have FIU favored in one game, and it's against FCS Maine. Their win total line is three with heavy Over juice, and they got to four last season with a stronger schedule, but I don't see much upside on this roster with a projection of 2.28 wins.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **21.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #130 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	at Louisiana Tech	12	30
9/2	MAINE	-9	14.5
9/9	NORTH TEXAS	13	36.5
9/16	at Connecticut	13.5	32
9/23	LIBERTY	13.5	36.5
10/4	at New Mexico St	7	26
10/11	UTEP	6	30
10/18	at Sam Houston St	5	23
10/25	JACKSONVILLE ST	9.5	32.5
11/11	at Middle Tenn St	14.5	32.5
11/18	at Arkansas	33	52
11/25	W KENTUCKY	17.5	40.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.78**
#116 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.9 / 0.5**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

60-1 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **12**
OFFENSE: 5 QB
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	16.9	120	37.3	125
Yards Per Point	18.9	122	12.1	122
Plays Per Game	69.4	78		
Time of Possession	27:46	114		
3rd Down Conv. %	29.1%	124	48.5%	126
Total Yards Per Game	318.9	111	450.3	117
Yards Per Play	4.6	114	5.9	107
Rush Attempts Per Game	30	118		
Rush Yards Per Game	108.5	113	198.2	112
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.6	92	4.8	102
Pass Attempts Per Game	37.8	22		
Completion %	57.9%	91	64.7%	112
Passing Yards Per Game	210.5	88	252.1	96
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	123	7.6	93
Turnovers	1.8	106	1.3	83

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	BRYANT (-10.5)	38-37	W	L
9/10	at Texas St Univ (14)	12-41	L	L
9/24	at W Kentucky (31)	0-73	L	L
10/1	at New Mexico St (15.5)	21-7	W	W
10/8	CONNECTICUT (6)	12-33	L	L
10/14	TX-SAN ANTONIO (33)	10-30	L	W
10/22	at Charlotte (14)	34-15	W	W
10/28	LOUISIANA TECH (6.5)	42-34	W	W
11/5	at North Texas (21.5)	14-52	L	L
11/12	FLA ATLANTIC (14.5)	7-52	L	L
11/19	at UTEP (14)	6-40	L	L
11/26	MIDDLE TENN ST (19.5)	28-33	L	W

BY ADAM BURKE

The state of Alabama has its sixth FBS team with Jacksonville State making the move this season. The Gamecocks, led by head coach Rich Rodriguez, went 9-2 last season with a 54-17 loss to Tulsa as a 10-point underdog. It was Rich Rod's first year in Jacksonville, so there's a chance that the Gamecocks are successful in their opening season, though they are ineligible to play for the Conference USA championship.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Zion Webb appealed to the NCAA for another season of eligibility and won, so Jacksonville State heads to FBS with most of the offense intact. Webb was effective at times as a passer with 1,737 yards and a 10/9 TD/INT ratio, but he was a successful runner with 13 rushing scores and 5.6 yards per carry. The Gamecocks rely quite heavily on the run, as feature back Anwar Lewis had 7.1 yards per pop on 115 tries. Louisiana-Monroe transfer Malik Jackson will also mix in, as JSU ran 493 times compared to 227 pass attempts last season.

On the whole, the Gamecocks averaged 5.6 yards per carry in Rodriguez's first season and the first season for offensive coordinator Rod Smith. Between Sam Houston State and Jacksonville State, the Gamecocks appear better equipped for the step up in class, as they return more production off of a more successful season. However, it's still a step up in talent, size, and depth, so Jacksonville State has to stay healthy.

DEFENSE

Despite a heavy influence on the run, Jacksonville State still had to defend more plays (814) than they ran (720), but the defense more than held its own. The Gamecocks allowed just 5.4 yards per play, 4.1 yards per carry, and held opponents to just 22.9 points per game. A lot of starters are back on this side of the ball as well, including most of the team's 27 sacks.

The Gamecocks also worked in a lot of guys to stay fresh, as nobody had more than 72 tackles and 14 guys had at least 20 tackles. Defensive coordinator Zac Alley is in his second season and is only 30 years old. He was a grad assistant under Dabo Swinney and Brent Venables at Clemson and also worked at Boise State and was the youngest DC in college football at 28 with Louisiana-Monroe. He's a smart guy and this group can grow together.

OUTLOOK

Jacksonville State has the fifth-smallest enrollment of any non-service academy, so this is a small school, but the home stadium seats 24,000 and there should be a lot of excitement for the first year in FBS. The Gamecocks have a very experienced team and run the ball well in a conference where stopping the run is hit or miss. With a game in Week 0 against UTEP, the Gamecocks will begin Conference USA play right away and also have two bye weeks. The win total is 5 and my numbers call for 4.66 wins, but I only have them favored in three games. That said, they have a higher ceiling with their experience and a good head coach.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 32.5

NATIONAL RANK: #105 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	UTEP	-5	30
9/2	E TENN ST	-16	18.5
9/9	at Coastal Carolina	7	37.5
9/23	E MICHIGAN	-2.5	32
9/28	at Sam Houston St	-7	23
10/4	at Middle Tenn St	2.5	32.5
10/10	LIBERTY	2	36.5
10/17	W KENTUCKY	6	40.5
10/25	at Fla International	-9.5	21.5
11/4	at South Carolina	20	50.5
11/18	LOUISIANA TECH	-5	30
11/25	at New Mexico St	-4.5	26

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 31.58 #123 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.2 / 0.2 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA — ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

990-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK	DEFENSE STAT/RANK
Points Per Game	First Year as FBS School	
Yards Per Point		
Plays Per Game		
Time of Possession		
3rd Down Conv. %		
Total Yards Per Game		
Yards Per Play		
Rush Attempts Per Game		
Rush Yards Per Game		
Yards Per Rush Attempt		
Pass Attempts Per Game		
Completion %		
Passing Yards Per Game		
Yards Per Pass Attempt		
Turnovers		

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-2, ATS: 7-4, O/U: 5-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	vs. Steph F Austin (7.5)	42-17	W	W
9/3	DAVIDSON (-26.5)	35-17	W	L
9/10	at Murray St (-14.5)	34-3	W	W
9/17	at Tulsa (12.5)	17-54	L	L
9/24	at Nicholls St (-10)	52-21	W	W
10/1	KENNESAW ST (-11)	35-28	W	L
10/15	vs. N Alabama (-15)	47-31	W	W
10/22	SE LOUISIANA (-7.5)	14-31	L	L
10/29	at Austin Peay (3.5)	40-16	W	W
11/12	E KENTUCKY (-4)	42-17	W	W
11/19	at C Arkansas (-1.5)	40-17	W	W

LIBERTY
FLAMES

BY ADAM BURKE

The wild card of Conference USA is Liberty. The Flames have a new head coach in Jamey Chadwell, who took Coastal Carolina to new heights in his five seasons with the Chanticleers. Hugh Freeze was very successful in Lynchburg, Virginia with a 34-16 record, plus some Top 25 appearances. The Flames are a conference member for the first time since joining FBS in 2018 and ease into it with the members of C-USA, but they also beat Arkansas and took Wake Forest to the wire last season.

OFFENSE
The Chadwell hire should be a good one, but Year 1 could be rough. His complex offense is full of pre-snap motion in hopes of creating mismatches and outnumbered situations for defenders. It took Coastal Carolina a quarterback like Grayson McCall and basically three seasons of the offense to get it figured out. He was the one-year interim for a 3-9 season in 2017 and then served as the offensive coordinator in 2018 with a 5-7 showing and just 26.7 points per game. As head coach, the Chants were 5-7 in 2019 but did score over 30 points per game. After that, the team went 31-7 over three years.

It remains to be seen how close Kaidon Salter is on the McCall scale, but this is not an easy offense to master. Salter and Johnathan Bennett shared time as the starter last season while also sharing time in the training room. Returning starters are few and far between on both sides of the ball for Liberty, but Dae Dae Hunter's 6.6 yards per carry and Demario Douglas's 79 catches will be missed. It is, however, a mostly clean slate for Chadwell.

DEFENSE
Liberty has had really good defenses in each of the last three seasons, but there are huge losses here and a new coaching staff. The Flames bid adieu to their top three tacklers and five of the top six, including Durrell Johnson, who had 18.5 tackles for loss. Liberty racked up 45 sacks, with nine from Johnson, six from departed Dennis Osagiede, and five more from departed Treshaun Clark.

Offensive growing pains could really hurt a rebuilding defense such as Liberty's. This group allowed 4.8 yards per play in 2021 and five yards per play in 2022, but everything is brand new here. This is also the remnants of a defense that allowed 36 points to UConn and 49 points to New Mexico State down the stretch.

OUTLOOK
Liberty plays a really bad schedule. Joining Conference USA kept New Mexico State on the slate, plus the other C-USA teams are not great. The nonconference schedule also features Bowling Green, Buffalo, Old Dominion, and UMass. As mentioned, this is a good way to ease into Chadwell's offense and being a conference member, but it is not an easy scheme to learn, and Grayson McCall is not walking through that door. Nevertheless, Liberty has a win total of 8.5 with that pathetic schedule. I have them down for 8.23 wins, so I lean Under, but they could be favored in as many as 11 games.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 36.5

NATIONAL RANK: #88 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BOWLING GREEN	-12	28
9/9	NEW MEXICO ST	-14	26
9/16	at Buffalo	-2	31.5
9/23	at Fla International	-13.5	21.5
10/5	SAM HOUSTON ST	-16.5	23
10/10	at Jacksonville St	-2	32.5
10/17	MIDDLE TENN ST	-7.5	32.5
10/24	at W Kentucky	6.5	40.5
11/4	LOUISIANA TECH	-10	30
11/11	OLD DOMINION	-12.5	27.5
11/18	MASSACHUSETTS	-23	17.5
11/25	at UTEP	-4.5	30

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **27.24** #133 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.3 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+240 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **2000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 8

OFFENSE: 5 QB

DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28.1	58	25	47
Yards Per Point	14.1	58	13.9	76
Plays Per Game	71.9	51		
Time of Possession	28:53	88		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.9%	57	34.3%	23
Total Yards Per Game	395	53	347.8	30
Yards Per Play	5.5	57	4.8	19
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.6	42		
Rush Yards Per Game	178.9	44	151.3	61
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	43	3.8	36
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.3	80		
Completion %	58.5%	85	59.7%	52
Passing Yards Per Game	216.1	86	196.4	20
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	72	6.8	37
Turnovers	2	119	1.8	20

2022 RESULTS
SU: 8-5, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Southern Miss (-3.5)	29-27	W	L
9/10	UAB (6)	21-14	W	W
9/17	at Wake Forest (18)	36-37	L	W
9/24	AKRON (-26.5)	21-12	W	L
10/1	at Old Dominion (-3.5)	38-24	W	W
10/8	at Massachusetts (-23)	42-24	W	L
10/15	GARDNER WEBB (-24.5)	21-20	W	L
10/22	BYU (7)	41-14	W	W
11/5	at Arkansas (14.5)	21-19	W	W
11/12	at Connecticut (-13)	33-36	L	L
11/19	VIRGINIA TECH (-10.5)	22-23	L	L
11/26	NEW MEXICO ST (-24)	14-49	L	L
12/20	vs. Toledo (4)	19-21	L	W

LOUISIANA TECH
BULLDOGS

HEAD COACH: SONNY CUMBIE (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAKE BROWN / SCOTT PARR
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT POWER

BY ADAM BURKE

It was a rough first season for Sonny Cumbie and the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs. For the second straight season, the Bulldogs went winless on the road and have lost 14 in a row away from Ruston. All three wins came at home, and one of them was against FCS Stephen F. Austin, whose former defensive coordinator is the DC at LA Tech. Coincidentally, that was also the team's best defensive performance. But I think things are looking up, and this might be a surprise team this year.

OFFENSE

Cumbie got a decent first season out of Parker McNeil, but all three QBs from last season have left the program. Hank Bachmeier transfers in from Boise State after posting 6,605 yards and a 41/19 TD/INT ratio. A quarterback with experience like Bachmeier should allow Cumbie, formerly the offensive coordinator at Texas Tech and TCU, to open up the playbook a bit more. Bachmeier doesn't get the services of leading receiver Tre Harris, but he does get Smoke Harris and also Cyrus Allen, who had nearly 23 yards per catch as a true freshman. All-name-team member De'Coldest Crawford could also be in the mix after redshirting.

While LA Tech's rushing numbers weren't great overall, both Marquis Crosby and Charvis Thornton hit at least five yards per carry, with Thornton actually leading the way with 5.8 yards per pop. Cumbie's deep ties in the Lone Star State should lead to an infusion of talent, and the offense could be much more explosive this season after managing 5.6 yards per play last year.

DEFENSE

The defense was actually the problem for this team last season. The Bulldogs surrendered 6.5 yards per play and gave up 6.1 yards per carry while incorporating an all-or-nothing defense under defensive coordinator Scott Power. Only four starters are back from this group, which is probably a good thing based on last season's performance. The Bulldogs did rack up 11 interceptions, but they blitzed a lot and rarely got to the QB with 16 sacks. Finding somebody to regularly harass the passer is the most important goal of this unit.

Unfortunately, Cumbie and his staff weren't really big players in the transfer portal, so a lot of the guys that were in the program last season will hold key roles this season. It is the second year in Power's scheme, but the Bulldogs didn't exactly get better throughout the season. UAB ran for 406 yards on them in the last game, and they gave up at least 414 yards to every C-USA opponent except FIU.

OUTLOOK

This could be a really good team to bet Overs with because Bachmeier should add more legitimacy to the offense, and the defense projects to be awful yet again. The second season under an offensive-minded coach like Cumbie should create more chances to score points. I think it helps LA Tech that some of the conference's better teams are gone. They gave up 47 to North Texas, 42 to Rice, 51 to UTSA, and 37 to UAB. The betting markets also like them, with a win total of 5.5 juiced heavy on the Over. My projection is for 6.44 wins.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **30**

NATIONAL RANK: #115 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	FLA INTERNATIONAL	-12	21.5
9/2	at SMU	18.5	45
9/9	NORTHWESTERN ST	-28	5
9/16	NORTH TEXAS	3.5	36.5
9/23	at Nebraska	18	46
9/29	at UTEP	2.5	30
10/5	W KENTUCKY	8	40.5
10/10	at Middle Tenn St	5.5	32.5
10/24	NEW MEXICO ST	-7.5	26
11/4	at Liberty	10	36.5
11/11	SAM HOUSTON ST	-9.5	23
11/18	at Jacksonville St	5	32.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 31.26 #125 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.9 / 0.3 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+800 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS **11**   OFFENSE: 7   DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.9	66	39.8	129
Yards Per Point	14.2	65	12.1	121
Plays Per Game	72.3	45		
Time of Possession	29:31	74		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.8%	89	44.7%	113
Total Yards Per Game	381	66	483.6	127
Yards Per Play	5.3	77	6.6	124
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.5	101		
Rush Yards Per Game	109.1	112	252.2	131
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	107	6.3	129
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.9	24		
Completion %	59.1%	80	58.6%	41
Passing Yards Per Game	271.9	27	231.5	71
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	61	7.2	62
Turnovers	2.2	124	1.7	26

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	at Missouri (20.5)	24-52	L	L
9/10	STEPH F AUSTIN (-6.5)	52-17	W	W
9/17	at Clemson (33.5)	20-48	L	W
9/24	at S Alabama (13)	14-38	L	L
10/8	UTEP (-1.5)	41-31	W	W
10/15	at North Texas (6.5)	27-47	L	L
10/22	RICE (2.5)	41-42	L	W
10/28	at Fla International (-6.5)	34-42	L	L
11/5	MIDDLE TENN ST (2.5)	40-24	W	W
11/12	at Tx-San Antonio (17)	7-51	L	L
11/19	at Charlotte (-2)	21-26	L	L
11/26	UAB (18)	27-37	L	W

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE
BLUE RAIDERS

HEAD COACH: RICK STOCKSTILL (18TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MITCH STEWART
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT SHAFER

BY ADAM BURKE

The biggest benefactor of the arrivals and departures in Conference USA could be Middle Tennessee. Head coach Rick Stockstill begins his 18th year with one of the more talented teams in the league, but the Blue Raiders feel like they've been floating in mediocrity for a while. Perhaps that changes with a much weaker field. Two of MTSU's four conference losses were to teams now gone, but the performances against the holdovers weren't all that impressive either.

OFFENSE

Nick Vattiato was pressed into duty in 2021 when the Blue Raiders had a rash of injuries at the quarterback position. The redshirt he was supposed to use in his true freshman season got burned, as he started five games. Last season, though, departed starter Chase Cunningham stayed healthy enough for Vattiato to redshirt, and now this is unquestionably his offense. Vattiato has a 7/7 TD/INT ratio and a little over 1,300 passing yards in his collegiate career.

Unfortunately for him, three receivers that accounted for 180 of the team's 341 receptions are gone. MTSU was actually ninth in completions last season and 11th in attempts, so Vattiato's performance will determine the ceiling for this squad with second-year offensive coordinator Mitch Stewart calling plays. It makes sense to throw the ball, as the Blue Raiders only managed 3.1 yards per carry last season.

DEFENSE

What's concerning about Middle Tennessee is that they are +23 in turnover margin over the last two seasons and just 15-11 in those 24 games. The Blue Raider defense tied for third in takeaways with 30 last season, trailing conference foe Western Kentucky and Illinois. MTSU's 20 interceptions were the second-most in the nation. Eight starters are back, including elite corner Teldrick Ross, who had 20 pass breakups and two of those interceptions.

Decorian Patterson is not back, though, and he led the team with seven picks. Also missing from the equation is Jordan Ferguson, who had nine sacks and eight tackles for loss. So, the Blue Raiders are replacing some real impact dudes on defense, but they do have Ross and leading tackler Tra Fluellen back. This group allowed 27.7 points per game, 5.5 yards per play, and 293 passing yards per game, so the turnovers played a huge role. Without them, this was not a very good unit, so they'll have to continue ball-hawking under defensive coordinator Scott Shafer.

OUTLOOK

Middle Tennessee could really benefit from the new Conference USA members. Some teams in the league don't take good care of the football, and that could allow this defense to keep forcing takeaways. The offense may get a boost from weaker defenses as well. And, yet, you wonder how high the ceiling is for MTSU, given that they haven't surpassed eight wins since 2009. MTSU has not won a conference title since being the co-champs in the 2006 Sun Belt. That seems like a program still destined to be mediocre, even with a weaker schedule. I only have them down for 5.87 wins with a win total of 6.5.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **32.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #103 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Alabama	38	67.5
9/9	at Missouri	20	49.5
9/16	MURRAY ST	-31.5	4
9/23	COLORADO ST	-5.5	30
9/28	at W Kentucky	10.5	40.5
10/4	JACKSONVILLE ST	-2.5	32.5
10/10	LOUISIANA TECH	-5.5	30
10/17	at Liberty	7.5	36.5
11/4	at New Mexico St	-4	26
11/11	FLA INTERNATIONAL	-14.5	21.5
11/18	UTEP	-6	30
11/25	at Sam Houston St	-6.5	23

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.46**
#119 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.9 / 0.1**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+450 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **13**
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	27.2	64	29.5	85
Yards Per Point	13.6	39	14.4	60
Plays Per Game	77.4	11		
Time of Possession	28:11	107		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.2%	107	38.6%	61
Total Yards Per Game	368.6	76	426.1	104
Yards Per Play	4.8	109	5.4	62
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.9	89		
Rush Yards Per Game	99.4	120	121.4	24
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.9	127	3.4	17
Pass Attempts Per Game	40.6	11		
Completion %	65.7%	17	57.4%	27
Passing Yards Per Game	269.2	29	304.7	131
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.6	95	7.6	89
Turnovers	1.4	59	2.3	2

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at James Madison (4.5)	7-44	L	L
9/10	at Colorado St (14)	34-19	W	W
9/17	TENNESSEE ST (-19.5)	49-6	W	W
9/24	at Miami Fl (25.5)	45-31	W	W
9/30	TX-SAN ANTONIO (4)	30-45	L	L
10/8	at UAB (10)	14-41	L	L
10/15	W KENTUCKY (7.5)	17-35	L	L
10/29	at UTEP (2.5)	24-13	W	W
11/5	at Louisiana Tech (-2.5)	24-40	L	L
11/12	CHARLOTTE (-10)	24-14	W	T
11/19	FLA ATLANTIC (4.5)	49-21	W	W
11/26	at Fla International (-19.5)	33-28	W	L
12/24	vs. San Diego St (7)	25-23	W	W

NEW MEXICO STATE
AGGIES

HEAD COACH: JERRY KILL (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM BECK
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NATE DREILING / MELVIN RICE

BY ADAM BURKE

One of the best stories in college football last season was one that nobody really paid attention to because it happened in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The New Mexico State Aggies, led by first-year head coach Jerry Kill, went 7-6 and won the Quick Lane Bowl over Bowling Green. The Aggies, who were limited to two games in 2020, had won seven games total over the last three non-COVID seasons. What does Kill have in store for an encore?

OFFENSE

It is really hard to read too much into the stats for New Mexico State. Their athletic department is dependent on getting blown out from time to time, and it happened with a 38-0 loss to Minnesota with 91 yards of offense and a 66-7 loss to Wisconsin. On the other hand, the Aggies also dropped 65 on Valparaiso to get bowl-eligible and hung 51 on Lamar. So, you take the good with the bad.

Now, though, the Aggies won't play an Independent schedule anymore, though they will rekindle the I-25 rivalry with New Mexico and still draw UMass. Overall, the Aggies racked up 5.7 yards per play, the most since 2017, when they last went to a bowl game. They rushed for 4.6 yards per carry, and sack avoidance helped the passing attack with just 16 allowed. Diego Pavia's job was to get the ball out as fast as possible, and that will be the case again with nine starters back, including every pass-catcher except the one that led the team in receptions.

DEFENSE

What happened on defense was simply stunning. New Mexico State did play a much weaker schedule, but the Aggies went from 40.4 points per game allowed and 7.4 yards per play allowed to 23.9 points per game and five yards per play. That was the lowest yards per play allowed by an Aggies defense in Division I-A. Defensive coordinator Nate Dreiling will turn 33 in October, and I think he'll be in line for a big job upgrade following this season.

Let's see what Dreiling does this season, as five of the top six tacklers are gone, including Lazarus Williams and Chris Ojoh, who combined for 12.5 of the team's 28 sacks. FBS transfers generally aren't interested in programs like New Mexico State, which means scouring the JUCO ranks or making do with what you've got. It will primarily be the latter for Dreiling, as only four returning starters are back, but the rising DC might be a magic man.

OUTLOOK

New Mexico State has a really interesting travel spot right before the bye. One road game at Liberty in Lynchburg, Virginia, feeds into the rivalry game against New Mexico, a game that the Aggies won for the first time in four tries last season. After that, the Aggies fly to Honolulu to face Hawaii. Then they'll play four road games in five weeks in October and November, including a trip to get pummeled at Auburn. The schedule is still weak, so my projections call for 5.68 wins with a win total line of 5.5, but I think the travel could be a real bear.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 26

NATIONAL RANK: #124 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	MASSACHUSETTS	-11	17.5
9/2	W ILLINOIS	-21.5	7
9/9	at Liberty	14	36.5
9/16	at New Mexico	-2.5	21
9/23	at Hawaii	0	23
10/4	FLA INTERNATIONAL	-7	21.5
10/11	SAM HOUSTON ST	-4.5	23
10/18	at UTEP	7	30
10/24	at Louisiana Tech	7.5	30
11/4	MIDDLE TENN ST	4	32.5
11/11	at W Kentucky	17.5	40.5
11/18	at Auburn	29	52
11/25	JACKSONVILLE ST	4.5	32.5

RETURNING STARTERS 13

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 4

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 28.78 #132 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.2 / 0.4 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

25-1 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.5	109	26.7	60
Yards Per Point	15.2	86	13.4	91
Plays Per Game	59.1	131		
Time of Possession	29:03	83		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.3%	80	39.9%	75
Total Yards Per Game	296.5	122	357.7	38
Yards Per Play	5	95	5.2	46
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.9	78		
Rush Yards Per Game	154.4	61	162.9	76
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	54	4.2	65
Pass Attempts Per Game	23.3	124		
Completion %	49.2%	127	61.8%	85
Passing Yards Per Game	142.2	124	194.8	19
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.1	115	7	49
Turnovers	1.5	83	1	113

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	NEVADA (7.5)	12-23	L	L
9/1	at Minnesota (36)	0-38	L	L
9/10	at UTEP (17)	13-20	L	W
9/17	at Wisconsin (37.5)	7-66	L	L
9/24	HAWAII (-4.5)	45-26	W	W
10/1	FLA INTERNATIONAL (-15.5)	7-21	L	L
10/15	NEW MEXICO (7)	21-9	W	W
10/29	at Massachusetts (-1)	23-13	W	W
11/12	LAMAR (-22)	51-14	W	W
11/19	at Missouri (29)	14-45	L	L
11/26	at Liberty (24)	49-14	W	W
12/3	VALPARAISO (-31.5)	65-3	W	W
12/26	vs. Bowling Green (3)	24-19	W	W

SAM HOUSTON STATE
BEARKATS

BY ADAM BURKE

Head coach KC Keeler and the Sam Houston State Bearkats have been very successful at the FCS level. Keeler was the National Champion in the spring of 2021 when the FCS played due to COVID. The Bearkats were 11-1 in the fall of 2021 with the quick turnaround, but only played nine games in 2022 and also redshirted a few players to maintain their eligibility for the first year as an FBS member. Keeler was 85-27 with SHSU in FCS, but now the task becomes much more difficult in Conference USA.

OFFENSE

FCS programs have fewer scholarships available, not to mention they lack the financial pull, especially in the NIL era, of FBS schools. It will take time for the Bearkats to really build up to FBS standards, but they return a lot of starters and a lot of production for the upcoming campaign. After scoring 41 points per game with 6.6 yards per play in 2021, the Bearkats only mustered 18.3 points per game and 4.7 yards per play in 2022, as very, very heavy losses in production and experience took their toll.

QB Keegan Shoemaker and former Arizona recruit and North Texas transfer Grant Gunnell will battle it out for starting reps, while Washington State transfer Xavier Ward may also get a look. Shoemaker's numbers were not strong with a 6/5 TD/INT ratio and just a 46.6% completion rate, so the job should be pretty wide-open. The Bearkats were a little more effective on the ground behind Zach Hrbacek, who averaged 5.8 yards per carry. With the huge losses from the 2020-21 teams lingering, it's a bad time for the Bearkats to make the leap.

DEFENSE

While the offense took a major nosedive, the defense still performed admirably, and maybe even more so without help from the other side of the ball. The SHSU defense allowed just 20.8 points per game while being extremely stout against the run. The pass defense held opponents to a 56% completion rate, but they went from 26 sacks to 16, albeit with three fewer games played.

This is an experienced defense full of upperclassmen, so this part of the team looks much more formidable and likely able to compete in a weak conference. Most of the starters in the secondary are six feet tall or bigger, which will help in a conference that does have some pass-happy offenses. If this group can force some takeaways and turn defense into offense, or even put some points on the board themselves, the projections for the Bearkats would be a lot more promising.

OUTLOOK

The Bearkats have a season win total of 4 and my projections call for 3.27 wins, so I'm a bit on the low side. They should be favored in at least two games, if not three, depending on how Jacksonville State looks at the outset. The offense doesn't appear to be FBS-ready, but the defense does, so it'll be interesting to see how the totals are lined for their games in a rough defensive conference. I think it'll be a tough transition to FBS.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 23

NATIONAL RANK: #128 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at BYU	25	46
9/9	vs. Air Force	18.5	41.5
9/23	at Houston	22	43.5
9/28	JACKSONVILLE ST	7	32.5
10/5	at Liberty	16.5	36.5
10/11	at New Mexico St	4.5	26
10/18	FLA INTERNATIONAL	-5	21.5
10/25	UTEP	4	30
11/4	KENNESAW ST	-8	17.5
11/11	at Louisiana Tech	9.5	30
11/18	at W Kentucky	19.5	40.5
11/25	MIDDLE TENN ST	6.5	32.5

RETURNING
STARTERS 16

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 9

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.99** #113 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.8 / 0.5** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **990-1**

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK	DEFENSE STAT/RANK
Points Per Game	First Year as FBS School	
Yards Per Point		
Plays Per Game		
Time of Possession		
3rd Down Conv. %		
Total Yards Per Game		
Yards Per Play		
Rush Attempts Per Game		
Rush Yards Per Game		
Yards Per Rush Attempt		
Pass Attempts Per Game		
Completion %		
Passing Yards Per Game		
Yards Per Pass Attempt		
Turnovers		

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-4, ATS: 3-6, O/U: 2-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Texas A&M (36)	0-31	L	W
9/10	N ARIZONA (-15)	3-10	L	L
9/17	TEXAS A&M-COMM (-23.5)	27-17	W	L
10/1	vs. Steph F Austin (-5)	17-16	W	L
10/15	at E Kentucky (6)	25-17	W	W
10/22	at Utah Tech (-14.5)	18-13	W	L
10/29	at Tarleton St (-7.5)	40-21	W	W
11/12	ABILENE CHRISTIAN (-9)	28-45	L	L
11/19	S UTAH (-11)	7-17	L	L

UTEP
MINERS

BY ADAM BURKE

Even though expectations are understandably low at UTEP, there have been some whispers that maybe Dana Dimel is in a make-or-break year. Given how the conference is now the opposite of formidable, it does make sense that a 5-7 campaign wouldn't cut it. Bowl eligibility is the baseline, and achieving something more should be expected. With most of the offense back and a chance to bring a little exposure to El Paso with those weeknight games, this is a big year for the Miners.

OFFENSE

Eight starters return from an offense that actually regressed in 2022. The Miners had 25.1 points per game and six yards per play in 2021. They dropped to 24.4 points per game and 5.5 yards per play in 2022. Senior QB Gavin Hardison is back to add to his numbers and is currently the third-leading passer all-time in program history, but it would take over 4,000 yards to move up any higher. UTEP will just settle for a better season than last year, with a 52.1% completion rate and an 11/8 TD/INT ratio.

Scotty O'Hara goes from the wide receivers coach to the offensive coordinator in hopes of sparking something in the passing game. Top WR Tyrin Smith is back after catching 71 balls for 1,039 yards, but no other returnee caught more than 21 passes. UTEP's running game falls on the shoulders of 235-pound bruiser Deion Hankins, who was a conference second-teamer last season, and he'll be running behind a veteran offensive line.

DEFENSE

The defense also took a step back from 2021 to 2022, perhaps leading to skepticism about Dimel's future. UTEP went from 25.2 points per game to 27 points per game allowed and from 5.2 yards per play to 5.9 yards per play allowed. UTEP finished with a negative turnover margin for the eighth straight season, despite an odd amount of fumble luck, with 11 recoveries on 19 fumbles. The Miners forced five interceptions, tied for 124th in the nation.

What's odd is that UTEP was in the top 40 in third-down defense and the top 50 in red zone TD%, but still couldn't convert that into enough victories. Leading tackler Tyrice Wright is back, and so is third-leading tackler Kobe Hylton, but top sack artist Jadrian Taylor took 9.5 of the 28 QB takedowns with him.

OUTLOOK

This is such a hard team to figure out. Conference USA hasn't been very good for a while and is clearly weaker this season, but nothing stands out for UTEP that would suggest an uptick in results or production. My projections have UTEP with just 5.92 wins, but there are a handful of toss-up games on the schedule with lines around +/-3. Falling short of a bowl game in this version of Conference USA would likely result in a pink slip for Dimel, so that's a storyline to watch this season. With the line at 5.5, I'd peg UTEP likelier for six wins than for five.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 30

NATIONAL RANK: #114 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	at Jacksonville St	5	32.5
9/2	INCARNATE WORD	9.5	41.5
9/9	at Northwestern	10.5	38.5
9/16	at Arizona	15	43
9/23	UNLV	-1	31.5
9/29	LOUISIANA TECH	-2.5	30
10/11	at Fla International	-6	21.5
10/18	NEW MEXICO ST	-7	26
10/25	at Sam Houston St	-4	23
11/4	W KENTUCKY	8.5	40.5
11/18	at Middle Tenn St	6	32.5
11/25	LIBERTY	4.5	36.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.21** #111 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.4 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

12-1 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.4	81	27	61
Yards Per Point	15.8	99	13.1	104
Plays Per Game	72.2	48		
Time of Possession	33:47	6		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.1%	55	34.8%	25
Total Yards Per Game	385.1	63	353.8	36
Yards Per Play	5.3	71	5.7	85
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.5	45		
Rush Yards Per Game	167.4	54	137.3	42
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	58	4.1	59
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.7	67		
Completion %	53.2%	118	56.6%	18
Passing Yards Per Game	217.7	84	216.5	42
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	81	8.2	112
Turnovers	1.8	103	1.3	74

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 4-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	NORTH TEXAS (1)	13-31	L	L
9/3	at Oklahoma (31)	13-45	L	L
9/10	NEW MEXICO ST (-17)	20-13	W	L
9/17	at New Mexico (-2.5)	10-27	L	L
9/23	BOISE ST (16.5)	27-10	W	W
10/1	at Charlotte (-3.5)	41-35	W	W
10/8	at Louisiana Tech (1.5)	31-41	L	L
10/22	FLA ATLANTIC (3)	24-21	W	W
10/29	MIDDLE TENN ST (-2.5)	13-24	L	L
11/3	at Rice (3.5)	30-37	L	L
11/19	FLA INTERNATIONAL (-14)	40-6	W	W
11/26	at Tx-San Antonio (16.5)	31-34	L	W

HEAD COACH: TYSON HELTON (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DREW HOLLINGSHEAD / ZACK LANKFORD
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TYSON SUMMERS

BY ADAM BURKE

The likely class of Conference USA is the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers, who went 9-5 overall last season and outscored conference foes 38-19 while outgaining them by an average of 136 yards per game. Even though he was ready to leave, starting QB Austin Reed decided to stay and has the chance to put up absurd numbers with a watered-down schedule and weaker defenses. With three nine-win seasons in Tyson Helton's four years as head coach, this could be the first with double-digit dubs.

OFFENSE

Reed threw for 4,744 yards with 40 touchdown passes against 11 interceptions last season. The West Florida transfer filled in perfectly for Bailey Zappe, who took his talents to the NFL, and a similar fate could be in store for Reed with the stats he can compile this season. Leading receiver Malachi Corley caught 101 balls for 1,293 yards, but his supporting cast of Daewood Davis and Jaylen Hall moved on. However, with how much Western Kentucky threw the ball (623 pass attempts), guys like Michael Mathison and 6-5 Cincinnati transfer Blue Smith will put up numbers.

While WKU didn't throw for 434 yards per game as they did in 2021, they were still second to Washington in passing yards per game with 352.1 and second in attempts to Mississippi State. For good measure, the Hilltoppers also rushed for 4.9 yards per carry. For a team that throws as much as WKU does, a +21 turnover margin in the last two seasons is remarkably impressive, and more of the same is likely in the new-look C-USA, especially with Mike Leach Air Raid disciple Drew Hollingshead as the new offensive coordinator.

DEFENSE

This team isn't all about the aerial assault and lighting up the scoreboard. The defense was also really stout last season, holding opponents to 23.4 points per game and just 5.2 yards per play. In the four seasons under Helton, the Hilltoppers have not allowed more than 5.6 yards per play, and the defense took another step forward under new defensive coordinator Tyson Summers last season. In his second year, Summers only has four returning starters, but the caliber of opposing offense has gone down.

Leading tackler and head sack man JaQues Evans is one of the four returnees. A lack of experience hits every level of the defense, especially the back seven. Fortunately, this is a good time for that to happen, given the state of the conference, but it will be interesting to see what WKU looks like in road games at Ohio State and Troy in Weeks 3 and 4 with a lot of newbies.

OUTLOOK

My numbers have WKU with 9.17 wins, and they are favored in every game except for those aforementioned matchups in the nonconference on the road. In fact, I have Western Kentucky favored by a touchdown or more in every other game. Their season win total is just 8.5 with the Over at plus money, and this is one of my favorite season win total wagers. If they pull the mini upset at Troy, it would take a complete catastrophe not to go Over.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **40.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #70 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 9

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	SOUTH FLORIDA	-12	31.5
9/9	HOUSTON BAPTIST	-48	-4.5
9/16	at Ohio St	31.5	69
9/23	at Troy	5.5	44.5
9/28	MIDDLE TENN ST	-10.5	32.5
10/5	at Louisiana Tech	-8	30
10/17	at Jacksonville St	-6	32.5
10/24	LIBERTY	-6.5	36.5
11/4	at UTEP	-8.5	30
11/11	NEW MEXICO ST	-17.5	26
11/18	SAM HOUSTON ST	-19.5	23
11/25	at Fla International	-17.5	21.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **30.74** #126 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+130 ODDS TO WIN CONFERENCE USA

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **11**

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	36.3	11	23.2	34
Yards Per Point	14	55	16.8	17
Plays Per Game	75.4	23		
Time of Possession	28:58	85		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.2%	35	35.9%	40
Total Yards Per Game	506.7	4	389.4	69
Yards Per Play	6.7	8	5.2	40
Rush Attempts Per Game	29.1	123		
Rush Yards Per Game	148.8	66	147.6	55
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	19	4	53
Pass Attempts Per Game	45.2	3		
Completion %	64.6%	26	62.0%	88
Passing Yards Per Game	357.9	2	241.8	83
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	38	6.6	28
Turnovers	1.5	81	2.2	5

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-5, ATS: 9-5, O/U: 7-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	AUSTIN PEAY (-28)	38-27	W	L
9/3	at Hawaii (-13)	49-17	W	W
9/17	at Indiana (7)	30-33	L	W
9/24	FLA INTERNATIONAL (-31)	73-0	W	W
10/1	TROY (-4.5)	27-34	L	L
10/8	at Tx-San Antonio (6)	28-31	L	W
10/15	at Middle Tenn St (-7.5)	35-17	W	W
10/21	UAB (-1)	20-17	W	W
10/29	NORTH TEXAS (-10)	13-40	L	L
11/5	at Charlotte (-14.5)	59-7	W	W
11/12	RICE (-13.5)	45-10	W	W
11/19	at Auburn (4.5)	17-41	L	L
11/26	at Fla Atlantic (-7.5)	32-31	W	L
12/21	vs. S Alabama (4)	44-23	W	W

INDEPENDENTS BETTING PREVIEW

In 2022, seven teams lived the independent life, but in 2023, only four remain. BYU jumped to the Big 12 after being independent for 12 years, while Liberty and New Mexico State joined Conference USA. Notre Dame remains the most notable independent. A new TV deal with NBC could potentially keep the Irish independent for many more years to come, but the money available in conference life could ultimately entice Notre Dame to join the Big Ten. The Irish do have an agreement with the ACC and will play six ACC teams this year, in addition to clashes with Ohio State and USC.

Army has been an independent since 2005 following a brief seven-year stint in Conference USA. The Black Knights have reached a bowl game in five of the last seven years. Only time will tell how long UConn will remain independent. After winning another basketball National Championship, there were reports of the Huskies potentially moving to the Big 12. UConn reached a bowl game last year for the first time since 2015. Lastly, UMass has been an independent since 2016. The Minutemen had a brief stint in the MAC from 2012–15. UMass had never won more than four games in the FBS ranks.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
NOTRE DAME	58.5	44.84 (44)	8.9	3.1	0.0	0.0	9
ARMY	36	35.03 (95)	5.9	6.1	0.0	0.0	6
CONNECTICUT	32	33.25 (110)	5.5	6.5	0.0	0.0	5
MASSACHUSETTS	17.5	35 (96)	2.2	9.8	0.0	0.0	2

ARMY
BLACK KNIGHTS

HEAD COACH: JEFF MONKEN (10TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT DRINKALL / DREW THATCHER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NATE WOODY

BY TIM MURRAY

The goal remains the same for Army every football season. Beat Navy, beat Air Force, win the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, and reach a bowl game. The Black Knights defeated Navy in double overtime last year but failed to win the CIC Trophy and did not reach a bowl game. Head coach Jeff Monken enters his 10th season in West Point and has done an incredible job turning the program around. Army has reached a bowl game in five of the last seven seasons and has just one losing season since 2015.

The Black Knights are making some tweaks to the offense in 2023 and will no longer run the triple option from under center. Army will still use an option attack but will operate mainly out of the shotgun. Drew Thatcher is the new offensive coordinator in West Point, coming over from Division II Nebraska-Kearney. The schedule is challenging this season. In addition to rivals Navy and Air Force, Army will play three P5 teams (Syracuse, Boston College, LSU), as well as three G5 programs that reached a bowl game in 2022 (UTSA, Troy, Coastal Carolina).

OFFENSE

It is hard to envision right now but come September 2 at UL Monroe, Army's offense will operate primarily out of the shotgun. Due to NCAA rule changes that eliminated blocking below the waist anywhere but inside the tackle box, Monken decided to make the massive change this spring. Monken told The Athletic, "We kind of limped through last season. I just didn't feel like it was sustainable." Army made a change at offensive coordinator, bringing in Thatcher. Still, expect plenty of rushing for the Black Knights in 2023. Army rushed for 289.4 yards per game (2nd in FBS) last season. Nebraska-Kearney finished fifth in Division II with 264.1 rushing yards per game.

The Black Knights have zero combined starts in its quarterback room entering 2023. Tyhier Tyler, Cade Ballard, and Jemel Jones all graduated. Tyler was Army's leading rusher last season, and Ballard attempted a team-high 46 passes. Despite losing Tyler, the Black Knights' top four leading running backs return in 2023. Tyson Riley, Jakobi Buchanan, Tyrell Robinson and Ay'Juan Marshall combined to rush for 1,353 yards and 10 touchdowns last year. Marshall also had six receptions for 208 yards and two touchdowns. Wide receiver Isaiah Alston could see more action this year. Alston was Army's leading receiver last year (16 catches, 269 yards, 1 TD). The offensive line has a combined 76 starts but could struggle at times with the new offensive scheme.

DEFENSE

Eight starters return this season from last year's defense, and defensive coordinator Nate Woody is back for his fourth season in West Point. Army's defense benefits from lack of possessions due to lengthy offensive possessions. However, last year Army's offense finished 29th in time of possession (Air Force and Navy finished 1-2). Three players from last year's team were invited to three NFL mini-camps (LB Andre Carter, LB Marquel Broughton, and DE Kwabena Bonsu). Andre Carter is a big loss after compiling 20 sacks over his career (15.5 in 2021).

OUTLOOK

It will be a transition year for Army, with drastic changes to the offensive in the works. The Black Knights schedule in 2023 is more challenging than the 2022 schedule. Army opens at UL Monroe, hosts UMass on October 28, and plays a pair of FCS opponents, but the other eight games will either be toss-us or expected losses.

Army faces three Power Five teams in Syracuse, Boston College, and LSU, and three other quality G5 programs in UTSA, Troy, and Coastal Carolina. Last year, Army lost to UTSA 41-38 in OT, lost to Coastal Carolina 38-28, and slipped past Troy 10-9. All three teams have win totals of 7.5 or better this season. Additionally, Army will play rivals Air Force (in Denver) and Navy (in Foxborough). Last year, the Black Knights won six games but played just one Power Five program (Wake Forest). This season, the schedule intensifies, and I'm not sure how much Army has improved.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 36

NATIONAL RANK: #92 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 4

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at LA Monroe	-8.5	24.5
9/9	DELAWARE ST	-41.5	-3
9/15	at TX-San Antonio	12	44.5
9/23	at Syracuse	14	47
10/7	BOSTON COLLEGE	0	38.5
10/14	TROY	6.5	44.5
10/21	at LSU	30	62.5
10/28	MASSACHUSETTS	-21.5	17.5
11/4	vs. Air Force	6	41.5
11/11	HOLY CROSS	-10	28
11/18	COASTAL CAROLINA	-0.5	37.5
12/9	vs. Navy	1.5	37

RETURNING STARTERS 17

OFFENSE: 9

DEFENSE: 8

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 35.03
#95 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.3 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA — ODDS TO WIN INDEPENDENT

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP — **2000-1**

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	25.2	76	24.3	41
Yards Per Point	13.7	44	15.3	40
Plays Per Game	64.7	121		
Time of Possession	31:55	23		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.0%	39	39.5%	71
Total Yards Per Game	345.9	99	372.3	48
Yards Per Play	5.3	69	5.8	99
Rush Attempts Per Game	53.6	3		
Rush Yards Per Game	253.9	3	202.6	116
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	40	5	115
Pass Attempts Per Game	10	130		
Completion %	42.0%	131	62.0%	89
Passing Yards Per Game	92	129	169.7	3
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.2	4	7.7	96
Turnovers	1.1	33	1.2	93

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-6, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Coastal Carolina (1.5)	28-38	L	L
9/10	TX-SAN ANTONIO (2)	38-41	L	L
9/17	VILLANOVA (-14)	49-10	W	W
10/1	GEORGIA ST (-9)	14-31	L	L
10/8	at Wake Forest (16.5)	10-45	L	L
10/15	COLGATE (-32.5)	42-17	W	L
10/22	LA MONROE (-6.5)	48-24	W	W
11/5	vs. Air Force (7)	7-13	L	L
11/12	at Troy (8.5)	9-10	L	W
11/19	CONNECTICUT (-10.5)	34-17	W	W
11/26	at Massachusetts (-20)	44-7	W	W
12/10	vs. Navy (2.5)	20-17	W	W

BY TIM MURRAY

Jim Mora worked a miracle in his first year in Storrs. Entering last season, UConn had won a total of four games since 2018 (UConn did not play any games in 2020). Despite a preseason win total of 2.5 and losing its starting quarterback in the first game of the season, the Huskies somehow won six games, including three wins as a touchdown underdog or more. UConn also played in its first bowl game since 2015 (lost in the Myrtle Beach Bowl to Marshall, 28-14).

While Danny Hurley and Geno Auriemma have National Championships under their belts, Mora should walk around the athletic department with his head held high after last year's magical season. Now what will Mora and the Huskies do as an encore? The Huskies open the season with a nationally televised primetime game against NC State at home (UConn is a 16.5-point underdog). In UConn's last home game, the Huskies defeated rock-solid Liberty, 36-33, as a 14-point underdog. Can UConn pick up where they left off?

OFFENSE
Penn State transfer Ta'Quan Roberson opened the 2022 season as the Huskies starting quarterback. Unfortunately, Roberson tore his ACL in the first quarter of UConn's season opener at Utah State. True freshman Zion Turner started the rest of the season and threw just nine touchdown passes. This year, Roberson is expected back, but UConn added Maine transfer Joe Fagnano. UConn offensive coordinator Nick Charlton was Fagnano's head coach from 2019-21 at Maine. Fagnano and Roberson will likely compete for the starting quarterback role in the fall.

The Huskies lost a pair of talented players to Power Five programs this offseason. Running back Nathan Carter transferred to Michigan State, and WR Aaron Turner moved on to Cincinnati. Carter rushed for 405 yards on 65 carries in four games last year before getting hurt and missing the remainder of the season. Victor Rosa and Devontae Houston combined to rush for 1,218 yards and 14 touchdowns last year. Rosa and Houston return in 2023. The Huskies also added Louisville transfer Jalen Mitchell. Mitchell rushed for 722 yards in 2021.

Aaron Turner's production will be difficult to replace. Turner finished with 57 catches for 527 yards and three touchdowns despite a limited passing attack. UConn also lost WR Keelan Marion (BYU) to the portal.

On the offensive line, the Huskies return four starters that started all 13 games last year. RG Christian Haynes was UConn's first All-American since 2010 and announced in December that he would be back in 2023.

DEFENSE
A week before the 2022 season, defensive coordinator Lou Spanos resigned. Jim Mora took over play-calling duties and will remain calling plays in 2023. The Huskies return eight starters from last year's defense that allowed 380.5 yards per game (70th nationally). LB Jackson Mitchell is back after leading the Huskies with 140 tackles in 2022. LB Brandon Bouyer-Randle had 98 tackles last year and a team-high seven tackles for loss, but Bouyer-Randle is currently in training camp with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Corner Tre Wortham also departed after leading the Huskies with four interceptions last year. The defensive line should be a strength, with DE Eric Watts returning after registering a team-high seven sacks in 2022. The Huskies added some depth via the portal: LB Eriq Gilyard (Kansas), CB Mumu Bin-Wahad (West Virginia), Armauni Archie (Washington State), Zakhari Spears (Washington).

OUTLOOK
UConn reaching a bowl game in 2022 was one of the biggest surprises of the college football season. Mora's squad went 9-4 ATS and the Huskies won and covered all three games they were favorites in. UConn's three other wins came against Fresno State (+23), Boston College (+7), and Liberty (+14). Under Mora, the UConn program seems to be headed in the right direction. Stability at quarterback would be helpful after not getting much production last season.

UConn plays four Power Five programs in 2023 and will be an underdog in all four games (NC State, Duke, at Boston College, at Tennessee). UConn will also be an underdog on the road against James Madison on November 11. The Huskies should be a favorite and beat FIU, FCS Sacred Heart, and UMass. The win total will likely come down to four toss-up games: at Georgia State, Utah State, at Rice, South Florida. With a strong offense and defense line, there is certainly a chance UConn heads back to a bowl game for a second straight season, but I expect a little regression following last year's unexpected six-win season. Four or less wins are more likely than six or more.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **32**

NATIONAL RANK: #107 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 4

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	NC STATE	14	48.5
9/9	at Georgia St	5	34
9/16	FLA INTERNATIONAL	-13.5	21.5
9/23	DUKE	12.5	47.5
9/30	UTAH ST	-4	30
10/7	at Rice	4	33
10/21	SOUTH FLORIDA	-3.5	31.5
10/28	at Boston College	9	38.5
11/4	at Tennessee	28	56.5
11/11	at James Madison	11.5	39.5
11/18	SACRED HEART	-30	4.5
11/25	MASSACHUSETTS	-17.5	17.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.25**
#110 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.5 / 0.4**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA — ODDS TO WIN INDEPENDENT

5000-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **17**
OFFENSE: 9 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	18.7	116	28.2	69
Yards Per Point	15.6	95	13.9	75
Plays Per Game	61.8	128		
Time of Possession	29:56	64		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.5%	111	44.1%	112
Total Yards Per Game	291	124	392	72
Yards Per Play	4.7	112	5.4	60
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.3	39		
Rush Yards Per Game	184.1	36	177.3	94
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	42	4.4	89
Pass Attempts Per Game	21.1	128		
Completion %	56.5%	101	63.4%	102
Passing Yards Per Game	106.9	127	214.7	41
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.1	129	7	54
Turnovers	1.5	72	1.8	20

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 9-4, O/U: 4-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	at Utah St (24)	20-31	L	W
9/3	C CONN ST (-21)	28-3	W	W
9/10	SYRACUSE (23.5)	14-48	L	L
9/17	at Michigan (47.5)	0-59	L	L
9/24	at Nc State (38)	10-41	L	W
10/1	FRESNO ST (23.5)	19-14	W	W
10/8	at Fla International (-6)	33-12	W	W
10/15	at Ball St (9.5)	21-25	L	W
10/29	BOSTON COLLEGE (8)	13-3	W	W
11/4	MASSACHUSETTS (-14.5)	27-10	W	W
11/12	LIBERTY (13)	36-33	W	W
11/19	at Army (10.5)	17-34	L	L
12/19	vs. Marshall (12)	14-28	L	L

MASSACHUSETTS
MINUTEMEN

HEAD COACH: DON BROWN (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: STEVE CASULA
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEITH DUDZINSKI

BY TIM MURRAY

UMass joined the FBS ranks back in 2012 and the Minutemen have not won more than four games in a season since. Over the last four seasons, UMass is just 3-37. Additionally, the Minutemen are 1-3 against FCS opponents during that span. Head coach Don Brown is entering year two of his second stint as the head coach of UMass. Brown was the defensive coordinator for UMass in 1998, when the Minutemen won the FCS National Championship. He was also the head coach in 2006, when UMass lost in the FCS National Title game.

Believe it or not, UMass was a successful program once upon a time, but that was over a decade ago. Brown left UMass in 2009 to become the defensive coordinator at Maryland. Prior to his return, he spent time as the defensive coordinator at UConn, Boston College, Michigan, and Arizona. While the record did not indicate it, the Minutemen improved from 2021 to 2022 and will open the season on the big stage in Week 0. UMass will visit New Mexico State for a primetime game on ESPN.

OFFENSE
Quarterback play was a disaster in Amherst last season. Four QBs combined to throw four touchdowns and 14 interceptions over the season. UMass finished last in FBS with 12.5 points per game and racked up just 266.0 yards per game. QB Taisun Phommachanh will take over the starting quarterback role this year. Phommachanh was a four-star recruit in the class of 2019 and spent the first three years of his college career at Clemson before transferring to Georgia Tech last year.

UMass lost leading rusher Ellis Merriweather from last year's team, but Kay'Ron Adams is back. The Minutemen also added Arizona transfer RB Jalen John. WR George Johnson returns after leading UMass with 402 receiving yards last year, and UMass adds a pair of transfers that will likely start alongside Johnson. Wide receiver Anthony Simpson transferred in from Arizona, where he saw the majority of his action as a kickoff returner. Wideout Mark Pope spent last year at Jackson State but caught 33 passes for 403 yards in 2020 for Miami (FL). Tackle Max Longman transferred to Indiana, so the offensive line could be an issue. But with improved quarterback play, the UMass offense should be improved in 2023.

DEFENSE
Eight starters return for UMass in 2023 after drastically improving in Brown's first season back. The Minutemen finished 55th in the nation in yards allowed per game (369.6), but they will be without three key pieces of last year's defense. Corner Josh Wallace hit the portal in May and ultimately landed at Michigan. The secondary did add Vanderbilt transfer S Dashaun Jerkins and Minnesota transfer CB Steven Ortiz. Corner Jordan Mahoney had a solid freshman year with six pass breakups and three interceptions. Up front, DE Marcus Cushnie is gone after compiling 5.5 sacks a year ago. Leading tackler LB Jalen Mackie also departed. But linebacker Jerry Roberts transferred in from Arizona. He started all 12 games for the Wildcats last year and had 78 tackles.

OUTLOOK
UMass has been one of, if not the, worst FBS program on a yearly basis since jumping from FCS in 2012. In the first year under Brown, UMass was outgained by 103.8 yards per game, an 80-yard improvement from 2021. The quarterback play last year was horrendous and should see a massive improvement this year.

The Minutemen are a 9-point underdog at New Mexico State in Week 0 and a 39.5-point underdog at Auburn over Labor Day weekend. While assuming a victory for UMass is a reach, the Minutemen should defeat FCS Merrimack on November 4. New Mexico and Arkansas State both visit Amherst in September, and both of those games are potential toss-ups. UMass also plays three other MAC schools (Miami OH, at Eastern Michigan, Toledo). While the Minutemen will be an underdog in all three of those games, it is not crazy to think UMass could sneak out a win in one of those games. UMass wraps up the season with a neutral-site game against UConn. The Minutemen have not won more than one game in a season since 2018, but this year, UMass has a chance to win three or four games.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 2

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **17.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #133 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 4

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	at New Mexico St	11	26
9/2	at Auburn	37.5	52
9/9	MIAMI OHIO	15	34.5
9/16	at E Michigan	16.5	32
9/23	NEW MEXICO	1	21
9/30	ARKANSAS ST	8.5	28
10/7	TOLEDO	22.5	42
10/14	at Penn St	47	61.5
10/28	at Army	21.5	36
11/4	MERRIMACK	-11	8
11/18	at Liberty	23	36.5
11/25	at Connecticut	17.5	32

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 35.00 #96 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.9 / 0.5 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA — ODDS TO WIN INDEPENDENT

10000-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **15**
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	11.8	130	33.6	111
Yards Per Point	22.5	130	11.1	131
Plays Per Game	69	82		
Time of Possession	31:50	24		
3rd Down Conv. %	27.8%	127	32.8%	16
Total Yards Per Game	265.9	128	372.9	49
Yards Per Play	3.9	130	6	110
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.4	12		
Rush Yards Per Game	147.9	67	200.5	114
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	103	5.1	119
Pass Attempts Per Game	23.5	123		
Completion %	48.1%	128	55.0%	10
Passing Yards Per Game	118	126	172.5	5
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5	130	8.2	116
Turnovers	1.6	93	1.5	62

2022 RESULTS

SU: 1-11, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 4-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Tulane (28.5)	10-42	L	L
9/10	at Toledo (28)	10-55	L	L
9/17	STONY BROOK (-1)	20-3	W	W
9/24	at Temple (10)	0-28	L	L
10/1	at E Michigan (19.5)	13-20	L	W
10/8	LIBERTY (23)	24-42	L	W
10/15	BUFFALO (17)	7-34	L	L
10/29	NEW MEXICO ST (1)	13-23	L	L
11/4	at Connecticut (14.5)	10-27	L	L
11/12	at Arkansas St (17.53)	33-35	L	W
11/19	at Texas A&M (32)	3-20	L	W
11/26	ARMY (20)	7-44	L	L

HEAD COACH: MARCUS FREEMAN (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GERAD PARKER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: AL GOLDEN

BY TIM MURRAY

The first season of the Marcus Freeman era was a bit of a roller coaster ride. Notre Dame finished with a 9-4 record and a thrilling 45-38 win over South Carolina in the Gator Bowl. The Irish dominated Clemson, 35-14, but also inexplicably lost to Marshall and Stanford at home. Notre Dame went 6-1 ATS as an underdog or a favorite of seven or fewer points in 2022, while going 1-5 ATS as a favorite of seven or more points with two outright losses.

The Irish massively upgraded the quarterback position this offseason, adding former Wake Forest QB Sam Hartman. However, the Irish lost offensive coordinator Tommy Rees to Alabama, legendary offensive line coach Harry Hiestand to retirement, and special teams coordinator Brian Mason to the Indianapolis Colts. Notre Dame opens up the season with a trip to Ireland against Navy, hosts Ohio State and USC, and plays six ACC opponents this year, including a visit to Clemson in November.

OFFENSE
It all starts with the quarterback and Notre Dame might have its best quarterback to start a season since Brady Quinn. Hartman comes to South Bend after a prolific career at Wake Forest. Hartman set ACC records for career passing yards and touchdowns. Shortly after Hartman's arrival, however, Nick Saban poached Rees. (Rees also took QB Tyler Buchner to Alabama after the spring). Following a bit of a clumsy search for Rees' replacement, Marcus Freeman promoted tight ends coach Gerard Parker to offensive coordinator. On the surface, the hire is questionable, considering the funds Notre Dame has at its disposal — as well as Parker's lack of play-calling experience.

On the good side, Notre Dame's offensive line is anchored by a pair of potential first-round picks. Tackles Joe Alt and Blake Fisher could be the best duo in the country. Starting C Zeke Correll also returns, but the Irish need to replace G Jarrett Patterson, who was drafted by the Houston Texans. Running back Audric Estime had a breakout season in 2022, leading the Irish with 920 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns. Estime should have over 1,000 yards this season running behind that line.

Notre Dame lost RB Logan Diggs to LSU (821 rushing yards) and Chris Tyree has moved from RB to WR. Tight end Michael Mayer moved on to the NFL and was drafted by the Las Vegas Raiders in the second round. Mayer led the Irish with 67 receptions, 809 receiving yards and nine touchdowns. Wideout Jayden Thomas will likely be Hartman's main target this fall. Thomas began to emerge down the stretch last season and had five receptions in the Gator Bowl (Mayer opted out). Wide receiver Tobias Merriweather could have a breakout season this year, and the Irish also brought in three four-star recruits at the position that could see some early action.

DEFENSE
One of the most stunning stats regarding Notre Dame in 2022 was its red zone defense. If an opponent entered the red zone, it almost always left with points. Notre Dame allowed a touchdown 79% of the time and allowed points on 94% of its opponents' red zone trips (32-34).

Defensive coordinator Al Golden enters his second season in South Bend and is coming off his first full offseason (Golden joined Notre Dame's staff following the Bengals' Super Bowl appearance in 2021). The strength of the defense will be at linebacker. JD Bertrand, Jack Kiser, and Marist Liufau all return. They were the top three tacklers on the team last year. Former five-star recruit Jaylen Sneed should see some more playing in his sophomore season as well.

At cornerback, the Irish have a strong duo in Cam Hart and Benjamin Morrison. Morrison had six interceptions last year and was a Freshman All-American last year. The safety position is the biggest concern for Notre Dame this year. The Irish added FCS Rhode Island transfer Antonio Carter in the spring to help bolster the position, but there is still plenty of cause for concern.

Up front, Notre Dame needs to replace DE Isaiah Foskey (second-round pick by Saints) and the Ademilola twins. The Irish added Ohio State transfer Javontae Jean-Baptiste to fill Foskey's role, but the front line seems to be missing some much-needed beef.

OUTLOOK
Notre Dame will play in the first college football game of the 2023 season against Navy over in Ireland in Week 0. After playing its first-ever FCS opponent (Tennessee State) on Labor Day weekend, the Irish will visit NC State on September 9. Notre Dame will be an underdog against Ohio State and Clemson, and around a pick 'em against USC on October 14. The Irish have several tricky games, including trips to Duke and Louisville, as well as a home game against Pitt the week before Clemson.

I predict Notre Dame will go 1-2 against Ohio State, Clemson, and USC but will drop at least one game as a favorite. Marcus Freeman's early track record of losing games as a big favorite does not bode well with a number of unique road games this year. The most likely outcome for the Irish is a nine-win season, but Notre Dame is more likely to win eight games than 10.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **58.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #13 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 4

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	vs. Navy	-22	37
9/2	TENNESSEE ST	-50.5	11
9/9	at NC State	-7.5	48.5
9/16	C MICHIGAN	-28.5	32.5
9/23	OHIO ST	8	69
9/30	at Duke	-9.5	47.5
10/7	at Louisville	-5.5	50
10/14	USC	1	62
10/28	PITTSBURGH	-13.5	47.5
11/4	at Clemson	3	59.5
11/18	WAKE FOREST	-15.5	45.5
11/25	at Stanford	-23.5	34

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **44.84**
#44 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.8 / 0.5**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA — ODDS TO WIN INDEPENDENT

28-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **13**
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.8	33	23	32
Yards Per Point	12.5	13	14.3	64
Plays Per Game	68.5	89		
Time of Possession	32:11	16		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.2%	13	36.3%	43
Total Yards Per Game	396.2	52	329.5	18
Yards Per Play	5.8	44	4.9	27
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.9	21		
Rush Yards Per Game	189	32	131.5	34
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	44	3.9	41
Pass Attempts Per Game	26	117		
Completion %	62.4%	47	58.7%	42
Passing Yards Per Game	207.2	92	198	22
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	34	6.5	22
Turnovers	1.4	57	1.2	103

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Ohio St (17)	10-21	L	W
9/10	MARSHALL (-20.5)	21-26	L	L
9/17	CALIFORNIA (-13.5)	24-17	W	L
9/24	at North Carolina (2.5)	45-32	W	W
10/8	vs. BYU (-3.5)	28-20	W	W
10/15	STANFORD (-16.5)	14-16	L	L
10/22	UNLV (-26)	44-21	W	L
10/29	at Syracuse (-1)	41-24	W	W
11/5	CLEMSON (3.5)	35-14	W	W
11/12	at Navy (-16.5)	35-32	W	L
11/19	BOSTON COLLEGE (-20)	44-0	W	W
11/26	at USC (4.5)	27-38	L	L
12/30	vs. South Carolina (-5)	45-38	W	W

MAC BETTING PREVIEW

While there has been massive realignment in college football in recent years, the Mid-American Conference has remained incredibly stable. The current 12 football teams have all been members since 1998, when Buffalo joined. The last to leave was Marshall in 2005.

Toledo beat Ohio 17-7 in the MAC Championship Game last December and is the +170 favorite to repeat at DraftKings Sportsbook. Ohio is the favorite to repeat in the East Division and is the +280 second choice to win the annual title game in Detroit. Other top contenders appear to be Buffalo (+650), Eastern Michigan (+800) and Miami (OH) (+850).

The next tier with some upside is Northern Illinois (+1600), Central Michigan (+1800) and Bowling Green (+2200). Remember that even though Toledo was expected to contend for the MAC title last year, Ball State won it at 10-1 in 2022 (predicted in the VSiN College Football Betting Guide), and Northern Illinois the year before that in 2021, despite only having an Over/Under season win total of 4 after going 0-6 in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season. The even longer shots are Ball State (30-1), Akron (35-1), Western Michigan (50-1) and Kent State (150-1).

Being a Group of Five conference (aka "mid-major") in the transfer portal/NIL era, the MAC loses a lot of top talent to Power Five programs. But the upside is that the conference does attract some players that fall through the cracks at the big schools and move to the MAC to increase their playing time and exposure.

Of course, one of the best things about betting on the Mid-American Conference is the midweek primetime "MACtion" games on ESPN in November, when teams get the rare chance to play in front of a national audience.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
EAST DIVISION							
OHIO U	36.5	29.94 (127)	7.5	4.5	5.6	2.4	7.5
MIAMI OHIO	34.5	29.14 (131)	7.2	4.8	5.0	3.0	7
BUFFALO	31.5	33.36 (109)	5.6	6.4	4.2	3.8	6.5
BOWLING GREEN	28	33.98 (105)	4.6	7.4	3.3	4.7	4.5
AKRON	24	32.13 (122)	3.7	8.3	2.4	5.6	3.5
KENT ST	20.5	32.83 (115)	3.0	9.0	2.0	6.0	2.5
WEST DIVISION							
TOLEDO	42	29.73 (128)	9.2	2.8	6.3	1.7	9
E MICHIGAN	32	29.32 (130)	6.7	5.3	4.4	3.6	7
N ILLINOIS	31.5	32.97 (114)	5.6	6.4	4.2	3.8	5.5
C MICHIGAN	32.5	35.37 (90)	5.4	6.6	4.2	3.8	5.5
BALL ST	30.5	34.58 (100)	5.4	6.6	3.9	4.1	4.5
W MICHIGAN	26	36.93 (80)	3.3	8.7	2.5	5.5	3.5

AKRON
ZIPS

BY DAVE TULEY

Akron obviously had an atrocious 2022 season at 2-12 with a -13 turnover margin (ranked No. 128 in the nation) and only wins against St. Francis (Pa.) and a down Northern Illinois team. There is a little hope for improvement with coach Joe Moorhead (Oregon, Mississippi State, Penn State, etc.) entering his second season with the program as he continues to add players to run his offense. However, that might not matter if the defense doesn't improve on its 33.5 points allowed average.

OFFENSE

DJ Irons showed improvement under Moorhead's direction, throwing for 2,606 yards and 10 TDs while adding another 314 yards and four TDs on the ground, but he did miss spring drills with injuries. Jeff Undercuffler Jr. (791 passing yards, five TDs, five INTs) took the spring snaps, so we'll see who starts in the fall.

No matter who's running Moorhead's offense, Akron surprisingly ranked No. 18 in the nation last season, though not too surprising since the Zips were almost always playing from behind. That also led Moorhead to try to improve a running game that averaged just 89.6 yards per game (last in the MAC and No. 125 in the country). They might have found their running back in Lorenzo Lingard Jr., formerly of Miami (FL) and Florida (Florida Player of the Year in 2017), or perhaps Drake Anderson, formerly of Northwestern and Arizona.

Last year, LSU transfer Alex Adams filled the stat sheet with 63 catches for 856 yards and nine TDs to be named All-MAC. It looks like his running mate will be Dakota Thomas, a transfer from Western Kentucky (another pass-happy program), who impressed during spring practice.

DEFENSE

The Zips lost 20 players to the transfer portal, but no departure was as surprising as All-MAC linebacker Bubba Arslanian announcing after spring practice that he was passing up his final year of eligibility. That's a huge loss for a defense that already allowed 33.5 points a game last season (No. 1117 in the nation) and 406.2 yards per game (No. 91).

After all the departures, safety Nate Thompson is the leading returning tackler (73 last year) and linebacker Antavious Fish is the leading returning sacker (just two). Moorhead's reputation as a developer of NFL talent (albeit on the offensive side of the ball) did bring in a decent amount of help in the transfer portal. Division II's DE Ahmad Rabah (18 sacks, 22.5 tackles for loss at American International) and DT Terray Jones (8.5 sacks at Tennessee State and a reported standout at spring practice) could make the most immediate impact.

OUTLOOK

The Zips' win total is obviously low, but it's still hard to find enough winnable games, even with that confidence-win over Northern Illinois late last season. They probably can't beat Temple, Kentucky or Indiana on their nonconference schedule, and we can't say they're a lock versus an FCS program like Morgan State. (We're sure they see Akron as a winnable game.) And it would also probably take a sweep of other MAC also-rans (Bowling Green and Kent State) to even sniff the Over on its win total.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **24**

NATIONAL RANK: #127 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Temple	12.5	33.5
9/9	MORGAN ST	-26	0
9/16	at Kentucky	32.5	52.5
9/23	at Indiana	18	39
9/30	BUFFALO	6	31.5
10/7	N ILLINOIS	6	31.5
10/14	at C Michigan	12	32.5
10/21	at Bowling Green	6.5	28
	KENT ST	-5.5	20.5
11/8	at Miami Ohio	14	34.5
11/14	at E Michigan	10	32
11/24	OHIO U	11	36.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.13** #122 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.5 / 0.5** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

35-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **10000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **15**

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	21	104	34.5	116
Yards Per Point	17.7	116	11.7	128
Plays Per Game	77.5	9		
Time of Possession	30:34	52		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.7%	90	36.3%	42
Total Yards Per Game	371.5	74	402.4	81
Yards Per Play	4.8	105	5.9	104
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.9	112		
Rush Yards Per Game	88.8	127	160.5	73
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.9	128	4.3	70
Pass Attempts Per Game	42.2	7		
Completion %	64.9%	23	60.0%	56
Passing Yards Per Game	282.7	19	241.9	84
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	90	8.3	119
Turnovers	2.3	127	1	113

2022 RESULTS

SU: 2-10, ATS: 6-5, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	ST FRANCIS PA (-18.5)	30-23	W	L
9/10	at Michigan St (34.5)	0-52	L	L
9/17	at Tennessee (47.5)	6-63	L	L
9/24	at Liberty (26.5)	12-21	L	W
10/1	BOWLING GREEN (8.5)	28-31	L	W
10/8	at Ohio U (9.5)	34-55	L	L
10/15	C MICHIGAN (12)	21-28	L	W
10/22	at Kent St (16)	27-33	L	W
10/29	MIAMI OHIO (9)	9-27	L	L
11/8	E MICHIGAN (6)	28-34	L	T
11/26	at N Illinois (9.5)	44-12	W	W
12/2	at Buffalo (12.5)	22-23	L	W

BY DAVE TULEY

There was hope for David Letterman's alma mater to return to its 2020 MAC-winning form, but Ball State had its second straight losing season at 5-7 last year (3-5 in the MAC West) despite starting 2-1 in conference play. The Cardinals went 1-4 down the stretch with the only win over lowly Kent State, including losing the last three games with a chance to become bowl-eligible. Now, they have to rebuild even more after suffering big losses in the transfer portal.

OFFENSE

Nearly every MAC team loses talented players to the Power Five, but Ball State was hit harder than most as it lost QB John Paddock (2,719 passing yards last season. 18 TDs) to Illinois and RB Carson Steele (1,556 rushing yards, 14 TDs) to UCLA. At least coach Mike Neu was able to get Marquez Cooper (1,331 yards, 13 TDs, second to Steele in the MAC) from Kent State.

The QB job is reportedly still open with last year's backup, Kiael Kelly (who only threw one pass all season), trying to hold off transfer Layne Hatcher, who has 10,090 career passing yards at Arkansas State and Texas State after red-shirting his freshman year at Alabama.

The offensive line returns three starters, and the Cardinals have two solid tight ends in Brady Hunt and Tanner Koziol (combined for 81 catches, 871 yards, and 12 TDs last season), but the wide receiving corps is inexperienced, with the top returnee being Nick Presley (six catches, 35 yards).

DEFENSE

Ball State's pass defense allowed just 216.1 yards per game (ranked No. 49 in the nation) to keep the Cardinals in most games, but they lost three defensive backs — Nic Jones, AJ Uzodinma and Jaquan Amos — to the NFL Draft that combined for 167 tackles, six INTs and 24 pass deflections. Those will be hard to replace, and Neu was still searching for answers after spring ball.

The front seven is now stronger, led by linebackers Clayton Coll (team-leading 110 total tackles) and Cole Pearce (85 tackles, 14 tackles for loss, team-leading five sacks). Lineman Tavion Woodard and Sidney Houston Jr. tied for second on the team with four sacks.

OUTLOOK

The Cardinals have a brutal start to the season with road games at two SEC teams, opening as 26.5-point road underdogs at Kentucky and then traveling to defending national champion Georgia. If they're not totally run over, they have a chance to bounce back against Indiana State and Georgia Southern. Ball State's upside this season is probably to be a middle-of-the-road MAC team, but with the Over/Under season win total set so low at 4.5 wins, the play is on the Over with enough winnable games on the schedule, especially Western Michigan, Bowling Green and Kent State. And if the QB situation is resolved, another upset or two is possible.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 30.5

NATIONAL RANK: #113 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Kentucky	25	52.5
9/9	at Georgia	42.5	70.5
9/16	INDIANA ST	-18.5	14.5
9/23	GA SOUTHERN	0	33
9/30	at W Michigan	-2	26
10/7	at E Michigan	3	32
10/14	TOLEDO	9	42
10/21	C MICHIGAN	0	32.5
	at Bowling Green	-0.5	28
11/7	at N Illinois	2.5	31.5
11/18	KENT ST	-12.5	20.5
11/25	MIAMI OHIO	1.5	34.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.58** #100 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.4 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

30-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **10000-1**

RETURNING
STARTERS 13

OFFENSE: 6

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	22.5	94	29.4	82
Yards Per Point	16.7	112	14.4	62
Plays Per Game	74.5	30		
Time of Possession	27:13	121		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.2%	97	41.0%	85
Total Yards Per Game	375.9	71	421.5	99
Yards Per Play	5	92	5	34
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.7	92		
Rush Yards Per Game	147.3	68	191.9	107
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	56	4.2	67
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.7	14		
Completion %	59.5%	77	59.3%	51
Passing Yards Per Game	228.6	66	229.5	64
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.8	120	6.4	19
Turnovers	1.8	106	1.1	104

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-6, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 3-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	at Tennessee (36.5)	10-59	L	L
9/10	W MICHIGAN (6.5)	30-29	W	W
9/17	MURRAY ST (-21)	31-0	W	W
9/24	at Ga Southern (9.5)	23-34	L	L
10/1	N ILLINOIS (3.5)	44-38	W	W
10/8	at C Michigan (7.5)	17-16	W	W
10/15	CONNECTICUT (-9.5)	25-21	W	L
10/22	E MICHIGAN (-2.5)	16-20	L	L
11/1	at Kent St (7)	27-20	W	W
11/8	at Toledo (14)	21-28	L	W
11/15	OHIO U (3.5)	18-32	L	L
11/22	at Miami Ohio (2.5)	17-18	L	W

BOWLING GREEN
FALCONS

HEAD COACH: SCOT LOEFFLER (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GREG NOSAL / MAX WARNER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SAMMY LAWANSON / STEVE MORRISON

BY DAVE TULEY

Bowling Green had an up-and-down season in 2021 and fittingly ended 6-6, though the Falcons did become bowl-eligible after an upset of eventual MAC champion Ohio in the next-to-last regular season game before losing 24-19 in the Quick Lane Bowl. The prospects for 2022 aren't as high as they lost starting QB Matt McDonald to graduation and several players in the transfer portal while having a couple of years of lowly-rated recruiting classes.

OFFENSE

Backup QB Camden Orth (three TD passes, one rushing TD) did play in 10 games last year, including throwing for 191 yards in the bowl loss, but he's in a battle with former Missouri and Indiana starter Connor Bazelak (more than 7,000 passing yards and 36 TDs in 29 starts over four seasons). Coach Scot Loeffler has a tough call and said the competition will continue into the fall.

Sophomore RB Terion Stewart led BGSU with 412 rushing yards in 2021 but missed last season with personal issues. His return should help the running game, though the major concern is the offensive line, which did add some transfers from Power Five conferences but also had several returnees nursing injuries during spring practice.

Tyrone Broden (32 catches, 506 yards, seven TDs) transferred to Arkansas, but the Falcons return top receiver Odieu Hiliare (58 catches, 747 yards, six TDs) and is also deep at tight end, so there is some talent to improve on last year's 23.5 points per game (ranked No. 97) if the offensive line develops.

DEFENSE

The defense allowed a whopping 32.5 points per game last season (ranked No. 113). There was a silver lining as the Falcons had a school-record-tying 38 sacks and were tied for No. 13 in FBS. However, that was with Karl Brooks (10 sacks last season and 27.5 to rank No. 3 in BGSU history), and he's off to the NFL after being selected in the sixth round by the Packers. The best returning lineman is Anthony Hawkins, but he's a nose guard and not as much of a threat to get to the QB.

Linebacker Demetrius Hardamon is the leading returnee with six sacks, but the Falcons have several more holes to fill. One interesting returnee is Davon Ferguson, who transferred to Georgia Southern but returned to BGSU. That would help, along with JUCO transfer Marquette Harris at linebacker and returnee Brock Horne (49 total tackles, two sacks).

OUTLOOK

Bowling Green won six games last season, but it's hard to see it get back to bowl eligibility this year. The nonconference slate has just one winnable game against Eastern Illinois, as the Falcons have to visit Liberty, Michigan (at the Big House) and Georgia Tech. It's hard to find MAC wins with Ohio, Miami (OH), Buffalo and Toledo on the schedule. They would need to sweep the other also-rans (Akron, Ball State, Kent State and Western Michigan) to get close to their season win total.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 28

NATIONAL RANK: #119 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Liberty	12	36.5
9/9	E ILLINOIS	-22.5	8
9/16	at Michigan	42.5	67
9/23	OHIO U	6.5	36.5
9/30	at Georgia Tech	13	39
10/7	at Miami Ohio	10	34.5
10/14	at Buffalo	7	31.5
10/21	AKRON	-6.5	24
	BALL ST	0.5	30.5
11/8	at Kent St	-3.5	20.5
11/14	TOLEDO	12	42
11/21	at W Michigan	1	26

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.98** #105 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

22-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING
STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	20.7	105	30.3	91
Yards Per Point	15.8	101	13.8	79
Plays Per Game	67	100		
Time of Possession	29:13	79		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.1%	113	45.4%	115
Total Yards Per Game	326.6	108	417.8	96
Yards Per Play	4.9	101	5.7	83
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.7	114		
Rush Yards Per Game	95	123	173.3	90
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.1	123	4.5	90
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.3	50		
Completion %	61.2%	63	64.1%	106
Passing Yards Per Game	231.6	62	244.6	90
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7	79	7.6	86
Turnovers	1.8	111	1.8	20

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at UCLA (24)	17-45	L	L
9/10	E KENTUCKY (-7.5)	57-59	L	L
9/17	MARSHALL (17.5)	34-31	W	W
9/24	at Mississippi St (31)	14-45	L	T
10/1	at Akron (-8.5)	31-28	W	L
10/8	BUFFALO (2)	7-38	L	L
10/15	MIAMI OHIO (7)	17-13	W	W
10/22	at C Michigan (6)	34-18	W	W
11/2	W MICHIGAN (-5)	13-9	W	L
11/9	KENT ST (3)	6-40	L	L
11/15	at Toledo (14.5)	42-35	W	W
11/22	at Ohio U (6)	14-38	L	L
12/26	vs. New Mexico St (-3)	19-24	L	L

BUFFALO
BULLS

HEAD COACH: MAURICE LINGUIST (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DJ MANGAS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROBERT WRIGHT

BY DAVE TULEY

The Bulls were an incredibly streaky team in 2021 as they started with three straight losses to Maryland, Holy Cross and Coastal Caroline, then won five in a row over Eastern Michigan, Miami (OH), Bowling Green, Massachusetts and eventual Mac champion Toledo (their highlight of the year). Then, they lost three straight to Ohio, Central Michigan and Kent State (the low point) before beating Akron to get bowl-eligible at 6-6 and beat Georgia Southern 23-21 in the Camelia Bowl.

OFFENSE
Quarterback Cole Snyder threw for 3,030 yards with 18 TDs and eight INTs, as the Bulls averaged 28.5 points per game. He has a solid line in front of him led by All-MAC left guard Gabe Wallace.

The running game is in strong hands (and legs) with Ron Cook Jr. and Mike Washington both returning after running for 600 or more yards last season and being part of the passing game.

The rest of the receiving corps needs to step up as Justin Marshall and Quian Williams (both caught more than 60 passes last year) ran out of eligibility, and Jamari Gassett left in the transfer portal for Florida A&M. Fifth-year senior Marlyn Johnson is the top returnee with just 17 catches for 133 yards last season. A promising red-shirt freshman is Nik McMillian, who caught four passes for 134 in the Spring Game.

DEFENSE
Buffalo's "stop unit" was anything but in 2021 and needs to improve after allowing 26.7 points per game. The Bulls allowed just seven points to lowly Bowling Green and UMass but were pretty much lit up by everyone else to keep the team from reaching its potential.

Linebackers Shaun Dolac (147 total tackles, 4.5 sacks) and safety Marcus Fuqua (seven INTs) were first-team All-MAC, so they have something to build around. The defensive front also has some solid returnees—Daymond Williams (4.5 sacks) and Jaylon Bass, George Wolo and CJ Bazile played all 13 games last year. The other positions need help with their depth, though coach Maurice Linquist was very active in the transfer portal this offseason.

OUTLOOK
It's not often I would recommend Over season win totals for the top three teams in a division, but there is a clear divide between the haves and have-nots in the MAC East as Buffalo should contend with Ohio and Miami (OH) for the division crown. I have the Bulls as a cut below the other two, though they do get to host Ohio on November 7 before having to visit Miami (OH) the following week. They might need to do better than 1-3 from a tough nonconference schedule of Wisconsin, Fordham, Liberty and Louisiana, but they should be able to rack up enough wins against the MAC also-rans to get Over their number if they can just pull an upset along the way.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 31.5

NATIONAL RANK: #109 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Wisconsin	25	54
9/9	FORDHAM	-11	23.5
9/16	LIBERTY	2	36.5
9/23	at LA Lafayette	10.5	38.5
9/30	at Akron	-6	24
10/7	C MICHIGAN	-2	32.5
10/14	BOWLING GREEN	-7	28
10/21	at Kent St	-7.5	20.5
10/31	at Toledo	13.5	42
11/7	OHIO U	1.5	36.5
11/15	at Miami Ohio	6	34.5
11/21	E MICHIGAN	-2.5	32

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.36** #109 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.3 / 0** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+650 ODDS TO WIN MAC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 10

OFFENSE: 5 QB

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28.3	56	25.8	54
Yards Per Point	13.1	24	15.1	44
Plays Per Game	80.4	2		
Time of Possession	35:00	2		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.5%	67	35.0%	28
Total Yards Per Game	370.3	75	390.4	70
Yards Per Play	4.6	113	5.8	103
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.2	16		
Rush Yards Per Game	140.8	78	164.5	81
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	109	5	114
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.8	33		
Completion %	58.3%	88	57.3%	24
Passing Yards Per Game	229.5	64	225.9	58
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	104	7	52
Turnovers	1.5	72	2.2	4

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Maryland (24)	10-31	L	W
9/10	HOLY CROSS (-6)	31-37	L	L
9/17	at Coastal Carolina (12.5)	26-38	L	W
9/24	at E Michigan (6.5)	50-31	W	W
10/1	MIAMI OHIO (-3)	24-20	W	W
10/8	at Bowling Green (-2)	38-7	W	W
10/15	at Massachusetts (-17)	34-7	W	W
10/22	TOLEDO (7)	34-27	W	W
11/1	at Ohio U (-2.5)	24-45	L	L
11/9	at C Michigan (2.5)	27-31	L	L
11/26	KENT ST (-4.5)	27-30	L	L
12/2	AKRON (-12.5)	23-22	W	L
12/27	vs. Ga Southern (6)	23-21	W	W

CENTRAL MICHIGAN
CHIPPEWAS

HEAD COACH: JIM MCELWAIN (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PAUL PETRINO
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROBB AKEY

BY DAVE TULEY

Just like Northern Illinois, who Central Michigan tied for the MAC West Division title in 2021 but lost the tiebreaker, 2022 was a disappointment as the Chippewas fell to 4-8 (3-5 in the MAC West) to fall short of bowl eligibility a season after beating Washington State in the Sun Bowl. Coach Jim McElwain (24-21 at CMU) is well-respected and expected to get the program back in MAC contention, but a lack of overall talent at the skill positions makes that look unlikely this season.

OFFENSE

Central Michigan lost all-MAC wide receivers Kalil Pimpleton and JaCorey Sullivan after the 2021 season and are still trying to recover. Dallas Dixon, who was expected to step in, had his season cut short by injuries and only caught six passes for 96 yards in two games. The leading returning receiver this season is Jalen McGaughy, with just 20 catches for 313 yards and two TDs.

It didn't help that the QBs battling for the starting job are dual-threats, but their regarded more as runners than passers: Jase Bauer (435 passing yards, 312 rushing yards last season) and Bert Emanuel Jr. (eight passing yards and no TD passes, 496 rushing yards with seven TDs). Marion Lukes is the leading returning rusher with just 323 yards last year and three TDs.

Reason for hope comes from a strong offensive line led by third-team all-MAC guard Deiyantei Powell-Woods, plus both tackles return in Davis Heinzen and Brayden Swartout.

DEFENSE

If the Chippewas get back to bowl eligibility and/or contend for the MAC title. It'll probably be because of their defense. CMU was 69th against the run and 57th against the pass, though it has to do better with takeaways, as the Chippewas only had six fumble recoveries and four INTs all last season.

The top defensive players are two–time, first-team All-MAC defensive tackle Robi Stuart and first-team All-MAC cornerback Donte Kent while safety De'Javion Stepney was third-team. Leading tackler Kyle Moretti (94 total tackles, three sacks) also returns at linebacker, as do the No. 2 and No. 3 tacklers in safety Trey Jones and LB Justin Whiteside, so there is a solid core for McElwain to work around.

OUTLOOK

Central Michigan has a tough nonconference schedule, including opening as a 14.5-point underdog at Michigan State on Friday, September 1. The Chippewas also have a September 16 date at Notre Dame. However, they had a relatively soft early MAC schedule, so if whoever emerges at QB can improve during the season and the offense can do its share along with the defense, CMU could already be above their win total of 5.5 by the time it closes the regular season at MAC division favorites Ohio and Toledo on November 15 and 24, respectively.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 32.5

NATIONAL RANK: #104 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	at Michigan St	15.5	46
9/9	NEW HAMPSHIRE	-14.5	21.5
9/16	at Notre Dame	28.5	58.5
9/23	at S Alabama	14.5	44
9/30	E MICHIGAN	-3.5	32
10/7	at Buffalo	2	31.5
10/14	AKRON	-12	24
10/21	at Ball St	0	30.5
10/31	N ILLINOIS	-4	31.5
11/7	at W Michigan	-4	26
11/15	at Ohio U	5.5	36.5
11/24	TOLEDO	6.5	42

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 35.37
#90 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.2 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

18-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 4
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23.3	88	30.7	94
Yards Per Point	15.2	85	12.8	110
Plays Per Game	71.1	58		
Time of Possession	28:49	90		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.4%	102	35.2%	33
Total Yards Per Game	353	93	392.4	73
Yards Per Play	5	96	5.2	44
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.2	65		
Rush Yards Per Game	148.9	65	161.3	74
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.1	68	4	48
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.2	61		
Completion %	57.3%	94	60.7%	68
Passing Yards Per Game	204.1	96	231.1	68
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	107	7.2	70
Turnovers	2.4	128	0.7	129

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	at Oklahoma St (20.5)	44-58	L	W
9/10	S ALABAMA (-6)	24-38	L	L
9/17	BUCKNELL (-40.5)	41-0	W	W
9/24	at Penn St (28)	14-33	L	W
10/1	at Toledo (6.5)	17-38	L	L
10/8	BALL ST (-7.5)	16-17	L	L
10/15	at Akron (-12)	28-21	W	L
10/22	BOWLING GREEN (-6)	18-34	L	L
11/2	at N Illinois (4.5)	35-22	W	W
11/9	BUFFALO (-2.5)	31-27	W	W
11/16	W MICHIGAN (-10)	10-12	L	L
11/25	at E Michigan (1)	19-38	L	L

E

EASTERN MICHIGAN
EAGLES

HEAD COACH: CHRIS CREIGHTON (10TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHRIS CREIGHTON
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TAVER JOHNSON / BEN NEEDHAM

BY DAVE TULEY

Eastern Michigan had a very successful 8-4 regular season in 2022 and went 5-3 to tie for first in the MAC West, but they lost the tiebreaker due to their 27-24 loss against Toledo. The Eagles went on to beat San Jose State 41-27 in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl. Respected coach Chris Creighton has plenty to continue that momentum with 11 returning starters, though QB isn't one of the positions.

OFFENSE

Troy transfer Taylor Powell threw for 2,111 yards last season and 16 TDs, but he's gone. Austin Smith is expected to take over after starting four games last year and coming off the bench to upset Arizona State. Smith threw for 774 yards and added 255 more rushing yards, as he's more of a dual threat than Powell and could actually improve the offense.

No matter who is under center, the Eagles' offense will likely be led by former Iowa RB Samson Evans, who carried the load for 1,166 yards and 15 TDs last season, with Jaylon Jackson (13 receptions) expected to be used as the "change-of-pace" back. The right side of the line returns with G Alex Howie and T Brian Dooley.

The top returning receiver is third-team All-MAC WR Tanner Knue (45 catches, 632 yards, nine TDs), but EMU needs to replace graduated Hassan Beydoun and Dylan Drummond (82 combined receptions for nearly 1,000 yards) Former Indiana WR Javon Swinton could fill one of those roles, while WR Hamze El-Zayat is a graduate student at EMU who was a three-year starter at Fordham and caught a 58-yard pass from Smith in the Spring Game.

DEFENSE

The Eagles' defense allowed 28.5 points per game last season and caused the offense to have to win a lot of shootouts, but the defense helped by leading the MAC with 13 INTs (paced by three by rover Joshua Scott). Punter Mitchell Tomasek also helped the D by leading the conference with a 44.1-yard average.

EMU suffered a huge loss with the graduation of Jose Ramirez, last year's MAC Defensive Player of the Year. Ramirez had a school-record 12 sacks (including a single-game, school-record four vs. Western Michigan) on the way to being drafted by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in April. No one returns with more than 1.5 sacks. DT Peyton Price is the best returning defensive lineman. Chase Kline (team-leading 91 total tackles) and Joe Sparacio (89 tackles) lead the linebacking corps, while the ball-hawking secondary is very deep.

OUTLOOK

Eastern Michigan has a chance to get off to a great start with a soft nonconference schedule. The toughest test is the Big Ten's Minnesota. But don't forget, the Eagles shocked the Pac-12's Arizona State last September, which helped lead to Herman Edwards losing his job. Their toughest MAC road games are probably not until November at Toledo and at Buffalo, but by then, they might already be over their win total of 7. And if Smith continues to develop, they could be playing for the MAC East title in Toledo.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY

OVER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **32**

NATIONAL RANK: #106 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	HOWARD	-23.5	10.5
9/9	at Minnesota	21	50.5
9/16	MASSACHUSETTS	-16.5	17.5
9/23	at Jacksonville St	2.5	32.5
9/30	at C Michigan	3.5	32.5
10/7	BALL ST	-3	30.5
10/14	KENT ST	-13.5	20.5
10/21	at N Illinois	1	31.5
10/28	W MICHIGAN	-8	26
11/8	at Toledo	12.5	42
11/14	AKRON	-10	24
11/21	at Buffalo	2.5	31.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **29.32**
#130 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.7 / 0.3**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+800 ODDS TO WIN MAC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **11**

OFFENSE: 4

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28.8	53	28	66
Yards Per Point	12.6	16	13.1	101
Plays Per Game	71.5	54		
Time of Possession	31:32	30		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.6%	28	39.6%	74
Total Yards Per Game	363.2	82	367.6	43
Yards Per Play	5.1	86	5.4	61
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.8	40		
Rush Yards Per Game	143.2	71	157.5	70
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	89	4.3	76
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.2	84		
Completion %	61.6%	56	54.9%	9
Passing Yards Per Game	220	78	210.1	34
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	65	7.2	71
Turnovers	1.4	59	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	E KENTUCKY (-11)	42-34	W	L
9/10	at La Lafayette (11)	21-49	L	L
9/17	at Arizona St (20.5)	30-21	W	W
9/24	BUFFALO (-6.5)	31-50	L	L
10/1	MASSACHUSETTS (-19.5)	20-13	W	L
10/8	at W Michigan (4.5)	45-23	W	W
10/15	N ILLINOIS (-3.5)	10-39	L	L
10/22	at Ball St (2.5)	20-16	W	W
10/29	TOLEDO (4)	24-27	L	W
11/8	at Akron (-6)	34-28	W	T
11/16	at Kent St (7.5)	31-24	W	W
11/25	C MICHIGAN (-1)	38-19	W	W
12/20	vs. San Jose St (4)	41-27	W	W

KENT STATE
GOLDEN FLASHES

HEAD COACH: KENNI BURNS (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT JOHNSON
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID DUGGAN

BY DAVE TULEY

Kent went 5-7 last season, falling just short of bowl eligibility, so there was some talent. However, all four first-team All-MAC players left via the transfer portal, as well as three second-teamers and two third-teamers. We haven't seen an exodus like this since, well, Exodus. And then, head coach Sean Lewis left to be Deion Sanders' offensive coordinator at Colorado. In fact, our VSiN colleague Steve Makinen points out that the Golden Flashes have the fewest returning starters in the nation at four, including none on offense.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Collin Schlee threw for 2,109 yards last season with 13 TDs and just five INTs, but he left for UCLA. Tommy Ulatowski appeared to be the front-runner after spring practice, but the competition reportedly remains open.

One bright spot for Kent State late season was the running game, which averaged 202.1 rushing yards per game (No. 22 in the nation, rare for a team with a losing record). Marquez Cooper led the team with 1,326 rushing yards and 13 TDs, but since we know there are no returning starters, we know he transferred (to MAC rival Ball State). There is hope, however, with Xavier Williams (1,431 career yards) returning after missing last season, plus Kansas transfer Ky Thomas (826 yards, six TDs in 2021 at Minnesota).

The receiving cupboard is even more empty as five pass-catchers left the program, led by All-MAC WR Devontez Walker (North Carolina). The top returnee is Trell Harris (13 catches, 136 yards, one TD), with first-year coach Kenni Burns trying to find more replacements.

DEFENSE

The defense, which was middle-of-the-road last season, allowed 29 points per game (ranked No. 89) but was just as decimated by the transfer portal.

At least the defense has more players that played supporting roles or earned starts later last season, led by defensive tackle CJ West (4.5 tackles for loss), linebackers Khalib Johns (four sacks) and Khali Saunders (1.5 sacks), plus cornerback DJ Miller Jr. (four passes defended).

OUTLOOK

First things first, remember that we're required to make an Over/Under season win total with each team preview, but that doesn't mean we're actually betting it. There's plenty of other betting action to be had this college football season to give any thought on whether Kent State goes Over or Under the insanely low betting total of 2.5 wins. Having said that, we still have to think the Under is more likely to hit with the program basically starting from scratch. If you think you see a win or two on Kent's schedule, you're probably better off betting the single-game moneyline(s).

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 2.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **20.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #132 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	at UCF	32.5	50
9/9	at Arkansas	34	52
9/16	C CONN ST	-22	2
9/23	at Fresno St	24.5	42.5
9/30	MIAMI OHIO	10.5	34.5
10/7	at Ohio U	18	36.5
10/14	at E Michigan	13.5	32
10/21	BUFFALO	7.5	31.5
	at Akron	5.5	24
11/8	BOWLING GREEN	3.5	28
11/18	at Ball St	12.5	30.5
11/25	N ILLINOIS	7.5	31.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 32.83 #115 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.4 / 0.3 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING
STARTERS **4**

OFFENSE: 0
DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	25.3	75	30.7	94
Yards Per Point	16	108	14.5	59
Plays Per Game	75.1	24		
Time of Possession	25:57	129		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.3%	53	40.2%	80
Total Yards Per Game	405.4	45	444.6	112
Yards Per Play	5.4	63	5.7	88
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.6	15		
Rush Yards Per Game	189.1	31	164.5	80
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	53	3.9	47
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.5	78		
Completion %	54.5%	113	70.5%	130
Passing Yards Per Game	216.3	85	280.2	122
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	75	8.2	115
Turnovers	1.2	39	1.2	94

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 4-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Washington (23.5)	20-45	L	L
9/10	at Oklahoma (33)	3-33	L	W
9/17	LIU POST (-40)	63-10	W	W
9/24	at Georgia (45)	22-39	L	W
10/1	OHIO U (-12.5)	31-24	W	L
10/8	at Miami Ohio (-5.5)	24-27	L	L
10/15	at Toledo (7)	31-52	L	L
10/22	AKRON (-16)	33-27	W	L
11/1	BALL ST (-7)	20-27	L	L
11/9	at Bowling Green (-3)	40-6	W	W
11/16	E MICHIGAN (-7.5)	24-31	L	L
11/26	at Buffalo (4.5)	30-27	W	W

BY DAVE TULEY

Miami had high hopes heading into last season with QB Brett Gabbert, the conference's Freshman of the Year in 2019, expected to lead the RedHawks back to MAC prominence. However, he suffered an upper-body injury in the season-opening loss to Kentucky and only played in three more games before being shelved for the season. Still, there was enough talent that the team, led by the defense, went 6-6 and earned a bid to the Bahamas Bowl, which it lost 24-20 to UAB. With a healthy Gabbert, the RedHawks should challenge Ohio for the MAC East title.

OFFENSE

Without Gabbert, the younger brother of NFL QB Blaine Gabbert, Miami's offense finished 11th in the MAC in scoring. He only threw four TDs last season with no interceptions, so the hope is he returns to the form that saw him throw for 2,648 yards in 2021 with 26 TDs and just six INTs.

Backup QB Aveon Smith led the RedHawks with 533 rushing yards and six rushing TDs last year, but second-leading rusher Keyon Mozee (471 yards, two TDs) could see more of a role. Kevin Davis (19 catches) gives Gabbert an option out of the backfield. Coach Chuck Martin also picked up former South Carolina RB Rashad Amos in the transfer portal.

The receiving corps also has to work in new faces, with junior TE Jack Coldiron (24 catches, 286 yards) being the top returning target. We'll see who steps up from the newcomers. The top options look like former Notre Dame WR Joe Wilkins Jr. (two TDs in limited play, especially shortened by injury in 2021) and Southeastern Louisiana slot receiver Gage Larvadain (96 catches, 1,252 yards, seven TDs).

DEFENSE

The defense stepped up to fill in for the loss of the RedHawks' star QB, allowing a MAC-low 22.6 points per game to keep Miami in nearly every game.

The RedHawks will have to replace leading tackler Ryan McWood, who they lost to graduation after seven years in the program. But Matthew Salopek (124 total tackles) and Dominic Nardone are expected to fill that role in the linebacking unit, with defensive ends Corey Suttle (six sacks) and Caiden Woullard (four sacks) adding experience on the defensive front. They lost safety John Saunders Jr. in the transfer portal to Mississippi, but Jacquez Warren (two INTs) and Ambe' Caldwell return, while Miami will need their young cornerbacks to be quick studies.

OUTLOOK

A lot of MAC schools have tough opening games playing Big Ten teams in their nonconference season lid-lifters, but Miami (OH) might have the toughest of all with a game against its namesake, Miami (FL). DraftKings has the Hurricanes listed as 17.5-point home favorites. The RedHawks also face a tough Cincinnati program but should pick up wins over Massachusetts and Delaware State before the MAC season begins. Conference wins should come against Kent State, Bowling Green Akron and Ball State. Miami will get Toledo and Buffalo at home, so if they can pick up a win in one of those games, they should be able to get Over even if they're unable to win at Ohio on October 28 in a game that should decide the MAC East. If you think they win that game, you might want to grab Miami now at +850 to win the MAC, as they'd probably be heading to the conference championship game.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 34.5

NATIONAL RANK: #97 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	at Miami FL	17.5	49.5
9/9	at Massachusetts	-15	17.5
9/16	at Cincinnati	12.5	43.5
9/23	DELAWARE ST	-40.5	-3
9/30	at Kent St	-10.5	20.5
10/7	BOWLING GREEN	-10	28
10/14	at W Michigan	-5.5	26
10/21	TOLEDO	4.5	42
10/28	at Ohio U	4	36.5
11/8	AKRON	-14	24
11/15	BUFFALO	-6	31.5
11/25	at Ball St	-1.5	30.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 29.14
#131 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.1 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+850 ODDS TO WIN MAC

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.3	115	23.3	36
Yards Per Point	15.4	90	16.5	21
Plays Per Game	65.8	112		
Time of Possession	29:49	67		
3rd Down Conv. %	29.2%	123	41.6%	92
Total Yards Per Game	298.1	120	386.1	66
Yards Per Play	4.5	115	5.3	54
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.7	63		
Rush Yards Per Game	134.8	86	144.1	50
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	90	4.1	56
Pass Attempts Per Game	26	117		
Completion %	53.9%	116	61.3%	79
Passing Yards Per Game	163.3	120	242	85
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	112	7	47
Turnovers	0.7	3	1.7	31

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 3-10

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Kentucky (15)	13-37	L	L
9/10	ROBERT MORRIS (-30.5)	31-14	W	L
9/17	vs. Cincinnati (24)	17-38	L	W
9/24	at Northwestern (8)	17-14	W	W
10/1	at Buffalo (3)	20-24	L	L
10/8	KENT ST (5.5)	27-24	W	W
10/15	at Bowling Green (-7)	13-17	L	L
10/22	W MICHIGAN (-7)	10-16	L	L
10/29	at Akron (-9)	27-9	W	W
11/8	OHIO U (2.5)	21-37	L	L
11/16	at N Illinois (1)	29-23	W	W
11/22	BALL ST (-2.5)	18-17	W	L
12/16	vs. UAB (11)	20-24	L	W

HEAD COACH: THOMAS HAMMOCK (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ERIC EIDSNESS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NICK BENEDETTO

BY DAVE TULEY

Northern Illinois has been among the MAC's most dominant programs since the turn of the century and especially in the last dozen years, with five conference championships in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2021. They have also gone to bowls games an even dozen times since 2004, including the 2013 Orange Bowl after the 2012 season when they were No. 15 in the BCS Standings at the end of the regular season. The program stayed competitive for the rest of the last decade until the pandemic shortened 2020 season when the Huskies went 0-6. They then bounced back with the shocking 2021 MAC title before taking a step back in an injury-riddled last year at 3-9. Which NIU team do we get this season?

OFFENSE

The Huskies averaged only 182.7 yards passing in 2022 (ranked 114th in the nation). Of course, it was a devastating loss when former Michigan State QB Rocky Lombardi, who led NIU to the 2021 MAC title, suffered a knee injury in the third game of the season. He was off to a pretty good start, completing 66.7% of his passes for 645 yards and five TDs with just one INT. His replacements threw just 12 TDs the rest of the season with 13 INTs.

Lombardi's return alone (he threw for 2,597 yards in 2021 with 15 TD passes and added 473 rushing yards and another nine TDs) would give NIU fans hope for a return to the top of the MAC, but the Huskies also get back 2021 second-team All-MAC WR Trayvon Rudolph (51 receptions, 892 yards, 17.5 yards-per-catch average, seven TDs), who missed all of last season. Leading receiver Kacper Rutkiewicz (26 catches, 432 yards, six TDs) also returns, and the Huskies added 6-4 WR Davis Patterson, who had 42 catches for 661 yards and five TDs the last two years at James Madison and Notre Dame College (OH).

More good news: The running game, which was the main reason for the 2021 MAC title, still averaged 190.4 yards per game last year (No. 34 in the nation), even without the threat of Lombardi. In addition, the entire starting line is back in addition to RB Antario Brown (680 rushing yards, seven TDs).

DEFENSE

During NIU's success early this century, the defense was often the team's calling card, but that wasn't the case in the title run of 2021 when the offense had a lot of shootouts, and it was worse last season.

The defense was strong up front and was No. 52 in rush defense, but ranked No. 100 against the pass and allowed a whopping 32.8 points per game (No. 114). Defensive tackles Devonte O'Malley and James Ester earned all-MAC recognition for clogging the middle, while O'Malley also tied for the team lead with 5.5 sacks.

Two of the top four tacklers from last season return in safety CJ Brown and linebacker Jaden Dolphin. No. 2 tackler Daveren Rayner transferred to Kentucky, and CB Eric Rogers left for Rutgers, but coach Thomas Hammock added some transfers to fill some holes, including LBs Keshon Artis (Virginia Tech) and Tyler Jackson (Lamar), among others.

OUTLOOK

NIU coach Hammock has already shown the ability to rebuild quickly after a poor season, and that should happen again as long as the Huskies can avoid major injuries, unlike last year. NIU opens as 10.5-point road underdogs at Boston College in the season opener and then has other nonconference games against Southern Illinois, Nebraska and Tulsa. A 2-2 start would have them well on the way to winning above their low total of 5.5, but a 1-3 start wouldn't be a death knell as they have several winnable games on the MAC schedule with Akron, Eastern Michigan, Central Michigan, Ball State, Western Michigan and Kent State, though they do get a tough draw with their MAC opener on the road at conference favorite Toledo.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **31.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #110 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Boston College	9.5	38.5
9/9	S ILLINOIS	-2.5	30.5
9/16	at Nebraska	16.5	46
9/23	TULSA	-1.5	31.5
9/30	at Toledo	13.5	42
10/7	at Akron	-6	24
10/14	OHIO U	3	36.5
10/21	E MICHIGAN	-1	32
10/31	at C Michigan	4	32.5
11/7	BALL ST	-2.5	30.5
11/14	W MICHIGAN	-7.5	26
11/25	at Kent St	-7.5	20.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.97** #114 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.8 / 0** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

16-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS **15**

OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.6	68	33.3	110
Yards Per Point	14	57	11.8	127
Plays Per Game	69.3	79		
Time of Possession	30:51	43		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.1%	73	42.4%	99
Total Yards Per Game	372.5	73	391.6	71
Yards Per Play	5.4	64	5.6	77
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.4	25		
Rush Yards Per Game	190.7	29	140.9	44
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	41	3.7	34
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.8	101		
Completion %	55.9%	106	61.0%	76
Passing Yards Per Game	181.8	114	250.7	94
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.5	99	8.5	122
Turnovers	1.5	65	1.5	46

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	E ILLINOIS (-35)	34-27	W	L
9/10	at Tulsa (6.5)	35-38	L	W
9/17	VANDERBILT (-2.5)	28-38	L	L
9/24	at Kentucky (27)	23-31	L	W
10/1	at Ball St (-3.5)	38-44	L	L
10/8	TOLEDO (6.5)	32-52	L	L
10/15	at E Michigan (3.5)	39-10	W	W
10/22	at Ohio U (-2.5)	17-24	L	L
11/2	C MICHIGAN (-4.5)	22-35	L	L
11/9	at W Michigan (0)	24-21	W	W
11/16	MIAMI OHIO (-1)	23-29	L	L
11/26	AKRON (-9.5)	12-44	L	L

HEAD COACH: TIM ALBIN (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT ISPHORDING / ALLEN RUDOLPH
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SPENCE NOWINSKY

BY DAVE TULEY

The second year of head coach Tim Albin's tenure was a huge success. The Bobcats won seven more games than in 2021, as they went 9-3 in the regular season and 7-1 in the MAC to win the East Division. Ohio did lose the MAC Championship Game to Toledo, 17-7, but then rallied for a 30-27 overtime win over Wyoming in the Arizona Bowl. Expectations are high this year with 15 returning starters, assuming QB Kurtis Rourke is able to play after his ACL tear late last season.

OFFENSE

Rourke was the 2022 MAC Offensive Player of the Year as he was 244 for 353 for 3,256 yards and 25 TDs with just four INTs in 11 games, while adding another 249 rushing yards. Even if Rourke doesn't return in time, the offense should be in good hands with backup CJ Harris, who filled in admirably down the stretch, including winning Arizona Bowl MVP honors for leading the comeback victory.

Leading rusher Sieh Bangura (1,078 yards, 13 rushing TDs) also returns after earning MAC Freshman of the Year Honors. In addition to taking pressure off the QBs with the ground game, Bangura also contributed to the air attack with 27 catches for 226 yards and two more TDs. But the cupboard isn't empty in the receiving corps, led by senior WR Sam Wiglusz (74 receptions, 883 yards). Oft-injured WR Tyler Walton's return adds more depth, as well as JUCO transfer Jailen Hammer.

The offensive line is a concern with no all-conference candidates, but the Bobcats have so much talent in the so-called skilled positions that they should be able to overcome that as long as the line doesn't commit too many penalties.

DEFENSE

It's hard to knock a defense after a team wins nine games and its division, but the fact is the Ohio offense definitely carried the defense last season. The "stop unit" allowed 28.3 points per game and a MAC-worst 6.2 yards per play, so it was up to the offense to win several shootouts.

However, the defense did come up with some stops when needed, so there is hope for improvement. The defensive line is a weakness, with just DE Vonnie Watkins returning. The strength of the D is probably the linebacking corps, led by Keye Thompson and Bryce Houston, while the secondary has the right to improve and adds Walter Reynolds, who had five INTs for Holy Cross last year.

OUTLOOK

As the defending division champs, Ohio should definitely battle Miami (OH) for MAC East supremacy. They have a tough road opener on Aug. 26 as 3.5-point underdogs at San Diego State and also face Florida Atlantic (which Ohio beat 41-38 last year) and Iowa State (which pummeled Ohio 43-10 last year), but if they can get just one win from those three games, they'll be in great shape to go Over their win total of 7.5 as they get their biggest hurdle to the East tied, Miami (OH), at home on October 28 and don't have to face MAC West favorite Toledo, at least not before the MAC title game again.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 36.5

NATIONAL RANK: #90 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	at San Diego St	5	39
9/2	LIU POST	-37	2
9/9	at Fla Atlantic	6	39.5
9/16	IOWA ST	10	48.5
9/23	at Bowling Green	-6.5	28
10/7	KENT ST	-18	20.5
10/14	at N Illinois	-3	31.5
10/21	W MICHIGAN	-12.5	26
10/28	MIAMI OHIO	-4	34.5
11/7	at Buffalo	-1.5	31.5
11/15	C MICHIGAN	-5.5	32.5
11/24	at Akron	-11	24

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 29.94 #127 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.9 / 0 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+280 ODDS TO WIN MAC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	29.7	46	26.5	57
Yards Per Point	13.5	38	15.5	32
Plays Per Game	68.9	84		
Time of Possession	31:48	25		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.0%	48	38.8%	63
Total Yards Per Game	400.9	49	410.5	87
Yards Per Play	5.8	43	5.7	86
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.4	77		
Rush Yards Per Game	142.8	72	141.2	45
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	72	4.3	79
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.8	65		
Completion %	63.0%	39	64.3%	109
Passing Yards Per Game	258.2	41	269.3	109
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	29	7.4	74
Turnovers	0.8	12	1.8	14

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-4, ATS: 9-4, O/U: 8-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	FLA ATLANTIC (6)	41-38	W	W
9/10	at Penn St (28)	10-46	L	L
9/17	at Iowa St (20)	10-43	L	L
9/24	FORDHAM (-16.5)	59-52	W	L
10/1	at Kent St (12.5)	24-31	L	W
10/8	AKRON (-9.5)	55-34	W	W
10/15	at W Michigan (1.5)	33-14	W	W
10/22	N ILLINOIS (2.5)	24-17	W	W
11/1	BUFFALO (2.5)	45-24	W	W
11/8	at Miami Ohio (-2.5)	37-21	W	W
11/15	at Ball St (-3.5)	32-18	W	W
11/22	BOWLING GREEN (-6)	38-14	W	W
12/3	vs. Toledo (3.5)	7-17	L	L
12/30	vs. Wyoming (-3)	30-27	W	T

TOLEDO ROCKETS

HEAD COACH: JASON CANDLE (8TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE HALLETT / ROBERT WEINER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: VINCE KEHRES / ROSS WATSON

BY DAVE TULEY

DraftKings has Toledo as the +170 favorite to repeat as MAC champions after going 7-5 last year (5-3 in the MAC West) during the regular season, then defeating Ohio 17-7 in the conference title game and beating Liberty 21-19 in the Liberty Bowl. In seven years under coach Jason Candle, Toledo is 54-32 (62.8%) and looks poised to continue that success with 16 returning starters.

OFFENSE

The Rockets averaged 31.3 points per game (No. 45 in the nation) last season, led by second-team All-MAC QB DeQuan Finn (2,269 passing yards, 23 TD passes, 632 rushing yards, nine rushing TDs), who is just a junior. He is protected by a strong offensive line led by All-MAC first-teamer Nick Rosi with other returning starters in center Devan Rogers and guards Vinny Sciury and Kendall Major, along with incoming transfers Rod Orr (Florida State) and David Nwaogwugwu (Rutgers).

There are also plenty of other returning skill position players, with leading rusher Jacquez Stuart (770 yards, four TDs) and leading receiver Jerjuan Newton (53 catches, 830 yards, nine TDs), who was second-team all-MAC. Senior Devin Maddox added 39 receptions and has more than 100 in his career at Toledo.

DEFENSE

The defense also did its part last year, allowing 25.1 points per game. That doesn't sound too great (Remember, that stat is skewed by the 77 points the Rockets allowed to Ohio State.), but it was good enough for a MAC defense when the offense averages more than 30 points per game.

Four first-team all-MAC defenders return in linebacker Dallas Gant (116 total tackles), cornerback Quinyon Mitchell (led the nation with 25 passes defended) and safeties Nate Bauer (61 total tackles, two INTs) and Maxen Hook (82 total tackles, two INTs).

Senior Terrance Taylor wasn't all-MAC last season, as he played just three games due to injuries, but he's expected to lead the pass rush along with Adrian Woliver (4.5 sacks).

OUTLOOK

Being the defending conference champion with heightened expectations comes an inflated Over/Under season win total at nine games. Don't forget the Rockets only went 7-5 last season despite winning the MAC, and they're going to have a target on their back. They also open the season as 11-point road dogs at Illinois, and it's going to be tough to get to the 10 wins needed to win the Over bet. Eight wins looks more likely (or nine for the push).

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 42

NATIONAL RANK: #68 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Illinois	11	50
9/9	TEXAS SOUTHERN	-35.5	10
9/16	SAN JOSE ST	-10.5	34.5
9/23	W MICHIGAN	-19	26
9/30	N ILLINOIS	-13.5	31.5
10/7	at Massachusetts	-22.5	17.5
10/14	at Ball St	-9	30.5
10/21	at Miami Ohio	-4.5	34.5
10/31	BUFFALO	-13.5	31.5
11/8	E MICHIGAN	-12.5	32
11/14	at Bowling Green	-12	28
11/24	at C Michigan	-6.5	32.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 29.73 #128 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.9 / 0 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+170 ODDS TO WIN MAC

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	RANK	DEFENSE STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	30.8	38	27	61
Yards Per Point	13	20	12.7	113
Plays Per Game	74.7	28		
Time of Possession	29:54	65		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.1%	36	34.8%	26
Total Yards Per Game	399.5	51	342.7	28
Yards Per Play	5.3	68	4.8	21
Rush Attempts Per Game	41.2	19		
Rush Yards Per Game	173.9	49	150.8	60
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	65	4	51
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.4	70		
Completion %	54.9%	111	54.6%	8
Passing Yards Per Game	225.6	70	191.8	17
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.2	70	6.2	10
Turnovers	1.9	118	1.3	79

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-5, ATS: 5-9, O/U: 6-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	LIU POST (-47.5)	37-0	W	L
9/10	MASSACHUSETTS (-28)	55-10	W	W
9/17	at Ohio St (31)	21-77	L	L
9/24	at San Diego St (-3)	14-17	L	L
10/1	C MICHIGAN (-6.5)	38-17	W	W
10/8	at N Illinois (-6.5)	52-32	W	W
10/15	KENT ST (-7)	52-31	W	W
10/22	at Buffalo (-7)	27-34	L	L
10/29	at E Michigan (-4)	27-24	W	L
11/8	BALL ST (-14)	28-21	W	L
11/15	BOWLING GREEN (-14.5)	35-42	L	L
11/25	at W Michigan (-8.5)	14-20	L	L
12/3	vs. Ohio U (-3.5)	17-7	W	W
12/20	vs. Liberty (-4)	21-19	W	L

WESTERN MICHIGAN
BRONCOS

HEAD COACH: LANCE TAYLOR (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BILLY COSH
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LOU ESPOSITO

BY DAVE TULEY

Coach Tim Lester suffered his first losing season at Western Michigan last year at 5-7 (4-4 in the MAC West) and lost his job, replaced by Lance Taylor, who has a big rebuilding job ahead of him. Help could be on the way with a QB who transferred as a graduate student after spring drills were completed, but the transfer portal also left a lot of holes.

OFFENSE

Western Michigan's QB room got more crowded. Jack Salopek, Treyson Bourguet and Mareyohn Hrabowski, who all took snaps last year, were battling for the starting job during spring drills. After that was over without first-year coach Lance Taylor announcing a decision, Hayden Wolff transferred from Old Dominion after throwing for 2,908 yards last season and 18 TDs with six INTs.

The Broncos' offense, which averaged only 19.0 points a game last season (ranked No. 118 in the nation), is also trying to replace top RB Sean Tyler (1,027 yards, seven TDs) and leading WR Corey Crooms (57 catches, 814 yards, five TDs), who both transferred to Minnesota. There's also a battle at RB between last year's backup, Zahir Abdus-Salaam (just 100 yards, no TDs) and Virginia Tech transfer Keshawn King (6.0 average per carry last season).

Jehlani Galloway (28 catches, 344 yards) and Anthony Sambucci (20 catches, 276 yards) are the leading returning receivers.

DEFENSE

The Western Michigan defense was better than the offense last season, but not by a lot, as it still allowed 24.1 points per game. But it also has to overcome some losses as Ryan Selig transferred to Minnesota; overall, four players who earned All-MAC honors are gone.

The leading returning tackler is cornerback Keni-H Lovely (48 tackles, one sack, four INTs, one TD), who was third-team All-MAC. The only other returning starter is defensive end Marshawn Kneeland (37 tackles, 1.5 sacks), but several players saw significant time as backups that are expected to move into starting roles.

OUTLOOK

The Broncos open against St. Francis (PA), but then have a brutal rest of the nonconference schedule at Syracuse, Iowa and at Mississippi State. They also have to open MAC play on the road against defending conference champ and this year's favorite, Toledo. Most of their other tougher games are also on the road (at Ohio, Eastern Michigan and Northern Illinois). It's hard to find enough wins unless everything goes right in Lester's first season.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **26**

NATIONAL RANK: #123 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	ST FRANCIS PA	-6.5	22
9/9	at Syracuse	24	47
9/16	at Iowa	28.5	51.5
9/23	at Toledo	19	42
9/30	BALL ST	2	30.5
10/7	at Mississippi St	27	50.5
10/14	MIAMI OHIO	5.5	34.5
10/21	at Ohio U	12.5	36.5
10/28	at E Michigan	8	32
11/7	C MICHIGAN	4	32.5
11/14	at N Illinois	7.5	31.5
11/21	BOWLING GREEN	-1	28

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **36.93**
#80 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.6 / 0.2**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

50-1 ODDS TO WIN MAC

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **9**
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 2

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	16.7	122	25.6	52
Yards Per Point	17.8	117	14.3	67
Plays Per Game	72.1	49		
Time of Possession	31:18	33		
3rd Down Conv. %	30.9%	118	32.2%	13
Total Yards Per Game	297	121	365.9	42
Yards Per Play	4.1	127	5.5	69
Rush Attempts Per Game	40	27		
Rush Yards Per Game	139.2	79	149.2	56
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	100	4.3	69
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.4	98		
Completion %	49.4%	126	57.1%	21
Passing Yards Per Game	157.8	122	216.7	44
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	124	7.5	84
Turnovers	1.8	106	1.9	13

2022 RESULTS
SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 3-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	at Michigan St (21.5)	13-35	L	L
9/10	at Ball St (-6.5)	29-30	L	L
9/17	PITTSBURGH (10.5)	13-34	L	L
9/24	at San Jose St (6.5)	6-34	L	L
10/1	NEW HAMPSHIRE (-15)	44-7	W	W
10/8	E MICHIGAN (-4.5)	23-45	L	L
10/15	OHIO U (-1.5)	14-33	L	L
10/22	at Miami Ohio (7)	16-10	W	W
11/2	at Bowling Green (5)	9-13	L	W
11/9	N ILLINOIS (0)	21-24	L	L
11/16	at C Michigan (10)	12-10	W	W
11/25	TOLEDO (8.5)	20-14	W	W

MOUNTAIN WEST BETTING PREVIEW

The Mountain West Conference has an opportunity to shine early in front of the college football world. Three of the seven games in Week 0 will include a Mountain West team, including San Jose State visiting USC and the reigning Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams. On Labor Day weekend, Boise State will play at 3:30 p.m. ET against Washington on ABC. Later that night, Wyoming will host Texas Tech on CBS primetime. On Sunday, September 3, San Jose State will unveil the new renovations to its stadium as the Spartans host a good Oregon State team in a standalone game on CBS. In Week 2, San Diego State plays host to UCLA in primetime on CBS, Boise State welcomes UCF to the blue turf for a primetime game on FS1, and UNLV visits Michigan for a 3:30 pm kickoff on CBS. There will be plenty of eyes on the conference early this season, but will these teams make any noise?

Boise State (+175) enters the year as the favorite, but the Broncos have not won the Mountain West since 2019. Boise State went undefeated in conference play last year but lost to Fresno State in the conference championship. Fresno State (+380) needs to replace QB Jake Haener. Air Force (+400) lost a quarterback that started 31 games, as well as the conference player of the year at running back. San Diego State (+700) lost a ton of talent on the defensive side of the ball. Wyoming (+1200) could have the best defense in the conference, but can the Cowboys score enough points to challenge for the title? San Jose State (+1400) brings back QB Chevan Cordeiro, who was named Mountain West Preseason Player of the Year, but lost its top wide receiver and multiple Mountain West Defensive Players of the Year off the defense (Viliami Fehoko and Cade Hall).

With the early challenges in the nonconference portion of the schedule, the Mountain West could be handed some lumps early. However, a conference that has been mostly dominated by Boise State, San Diego State, Fresno State, and Air Force feels a bit more open this year. Wyoming and Colorado State (+2800) are two teams that could make some noise. Boise State is the rightful favorite with the best backfield in the conference, but +175 is too short of a price for the Broncos before the season starts.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
BOISE ST	46	37.62 (74)	8.3	3.7	6.3	1.7	8.5
AIR FORCE	41.5	29.51 (129)	8.8	3.2	5.7	2.3	8.5
FRESNO ST	42.5	32.7 (118)	8.4	3.6	5.7	2.3	8
SAN DIEGO ST	39	34.73 (99)	6.9	5.1	5.0	3.0	7
WYOMING	38	35.18 (93)	6.7	5.3	5.0	3.0	6.5
SAN JOSE ST	34.5	36.52 (85)	5.4	6.6	4.0	4.0	5.5
UNLV	31.5	34.25 (103)	5.6	6.4	3.9	4.1	6
NEVADA	26.5	34.82 (98)	4.0	8.0	3.1	4.9	4
COLORADO ST	30	34.04 (104)	4.6	7.4	2.9	5.1	4.5
UTAH ST	30	34.38 (101)	4.6	7.4	2.9	5.1	5.5
HAWAII	23	33.38 (108)	3.6	9.4	2.0	6.0	3.5
NEW MEXICO	21	32.38 (120)	3.4	8.6	1.7	6.3	3.5

BY TIM MURRAY

Troy Calhoun returns for his 17th season at Air Force, and the Falcons have been a consistent winner under him. Over the last three full seasons (excluding 2020), Air Force has won nine or more games in the regular season. Last year, the Falcons were a favorite in every regular season game and finished 9-3 (6-6 ATS).

Air Force, like the other service academies, cannot utilize the portal, so it will have to figure out a way to replace two of the best players in school history. Daniels finished with a 22-9 record as Air Force's starting quarterback. Defensively, with eight returning starters, Air Force should be solid again. Also working in the Falcons' favor is their schedule. Air Force is projected to face one of the easiest schedules in the nation.

OFFENSE
Mike Thiessen is back for his 14th season as the Air Force offensive coordinator. Thiessen is the longest-tenured OC in the country. The Falcons have led the nation in rushing the last three years, but this year they will not have Brad Roberts, who led the nation with 1,728 rushing yards, including 11 games over 100 yards and 17 total rushing touchdowns.

They also lost QB Haaziq Daniels, the Falcons' third-leading rusher last year with 695 yards and eight touchdowns. Running back John Lee Eldridge will likely try to fill the void left by Roberts. Eldridge had 766 rushing yards and four touchdowns last year. The offensive line should be solid, but left tackle Everett Smalley was dismissed from the program in May. Smalley was Second Team All-Mountain West last year. Center Thor Paglialong was selected to the First Team All-Mountain West this preseason.

DEFENSE
In addition to leading the nation in rushing yards, Air Force was tops in the nation in time of possession and yards allowed per game. The Falcons allowed just 254.4 yards per game last season and finished 10th in defensive efficiency, according to SP+.

Eight starters return from last year's defense, which is rare at a service academy. Leading tackler S Trey Taylor returns along with NT Payton Zdroik. Both were selected to the preseason All-Mountain West first team. Zdroik had 5.5 sacks last season and will look to build on that. Linebacker Vince Sanford will be a big loss from last year's team. Sanford led the Falcons with 6.5 sacks. With the production that was lost on offense, the defense will be Air Force's strength in 2023.

OUTLOOK
Despite winning nine games last year, Air Force underachieved a bit. The Falcons lost three conference games, including two as a double-digit favorite. Air Force did sweep Army and Navy to win the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy. The schedule is certainly an advantage this year when looking at the win total. According to Phil Steele's projection, Air Force will play the sixth easiest schedule in the FBS this year.

The Falcons avoid Fresno State in conference but finish the season at Boise State. An improved Colorado State squad will host Air Force in between the Falcons games against Navy and Army. If the Falcons sweep Navy and Army again this season, they should go over their win total. I expect Navy to be improved and Army will likely hover around .500. My prediction is that Air Force will head into the season finale at Boise State with eight wins.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **41.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #69 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	ROBERT MORRIS	-53	-8
9/9	vs. Sam Houston St	-18.5	23
9/15	UTAH ST	-14.5	30
9/22	at San Jose St	-5	34.5
9/30	SAN DIEGO ST	-5.5	39
10/14	WYOMING	-7	38
10/21	at Navy	-2	37
10/28	at Colorado St	-10	30
11/4	vs. Army	-6	36
11/11	at Hawaii	-16.5	23
11/18	UNLV	-13.5	31.5
11/24	at Boise St	7.5	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **29.51**
#129 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.3 / 0.3**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+400 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **13**
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.2	72	13.1	1
Yards Per Point	14.4	72	18.5	6
Plays Per Game	68.6	87		
Time of Possession	36:27	1		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.6%	32	28.0%	4
Total Yards Per Game	377.3	69	242.5	1
Yards Per Play	5.5	55	4.7	12
Rush Attempts Per Game	60.8	1		
Rush Yards Per Game	310.1	1	94	3
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	21	3.3	11
Pass Attempts Per Game	6.8	131		
Completion %	46.9%	129	57.9%	30
Passing Yards Per Game	67.3	131	148.5	1
Yards Per Pass Attempt	10	1	6.9	43
Turnovers	0.9	13	1.2	100

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-3, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	N IOWA (-16)	48-17	W	W
9/10	COLORADO (-17.5)	41-10	W	W
9/16	at Wyoming (-16.5)	14-17	L	L
9/23	NEVADA (-24.5)	48-20	W	W
10/1	NAVY (-14)	13-10	W	L
10/8	at Utah St (-11.5)	27-34	L	L
10/15	at Unlv (-10)	42-7	W	W
10/22	BOISE ST (-2.5)	14-19	L	L
11/5	vs. Army (-7)	13-7	W	L
11/12	NEW MEXICO (-21)	35-3	W	W
11/19	COLORADO ST (-22)	24-12	W	L
11/26	at San Diego St (-2)	13-3	W	W
12/22	vs. Baylor (3.5)	30-15	W	W

HEAD COACH: ANDY AVALOS (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BUSH HAMDAN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SPENCER DANIELSON / KANE IOANE

BY TIM MURRAY

Being the most recognizable school in the Mountain West has not led to an embarrassment of championships lately. Despite going 8-0 in conference play last year, the Broncos fell to Fresno State in the Mountain West Championship. Boise State's last conference championship was in 2019. Last year, after a 2-2 start (including a loss as a 16-point favorite at UTEP), the Broncos brought in former Boise State head coach Dirk Koetter to be the offensive coordinator.

The schedule is rough for the Broncos. Boise State opens the season at Washington, then hosts UCF in Week 2. Two weeks later, the Broncos play at San Diego State on a Friday night and then head to Memphis on September 3. Boise State is once again the favorite to win the conference (+175 at DraftKings).

OFFENSE

Nine starters return from last year's team, including QB Taylen Green and a pair of dynamic running backs in George Holani and Ashton Jeanty. The trio of Green, Holani, Jeanty rushed for a combined 2,566 yards last year. Former Broncos quarterback Bush Hamdan will take over as the offensive coordinator. Hamdan was the quarterback's coach at Missouri from 2020-22. Green completed 61% of his passes for 2,042 yards and 14 touchdowns. Holani and Jeanty could be the best running back duo in the country.

In all, nine starters return on offense. Three starters on the offensive line are back and the top four pass catchers are, too. But they need to replace First Team All-Conference left tackle John Ojukwu, who is now in training camp with the Tennessee Titans. The offense will be put to the test right away with a Week 1 road trip to Washington.

DEFENSE

Andy Avalos is a defensive-minded head coach (defensive coordinator at Oregon 2019-20) and he will have his work cut out for him this year. The defense lost six starters and nine of the 18 players that played 250+ snaps. Safety JL Skinner and defensive lineman Scott Matlock were both selected in the sixth round of the NFL Draft. Skinner was First Team All-Mountain West last year. He had four interceptions and 65 tackles. DE George Tarlas is in camp with the Las Vegas Raiders. Tarlas had four sacks last year before being lost for the season with an injury.

Linebacker Ezekial Noa was Second Team All-Mountain West last year and has also left. In addition to Skinner's departure, cornerback Caleb Biggers and safety Tyreque Jones exited. Linebacker DJ Schramm led the Broncos with 107 tackles and returns for his senior season. Last year's defense finished seventh nationally in yards allowed per game (292.5). Regression is likely for this year's defense.

OUTLOOK

Boise State was selected by the media to win the Mountain West in 2023, receiving 28 of the 37 first-place votes. The Broncos' offense should be improved and likely the top offense in the Mountain West. On the other side of the ball, there are a lot of holes to be filled from last year's team. The start of the season is quite challenging. The Broncos open the season at Washington (-14.5). The Huskies could be a preseason Top 10 team. The following week, Boise State hosts UCF. After playing FCS North Dakota on September 16, the Broncos open Mountain West play at San Diego State on a Friday night, then visit Memphis on September 30.

If Boise State escapes September with a winning record, the Broncos will have a big season. In conference, Boise State does not play the three teams that were voted to finish in the bottom three spots in the conference (Hawaii, Nevada, and New Mexico). With the defensive concerns, Boise State could struggle early in the season, and it seems unlikely the Broncos will run through conference play unblemished for a second straight year. However, the conference is a bit down this year, and Boise State could absolutely take down the Mountain West for the first time since 2019.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **46**

NATIONAL RANK: #51 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Washington	14	58
9/9	UCF	1	50
9/16	N DAKOTA	-19.5	30
9/22	at San Diego St	-5	39
9/30	at Memphis	1	44.5
10/7	SAN JOSE ST	-14.5	34.5
10/14	at Colorado St	-14.5	30
10/28	WYOMING	-11	38
11/4	at Fresno St	-2	42.5
11/11	NEW MEXICO	-28.5	21
11/18	at Utah St	-14.5	30
11/24	AIR FORCE	-7.5	41.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **37.62** #74 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.1 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+175 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **300-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **14**

OFFENSE: 9 QB
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	29.5	49	20.5	14
Yards Per Point	13.3	34	14.8	50
Plays Per Game	67.1	99		
Time of Possession	30:13	58		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.9%	59	32.8%	17
Total Yards Per Game	392	56	303.5	8
Yards Per Play	5.8	41	4.7	13
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.5	44		
Rush Yards Per Game	202.5	16	132.6	35
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	13	3.6	26
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.7	103		
Completion %	58.6%	83	51.5%	1
Passing Yards Per Game	189.5	108	170.9	4
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	82	6.7	31
Turnovers	1.2	41	1.5	59

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-4, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 7-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Oregon St (1.5)	17-34	L	L
9/9	at New Mexico (-17)	31-14	W	T
9/17	TENN-MARTIN (-24)	30-7	W	L
9/23	at UTEP (-16.5)	10-27	L	L
9/30	SAN DIEGO ST (-6)	35-13	W	W
10/8	FRESNO ST (-10.5)	40-20	W	W
10/22	at Air Force (2.5)	19-14	W	W
10/29	COLORADO ST (-25)	49-10	W	W
11/5	BYU (-9.5)	28-31	L	L
11/12	at Nevada (-21)	41-3	W	W
11/19	at Wyoming (-14.5)	20-17	W	L
11/25	UTAH ST (-16.5)	42-23	W	W
12/3	FRESNO ST (-3)	16-28	L	L
12/17	vs. North Texas (-12.5)	35-32	W	L

COLORADO STATE
RAMS

HEAD COACH: JAY NORVELL (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT MUMME
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: FREDDIE BANKS

BY TIM MURRAY

After leading Nevada to four consecutive bowl appearances, Jay Norvell left Reno to replace Steve Addazio at Colorado State in 2022. The Rams finished 3-9 last season but could make a big jump in 2023. The Rams added over 20 players via the transfer portal, including a revamped offensive line.

OFFENSE
There was no offensive line worse in the FBS than Colorado State's in 2022. The Rams allowed an FBS-worst 59 sacks during the season (4.92 sacks per game). Norvell used the transfer portal to tweak his offensive line. Center Jacob Gardner, who played tackle last year, is the only returning starter on the offensive line. The other four starters will likely be transfers.

Quarterback Clay Millen completed 72% of his passes, but if they were not being thrown to Tory Horton, it was likely a short pass due to the lack of protection. Millen is a former four-star recruit (according to 247 Sports) that committed to Nevada. After redshirting in 2020, Millen followed Norvell to Colorado State. Millen's father, Hugh, was a quarterback in the NFL for a decade, including being John Elway's backup from 1996-97. Horton is a dynamic wide receiver and returns for his junior season despite some interest from SEC schools. Horton had 71 receptions for 1,131 and eight touchdowns last year. He accounted for 48% of the Rams' passing yards in 2022.

Justus Ross-Simmons, Colorado State's second-leading receiver, returns and the Rams added SMU transfer Dylan Goffney in the portal. At running back, Kobe Johnson transferred in from North Dakota State as the Bison's leading rusher. The status of the Rams' leading rusher last year, Avery Morrow, is TBD due to an off-field incident. Running back Damian Henderson was the Rams' top high school recruit and could be an impact player this fall. At tight end, Colorado State added Dallin Holker from BYU.

DEFENSE
Colorado State returns eight starters from last year's team, and DE Mohamed Kamara is the best of the bunch. Kamara had 8.5 sacks last year and was selected to the preseason First Team All-Mountain West team. The defensive line is likely Colorado State's deepest and best position on the roster.

Defensive end Tony Pierce will likely line up opposite Kamara. Pierce played in 52 games (38 starts) over four years at North Dakota State. Safety Jack Howell was First Team All-Mountain West last year and is back in 2023. Howell had a team-high 108 tackles and three interceptions last season. Oregon State transfer Ron Hardge should start opposite of returning starting CB Chigozie Anusiem. Anusiem had a team-high nine pass breakups last season.

OUTLOOK
The Rams have not reached a bowl game since 2017. From 1994-2017, Colorado State was a regular in the postseason, playing in 15 bowl games. Norvell took on a full-on rebuild in Fort Collins, but Colorado State is a team on the rise. After finding a way to three wins last year, the Rams should fight for bowl eligibility in 2023.

The Rams open the season as a two-touchdown home underdog against Washington State and then get a bye week to prepare for Colorado. The Buffaloes have been the talk of college football this offseason with the hiring of Deion Sanders. Colorado opens the season with back-to-back appearances on Fox's "Big Noon Kickoff." The Rams could be getting Colorado in a good spot.

A road trip to Middle Tennessee could be a swing game for the win total in Week 3. The Rams avoid Fresno State and San Jose State but unfortunately miss out on the preseason last-place team, New Mexico. Boise State, Air Force, and San Diego State all come to Fort Collins for a chance to pull off an upset. Additionally, Air Force plays Colorado State the week after visiting Navy and the week before playing Army. With the added talent via the portal and the returning starters, Colorado State is one of my favorite win total plays of the year.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 30

NATIONAL RANK: #117 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	WASHINGTON ST	14	46
9/16	at Colorado	7.5	34.5
9/23	at Middle Tenn St	5.5	32.5
9/30	UTAH TECH	-19	13
10/7	at Utah St	2	30
10/14	BOISE ST	14.5	46
10/21	at UNLV	4	31.5
10/28	AIR FORCE	10	41.5
11/3	at Wyoming	11.5	38
11/11	SAN DIEGO ST	7.5	39
11/18	NEVADA	-5	26.5
11/25	at Hawaii	-4	23

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 34.04 #104 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.8 / 0.3 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

30-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 15

OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	13.5	127	25.6	52
Yards Per Point	21.6	128	13.7	80
Plays Per Game	64.8	120		
Time of Possession	29:43	68		
3rd Down Conv. %	22.5%	130	35.5%	37
Total Yards Per Game	290.3	125	351.7	32
Yards Per Play	4.5	117	5	33
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.4	103		
Rush Yards Per Game	91.8	126	164.3	79
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.8	129	4.2	68
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.3	107		
Completion %	63.3%	36	61.2%	77
Passing Yards Per Game	198.5	102	187.5	12
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	66	6.4	17
Turnovers	1.6	93	1.3	83

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 1-11

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Michigan (31)	7-51	L	L
9/10	MIDDLE TENN ST (-14)	19-34	L	L
9/17	at Washington St (17)	7-38	L	L
9/24	SACRAMENTO ST (4)	10-41	L	L
10/7	at Nevada (3.5)	17-14	W	W
10/15	UTAH ST (14)	13-17	L	W
10/22	HAWAII (-6)	17-13	W	L
10/29	at Boise St (25)	10-49	L	L
11/5	at San Jose St (24)	16-28	L	W
11/12	WYOMING (8.5)	13-14	L	W
11/19	at Air Force (22)	12-24	L	W
11/25	NEW MEXICO (-7.5)	17-0	W	W

HEAD COACH: JEFF TEDFORD (5TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PAT MCCANN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN COYLE

BY TIM MURRAY

After a sluggish start to the season and an injury to QB Jake Haener, Fresno State won nine straight games and the Mountain West. The team also wrapped up the season with a dominant 29-6 win over Washington State in the LA Bowl and finished No. 24 in the AP Poll. The Bulldogs enter 2023 with the third-longest winning streak in the FBS, but they will be without Haener, last year's leading rusher Jordan Mims, and their top three leading receivers. The Bulldogs went to the portal to fill those voids.

Offensive coordinator Kirby Moore departed for Missouri and head coach Jeff Tedford promoted WR coach Pat McCann to fill the role. Fortunately for Fresno State, the two Power Five teams on schedule this year have new head coaches (Purdue, Arizona State). The reigning conference champs were picked to finish third in the conference.

OFFENSE
How does a Group of Five team replace a quarterback selected in the fourth round of the NFL draft, a 1,300-yard rusher, and a 1,000-yard wide receiver? We are about to find out. Haener hurt his ankle last season in the third game of the season, missed four games, and when he returned, Fresno State could not be stopped. He was First Team All-Mountain West and threw 20 touchdowns with only three interceptions. The Bulldogs will have a quarterback competition this fall between Logan Fife and UCF transfer Mikey Keene. Fife went 2-2 as the starter when Haener was injured. In his first start, Fresno State lost as a 23-point favorite at UConn.

After rushing for 1,370 yards and 18 touchdowns last year, Jordan Mims was signed by the Buffalo Bills as an undrafted free agent. Running back Malik Sherrod (428 rushing yards, two TDs) will take over for Mims. The Bulldogs also added RB Damien Moore from Cal via the portal. Moore had a solid 2021 in Berkeley, rushing for 518 yards.

The top receiver returning is Erik Brooks, who had 37 receptions for 391 yards and three touchdowns. Fresno State added WR Mikel Barkley from Toledo, Jaelen Gill (#63 overall recruit in the Class of 2020) from Boston College, and a couple of JUCO wide receivers. In all, Fresno State lost six of its top seven pass catchers from a season ago.

The offensive line returns four starters, but center Bula Schmidt departs. Schmidt was Second Team All-Mountain West last year. Right guard Mose Vavao was the only Bulldog voted to preseason All-Mountain West. It is difficult to see how this year's offense will be in the same ballpark as last year's.

DEFENSE
The Fresno State defense might have to carry the Bulldogs early this season. Believe it or not, according to SP+, the defense was better than the offense last season. Fresno State finished 36th nationally in defense in 2022 per SP+. Defensive coordinator Kevin Coyle must figure out a way to replace defensive end David Perales. Perales was First Team All-Mountain West last year and led Fresno State with 11.5 sacks.

The defense does return seven starters and eight players that had over 400 snaps last year. Defensive end Devo Bridges was selected First Team All-Mountain West this preseason after having 6.5 tackles for losses last year. Linebacker Levelle Bailey is back after leading Fresno State in tackles last year. The Bulldogs lost some production in the secondary, including Evan Williams (Second Team All-Mountain West), but cornerback Cameron Lockridge returns.

OUTLOOK
Tedford will have his hands full with his team this year, but if the quarterback position does not have a massive drop off, Fresno State could return to the Mountain West Championship. The Bulldogs are less than a touchdown underdog in their season opener at Purdue and will likely be less than a touchdown underdog at Arizona State as well. If Fresno State can go 3-1 in the nonconference portion of the schedule, the Bulldogs could be on track to go Over.

Fresno State avoids Air Force in conference play and hosts preseason favorite Boise State. Road trips to Wyoming, San Jose State, and San Diego State will be a challenge. This is not a win total I have played, but based on Jeff Tedford's track record and playing two weaker Power Five programs, I think it is more likely the Bulldogs win nine games than seven in 2023.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 42.5

NATIONAL RANK: #67 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Purdue	5.5	46
9/9	E WASHINGTON	-28	16.5
9/16	at Arizona St	2	42.5
9/23	KENT ST	-24.5	20.5
9/30	NEVADA	-18	26.5
10/7	at Wyoming	-1.5	38
10/13	at Utah St	-11	30
10/28	UNLV	-13.5	31.5
11/4	BOISE ST	2	46
11/11	at San Jose St	-5.5	34.5
11/18	NEW MEXICO	-24	21
11/25	at San Diego St	-1	39

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 32.70
#118 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.1 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+380 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 11
OFFENSE: 4
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	30.2	42	20.4	13
Yards Per Point	13	21	16.7	18
Plays Per Game	68.8	85		
Time of Possession	31:05	37		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.5%	22	36.7%	48
Total Yards Per Game	391.8	58	340.8	25
Yards Per Play	5.7	45	5	30
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.9	96		
Rush Yards Per Game	129.5	88	153.2	64
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	78	4.3	84
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.1	52		
Completion %	69.8%	2	53.7%	5
Passing Yards Per Game	262.4	35	187.6	13
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	36	6.2	9
Turnovers	1.1	22	1.4	68

2022 RESULTS
SU: 10-4, ATS: 7-7, O/U: 7-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	CAL POLY SLO (-43)	35-7	W	L
9/10	OREGON ST (-1)	32-35	L	L
9/17	at USC (11.5)	17-45	L	L
10/1	at Connecticut (-23.5)	14-19	L	L
10/8	at Boise St (10.5)	20-40	L	L
10/15	SAN JOSE ST (7)	17-10	W	W
10/22	at New Mexico (-9.5)	41-9	W	W
10/29	SAN DIEGO ST (-11)	32-28	W	L
11/5	HAWAII (-27.5)	55-13	W	W
11/11	at Unlv (-8.5)	37-30	W	L
11/19	at Nevada (-22.5)	41-14	W	W
11/25	WYOMING (-14)	30-0	W	W
12/3	at Boise St (3)	28-16	W	W
12/17	vs. Washington St (-5.5)	29-6	W	W

HAWAII
RAINBOW WARRIORS

HEAD COACH: TIMMY CHANG (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROMAN SAPOLU / IAN SHOEMAKER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JACOB YORO

BY ADAM BURKE

Hawaii needed two upset wins just to go 3-10 last season, as the Rainbow Warriors beat Duquesne as an eight-point favorite and weren't favored in any other game. It was going to be a tough season with some transfers and a first-time head coach that was a program legend, but not exactly proven on the sidelines. Close calls at San Diego State and Colorado State, plus covers against Wyoming, Utah State, and San Jose State may have served as building blocks for 2023.

OFFENSE

There were clear growing pains for the offense, but the running game really got going in Mountain West play with 4.8 yards per carry and the passing game had over 200 yards in each of the last five games, including over 300 against Utah State. While 200 passing yards isn't a big number, especially in a run-and-shoot offense like Hawaii's, the Rainbow Warriors got more efficient as the season went along. The top three pass-catchers from the previous season had also moved on, so Hawaii had very little returning production there.

Brayden Schager only had 13 TD against 10 INT, and he'll need to be better than that, but two of the top four receivers return this season, and there is a little more experience at the position. Still, Hawaii should go as the running game goes, as sophomore Tylan Hines averaged 7.6 yards per carry last season while mostly playing behind Dedrick Parson.

DEFENSE

Anytime the offense struggles, the defense is going to have a hard time. Hawaii was crushed by graduation and the transfer portal last season with only two returning starters. This group has nine, as defensive coordinator Jacob Yoro was forced to play a lot of redshirt freshmen and sophomores in 2023. The Hawaii defense allowed 6.6 yards per play, so massive improvement is required, but the Rainbow Warriors were 67th in red zone TD% against. They were tied for the sixth-most red zone attempts against, though.

It is worth pointing out that Hawaii gave up over 600 yards to Vanderbilt and just under 600 yards to Michigan, so those two games did skew a lot of their numbers. Only Fresno State really put it on them in Mountain West play. The defense does bring back four of the top five tacklers and would benefit from more takeaways. Hawaii only recovered two fumbles but also only forced four. Going for the ball should be more of an emphasis.

OUTLOOK

As usual, Hawaii plays 13 games, so remember that when thinking about their win total. The nonconference schedule doesn't have Michigan, but it does have Oregon, so that's another road paycheck game. Despite playing in Week 0, Hawaii only has one bye, but it is well-timed to break the season into six games and seven games. I think this year's team is pretty clearly better than last year's, and head coach Timmy Chang has actually had more time to recruit and get involved in the portal after being hired in January 2022. My projection is for 4.36 wins, as the conference is weaker and Hawaii is improved.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **23**

NATIONAL RANK: #129 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	at Vanderbilt	18	39.5
9/1	STANFORD	8.5	34
9/9	ALBANY	-11	15
9/16	at Oregon	40	59.5
9/23	NEW MEXICO ST	0	26
9/30	at UNLV	11	31.5
10/14	SAN DIEGO ST	14	39
10/21	at New Mexico	0.5	21
10/28	SAN JOSE ST	9	34.5
11/4	at Nevada	6.5	26.5
11/11	AIR FORCE	16.5	41.5
11/18	at Wyoming	18	38
11/25	at Fla International	4	30

RETURNING
STARTERS **14**

OFFENSE: 5 QB

DEFENSE: 9

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.38** #108 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.5 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.4	113	36.4	122
Yards Per Point	18.3	121	12.2	118
Plays Per Game	72.3	47		
Time of Possession	28:43	93		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.4%	100	39.3%	67
Total Yards Per Game	356	90	445	113
Yards Per Play	4.9	98	6.7	127
Rush Attempts Per Game	31.8	107		
Rush Yards Per Game	141.1	77	220.6	126
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	52	5.8	127
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.1	17		
Completion %	52.7%	120	65.5%	119
Passing Yards Per Game	214.9	87	224.4	56
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.5	125	8.3	118
Turnovers	1.5	72	0.8	128

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-10, ATS: 9-4, O/U: 5-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	VANDERBILT (9)	10-63	L	L
9/3	W KENTUCKY (13)	17-49	L	L
9/10	at Michigan (53)	10-56	L	W
9/17	DUQUESNE (-9.5)	24-14	W	W
9/24	at New Mexico St (4.5)	26-45	L	L
10/8	at San Diego St (24)	14-16	L	W
10/15	NEVADA (6)	31-16	W	W
10/22	at Colorado St (6)	13-17	L	W
10/29	WYOMING (11.5)	20-27	L	W
11/5	at Fresno St (27.5)	13-55	L	L
11/12	UTAH ST (10.5)	34-41	L	W
11/19	UNLV (11)	31-25	W	W
11/26	at San Jose St (15.5)	14-27	L	W

NEVADA
WOLF PACK

HEAD COACH: KEN WILSON (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DEREK SAGE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KWAME AGYEMAN / MIKE BETHEA

BY ADAM BURKE

Expectations in Reno aren't always the highest and that was especially true of the 2022 season, as Nevada went from a pass-happy attack to a run-first mindset. As you would expect with a lot of round holes and square pegs, it was a long season for the Wolf Pack, who went 2-10 and had their worst season since 2000. That was their first year in the WAC and their first year in FBS. At least things look better for Year 2.

OFFENSE
Few teams in college football made as big of a transition as Nevada last season. The Wolf Pack saw Jay Norvell take his Air Raid offense to Colorado State and subsequently hired Ken Wilson, who ran the ball more than he threw it in the midst of a 2-10 season. Personnel recruited to run an Air Raid had trouble with the new offense, as the team managed just 18.8 points per game and 4.4 yards per play.

The Wolf Pack only had two returning starters last season and are light on experience again, but attacked the transfer portal to get a new QB in Brendon Lewis from Colorado and some help on the offensive line. Nevada ran the ball 427 times for just 3.3 yards per carry and only had 398 pass attempts with seven TD passes against eight interceptions. It would be hard to imagine this group being as bad as last season, but explosive plays will still be hard to find.

DEFENSE
The Nevada defense largely held its own with minimal help from the offense. With just three returning starters, they allowed over 30 points per game and 5.8 yards per play, but they managed a positive turnover margin and were 34th in TD% against in the red zone. The Nevada offense ranked 103rd in third-down conversion rate, so the defense was out there a lot and had issues getting off the field with the 102nd-ranked third-down conversion rate against.

Eight starters are back this time, though the three leading tacklers are all gone. Top corners Jaden Dedman and Isaiah Essissima are both back after combining for 17 pass breakups and a couple of interceptions. Co-DC Kwame Agyeman coached up the defensive backs at Oregon for two years, so that group could certainly see improvement, and some transfers to the front seven may help as well.

OUTLOOK
Even though Nevada plays a really weak schedule, I'm not buying into the Ken Wilson regime. They do have several lines under a touchdown, including five in underdog roles and one as a favorite, so this season will hinge on how those projected close games go. I have 3.96 wins as a projection, and with a win total of 4, that seems pretty accurate. For the sake of giving a pick, I'd lean Under because I have them a dog in each of their last three games.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **26.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #122 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at USC	37.5	62
9/9	IDAHO	3.5	33
9/16	KANSAS	16.5	46
9/23	at Texas St Univ	3.5	27.5
9/30	at Fresno St	18	42.5
10/14	UNLV	2	31.5
10/21	at San Diego St	15	39
10/28	NEW MEXICO	-8.5	21
11/4	HAWAII	-6.5	23
11/11	at Utah St	5	30
11/18	at Colorado St	5	30
11/25	WYOMING	8.5	38

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.82** #98 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.7 / 0.1** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

55-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **13**

OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	16.8	121	28.7	77
Yards Per Point	17.2	113	13.1	105
Plays Per Game	69	82		
Time of Possession	28:06	111		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.6%	92	41.6%	91
Total Yards Per Game	289.2	126	376.4	51
Yards Per Play	4.2	125	5.4	57
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.1	87		
Rush Yards Per Game	114.4	101	163.3	77
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	108	4.3	85
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.3	59		
Completion %	54.9%	110	59.1%	49
Passing Yards Per Game	174.8	116	213.1	39
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.4	126	7.1	57
Turnovers	1.4	54	1.5	46

2022 RESULTS

SU: 2-10, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 5-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	at New Mexico St (-7.5)	23-12	W	W
9/3	TEXAS ST UNIV (2)	38-14	W	W
9/10	INCARNATE WORD (-4)	41-55	L	L
9/17	at Iowa (24)	0-27	L	L
9/23	at Air Force (24.5)	20-48	L	L
10/7	COLORADO ST (-3.5)	14-17	L	L
10/15	at Hawaii (-6)	16-31	L	L
10/22	SAN DIEGO ST (7)	7-23	L	L
10/29	at San Jose St (24.5)	28-35	L	W
11/12	BOISE ST (21)	3-41	L	L
11/19	FRESNO ST (22.5)	14-41	L	L
11/26	at Unlv (12.5)	22-27	L	W

HEAD COACH: DANNY GONZALES (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRYANT VINCENT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TROY REFFETT

BY ADAM BURKE

The only thing high in Albuquerque is the elevation. Hopes, dreams, expectations, however you want to phrase it, they are not high for the Lobos this season. New Mexico has gone 7-24 under fourth-year head coach Danny Gonzales and went 8-28 in the final three seasons under Bob Davie. This team hasn't won more than three games since 2016, and now the pressure is mounting because in-state rival New Mexico State went bowling under Jerry Kill last year. The seat is hot for Gonzales in another season where wins look hard to find.

OFFENSE

It turns out that scoring about 13 points per game isn't going to get it done. Over the last two seasons, the Lobos have scored 12.2 and 13.1 points per game. Defensively, they've been better, which makes sense since Gonzales has been a defensive coordinator at San Diego State and Arizona State. Offensively, though, this has been one of the worst teams in the nation.

Things could be looking up a little this season. Former UAB offensive coordinator and head coach Bryant Vincent comes in after not being picked as the Blazers' head coach, and he brought veteran QB Dylan Hopkins with him. He will be the best QB for the team in several years and could find a friend in 6-5 JUCO transfer DJ Washington. After averaging 3.9 and 4.0 yards per play the last two seasons, anybody capable of throwing a forward pass raises the ceiling here.

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Rocky Long took his patented 3-3-5 to Syracuse. There are only two returning starters to fill out the 3-3-5 under new DC Troy Reffett, who will keep it in place, but this may very well be the last year of it for New Mexico if a regime change does happen. Reffett has been a DC at four different stops, including one season under Long in 2008, so the 3-3-5 is also his preferred scheme.

In the two years with Long, the Lobos allowed 5.3 and 5.5 yards per play. Given that the offense converted 22% of third-down attempts, it's amazing that this defense was able to survive without wearing down late in games. The offense did move at a really slow pace, so even though the Lobos only mustered 157 points for the season, the defense only faced 780 plays against by being 30th in third-down conversion rate against a 34.13%. Any kind of offensive efficiency will help.

OUTLOOK

It is kind of hard to know what to expect from New Mexico. If the defense doesn't fall off much (or at all) and the offense is able to take a few steps towards respectability, then it isn't out of the realm of possibility that the Lobos can win four or five games. They are favored twice for me and have a few other games where they are a short underdog. On the other hand, Gonzales is likely to be fired, and maybe the Hopkins/Vincent tandem doesn't work with a lack of skill-position talent. My projection is for 3.31 wins, and the line is 3.5, so I lean Under, but at least there's some hope on offense.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **21**

NATIONAL RANK: #131 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Texas A&M	38.5	56
9/9	TENNESSEE TECH	-12	11.5
9/16	NEW MEXICO ST	2.5	26
9/23	at Massachusetts	-1	17.5
9/30	at Wyoming	20.5	38
10/14	SAN JOSE ST	11.5	34.5
10/21	HAWAII	-0.5	23
10/28	at Nevada	8.5	26.5
11/4	UNLV	8	31.5
11/11	at Boise St	28.5	46
11/18	at Fresno St	24	42.5
11/24	UTAH ST	7.5	30

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.38** #120 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.1 / 0.5** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **10000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **9**

OFFENSE: 7

DEFENSE: 2

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	10.5	131	28.4	73
Yards Per Point	19.9	126	13.5	88
Plays Per Game	60.2	130		
Time of Possession	28:09	109		
3rd Down Conv. %	17.7%	131	36.4%	44
Total Yards Per Game	209.5	131	383.4	63
Yards Per Play	3.5	131	5.6	78
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.7	79		
Rush Yards Per Game	109.9	110	170.9	86
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	119	4.3	78
Pass Attempts Per Game	21.7	126		
Completion %	51.9%	121	62.5%	92
Passing Yards Per Game	99.6	128	212.5	37
Yards Per Pass Attempt	4.6	131	8	106
Turnovers	1.1	30	1.4	70

2022 RESULTS

SU: 2-10, ATS: 3-8, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MAINE (-6)	41-0	W	W
9/9	BOISE ST (17)	14-31	L	T
9/17	UTEP (2.5)	27-10	W	W
9/24	at LSU (31)	0-38	L	L
9/30	at Unlv (14)	20-31	L	W
10/8	WYOMING (3.5)	14-27	L	L
10/15	at New Mexico St (-7)	9-21	L	L
10/22	FRESNO ST (9.5)	9-41	L	L
11/5	at Utah St (14.5)	10-27	L	L
11/12	at Air Force (21)	3-35	L	L
11/18	SAN DIEGO ST (14.5)	10-34	L	L
11/25	at Colorado St (7.5)	0-17	L	L

BY TIM MURRAY

As of now, San Diego State remains a member of the Mountain West Conference despite consistent discussion about the Aztecs joining the Pac-12. Brady Hoke, in his second stint at San Diego State, is entering Year 4, and their schedule does them no favors. The Aztecs open the season playing host to Ohio in Week 0. The Bobcats are the second favorite to win the MAC this year.

After playing FCS Idaho State in Week 1, San Diego State faces UCLA, Oregon State, Boise State, and Air Force in consecutive weeks. Emerging with a .500 record after those six weeks would be deemed a victory. While defense and special teams have been the calling cards of the Aztecs, the defensive front lost a lot of talent from a year ago. Special teams is always a strength for San Diego State, as K/P Jack Browning was named Mountain West preseason Special Teams Player of the Year after going 20 for 25 on field goals. The Aztecs will need to replace star returner Jordan Byrd, who was a First Team All-Mountain West Conference punt returner and kick returner.

OFFENSE
Quarterback Jalen Mayden began 2022 in the Aztecs' secondary before being thrust into quarterback duties in October. Mayden's first practice back at QB was October 3, and he started against Hawaii five days later. Mayden threw for 2,030 yards with 12 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. Additionally, he rushed for 231 yards and three touchdowns. San Diego State legend Ryan Lindley is the new offensive coordinator. Lindley working with Mayden all offseason should lead to improvements.

Running back Jordan Byrd led San Diego State with 390 rushing yards but has moved on to the NFL (UDFA with Pittsburgh). Byrd will be more difficult to replace in the return game than in the backfield. After spring practices, the Aztecs took a big hit when right tackle Josh Simmons transferred to Ohio State. Center Alama Uluave was signed by the Dolphins as an undrafted free agent. Guard Cade Bennett was Second Team All-Mountain West last year and he returns.

Tight end Mark Redman was a First Team All-Mountain West selection this preseason. Redman had 21 catches for 233 yards and two touchdowns last year. Wideout Raphael Williams transferred in from FCS Western Carolina. In two seasons, Williams had 1,617 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns. With a full offseason focused on quarterback, if Mayden takes a leap, the Aztecs offense should be improved.

DEFENSE
Hoke earned his reputation by coaching defensive lines to an elite level. Hoke was the defensive line coach at Michigan from 1995-2002 before being hired as the head coach at Ball State. Hoke and defensive coordinator Kurt Mattix will have to work some magic this season after losing three starters off last year's defensive line, including First Team All-Mountain West defensive lineman Jonah Tavai. Tavai had 10.5 sacks last year. Three-time First Team All-Mountain West linebacker Caden McDonald graduated as well.

In all, the Aztecs lost six starters on defense, including three First Team All-Mountain West and a Second Team selection. San Diego State added New Mexico linebacker Cody Moon. Moon led the Lobos with 104 tackles and 4.5 sacks last year and was a preseason All-Mountain West selection.

OUTLOOK
The first six games of the season is a gauntlet for San Diego State. The Aztecs play Ohio in Week 0. The Bobcats are a four-point underdog and have the second-shortest odds to win the MAC. After playing FCS Idaho State in Week 1, San Diego State hosts UCLA, visits Oregon State, hosts Boise State on a Friday night, then goes to Air Force. The Aztecs could be an underdog in all four of those games.

The best-case scenario out of those six games could be 3-3 for San Diego State. Depending on how the offense comes together and how the defense fills the holes from last year's departures, the Aztecs could be a favorite in their final six games. The final three games will not be easy: at Colorado State, at San Jose State, and home to Fresno State. With a very difficult schedule and question marks on defense, the Aztecs seem more likely to finish with six wins than eight in 2023.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 39

NATIONAL RANK: #79 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	OHIO U	-5	36.5
9/2	IDAHO ST	-36	6
9/9	UCLA	10.5	51.5
9/16	at Oregon St	17.5	53.5
9/22	BOISE ST	5	46
9/30	at Air Force	5.5	41.5
10/14	at Hawaii	-14	23
10/21	NEVADA	-15	26.5
11/4	UTAH ST	-11	30
11/11	at Colorado St	-7.5	30
11/18	at San Jose St	-2.5	34.5
11/25	FRESNO ST	1	42.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.73** #99 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.4 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+700 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 6 QB
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	20.1	107	21.7	22
Yards Per Point	15.5	92	14.9	47
Plays Per Game	63.9	124		
Time of Possession	31:06	36		
3rd Down Conv. %	28.8%	125	35.8%	38
Total Yards Per Game	311.7	116	322.1	13
Yards Per Play	4.9	100	4.8	15
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.5	76		
Rush Yards Per Game	124	90	117.3	20
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	99	3.5	22
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.3	114		
Completion %	54.1%	114	61.4%	80
Passing Yards Per Game	187.7	112	204.8	28
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	71	6.5	23
Turnovers	1.9	116	1.7	31

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 5-8, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	ARIZONA (-6)	20-38	L	L
9/10	IDAHO ST (-32.5)	38-7	W	L
9/17	at Utah (22.5)	7-35	L	L
9/24	TOLEDO (3)	17-14	W	W
9/30	at Boise St (6)	13-35	L	L
10/8	HAWAII (-24)	16-14	W	L
10/22	at Nevada (-7)	23-7	W	W
10/29	at Fresno St (11)	28-32	L	W
11/5	UNLV (-5)	14-10	W	L
11/12	SAN JOSE ST (2)	43-27	W	W
11/18	at New Mexico (-14.5)	34-10	W	W
11/26	AIR FORCE (2)	3-13	L	L
12/24	vs. Middle Tenn St (-7)	23-25	L	L

SAN JOSE STATE
SPARTANS

HEAD COACH: BRENT BRENNAN (7TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN MCGIVEN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DERRICK ODUM

BY TIM MURRAY

In 2020, San Jose State stunned the Mountain West by going undefeated and winning the conference for the first time in school history. The Spartans dropped off in 2021, missing a bowl game. But they reached a bowl in 2022, losing to Eastern Michigan in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

San Jose State's schedule is quite challenging in 2023. The Spartans visit USC (-30.5) in Week 0 and host Oregon State (-16.5) in Week 1. San Jose State wraps up nonconference play with a trip to Toledo. The Rockets are the favorites to win the MAC at DraftKings Sportsbook. Additionally, San Jose State plays the top four favorites in the Mountain West as well.

The Spartans do return QB Chevan Cordeiro, who was named Mountain West preseason Offensive Player of the Year. However, San Jose State must replace a ton of talent lost on the defensive side of the ball, including reigning Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year Viliami Fehoko.

OFFENSE
Cordeiro, who enters his sixth season of college football this fall, started his career at Hawaii, and he was named the Mountain West preseason Offensive Player of the Year. Cordeiro threw for 3,251 yards, 23 touchdowns and six interceptions last season, while also rushing for nine touchdowns. San Jose State head coach Brent Brennan joined VSiN Primetime and said that Cordeiro has "attacked" this offseason.

The Spartans return nine starters this year, including running back Kairee Robinson. Robinson rushed for 752 yards and 10 touchdowns last year. However, Cordeiro's top target from last year, Elijah Cooks, was signed by the Jacksonville Jaguars as an undrafted free agent. Cooks had a team-high 69 catches for 1,076 yards and 10 touchdowns in 2022. Wide receiver Justin Lockhart returns and was named First Team All-Mountain West this preseason. Lockhart had 36 catches for 578 yards and one touchdown last year. The offensive line should be solid with a ton of starters back.

DEFENSE
Defensive coordinator Derrick Odum enters his seventh season at San Jose State and will have quite the challenge this year trying to replace a ton of production that exited the program. Fehoko had nine sacks last year and was a three-time First Team All-Mountain West selection before being drafted in the fourth round by the Dallas Cowboys. He was the first player drafted out of San Jose State since 2019.

Linebacker Kyle Harmon, who led the Spartans in tackles, is also gone. Like Fehoko, Harmon was also a three-time First Team All-Mountain West selection. Defensive lineman Cade Hall had 7.5 sacks last year and was the Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year in 2020. Safety Tre Jenkins will be the leader of the defense this year. Facing USC QB Caleb Williams is less than ideal for any defense but especially one looking to replace the talent that San Jose State lost.

OUTLOOK
When looking to play season win totals, the schedule can make the decision for you. San Jose State will be an underdog in five of its first six games of the season. After wrapping up the nonconference portion of the schedule with a night game at Toledo, San Jose State will host Air Force on a Friday night. The Spartans will be on short rest, while Air Force will have played the previous Friday evening. After a Week 5 bye, San Jose State visits the conference favorite, Boise State. The season concludes with Fresno State, San Diego State, and a trip to UNLV. The offense this year, led by Chevan Cordeiro, should be improved, but the defense loses too much talent to replace in one offseason.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 34.5

NATIONAL RANK: #95 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	at USC	29.5	62
9/3	OREGON ST	16.5	53.5
9/9	CAL POLY SLO	-32	5.5
9/16	at Toledo	10.5	42
9/22	AIR FORCE	5	41.5
10/7	at Boise St	14.5	46
10/14	at New Mexico	-11.5	21
10/21	UTAH ST	-6.5	30
10/28	at Hawaii	-9	23
11/11	FRESNO ST	5.5	42.5
11/18	SAN DIEGO ST	2.5	39
11/25	at UNLV	-1	31.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 36.52 #85 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.4 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

14-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

3000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 14

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28	59	22.5	27
Yards Per Point	13.4	36	14.9	46
Plays Per Game	68	95		
Time of Possession	28:42	94		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.0%	85	39.5%	70
Total Yards Per Game	375.7	72	335.3	23
Yards Per Play	5.5	52	4.8	20
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.5	125		
Rush Yards Per Game	100.2	119	122.4	25
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	97	3.3	8
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.4	29		
Completion %	61.3%	61	60.2%	59
Passing Yards Per Game	275.5	22	212.9	38
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	51	7.5	82
Turnovers	0.8	8	1.5	46

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-5, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	PORTLAND ST (-22)	21-17	W	L
9/10	at Auburn (24)	16-24	L	W
9/24	W MICHIGAN (-6.5)	34-6	W	W
10/1	at Wyoming (-2.5)	33-16	W	W
10/7	UNLV (-6.5)	40-7	W	W
10/15	at Fresno St (-7)	10-17	L	L
10/29	NEVADA (-24.5)	35-28	W	L
11/5	COLORADO ST (-24)	28-16	W	L
11/12	at San Diego St (-2)	27-43	L	L
11/19	at Utah St (1)	31-35	L	L
11/26	HAWAII (-15.5)	27-14	W	L
12/20	vs. E Michigan (-4)	27-41	L	L

UNLV
RUNNIN REBELS

HEAD COACH: BARRY ODOM (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRENNAN MARION
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MICHAEL SCHERER

BY TIM MURRAY

Following a 5-7 season, UNLV dismissed head coach Marcus Arroyo and hired Arkansas defensive coordinator Barry Odom to replace him. Prior to his three seasons with Arkansas, Odom was the head coach of Missouri. Odom compiled a 25-25 record in four seasons at Missouri with a 13-19 SEC record.

"When I look at Vegas, there is one in the world," Odom said on VSiN Primetime. "This place should have a successful football program, and I want to be the person that consistently gets that done."

UNLV has not been to a bowl game since 2013 and has reached just one bowl in the last 20 years. But with great football facilities and Allegiant Stadium as its home stadium, UNLV should be on the rise as a program. The question is: will it happen in 2023?

OFFENSE
Odom initially hired veteran (and controversial) coach Bobby Petrino to be UNLV's offensive coordinator. Only 21 days after Petrino was hired, he left to take the same position at Texas A&M. Odom then hired 35-year-old Brennan Marion as offensive coordinator. Marion is a "riser" in the coaching world, as he was the wide receiver coach at Texas in 2022 and Pittsburgh in 2021. Pitt's Jordan Addison won the Biletnikoff Award, the award given to the nation's top wide receiver, in 2021.

Marion has a unique tie to UNLV. He was the offensive coordinator for Howard in 2017 when the Bison upset the Rebels as 45-point underdogs. Marion runs a unique offense called the "Go-Go" offense. It uses two running backs and vertical threats. It will also go at a fast pace. Quarterback Doug Brumfield is back this season. Brumfield completed 64.6% of his passes last year and rushed for 261 yards and six touchdowns, but durability can be an issue.

The Rebels lost its leading rusher, Aidan Robbins, to BYU. Robbins rushed for 1,011 yards and nine touchdowns. UNLV's top wide receiver, Ricky White (51 receptions, 619 yards), returns. UNLV did lose wide receiver Kyle Williams (40 receptions, 541 yards, team-high five touchdowns) to Washington State. Additionally, Nick Williams and Jeffrey Weimer, UNLV's third and fourth leading receivers, are gone as well. JUCO transfer Jacob De Jesus had a big spring and should contribute this fall.

Pittsburgh transfer RB Vincent Davis will have a big role in the "Go-Go" two-back set. Davis has over 1,800 career rushing yards. But the offensive line could be an issue. The line lost three starters. Tackle Daviyon McDaniel is playing in the CFL, center Leif Fautanu transferred to Arizona State and Preston Nichols transferred to Purdue. UNLV did add guard Jalen St. John from Arkansas via the portal.

DEFENSE
At just 29 years old, Mike Scherer will be the defensive coordinator under Odom. Scherer played linebacker at Missouri when Odom was the head coach, and he coached under him the last three years at Arkansas. Scherer was the linebackers coach the last two seasons.

The Rebels' defense returns seven starters this year. On the defensive line, UNLV loses Second Team All-Mountain West performer, Adam Plant. Plant, who signed with the Las Vegas Raiders as an undrafted free agent, had a team-high eight sacks in 2022. Linebacker Austin Ajiake, the UNLV player to make First Team All-Mountain West, signed with the Carolina Panthers as an undrafted free agent.

The back end of the secondary should be solid for the Rebels in 2023, with safeties Jonathan Baldwin and Jordyn Morgan returning. The Rebels lost CB Nohl Williams to Cal in the portal. Williams was rated as the 16th-best cornerback and 83rd overall prospect in the portal, according to 247 Sports. UNLV also added three Power Five transfers that should be contributors on the defense: LB Zavier Carter (LSU), LB Jackson Woodard (Arkansas), S Jaxen Turner (Arizona).

OUTLOOK
It has been said before, but the future is high in Vegas regarding the Rebels moving forward. However, this season might not be the year to put all in your chips in the middle of the table. UNLV does avoid San Diego State and Boise State in conference play but visits Fresno State and Air Force.

The nonconference schedule is interesting. After opening with FCS Bryant, UNLV visits Michigan. The Wolverines are viewed as College Football Playoff contenders. In Week 3, Vanderbilt comes to Vegas. The Commodores should be improved and that is likely a swing game for UNLV's win total.

Lastly, the Rebels visit UTEP on September 23. The Miners are a veteran team and one of my favorite win totals of the year (Over 5.5). If UNLV goes 1-3 in the nonconference part of the schedule, seven wins will be a challenge. Colorado State, Wyoming, and San Jose State all visit Las Vegas, but all three games are considered toss-ups. With a new system on offense and some of the top players, including three starting offensive lineman, exiting, UNLV is more likely to win five games than seven in 2023.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 31.5

NATIONAL RANK: #108 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BRYANT	-19.5	14.5
9/9	at Michigan	39	67
9/16	VANDERBILT	5.5	39.5
9/23	at UTEP	1	30
9/30	HAWAII	-11	23
10/14	at Nevada	-2	26.5
10/21	COLORADO ST	-4	30
10/28	at Fresno St	13.5	42.5
11/4	at New Mexico	-8	21
11/10	WYOMING	4	38
11/18	at Air Force	13.5	41.5
11/25	SAN JOSE ST	1	34.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.25** #103 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

18-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13

OFFENSE: 6 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24	85	29.2	79
Yards Per Point	13.9	54	13.6	86
Plays Per Game	66.1	110		
Time of Possession	28:37	96		
3rd Down Conv. %	31.3%	117	37.9%	56
Total Yards Per Game	334.1	103	397.1	75
Yards Per Play	5.1	91	5.5	68
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.6	94		
Rush Yards Per Game	136.4	83	167.4	83
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.1	70	4.2	64
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.6	90		
Completion %	61.7%	54	63.1%	98
Passing Yards Per Game	197.7	104	229.7	66
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	93	7.6	90
Turnovers	1.4	54	1.8	17

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	IDAHO ST (-22.5)	52-21	W	W
9/4	IDAHO ST (-23.5)	52-7	W	W
9/10	at California (12)	14-20	L	W
9/17	NORTH TEXAS (-2.5)	58-27	W	W
9/24	at Utah St (-3)	34-24	W	W
9/30	NEW MEXICO (-14)	31-20	W	L
10/7	at San Jose St (6.5)	7-40	L	L
10/15	AIR FORCE (10)	7-42	L	L
10/22	at Notre Dame (26)	21-44	L	W
11/5	at San Diego St (5)	10-14	L	W
11/11	FRESNO ST (8.5)	30-37	L	W
11/19	at Hawaii (-11)	25-31	L	L
11/26	NEVADA (-12.5)	27-22	W	L

BY TIM MURRAY

In 2021, Blake Anderson's first year in Logan, Utah State won 11 games, won the Mountain West Championship, and defeated Oregon State in the LA Bowl. Last year, the Aggies took a step back, winning just six games and losing by four touchdowns in the First Responder Bowl. Entering 2023, Utah State returns just nine starters after a handful of the Aggies' top players departed via the transfer portal. The schedule will be quite challenging as they are the only team in the conference to play all five of the preseason top-five teams. Additionally, some regression could be on the way after Utah State won four games by less than a touchdown last year and lost zero by less than a touchdown.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Logan Bonner was lost for the season in late September, and Cooper Legas was thrust into action. Legas completed 61% of his passes with 11 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. Legas returns in 2023, but backup Bishop Davenport transferred to South Alabama.

Running back Calvin Tyler led the Aggies with 1,122 rushing yards and seven touchdowns. The Second Team All-Mountain West was signed by the Cincinnati Bengals as an undrafted free agent. RB Robert Briggs will assume the starting duties. Briggs rushed for 353 yards and a touchdown last year. Legas can also utilize his legs.

WR Brian Cobbs had 76 receptions for 923 yards and five touchdowns last year en route to earning Second Team All-Mountain West. Cobbs signed as an undrafted free agent with the Arizona Cardinals. Terrell Vaughn is the Aggies' top returning receiver. Vaughn had 56 catches for 624 yards and five touchdowns. Stanford transfer Colby Bowman will start at wide receiver.

The offensive line will be a major concern. Utah State lost four starters from last year's unit. Left tackle Alfred Edwards, who set the Aggies record for career starts, exhausted his eligibility. Edwards was the only Aggie to make First Team All-Mountain West in 2022. Additionally, right guard Weylin Lapuaho, who started all 13 games last year, transferred to BYU. Right tackle Jacob South and center Chandler Dolphin are both gone as well. Arizona State transfer Ralph Frias is expected to start at left tackle.

DEFENSE

Similar to Utah State's offense, the defense lost a lot of production from last year's team. Leading tackler, linebacker AJ Vongphachanh, transferred to BYU. Defensive end Daniel Grzesiak, who led the Aggies with 8.5 sacks, transferred to Cincinnati. Defensive ends Byron Vaughns (Baylor) and Patrick Joyner (Kansas) both transferred.

In the secondary, cornerbacks Ajani Carter (Baylor) and Dominic Tatum (Washington State) are gone as well. Safety Hunter Reynolds, who finished last year with 93 tackles, seven pass breakups, and three interceptions, graduated. Safety Ike Larsen is the top returner on defense. Larsen had a team-high four interceptions last season and was the lone Utah State player named First Team All-Mountain West this preseason.

OUTLOOK

Following a 6-6 season with four close victories (seven points or less) and just nine returning starters, Utah State should be in for some regression in 2023. The Aggies open the season at Iowa and are a 23-point underdog. While Iowa is the lone Power Five team on Utah State's schedule, the Aggies host James Madison on September 23 and visit UConn on September 30. James Madison was selected to finish first in the Sun Belt East. UConn should be slightly improved from last year's six-win team.

The Aggies are the only team in the Mountain West scheduled to play the top-five teams in the preseason poll (Boise State, Air Force, Fresno State, San Diego State, San Jose State). Utah State avoids Wyoming, Hawaii, and UNLV in conference play in 2023. With the loss of talent, a tough schedule, and regression from close games a year ago, it would be surprising if Utah State reached bowl eligibility this season.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 30

NATIONAL RANK: #116 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Iowa	24	51.5
9/9	IDAHO ST	-26.5	6
9/15	at Air Force	14.5	41.5
9/23	JAMES MADISON	8	39.5
9/30	at Connecticut	4	32
10/7	COLORADO ST	-2	30
10/13	FRESNO ST	11	42.5
10/21	at San Jose St	6.5	34.5
11/4	at San Diego St	11	39
11/11	NEVADA	-5	26.5
11/18	BOISE ST	14.5	46
11/24	at New Mexico	-7.5	21

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.38** #101 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.8 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

28-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 9

OFFENSE: 4 QB

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23.5	87	30.8	99
Yards Per Point	15.3	89	12.9	107
Plays Per Game	74.9	25		
Time of Possession	29:11	82		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.4%	101	40.1%	77
Total Yards Per Game	360.7	85	399.3	77
Yards Per Play	4.8	103	5.6	82
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.8	14		
Rush Yards Per Game	162.3	57	194	108
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	83	4.9	111
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.8	88		
Completion %	59.9%	73	55.1%	11
Passing Yards Per Game	198.3	103	205.3	29
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	94	7	53
Turnovers	1.9	116	1.3	86

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 4-9, O/U: 5-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	CONNECTICUT (-24)	31-20	W	L
9/3	at Alabama (42)	0-55	L	L
9/10	WEBER ST (-6.5)	7-35	L	L
9/24	UNLV (3)	24-34	L	L
9/29	at BYU (26)	26-38	L	W
10/8	AIR FORCE (11.5)	34-27	W	W
10/15	at Colorado St (-14)	17-13	W	L
10/22	at Wyoming (5.5)	14-28	L	L
11/5	NEW MEXICO (-14.5)	27-10	W	W
11/12	at Hawaii (-10.5)	41-34	W	L
11/19	SAN JOSE ST (-1)	35-31	W	W
11/25	at Boise St (16.5)	23-42	L	L
12/27	vs. Memphis (8)	10-38	L	L

WYOMING
COWBOYS

HEAD COACH: CRAIG BOHL (10TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM POLASEK
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAY SAWVEL

BY ADAM BURKE

College football is inherently unpredictable, but it sure feels like we can pencil Wyoming in for 6-8 wins every season. Since 2016, the Cowboys have won eight games three times, seven games twice, and six games once, with the exception of a 2-4 COVID year in 2020. This team never has the best talent but almost always has a good defense and a high floor. It is hard to believe that this is already Craig Bohl's 10th season in Laramie, and it looks like another bowl berth is in the works.

OFFENSE
Wyoming doesn't pull any punches on offense. The Cowboys are going to run the ball, be physical, and play to the elevation. Laramie is upwards of 7,100 feet above sea level, so it makes sense to try and tire out the other team. It doesn't always make for the sexiest or most exciting profile. The Cowboys have been running the ball at a steady rate since 2018, averaging 4.8 to 5.1 yards per carry. They haven't eclipsed 200 passing yards per game since 2016, when some guy named Josh Allen was on the roster.

I can't imagine Andrew Peasley will lead that sort of offense, but Peasley's job is to keep defenses honest and run around a bit. Overall, the Cowboys only had an 11/12 TD/INT ratio, so it will be about running the rock. Dawaiian McNeely had 5.7 yards per carry last season, and Harrison Waylee transferred in from Northern Illinois with nearly 2,000 yards to his name. As long as both guys stay healthy, Wyoming will have a physical back in McNeely and a quicker back in Waylee as a nice tandem.

DEFENSE
Wyoming's defensive numbers have been solid basically since 2016, allowing 4.7 to 5.4 yards per play with 17.5 to 23.9 points per game. The last two seasons, the Wyoming defense has had more issues, but the top six tacklers are all back, including tackle machine Easton Gibbs, who had 121 stops last season. Defensive coordinator Jay Sawvel has 10 starters back, including several sophomores, so this was a young defense last year.

The Cowboys did face 900 plays last season, and the offense only ran 783, so a little more balance would help those guys get a breather every now and then. Most of Wyoming's 37 sacks return, and that was the most for the team in at least 15 years, so that could give the secondary more than just six interceptions. As usual, the defense provides a high floor, and the offense will determine the ceiling.

OUTLOOK
Wyoming does play Boise State and Air Force on the road, but the rest of the conference schedule isn't bad at all. We'll find out a lot about the Cowboys with a Week 1 visit from Texas Tech, which is all kinds of interesting at War Memorial Stadium to open the season. Appalachian State also makes the trek from Boone. While App State is the highest in elevation east of the Mississippi, 7,100 and 3,300 are not the same number. My projection for Wyoming is 6.6 wins, and the market line is 6.5. Imagine that. I'd lean slightly to the Over if forced to pick.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 38

NATIONAL RANK: #84 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	TEXAS TECH	12.5	54
9/9	PORTLAND ST	-27.5	14
9/16	at Texas	27.5	62.5
9/23	APPALACHIAN ST	-3	37.5
9/30	NEW MEXICO	-20.5	21
10/7	FRESNO ST	1.5	42.5
10/14	at Air Force	7	41.5
10/28	at Boise St	11	46
11/3	COLORADO ST	-11.5	30
11/10	at UNLV	-4	31.5
11/18	HAWAII	-18	23
11/25	at Nevada	-8.5	26.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH
35.18
#93 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS
3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

12-1 ODDS TO WIN MOUNTAIN WEST

3000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15

OFFENSE: 5 QB
DEFENSE: 10

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	20.3	106	25.1	49
Yards Per Point	15.6	94	15.5	31
Plays Per Game	60.3	129		
Time of Possession	28:30	99		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.8%	106	39.4%	69
Total Yards Per Game	315.3	114	389.3	68
Yards Per Play	5.2	79	5.4	55
Rush Attempts Per Game	36	67		
Rush Yards Per Game	184.1	36	165.3	82
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	20	4.5	92
Pass Attempts Per Game	22.8	125		
Completion %	50.0%	123	61.7%	83
Passing Yards Per Game	131.3	125	224.1	54
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	121	6.8	34
Turnovers	1.3	42	0.9	120

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	at Illinois (14)	6-38	L	L
9/3	TULSA (7)	40-37	W	W
9/10	N COLORADO (-23.5)	33-10	W	L
9/16	AIR FORCE (16.5)	17-14	W	W
9/24	at BYU (20.5)	24-38	L	W
10/1	SAN JOSE ST (2.5)	16-33	L	L
10/8	at New Mexico (-3.5)	27-14	W	W
10/22	UTAH ST (-5.5)	28-14	W	W
10/29	at Hawaii (-11.5)	27-20	W	L
11/12	at Colorado St (-8.5)	14-13	W	L
11/19	BOISE ST (14.5)	17-20	L	W
11/25	at Fresno St (14)	0-30	L	L
12/30	vs. Ohio U (3)	27-30	L	T

PAC-12 BETTING PREVIEW

Caleb Williams, the reigning Heisman Trophy winner, returns to quarterback USC and plays the role of college football's biggest star. The Trojans are fit for Hollywood, with coach Lincoln Riley directing a high-payroll cast with soaring expectations. USC was 11-1 and a win away from the four-team playoff last season before falling to Utah in the Pac-12 championship game in Las Vegas. The Utes, who have lost back-to-back Rose Bowls, bring back quarterback Cameron Rising. Veteran quarterbacks are a theme in this conference, as Oregon's Bo Nix and Washington's Michael Penix Jr. return for league title contenders. The Pac-12 is loaded with quality teams and star power, at least until USC and UCLA depart for the Big Ten in 2024.

The conference welcomes three new coaches, none more hyped nationally than Deion Sanders. "Coach Prime" cleaned house at Colorado and turned over the roster from top to bottom through the transfer portal, yet oddsmakers don't believe the hype and set the Buffaloes' win total at 3.5. Arizona State's Kenny Dillingham, 33, is the youngest head coach of a Power Five program. The David Shaw era finally ended at Stanford, which hired Troy Taylor to launch a rebuilding job. The conference has a surplus of big-name coaches, elite quarterbacks and fascinating storylines, but will it produce a playoff team for the first time since 2017?

This should be the Trojans' year, assuming Williams stays healthy and the defense improves. Heisman repeats are extremely rare, but Williams is the obvious favorite to be the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL Draft. USC is the league favorite at +190, according to DraftKings, with Oregon (+300), Washington (+320), Utah (+600), Oregon State (11-1) and UCLA (14-1) in the hunt. The Trojans are getting 16-1 odds to win the national championship and have a legitimate shot if Williams remains a dynamic playmaker and resembles the college version of Patrick Mahomes.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
USC	62	45.31 (38)	9.8	2.2	7.3	1.7	10
OREGON	59.5	42.7 (63)	9.4	2.6	6.8	2.2	9.5
UTAH	59	48.27 (13)	8.8	3.2	6.4	2.6	8.5
WASHINGTON	58	46.92 (23)	8.9	3.1	6.3	2.7	9
OREGON ST	53.5	44.96 (42)	8.4	3.6	5.6	3.4	8.5
UCLA	51.5	42.46 (64)	8.2	3.8	5.5	3.5	8.5
WASHINGTON ST	46	42.23 (66)	6.5	5.5	4.3	4.7	6.5
ARIZONA	43	45.53 (34)	5.1	6.9	3.0	6.0	5
CALIFORNIA	45.5	49.13 (5)	5.0	7.0	3.0	6.0	5
ARIZONA ST	42.5	46.42 (26)	4.7	7.3	2.8	6.2	5
COLORADO	34.5	48.46 (11)	2.6	9.4	1.6	7.4	3.5
STANFORD	34	48.3 (12)	2.4	9.6	1.3	7.7	3

ARIZONA
WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: JEDD FISCH (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRENNAN CARROLL
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOHNNY NANSEN

BY MATT YOUMANS

Entering last season, Arizona had lost 23 of its last 24 games, but coach Jedd Fisch was eyeing a turnaround after going 1-11 in his first year in Tucson. The Wildcats got off to an encouraging start by beating San Diego State 38-20 as 6-point road 'dogs in the season opener. While much progress was made in Fisch's second year, Arizona fizzled against a tough Pac-12 schedule and finished 5-7.

OFFENSE

Fisch, a former NFL assistant who was quarterbacks coach for the Patriots in 2020, found the right guy to run his offense last year. Washington State transfer Jayden de Laura was an immediate upgrade and passed for 3,685 yards and 25 touchdowns. The offense made a major leap from 17.2 points per game in 2021 to 30.8 points per game, as the Wildcats scored 20 points or more in all nine conference games. Eight starters are returning this year. De Laura's top target is Jacob Cowing, who transferred from UTEP and totaled 85 receptions for 1,034 yards and seven touchdowns. Cowing and Tetairoa McMillan, who had 18.0 yards per reception and eight touchdowns, lead a deep group of receivers. Senior running back Michael Wiley returns after leading the team with 771 yards. The bottom line is the offense was not the problem last year and should be better in 2023.

DEFENSE

With eight starters returning a year ago, Arizona still allowed 36.5 points per game and surrendered 45 points or more in each game of a four-game midseason losing streak against Oregon, Washington, USC and Utah. Only three starters return this season, but that's not necessarily bad news because Fisch and his staff hit the transfer portal for reinforcements. Senior defensive end Taylor Upshaw, a transfer from Michigan, should be an impact player along with sophomore linebacker Jacob Manu. It's tough to say if the defense will improve, but it's unlikely to improve enough.

OUTLOOK

Fisch's first year was a disaster, but he penned a signature win in 2022, a 34-28 victory over UCLA as a 20-point 'dog in Pasadena. After getting humiliated in the rivalry with Arizona State and losing the previous two meetings by a combined score of 108-22, Arizona defeated the Sun Devils, 38-35. The Wildcats topped their season win total of 3 posted at DraftKings, but the win total is now 5. While the schedule presents a few winnable games in September, there are no soft spots at home the rest of the way. With five wins seemingly the ceiling, look Under or pass.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **43**

NATIONAL RANK: #65 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	N ARIZONA	-26.5	18.5
9/9	at Mississippi St	10.5	50.5
9/16	UTEP	-15	30
9/23	at Stanford	-7	34
9/30	WASHINGTON	13	58
10/7	at USC	21.5	62
10/14	at Washington St	6.5	46
10/28	OREGON ST	8.5	53.5
11/4	UCLA	7	51.5
11/11	at Colorado	-5	34.5
11/18	UTAH	14.5	59
11/25	at Arizona St	2.5	42.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 45.53 #34 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.8 / 0.5 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

100-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

400-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **11**

OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	30.8	39	37.3	125
Yards Per Point	15.2	88	12.7	112
Plays Per Game	70	67		
Time of Possession	28:00	113		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.9%	37	48.4%	125
Total Yards Per Game	468.6	15	473.3	125
Yards Per Play	6.7	10	6.5	122
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.7	124		
Rush Yards Per Game	142.1	74	202.5	115
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	30	5.5	125
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.2	15		
Completion %	61.0%	65	69.2%	127
Passing Yards Per Game	326.5	4	270.8	112
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	15	7.6	92
Turnovers	1.9	113	1.4	70

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 6-6, O/U: 7-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at San Diego St (6)	38-20	W	W
9/10	MISSISSIPPI ST (12.5)	17-39	L	L
9/17	N DAKOTA ST (3)	31-28	W	W
9/24	at California (3.5)	31-49	L	L
10/1	COLORADO (-18)	43-20	W	W
10/8	OREGON (13.5)	22-49	L	L
10/15	at Washington (14.5)	39-49	L	W
10/29	USC (14)	37-45	L	W
11/5	at Utah (18)	20-45	L	L
11/12	at UCLA (20)	34-28	W	W
11/19	WASHINGTON ST (4)	20-31	L	L
11/25	ARIZONA ST (-4)	38-35	W	L

ARIZONA STATE
SUN DEVILS

HEAD COACH: KENNY DILLINGHAM (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BEAU BALDWIN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN WARD

BY MATT YOUMANS

Out with the old (Herm Edwards) and in with 33-year-old Kenny Dillingham as Arizona State's new coach. Dillingham has worked under some sharp offensive head coaches and shows promise as a program leader and recruiter. The Sun Devils are facing a tough road through the Pac-12, but do not underrate Dillingham and his chances of overachieving this year.

OFFENSE

It appears Dillingham's first starting quarterback will be Drew Pyne, who was a highly-touted recruit at Notre Dame and had 22 touchdown passes in 10 starts for the Irish last season. Dillingham's future starter at QB is expected to be five-star recruit Jaden Rashada, who backed out of a commitment to Florida. Dillingham is using transfers to rebuild the offensive depth chart, adding Sacramento State running back Cameron Skattebo, UNLV center Leif Fautanu and several others. The line looks strong and led by veterans, so this offense could be surprisingly good. Dillingham, a 2012 graduate of Arizona State, coached under Mike Norvell at Florida State and Memphis and Gus Malzahn at Auburn before becoming the offensive coordinator at Oregon last year. He hired Beau Baldwin, a former head coach at Eastern Washington, as his offensive coordinator.

DEFENSE

Dillingham and his staff, including new defensive coordinator Brian Ward from Washington State, brought in more than 30 transfers. The defense returns only five starters but adds transfers from Tennessee, Texas, Michigan State, Wisconsin and Washington State and many of those players will contribute or start immediately. The Sun Devils were involved in a lot of high-scoring games last season, highlighted by a 45-38 win over Washington, and that theme should continue until this defense matures.

OUTLOOK

With eight home games, Arizona State will have plenty of opportunities to get to five or six wins. The Sun Devils open at home against Southern Utah, Oklahoma State, Fresno State and USC, giving Dillingham a realistic shot to be 3-0 before facing the Trojans. The other league home games are against Colorado, Washington State, Oregon and Arizona. Cal is probably the only winnable road game in conference play. The win total (5) is depressed because of last year's 3-9 debacle. Edwards was fired after an embarrassing loss to Eastern Michigan, and NCAA penalties for recruiting violations were a distraction. Dillingham is young, yet he's rebuilding the right way and has a potential surprise team with a good shot to reach six wins.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 42.5

NATIONAL RANK: #66 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	S UTAH	-29.5	15.5
9/9	OKLAHOMA ST	3	47.5
9/16	FRESNO ST	-2	42.5
9/23	USC	17.5	62
9/30	at California	5.5	45.5
10/7	COLORADO	-10.5	34.5
10/21	at Washington	18	58
10/28	WASHINGTON ST	1	46
11/4	at Utah	20	59
11/11	at UCLA	11.5	51.5
11/18	OREGON	15	59.5
11/25	ARIZONA	-2.5	43

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 46.42 #26 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.3 / 0 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

120-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

400-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12

OFFENSE: 7

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.8	78	34	113
Yards Per Point	15.5	91	13.2	99
Plays Per Game	68.1	94		
Time of Possession	30:12	59		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.9%	40	52.3%	130
Total Yards Per Game	384.3	65	449.8	116
Yards Per Play	5.6	47	6.2	118
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.5	115		
Rush Yards Per Game	123.3	91	204	119
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	71	5.5	124
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.1	36		
Completion %	66.6%	13	60.1%	57
Passing Yards Per Game	261	37	245.8	91
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	56	7.2	63
Turnovers	1.5	83	0.9	124

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	N ARIZONA (-25.5)	40-3	W	W
9/10	at Oklahoma St (12)	17-34	L	L
9/17	E MICHIGAN (-20.5)	21-30	L	L
9/24	UTAH (16)	13-34	L	L
10/1	at USC (24.5)	25-42	L	W
10/8	WASHINGTON (13.5)	45-38	W	W
10/22	at Stanford (3)	14-15	L	W
10/29	at Colorado (-12.5)	42-34	W	L
11/5	UCLA (11)	36-50	L	L
11/12	at Washington St (9.5)	18-28	L	L
11/19	OREGON ST (7.5)	7-31	L	L
11/25	at Arizona (4)	35-38	L	W

CALIFORNIA
GOLDEN BEARS

HEAD COACH: JUSTIN WILCOX (7TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAKE SPAVITAL
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PETER SIRMON

BY MATT YOUMANS

Entering his seventh year in Berkeley, coach Justin Wilcox needs to turn around a Cal program in decline. The Golden Bears are a combined 10-18 the past three years. Wilcox is an outstanding defensive coach, but he has been unable to find a star quarterback, and Cal's offense will remain one of the worst in a conference stacked with explosive offenses and veteran quarterbacks.

OFFENSE

Wilcox has had solid quarterbacks — four-year starter Chase Garbers preceded Jack Plummer last year — but needs one to take the offense to a higher level. TCU transfer Sam Jackson, who is mobile with a live arm, will compete against North Carolina State transfer Ben Finley. The job opened when Plummer, who passed for 21 touchdowns, opted to transfer to Louisville. Aaron Rodgers and Jared Goff are not walking back through the door. The Bears do return their leading rusher, Jaydn Ott, and leading receiver, Jeremiah Hunter, and four starters return for a good line. There is optimism surrounding the return of coordinator Jake Spavital, who was offensive coordinator for the Bears under Sonny Dykes in 2016 before becoming the Texas State head coach.

DEFENSE

Nine starters return for Wilcox, who's among the few defensive-minded head coaches in a league full of offensive wizards like USC's Lincoln Riley, UCLA's Chip Kelly and Washington's Kalen DeBoer. Cal will count on two veterans — tackle Brett Johnson and linebacker Jackson Sirmon — to lead a unit that allowed 27.8 points per game, an unusually high number for a Wilcox defense.

OUTLOOK

Aside from a home game against Idaho, the schedule is brutally tough. Cal will face all of the Pac-12's power teams (USC, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Oregon State, UCLA) and miss two of the weakest teams (Arizona, Colorado). The Bears open at North Texas before hosting Auburn. Last year, Cal went 4-8 with home victories over UC Davis, UNLV, Arizona and Stanford, and only the Cardinal return to the schedule. Wilcox is 3-1 against Stanford in the "Big Game" the past four years, so he's got that going for him. Under the total of 5.5 was an easy call last year, and Under 5 is the obvious call this year. The quarterback position is a big question mark, and the schedule has only one soft spot. A five-win season seems to be the ceiling.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **45.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #56 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at North Texas	-6.5	36.5
9/9	AUBURN	4	52
9/16	IDAHO	-15	33
9/23	at Washington	15.5	58
9/30	ARIZONA ST	-5.5	42.5
10/7	OREGON ST	5.5	53.5
10/14	at Utah	17	59
10/28	USC	14.5	62
11/4	at Oregon	17.5	59.5
11/11	WASHINGTON ST	-2	46
11/18	at Stanford	-9.5	34
11/25	at UCLA	9	51.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **49.13**
#5 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.4 / 0.2**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **17**
OFFENSE: 8
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23	91	29.2	79
Yards Per Point	15.7	97	14.8	49
Plays Per Game	67.7	96		
Time of Possession	28:35	97		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.8%	105	39.1%	65
Total Yards Per Game	360	87	433.2	106
Yards Per Play	5.3	73	5.8	96
Rush Attempts Per Game	25.9	128		
Rush Yards Per Game	92	125	150.3	59
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.6	96	4.1	62
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.2	15		
Completion %	62.2%	50	65.9%	120
Passing Yards Per Game	268	30	282.9	125
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	83	7.6	94
Turnovers	1	16	1.5	62

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 6-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	CAL DAVIS (-14)	34-13	W	W
9/10	UNLV (-12)	20-14	W	L
9/17	at Notre Dame (13.5)	17-24	L	W
9/24	ARIZONA (-3.5)	49-31	W	W
10/1	at Washington St (4)	9-28	L	L
10/15	at Colorado (-15)	13-20	L	L
10/22	WASHINGTON (7.5)	21-28	L	W
10/29	OREGON (16.5)	24-42	L	L
11/5	at USC (21)	35-41	L	W
11/12	at Oregon St (11)	10-38	L	L
11/19	STANFORD (-4.5)	27-20	W	W
11/25	UCLA (11.5)	28-35	L	W
8/27	at Fla Atlantic (7)	13-43	L	L

HEAD COACH: DEION SANDERS (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SEAN LEWIS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHARLES KELLY

BY MATT YOUMANS

The national media might buy the Deion Sanders story, but sharp bettors don't believe the hype. "Coach Prime" talks about winning a Pac-12 championship while oddsmakers are doubting Colorado's chances of winning four games. Sanders is using transfers in a total roster makeover that he thinks will be a boom and many others think will be a bust because of a lack of depth. The Buffaloes, 1-11 a year ago, will likely field another losing team, but no other losing team will be more fascinating to fade or follow.

OFFENSE

Shedeur Sanders, the coach's son, passed for 70 touchdowns in two seasons at Jackson State. How good he truly is will go a long way in determining this team's success. Is Sanders a legit NFL prospect or a product of his dad's hype machine? The truth likely lies somewhere in the middle, and Sanders will be a mid-level quarterback in his debut season in the Pac-12. There is no doubt he's surrounded by high-level talent.

Houston transfer running back Alton McCaskill is a key addition, and wide receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter is a legit first-round NFL prospect who could be the best player on the field in several games. The line looks good enough on paper and transfers are filling the holes. The best coach on the new staff is probably offensive coordinator Sean Lewis, who was the head coach at Kent State. The Buffaloes have lots of doubters, but there are lots of reasons to believe in their offense.

DEFENSE

The number of returning starters is irrelevant with this team, especially with the defense. The new staff recruited edge rushers from Arkansas, Florida State, Mississippi and West Virginia. Linebacker Demouy Kennedy and defensive back Jahquez Robinson were highly-ranked recruits at Alabama, and middle linebacker LaVonta Bentley is from Clemson. Hunter, from Jackson State, is a two-way star who will start at one corner. The defense is improved across the board, yet most of the pieces are new and the unit needs time to develop.

OUTLOOK

Where are the soft spots on the schedule? Colorado State, Stanford and Arizona are opponents the Buffaloes need to beat at home. Colorado will not be favored in any of its road games against TCU, Oregon, Arizona State, UCLA, Washington State and Utah. It's not absurd and out of the question to think the Buffaloes can win four, five or even six games, but the reality is "Coach Prime" will probably have to accept 3-9 and find ways to put a positive spin on it.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 34.5

NATIONAL RANK: #96 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at TCU	21	53
9/9	NEBRASKA	8.5	46
9/16	COLORADO ST	-7.5	30
9/23	at Oregon	28.5	59.5
9/30	USC	25	62
10/7	at Arizona St	10.5	42.5
10/13	STANFORD	-3.5	34
10/28	at UCLA	20	51.5
11/4	OREGON ST	16	53.5
11/11	ARIZONA	5	43
11/17	at Washington St	15	46
11/25	at Utah	28.5	59

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 48.46
#11 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.8 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

140-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 8
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	15.4	125	44.5	131
Yards Per Point	18.3	120	11.5	129
Plays Per Game	64	123		
Time of Possession	27:23	117		
3rd Down Conv. %	31.7%	116	53.2%	131
Total Yards Per Game	282.3	127	513.8	130
Yards Per Play	4.4	122	7.2	130
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.1	105		
Rush Yards Per Game	109.4	111	249.1	130
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	104	6.3	128
Pass Attempts Per Game	30	85		
Completion %	49.7%	125	67.1%	125
Passing Yards Per Game	172.9	117	264.7	105
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.8	119	8.7	126
Turnovers	1.8	111	0.9	120

2022 RESULTS

SU: 1-11, ATS: 2-10, O/U: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	TCU (13.5)	13-38	L	L
9/10	at Air Force (17.5)	10-41	L	L
9/17	at Minnesota (28)	7-49	L	L
9/24	UCLA (22.5)	17-45	L	L
10/1	at Arizona (18)	20-43	L	L
10/15	CALIFORNIA (15)	20-13	W	W
10/22	at Oregon St (23)	9-42	L	L
10/29	ARIZONA ST (12.5)	34-42	L	W
11/5	OREGON (31)	10-49	L	L
11/11	at USC (34.5)	17-55	L	L
11/19	at Washington (30.5)	7-54	L	L
11/26	UTAH (30)	21-63	L	L

OREGON
DUCKS

HEAD COACH: DAN LANNING (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JUNIOR ADAMS / WILL STEIN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHRIS HAMPTON / TOSH LUPOI

BY MATT YOUMANS

First impressions are not everything. The Dan Lanning era at Oregon started with a disaster, a 49-3 loss to Georgia. Lanning, a former defensive coordinator under Kirby Smith with the Bulldogs, turned things around quickly with an eight-game winning streak. The Ducks went 9-3 in the regular season, slipping Over their win total of 8.5, and beat North Carolina 28-27 in the Holiday Bowl. Lanning has an experienced team returning, but the Pac-12 schedule is a little tougher this time.

OFFENSE
The top defenses in the SEC are unforgiving, and the Pac-12 is a different world that tilts more toward the offenses, as Bo Nix found out in his first year at Oregon. Nix transferred from Auburn, where he struggled to find consistency, and suddenly started to fulfill his promise as a quarterback. Nix completed 72 percent of his passes with 29 touchdowns and seven interceptions, while also running for 510 yards and 14 TDs. He's one of eight returning starters, along with leading rushers Bucky Irving and Noah Whittington and top receiver Troy Franklin.

The offensive line loses four veterans, but Lanning hit the transfer portal for reinforcements, and the line still ranks among the league's strongest. The Ducks, who averaged 501 yards and 38.8 points per game, scored 41 points or more in each game of an eight-game winning streak. The numbers are not as impressive as they look because Nix and the Ducks feasted on several bad defenses after getting dominated by Georgia.

DEFENSE
Lanning has SEC roots and is attempting to build a more physical defense. The Ducks had difficulty stopping the run and allowed 37 points to Washington and 38 to Oregon State in late-season losses. Eight starters are back, led by senior edge rusher Brandon Dorlus. The downside is Lanning loses star linebackers Noah Sewell and Justin Flowe.

OUTLOOK
The Ducks play five road games and probably will be big favorites in two (against Stanford and Arizona State) and underdogs at Washington and Utah. A September 9 trip to Texas Tech could be trouble because the Red Raiders are Big 12 title contenders. Oregon could sweep its home schedule due to the only tough games coming against USC, Washington State and Oregon State. It can be argued Lanning has a 10-win team on paper, but the same can be said about USC, Washington and Utah, so this projection is more of a lean to 9-3 because the Ducks seem vulnerable to slipping up in a few tricky spots on the schedule.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 59.5

NATIONAL RANK: #9 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	PORTLAND ST	-49	14
9/9	at Texas Tech	-3.5	54
9/16	HAWAII	-40	23
9/23	COLORADO	-28.5	34.5
9/30	at Stanford	-24.5	34
10/14	at Washington	0.5	58
10/21	WASHINGTON ST	-17	46
10/28	at Utah	2.5	59
11/4	CALIFORNIA	-17.5	45.5
11/11	USC	-0.5	62
11/18	at Arizona St	-15	42.5
11/24	OREGON ST	-9.5	53.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 42.70 #63 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.2 / 0.5 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+300 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

40-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	36.2	12	28.5	74
Yards Per Point	13.6	40	14	72
Plays Per Game	71.3	56		
Time of Possession	30:40	49		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.9%	31	48.1%	123
Total Yards Per Game	491.9	8	398.4	76
Yards Per Play	6.9	5	5.8	100
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.3	48		
Rush Yards Per Game	211.8	13	127.9	32
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.5	5	4.3	73
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.6	54		
Completion %	70.1%	1	64.2%	108
Passing Yards Per Game	280.2	20	270.5	110
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.6	11	7.3	72
Turnovers	1	16	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS
SU: 10-3, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	vs. Georgia (16)	3-49	L	L
9/10	E WASHINGTON (-27.5)	70-14	W	W
9/17	BYU (-4)	41-20	W	W
9/24	at Washington St (-6)	44-41	W	L
10/1	STANFORD (-17.5)	45-27	W	W
10/8	at Arizona (-13.5)	49-22	W	W
10/22	UCLA (-7)	45-30	W	W
10/29	at California (-16.5)	42-24	W	W
11/5	at Colorado (-31)	49-10	W	W
11/12	WASHINGTON (-12)	34-37	L	L
11/19	UTAH (-1)	20-17	W	W
11/26	at Oregon St (1.5)	34-38	L	L
12/28	vs. North Carolina (-13.5)	28-27	W	L

OREGON STATE
BEAVERS

HEAD COACH: JONATHAN SMITH (6TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN LINDGREN
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TRENT BRAY

BY MATT YOUMANS

Most of the media hype will focus on USC, Washington, Utah and Oregon, but don't overlook an under-the-radar Oregon State team. Jonathan Smith has been a magician in Corvallis while coaching the Beavers from 2-10 in his first year to 10-3 in his fifth year. Smith draws a favorable schedule and a shot to crack the league's top four.

OFFENSE

It's not a lock that Clemson transfer DJ Uiagalelei will win the quarterback competition, but he's the favorite over sophomore Ben Gulbranson. The higher ceiling belongs to Uiagalelei, who went 22-6 as the Tigers' starter yet was inconsistent and flopped in some big games. Gulbranson went 7-1 in eight starts last year, but he passed for only nine touchdowns while the running attack carried the offense. Eight starters are back, highlighted by running back Damien Martinez, who finished with 982 yards and seven touchdowns on the ground in what amounted to about a half a season of action. Starting with the sixth game, Martinez recorded six straight games with 100 or more yards. The driving force for the offense will be a line that ranks in the nation's top 10, with four returning starters who are all juniors and seniors. If Uiagalelei turns into the real deal, the Beavers could top last year's 32.2 points per game.

DEFENSE

Nine starters returned last year, and the defense lived up to expectations by allowing 20 points per game and limiting USC to 17 points. There might be a slight decline with only five starters coming back, but the Beavers are experienced up front and will remain strong enough.

OUTLOOK

Over the win total (6.5) was an easier call a year ago, and the Beavers won nine due to dramatic comeback victories over Fresno State, Stanford and Oregon. With three-point losses to USC and Washington, Oregon State was competitive in 11-of-12 games before blowing out Florida, 30-3, in the Las Vegas Bowl.

The schedule is softer this year without the Trojans. The Beavers, who went 12-1 at home the past two years, host UCLA, Utah and Washington. It's not safe to assume Oregon State will beat the Utes and Huskies in Corvallis, and the Beavers have not won the "Civil War" game at Oregon since 2007. The call to go Over 8.5 is only a lean this year, with 9-3 slightly more likely than 8-4. Smith has been a consistent overachiever.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 53.5

NATIONAL RANK: #22 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/3	at San Jose St	-16.5	34.5
9/9	CAL DAVIS	-19	37.5
9/16	SAN DIEGO ST	-17.5	39
9/23	at Washington St	-4.5	46
9/29	UTAH	2.5	59
10/7	at California	-5.5	45.5
10/14	UCLA	-5	51.5
10/28	at Arizona	-8.5	43
11/4	at Colorado	-16	34.5
11/11	STANFORD	-23	34
11/18	WASHINGTON	1	58
11/24	at Oregon	9.5	59.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 44.96
#42 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

11-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

100-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	29.3	50	19.3	11
Yards Per Point	13.2	28	17.5	12
Plays Per Game	65.5	114		
Time of Possession	31:56	22		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.4%	45	39.3%	67
Total Yards Per Game	384.7	64	338.7	24
Yards Per Play	5.9	39	5.1	35
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.9	29		
Rush Yards Per Game	195.5	24	103.8	11
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	32	3.7	29
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.4	122		
Completion %	61.1%	64	58.3%	34
Passing Yards Per Game	189.2	110	234.8	76
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.7	44	6.4	16
Turnovers	1.5	72	1.2	100

2022 RESULTS
SU: 10-3, ATS: 11-2, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	BOISE ST (-1.5)	34-17	W	W
9/10	at Fresno St (1)	35-32	W	W
9/17	MONTANA ST (-17.5)	68-28	W	W
9/24	USC (6)	14-17	L	W
10/1	at Utah (10.5)	16-42	L	L
10/8	at Stanford (-4.5)	28-27	W	L
10/15	WASHINGTON ST (-3)	24-10	W	W
10/22	COLORADO (-23)	42-9	W	W
11/4	at Washington (4.5)	21-24	L	W
11/12	CALIFORNIA (-11)	38-10	W	W
11/19	at Arizona St (-7.5)	31-7	W	W
11/26	OREGON (-1.5)	38-34	W	W
12/17	vs. Florida (-7.5)	30-3	W	W

STANFORD
CARDINAL

HEAD COACH: TROY TAYLOR (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TROY TAYLOR
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BOBBY APRIL III

BY MATT YOUMANS

Last season was called a make-or-break proposition for coach David Shaw, who was a broken man after a 3-9 finish. Shaw went 14-28 in his last four years and resigned. New coach Troy Taylor was a big winner at Sacramento State and brings a fresh offensive philosophy. But Taylor is facing a total rebuild with only six returning starters and no proven quarterback.

OFFENSE

Running back EJ Smith, son of former Dallas Cowboys great Emmitt Smith, could be the star Taylor's offense needs. Smith was off to a hot start last year, carrying 30 times for 206 yards before going down to a season-ending injury in the second game. Taylor is a run-first coach, and that's good because Smith and backup Casey Filkins are his best players.

The quarterback competition is apparently wide open with freshman Myles Jackson, sophomore Ari Patu, sophomore Ashton Daniels and Syracuse transfer Justin Lamson in the mix. The bad news for Taylor is the offensive line requires a total rebuild. Stanford won three games last year and averaged 15.5 points in back-to-back victories over Notre Dame (16-14) and Arizona State (15-14). The offense could be dismal, though Taylor has a track record of success, so he provides some hope.

DEFENSE

Sophomore linebacker David Bailey is one of three returning starters and will lead a unit that yielded 32.2 points and 224 rushing yards per game. The Cardinal allowed 40 points or more in five conference games. While most teams are rebuilding through the transfer portal, Stanford is in a different situation and lost the transfer game in the offseason.

OUTLOOK

The season opener on September 1 at Hawaii, which is picked to finish 10th in the Mountain West, will tell a lot about where Stanford is headed. The Cardinal will get blown out at USC in the second game before hosting Sacramento State and Arizona, so it's possible Taylor could win three games in September. It's also possible he could be 1-3 or 0-4 and headed for a disaster. Stanford's other opportunities to get a win will come against Colorado and Cal. This is all about Taylor, who should eventually prove to be a great hire, and how quickly he can develop an inexperienced roster that has the least talent in the Pac-12. It's tempting to bet on Taylor to go Over a low win total, but he needs more talent and time.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 34

NATIONAL RANK: #98 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/1	at Hawaii	-8.5	23
9/9	at USC	30.5	62
9/16	SACRAMENTO ST	5.5	40.5
9/23	ARIZONA	7	43
9/30	OREGON	24.5	59.5
10/13	at Colorado	3.5	34.5
10/21	UCLA	16	51.5
10/28	WASHINGTON	22.5	58
11/4	at Washington St	15	46
11/11	at Oregon St	23	53.5
11/18	CALIFORNIA	9.5	45.5
11/25	NOTRE DAME	23.5	58.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 48.30 #12 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.6 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

250-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS 6

OFFENSE: 3
DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.5	109	34.2	115
Yards Per Point	17.9	118	13.3	97
Plays Per Game	73.2	38		
Time of Possession	30:05	61		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.4%	79	35.3%	34
Total Yards Per Game	349.3	95	454.6	119
Yards Per Play	4.8	108	6.7	126
Rush Attempts Per Game	31.6	110		
Rush Yards Per Game	101.7	118	231.3	127
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	118	6.3	130
Pass Attempts Per Game	38	21		
Completion %	60.1%	72	58.3%	36
Passing Yards Per Game	247.5	48	223.4	52
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.5	100	7.4	79
Turnovers	1.5	83	0.7	129

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 2-10, O/U: 6-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	COLGATE (-40)	41-10	W	L
9/10	USC (9.5)	28-41	L	L
9/24	at Washington (14)	22-40	L	L
10/1	at Oregon (17.5)	27-45	L	L
10/8	OREGON ST (4.5)	27-28	L	W
10/15	at Notre Dame (16.5)	16-14	W	W
10/22	ARIZONA ST (-3)	15-14	W	L
10/29	at UCLA (16.5)	13-38	L	L
11/5	WASHINGTON ST (3)	14-52	L	L
11/12	at Utah (24)	7-42	L	L
11/19	at California (4.5)	20-27	L	L
11/26	BYU (6.5)	26-35	L	L

UCLA
BRUINS

HEAD COACH: CHIP KELLY (6TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHIP KELLY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: D'ANTON LYNN

BY MATT YOUMANS

Chip Kelly still has a losing record (27-29) after five years at UCLA, where he has not won a bowl, but he went 17-8 the past two years to dig out of a hole. The Bruins took advantage of a favorable schedule to go Over 8.5 wins last year. This schedule is a little tougher, and the quarterback situation is a mystery, but UCLA could have its best defense of the Kelly era.

OFFENSE
Kelly's quarterback throughout most of his Westwood tenure was Dorian Thompson-Robinson, who arrived in 2018 and started 48 games in five seasons. Thompson-Robinson's career ended in disappointment with a Sun Bowl loss to Pittsburgh, and he was drafted in the fifth round by the Browns. Kelly's new starter will be junior Ethan Garbers, Kent State transfer Collin Schlee or hyped freshman Dante Moore. Zach Charbonnet also went to the NFL, as a second-round pick by the Seahawks, after rushing for 1,359 yards and 14 touchdowns.

The Bruins should be fine at running back thanks to the addition of Ball State transfer Carson Steele, who rushed for 1,556 yards and 14 scores for the Cardinals. Kelly's new-look offense will not approach last year's 39 points per game, but with one of the top lines in the Pac-12, the decline in the numbers should not be dramatic.

DEFENSE
Nine starters are back, led by edge rusher Laiatu Latu and linebacker Darius Muasau. Kelly runs the offense and leaves the defense to his coordinator, and the new DC is D'Anton Lynn, who was an NFL assistant with the Ravens and looks like an upgrade. The Bruins were bad defensively in the final five games last year, but this unit will be better.

OUTLOOK
Kelly saved his job in 2021, when he upset LSU and USC and finished 8-4. He has started scheduling easier nonconference games to boost his record and added Coastal Carolina and North Carolina Central this year to go along with a trip to San Diego State. The Bruins avoid Oregon and Washington in Pac-12 play, but they hit the road to play Utah, Oregon State, Arizona and USC. UCLA was a 20-point home favorite in a 34-28 loss to Arizona late last season. The Bruins are breaking in a new quarterback and lost way too much offensive production to predict a nine-win season, so this is a lean Under 8.5.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 51.5

NATIONAL RANK: #31 OF 133
CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	COASTAL CAROLINA	-16	37.5
9/9	at San Diego St	-10.5	39
9/16	NC CENTRAL	-38	16
9/23	at Utah	10.5	59
10/7	WASHINGTON ST	-8	46
10/14	at Oregon St	5	53.5
10/21	at Stanford	-16	34
10/28	COLORADO	-20	34.5
11/4	at Arizona	-7	43
11/11	ARIZONA ST	-11.5	42.5
11/18	at USC	12.5	62
11/25	CALIFORNIA	-9	45.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 42.46 #64 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.6 / 0.3 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

14-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

100-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	38.8	7	30.8	99
Yards Per Point	13	23	13.3	93
Plays Per Game	73.8	35		
Time of Possession	27:37	115		
3rd Down Conv. %	51.3%	4	39.3%	66
Total Yards Per Game	505.1	5	411.3	89
Yards Per Play	6.8	6	5.6	75
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.7	33		
Rush Yards Per Game	239.8	5	133.5	36
Yards Per Rush Attempt	6	1	3.9	43
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.5	56		
Completion %	69.0%	4	66.1%	121
Passing Yards Per Game	265.3	32	277.8	119
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	25	7.3	73
Turnovers	1.6	88	1.3	86

2022 RESULTS
SU: 9-4, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	BOWLING GREEN (-24)	45-17	W	W
9/10	ALABAMA ST (-48.5)	45-7	W	L
9/17	S ALABAMA (-15.5)	32-31	W	L
9/24	at Colorado (-22.5)	45-17	W	W
9/30	WASHINGTON (2.5)	40-32	W	W
10/8	UTAH (3.5)	42-32	W	W
10/22	at Oregon (7)	30-45	L	L
10/29	STANFORD (-16.5)	38-13	W	W
11/5	at Arizona St (-11)	50-36	W	W
11/12	ARIZONA (-20)	28-34	L	L
11/19	USC (2.5)	45-48	L	L
11/25	at California (-11.5)	35-28	W	L
12/30	vs. Pittsburgh (-8.5)	35-37	L	L

BY MATT YOUMANS

With a returning Heisman Trophy winner at quarterback and an innovative offensive coach, USC has what it takes on one side of the ball to be a national title contender. Is the defense tough enough? Lincoln Riley coached Oklahoma to three playoff appearances in five years, and he's using the transfer portal and NIL resources to his advantage in Los Angeles, so a playoff appearance for the Trojans is realistic in his second year.

OFFENSE

In 14 starts as a sophomore, Caleb Williams passed for 4,537 yards and 42 touchdowns with only five interceptions. He completed 333-of-500 passes and also rushed for 10 touchdowns. Williams is the college version of Patrick Mahomes and the likely No. 1 pick of the NFL Draft. Williams is as good as it gets as a starting point, and the former Oklahoma transfer is surrounded by seven more returning starters. Tahj Washington and Mario Williams highlight a big-play receiving corps, senior Austin Jones leads a backfield deep with talent and the line looks stronger. Riley will be dialing up plays in a video-game offense.

DEFENSE

A unit that surrendered 29.2 points and 424 yards per game returns nine starters and adds several transfers, including tackle Bear Alexander (Georgia) and linebacker Mason Cobb (Oklahoma State). The defense excelled at forcing turnovers last season, as USC finished +22 in turnover margin, yet that number is probably unsustainable. The returnees and transfers indicate coordinator Alex Grinch's defense will be dramatically improved.

OUTLOOK

The Trojans will be 6-0 going into their October 14 date at Notre Dame, which is followed by a home game against Utah. USC went 11-3 last season with a one-point loss at Utah, a 47-24 loss to the Utes in the conference title game, and a one-point loss to Tulane in the Cotton Bowl. The toughest spot on the Trojans' schedule figures to come November 11 at Oregon. USC topped its win total of 9.5 last year, and DraftKings wisely bumped this total to 10, but look Over. It's always risky to bet Over a high win total because an injury to the quarterback could wreck the season. Still, assuming Williams stays healthy, all of the pieces are in place for at least a 10-win regular season and a spot in the four-team playoff. Williams gives the Trojans a significant advantage over other elite teams such as Alabama, Georgia and Ohio State.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 10

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **62**

NATIONAL RANK: #7 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	SAN JOSE ST	-29.5	34.5
9/2	NEVADA	-37.5	26.5
9/9	STANFORD	-30.5	34
9/23	at Arizona St	-17.5	42.5
9/30	at Colorado	-25	34.5
10/7	ARIZONA	-21.5	43
10/14	at Notre Dame	-1	58.5
10/21	UTAH	-5	59
10/28	at California	-14.5	45.5
11/4	WASHINGTON	-6.5	58
11/11	at Oregon	0.5	59.5
11/18	UCLA	-12.5	51.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **45.31**
#38 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.3**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+190 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

16-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS **17**
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	41.4	5	29.2	81
Yards Per Point	12.3	8	14.5	58
Plays Per Game	72.5	43		
Time of Possession	31:56	21		
3rd Down Conv. %	53.6%	2	42.9%	103
Total Yards Per Game	506.7	3	423.9	101
Yards Per Play	7	3	6.3	119
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.7	93		
Rush Yards Per Game	171.3	51	159.8	72
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	24	5	112
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.7	25		
Completion %	67.1%	9	63.7%	103
Passing Yards Per Game	335.4	3	264.1	104
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.1	5	8	108
Turnovers	0.5	1	2	8

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-3, ATS: 8-6, O/U: 11-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	RICE (-32.5)	66-14	W	W
9/10	at Stanford (-9.5)	41-28	W	W
9/17	FRESNO ST (-11.5)	45-17	W	W
9/24	at Oregon St (-6)	17-14	W	L
10/1	ARIZONA ST (-24.5)	42-25	W	L
10/8	WASHINGTON ST (-12.5)	30-14	W	W
10/15	at Utah (3.5)	42-43	L	W
10/29	at Arizona (-14)	45-37	W	L
11/5	CALIFORNIA (-21)	41-35	W	L
11/11	COLORADO (-34.5)	55-17	W	W
11/19	at UCLA (-2.5)	48-45	W	W
11/26	NOTRE DAME (-4.5)	38-27	W	W
12/2	vs. Utah (-2.5)	24-47	L	L
1/2	vs. Tulane (-2)	45-46	L	L

BY MATT YOUMANS

Kyle Whittingham is a bet-on coach — until his quarterback goes down to injury in the Rose Bowl. Utah finished 10-4 in the past two seasons and won the Pac-12 Championship Game in a blowout each year. Unfortunately for Whittingham, he had bad injury luck with his QB in Pasadena and lost to a Big Ten opponent on both trips. With the Utes facing road games against USC and Washington this season, a Pac-12 three-peat is unlikely.

OFFENSE

Senior quarterback Cameron Rising suffered a torn ACL in the Rose Bowl loss to Penn State — a year after he was knocked out of a Rose Bowl loss to Ohio State — and made the wise decision to return to school. Whittingham recently said he "absolutely" expects Rising to be ready for camp in early August and start the Aug. 31 opener against Florida. Rising is a true dual-threat QB, though the knee injury could limit his running game. Redshirt freshman Brandon Rose is the current No. 2 quarterback and is followed on the depth chart by Bryson Barnes and Nate Johnson.

The running back spot is in good hands with Ja'Quinden Jackson and Micah Bernard. Tight ends Brant Kuithe and Thomas Yassmin are part of a line that Whittingham said might be the best he has had in depth and talent in his 19 years. This has the potential to be a great offense with Rising and still a good one without him.

DEFENSE

Nine starters return from a unit that allowed 21.4 points per game. A line led by Junior Tafuna is arguably the toughest in the conference, and the same could be true about the defense as a whole because there are no weaknesses on any of the three levels. The Utes were too physical for USC and quarterback Caleb Williams in the league title game.

OUTLOOK

Rising is reportedly ahead of schedule in his knee rehab, and he needs to be ready with Florida and Baylor looming the first two weeks. Aside from road games against USC and Washington, the Utes play at Oregon State, so betting Over 8.5 is not an easy decision. Still, going Over is the lean due to faith in Whittingham and the culture of toughness in his program. Utah probably boasts the best offensive and defensive lines in the league. If Rising's health becomes an issue, the backups are capable of winning. The Utes are likely to lose at least two road games, but they will be solid favorites in all seven games in Salt Lake City.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 59

NATIONAL RANK: #12 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	FLORIDA	-10	52
9/9	at Baylor	-4	52
9/16	WEBER ST	-25.5	36.5
9/23	UCLA	-10.5	51.5
9/29	at Oregon St	-2.5	53.5
10/14	CALIFORNIA	-17	45.5
10/21	at USC	5	62
10/28	OREGON	-2.5	59.5
11/4	ARIZONA ST	-20	42.5
11/11	at Washington	1.5	58
11/18	at Arizona	-14.5	43
11/25	COLORADO	-28.5	34.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **48.27** #13 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.4 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+600 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

70-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	36	14	22.5	29
Yards Per Point	12.7	18	15.7	28
Plays Per Game	73	41		
Time of Possession	33:27	9		
3rd Down Conv. %	50.6%	7	33.3%	20
Total Yards Per Game	456.8	20	353.4	35
Yards Per Play	6.3	22	5.7	90
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.8	30		
Rush Yards Per Game	215.5	11	116.8	19
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.4	7	4.1	58
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.1	63		
Completion %	63.6%	35	62.1%	90
Passing Yards Per Game	241.3	51	236.5	81
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.5	54	7.9	102
Turnovers	1.3	45	1.7	30

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-4, ATS: 8-6, O/U: 8-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Florida (-2.5)	26-29	L	L
9/10	S UTAH (-45.5)	73-7	W	W
9/17	SAN DIEGO ST (-22.5)	35-7	W	W
9/24	at Arizona St (-16)	34-13	W	W
10/1	OREGON ST (-10.5)	42-16	W	W
10/8	at UCLA (-3.5)	32-42	L	L
10/15	USC (-3.5)	43-42	W	L
10/27	at Washington St (-7)	21-17	W	L
11/5	ARIZONA (-18)	45-20	W	W
11/12	STANFORD (-24)	42-7	W	W
11/19	at Oregon (1)	17-20	L	L
11/26	at Colorado (-30)	63-21	W	W
12/2	vs. USC (2.5)	47-24	W	W
1/2	vs. Penn St (1.5)	21-35	L	L

WASHINGTON
HUSKIES

HEAD COACH: KALEN DEBOER (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RYAN GRUBB / JAMARCUS SHEPHARD
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WILLIAM INGE / CHUCK MORRELL

BY MATT YOUMANS

In his first year in Seattle, coach Kalen DeBoer took over a four-win team and turned it around to 11-2, including an Alamo Bowl victory over Texas. DeBoer's success was not surprising to those who followed his teams at Fresno State. He has a creative offensive mind, and he's got the quarterback to take it to the next level. The Huskies are a legit threat to win the conference, so circle their November 4 game at USC as the Pac-12 season's biggest game.

OFFENSE

Michael Penix ranked second in the nation with 4,641 passing yards last season, when he raised his NFL stock and still opted to return to school as a Heisman Trophy contender. Penix again will be targeting Jalen McMillan and Rome Odunze, who combined for 154 receptions, 2,243 yards and 16 of the star quarterback's 31 touchdowns. While the offensive line is mammoth in size, it is lacking some experience, with only two starters returning. But DeBoer took an offense that averaged 21.5 points the previous year and ramped it up to 39.7 points per game. In late-season road wins at Oregon and Washington State, Penix put up 37 and 51 points, respectively. Respect this offense as one of the nation's best.

DEFENSE

DeBoer is focused on the other side of the ball yet obviously knows the defense must improve a lot, and it helps to have eight starters back. The Huskies allowed 40 points in a loss at UCLA, 45 in a loss at Arizona State and 39 in a win at Arizona. There is plenty of talent on a unit led by edge rusher Bralen Trice, linebacker Alphonzo Tuputala and cornerback Jabbar Muhammad, a transfer from Oklahoma State.

OUTLOOK

The schedule is much tougher than last year, when Washington avoided USC and Utah. The Huskies will play the Trojans and Utes on back-to-back Saturdays in early November prior to a trip to Oregon State. However, the Huskies will be favored in their first eight games, including Boise State and Oregon at home, and Michigan State and Arizona on the road. This team should win nine to at least push the win total. An injury to Penix would be a major problem, and that's always a risk when playing an offensive-oriented team to top a high win total. It's a square bet, but Washington has the coach, quarterback and improved defense to get to 10-2, so lean Over.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 9

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 58

NATIONAL RANK: #14 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BOISE ST	-14	46
9/9	TULSA	-29	31.5
9/16	at Michigan St	-9.5	46
9/23	CALIFORNIA	-15.5	45.5
9/30	at Arizona	-13	43
10/14	OREGON	-0.5	59.5
10/21	ARIZONA ST	-18	42.5
10/28	at Stanford	-22.5	34
11/4	at USC	6.5	62
11/11	UTAH	-1.5	59
11/18	at Oregon St	-1	53.5
11/25	WASHINGTON ST	-14.5	46

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 46.92
#23 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.6 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+320 — ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

40-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	38.7	8	27.5	65
Yards Per Point	13.1	26	14.3	66
Plays Per Game	75.7	20		
Time of Possession	31:14	35		
3rd Down Conv. %	56.1%	1	46.8%	121
Total Yards Per Game	507.3	2	392.8	74
Yards Per Play	6.7	9	5.6	73
Rush Attempts Per Game	30	118		
Rush Yards Per Game	138.1	81	124.5	28
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	46	3.6	25
Pass Attempts Per Game	45.2	4		
Completion %	64.6%	27	64.3%	110
Passing Yards Per Game	369.3	1	268.3	108
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	22	8.1	110
Turnovers	0.8	10	1	113

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-2, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	KENT ST (-23.5)	45-20	W	W
9/10	PORTLAND ST (-30)	52-6	W	W
9/17	MICHIGAN ST (-3.5)	39-28	W	W
9/24	STANFORD (-14)	40-22	W	W
9/30	at UCLA (-2.5)	32-40	L	L
10/8	at Arizona St (-13.5)	38-45	L	L
10/15	ARIZONA (-14.5)	49-39	W	L
10/22	at California (-7.5)	28-21	W	L
11/4	OREGON ST (-4.5)	24-21	W	L
11/12	at Oregon (12)	37-34	W	W
11/19	COLORADO (-30.5)	54-7	W	W
11/26	at Washington St (-2.5)	51-33	W	W
12/29	vs. Texas (3)	27-20	W	W

WASHINGTON STATE
COUGARS

HEAD COACH: JAKE DICKERT (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BEN ARBUCKLE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF SCHMEDDING

BY MATT YOUMANS

Washington State was the definition of a middle-of-the-pack team in the Pac-12 last year. The Cougars went 4-0 against their weakest league opponents and 0-5 against the top half of the league (Utah, USC, Washington, Oregon and Oregon State). The end result was a 7-5 record in the regular season and second bowl appearance in coach Jake Dickert's second season. Expect more of the same and maybe a little less.

OFFENSE

In a conference stacked with star quarterbacks, Cameron Ward ranks on the fringe of the top five. Ward proved he belongs. He was a transfer from Incarnate Word in San Antonio, where he totaled 77 touchdown passes in two seasons in the Southland Conference. In his first year at Washington State, Ward completed 64.4% of his passes for 3,231 yards and 23 touchdowns with nine interceptions. He also ran for five touchdowns. Behind an improved line, Ward's numbers should improve.

Nakia Watson, a former Wisconsin transfer, returns as the top running back, and junior wide receiver Kyle Williams will be a go-to target after transferring from UNLV. Offensive coordinator Eric Morris left for the head-coaching position at North Texas, and new coordinator Ben Arbuckle from Western Kentucky is another pass-happy play caller.

DEFENSE

If the Cougars crumble, the defense will probably be the reason. A unit that allowed 23.0 points per game returns only five starters. Senior Brennan Jackson does return as one of the elite defensive ends in the league. One positive is USC quarterback Caleb Williams is not on the schedule.

OUTLOOK

Washington State went 3-0 in nonconference play last year and upended Wisconsin 17-14 as a 17-point road underdog. The Cougars open at Colorado State, an improved Mountain West team, before hosting the revenge-minded Badgers. USC and Utah are not on the conference schedule, so that's a big break, but the Cougars play five league road games and will likely be a 'dog in four. Ward and the offense might have to carry a heavy load for Washington State early before a rebuilt defense catches up. Dickert, the team's former defensive coordinator, has a lot of work to do on that side of the ball. Unless the Cougars upset Wisconsin again — and don't bet on that — they are unlikely to win seven games. The crystal ball shows 6-6, which could be optimistic.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 46

NATIONAL RANK: #49 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 12

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Colorado St	-14	30
9/9	WISCONSIN	5.5	54
9/16	N COLORADO	-45	4.5
9/23	OREGON ST	4.5	53.5
10/7	at UCLA	8	51.5
10/14	ARIZONA	-6.5	43
10/21	at Oregon	17	59.5
10/28	at Arizona St	-1	42.5
11/4	STANFORD	-15	34
11/11	at California	2	45.5
11/17	COLORADO	-15	34.5
11/25	at Washington	14.5	58

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 42.23
#66 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

40-1 ODDS TO WIN PAC 12

300-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.3	71	23.4	37
Yards Per Point	13.8	45	17.7	11
Plays Per Game	69.8	74		
Time of Possession	28:04	112		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.6%	93	39.5%	72
Total Yards Per Game	361.4	83	414.5	92
Yards Per Play	5.2	82	5.8	95
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.2	127		
Rush Yards Per Game	105.5	114	142.2	47
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	86	4.3	71
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.3	19		
Completion %	64.7%	24	61.9%	86
Passing Yards Per Game	255.9	43	272.3	115
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	92	7.6	91
Turnovers	1.2	36	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 3-10

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	IDAHO (-28)	24-17	W	L
9/10	at Wisconsin (17.5)	17-14	W	W
9/17	COLORADO ST (-17)	38-7	W	W
9/24	OREGON (6)	41-44	L	W
10/1	CALIFORNIA (-4)	28-9	W	W
10/8	at USC (12.5)	14-30	L	L
10/15	at Oregon St (3)	10-24	L	L
10/27	UTAH (7)	17-21	L	W
11/5	at Stanford (-3)	52-14	W	W
11/12	ARIZONA ST (-9.5)	28-18	W	W
11/19	at Arizona (-4)	31-20	W	W
11/26	WASHINGTON (2.5)	33-51	L	L
12/17	vs. Fresno St (5.5)	6-29	L	L

SEC BETTING PREVIEW

The Georgia Bulldogs won the SEC Championship Game on their way to winning the College Football Playoff last year. Kirby Smart's team has won the conference in two of the last six years. The Bulldogs are also favored to win it for a second year in a row, as they're listed at -115 to take the conference. The Alabama Crimson Tide have the second-best odds of winning the SEC, but they're way back at +300. Nick Saban's program has won the conference in eight of the last 15 years. People are somewhat down on the Tide after they missed the College Football Playoff last year, but you can bet against Saban at your own risk.

The LSU Tigers are yet another team that looks to have what it takes to compete on paper. Brian Kelly led LSU to a 10-4 record in his first year with the program, and the Tigers now have +450 odds to win the SEC. Outside of that, it's hard to count out teams like the Texas A&M Aggies and Tennessee Volunteers.

The rest of the programs in this conference are likely a few years away from actually competing to win the SEC, but it will be interesting to see what the Ole Miss Rebels, Auburn Tigers and Arkansas Razorbacks do this season. Lane Kiffin has led Ole Miss to winning records in back-to-back years, so this program can make a little noise. As for Auburn, the Tigers hired Hugh Freeze in the offseason. He probably needs a little time to build this program up, but he'll have the resources and knows what it takes to win in the SEC. Meanwhile, Arkansas is 16-10 over the last two seasons and brings back star quarterback K.J. Jefferson. That comes with some expectations, but does the team have enough around Jefferson to turn in another winning season?

Another team to keep an eye on is the Florida Gators. It'll be interesting to see how they do in Year 2 of Billy Napier. Florida was just 6-7 in 2022 and lost by 27 against the Oregon State Beavers in the SRS Distribution Las Vegas Bowl. If the Gators don't improve in a hurry, Napier's seat could get hot rather quickly. Florida is a program that expects to compete with the big boys in the SEC, so patience won't be there in evaluating the state of this team.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
EAST DIVISION							
GEORGIA	70.5	43.68 (60)	11.3	0.7	7.3	0.7	11.5
TENNESSEE	56.5	47.5 (19)	8.1	3.9	4.3	3.7	9.5
KENTUCKY	52.5	46.14 (29)	7.2	4.8	3.8	4.2	6.5
FLORIDA	52	48.6 (10)	6.1	5.9	3.5	4.5	5.5
SOUTH CAROLINA	50.5	50.34 (1)	6.0	6.0	3.5	4.5	6.5
MISSOURI	49.5	48.2 (14)	6.1	5.9	3.1	4.9	6.5
VANDERBILT	39.5	46.33 (27)	3.9	8.1	1.1	6.9	3.5
WEST DIVISION							
ALABAMA	67.5	48.71 (9)	10.3	1.7	6.6	1.4	10.5
LSU	62.5	46.18 (28)	9.3	2.7	5.8	2.2	9.5
TEXAS A&M	56	45.88 (33)	7.7	4.3	4.1	3.9	7.5
OLE MISS	56	49.28 (3)	7.5	4.5	4.0	4.0	7.5
ARKANSAS	52	46.13 (30)	6.8	5.2	3.1	4.9	7
AUBURN	52	47.3 (22)	6.6	5.4	3.1	4.9	6.5
MISSISSIPPI ST	50.5	47.83 (16)	6.4	5.6	2.7	5.3	6.5

ALABAMA
CRIMSON TIDE

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Alabama Crimson Tide have seemingly fallen behind Georgia as the class of the SEC, but there's no way Nick Saban will sit back and accept that. The legendary head coach is going to do everything in his power to get this team back in the College Football Playoff hunt, but will the quarterback play allow that to happen this season? That is seemingly the biggest question mark heading into the year, as Bryce Young is now spending his Sundays playing for the Carolina Panthers.

Alabama's offensive line wasn't very good last season, but Young was so good that he could mask that, along with some of the program's other deficiencies — at least when playing at home. Without a legitimate superstar at quarterback, will things look a lot worse? The defense likely won't be what it was last year, which isn't great, considering last season was a bit of a drop from the year before.

OFFENSE

If Jalen Milroe wins this job, the passing game could take a small hit. That'd be a slight shame considering the efficiency this unit has had through the air over the years, but it might be a necessary evil when you factor in that Alabama returns only two starters from last year's offensive line. Milroe's ability to take off and extend plays would help a unit that might lack connectivity early in the season. But Ty Simpson is a bit better as a decision-maker, and his accuracy as a passer is better than Milroe's. Simpson would likely be a bit better of a fit for new offensive coordinator Tommy Rees' system, and he also has the ability to tuck it and run. It's just not something he looks to do quite as early.

Regardless of who wins this job, the wide receiver group should be a lot better than last year, and most of that will come from the internal development of some highly talented athletes. The Crimson Tide also have a stable of gifted running backs, so the ground game should be fine as long as the offensive line doesn't implode.

DEFENSE

Even though Will Anderson Jr.. struggled to live up to the hype last year, the team will miss his presence. But talent is never an issue on the defensive side of the ball for Alabama. Sure, the linebacking corps won't be quite as good as it was with Anderson in the mix, but the defensive line should be better in 2023.

The Crimson Tide also have a very good group of defensive backs, which should be a big asset against some of the SEC's better passing teams. Overall, Alabama might struggle to replicate last year's 18.0 points per game allowed (tied for 9th in CFB). But it's hard to see the Tide completely falling apart on this side of the ball, and they should ultimately be a top-20 unit once again.

OUTLOOK

There's just no value in betting the Under at -175 odds. This is a very talented football team, and the schedule isn't as awful as you might think for a top-tier SEC program. Alabama's toughest road game will come against Texas A&M, but that's one the Tide could easily find a way to win. If they steal that one on the road, it's hard to find two other losses on the schedule. And there's national title potential if the quarterback play is better than people think.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 10.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **67.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #3 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	MIDDLE TENN ST	-38	32.5
9/9	TEXAS	-8	62.5
9/16	at South Florida	-34.5	31.5
9/23	OLE MISS	-14.5	56
9/30	at Mississippi St	-15	50.5
10/7	at Texas A&M	-9	56
10/14	ARKANSAS	-19	52
10/21	TENNESSEE	-14	56.5
11/4	LSU	-7.5	62.5
11/11	at Kentucky	-12	52.5
11/18	CHATTANOOGA	-41	29.5
11/25	at Auburn	-13	52

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **48.71** #9 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.1 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+300 ODDS TO WIN SEC

+600 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **10**
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	41.7	3	19.7	12
Yards Per Point	11.4	3	16.7	20
Plays Per Game	70	67		
Time of Possession	29:28	76		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.0%	17	30.8%	10
Total Yards Per Game	473.1	12	327.7	17
Yards Per Play	6.8	7	4.5	5
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.4	84		
Rush Yards Per Game	190.1	30	136.4	40
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.5	6	3.7	33
Pass Attempts Per Game	34	46		
Completion %	63.2%	37	54.4%	6
Passing Yards Per Game	283	17	191.3	16
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	16	5.7	3
Turnovers	1.1	26	0.9	120

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-2, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	UTAH ST (-42)	55-0	W	W
9/10	at Texas (-21)	20-19	W	L
9/17	LA MONROE (-49.5)	63-7	W	W
9/24	VANDERBILT (-40.5)	55-3	W	W
10/1	at Arkansas (-17)	49-26	W	W
10/8	TEXAS A&M (-24.5)	24-20	W	L
10/15	at Tennessee (-9.5)	49-52	L	L
10/22	MISSISSIPPI ST (-21.5)	30-6	W	W
11/5	at LSU (-13)	31-32	L	L
11/12	at Ole Miss (-11)	30-24	W	L
11/19	AUSTIN PEAY (-44.5)	34-0	W	L
11/26	AUBURN (-21.5)	49-27	W	W
12/31	vs. Kansas St (-7.5)	45-20	W	W

ARKANSAS
RAZORBACKS

HEAD COACH: SAM PITTMAN (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAN ENOS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TRAVIS WILLIAMS / MARCUS WOODSON

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Head coach Sam Pittman has worked wonders since arriving in Fayetteville. The Arkansas Razorbacks weren't in good shape when he took over the program, and the team went just 3-7 in 2020. But Arkansas is 16-10 since the start of the 2021 season, and the team has won each of its past two bowl games.

However, this does figure to be something of a challenging year for this team. Star quarterback K.J. Jefferson is back under center for the Hogs, but only 10 starters return from last year's group. The Razorbacks also lost offensive coordinator Kendal Briles to TCU in the offseason. Briles did a great job of taking Arkansas' offense to another level, and Dan Enos will have his work cut out for him in filling his shoes.

OFFENSE

It'll be intriguing to see what this offense looks like with Briles no longer calling the shots. Enos, who spent last season as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for Maryland, probably won't be asked to change things too much. He'll definitely do what he can to use Jefferson as a runner, as the quarterback rushed for 640 yards and nine touchdowns last year.

With a great group of running backs, Arkansas will have plenty of options when it comes to the ground game. But Jefferson also posted a career-high completion percentage in 2022, while also throwing for 2,648 yards with 24 touchdowns and only five picks. The Razorbacks will be hoping that the senior can turn in an even better year as a thrower in 2023. The issue is that Arkansas' offensive line is a bit of a question mark, with three of last year's starters having departed. The Razorbacks are also lacking in proven talent at the wide receiver position.

DEFENSE

Arkansas had one of the worst defenses in the SEC last year, giving up 28.8 points per game. Only two teams gave up more rushing yards per game than the Razorbacks did, but that actually could improve in 2023. Arkansas' defensive line should be quite a bit better than it was last season. The team will just need an inexperienced group of linebackers to find a way to support the defensive front when defending the run. Another issue is that the Razorbacks were lousy in the secondary last year, and there isn't much to be optimistic about when it comes to the defensive backs group. With that in mind, Arkansas should be one of the worst defenses in the conference again in 2023.

OUTLOOK

With this total sitting at 7, you have to ask yourself whether it's more likely the Razorbacks win six or eight games. And I just don't see how eight would be the answer there. Jefferson is an electric player at the quarterback position, but Arkansas is going to miss Briles' mind offensively. And this team is very inexperienced on both sides of the ball, so it's hard to envision the Razorbacks exceeding expectations with their difficult schedule.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **52**

NATIONAL RANK: #28 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	vs. W Carolina	-32.5	21
9/9	KENT ST	-34	20.5
9/16	BYU	-8	46
9/23	at LSU	14	62.5
9/30	vs. Texas A&M	4.5	56
10/7	at Ole Miss	7	56
10/14	at Alabama	19	67.5
10/21	MISSISSIPPI ST	-3.5	50.5
11/4	at Florida	3	52
11/11	AUBURN	-2	52
11/18	FLA INTERNATIONAL	-33	21.5
11/24	MISSOURI	-5	49.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **46.13**
#30 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2 / 0.2**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

100-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **10**
OFFENSE: 4 QB
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	32.1	30	30.9	101
Yards Per Point	14.4	70	15.2	43
Plays Per Game	77.1	13		
Time of Possession	29:42	70		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.4%	15	45.7%	116
Total Yards Per Game	461.2	17	469.5	124
Yards Per Play	6	31	6.3	121
Rush Attempts Per Game	47.4	6		
Rush Yards Per Game	239.8	5	181	99
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	25	4.8	101
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.1	109		
Completion %	64.9%	22	61.7%	84
Passing Yards Per Game	221.3	75	288.5	129
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	23	8.5	123
Turnovers	1.3	42	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 6-7, O/U: 10-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	CINCINNATI (-6.5)	31-24	W	W
9/10	SOUTH CAROLINA (-9)	44-30	W	W
9/17	MISSOURI ST (-25.5)	38-27	W	L
9/24	vs. Texas A&M (1.5)	21-23	L	L
10/1	ALABAMA (17)	26-49	L	L
10/8	at Mississippi St (8.5)	17-40	L	L
10/15	at BYU (1)	52-35	W	W
10/29	at Auburn (-4)	41-27	W	W
11/5	LIBERTY (-14.5)	19-21	L	L
11/12	LSU (5)	10-13	L	W
11/19	OLE MISS (1)	42-27	W	W
11/25	at Missouri (-4)	27-29	L	L
12/28	vs. Kansas (-2.5)	55-53	W	L

AUBURN
TIGERS

HEAD COACH: HUGH FREEZE (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHILIP MONTGOMERY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RON ROBERTS

BY ZACHARY COHEN

After going 39-25 in five seasons with Ole Miss, some off-field shenanigans forced Hugh Freeze to take a few years off as a head coach. But Freeze returned with Liberty in 2019, and he went 34-15 in four seasons with the program. Freeze's work with the Flames ended up getting him this big opportunity with the Auburn Tigers, and the expectation is that this will ultimately end up working out very well for both parties. But how quickly will the hiring yield results? It isn't hard to envision it happening immediately. Auburn returns 17 starters, and Freeze did well on the transfer market. And Freeze's schematic changes should bring the best out of most of these players. Another big change for the Tigers is that Michigan State transfer Payton Thorne decided to end his career with Auburn. He should stabilize the quarterback position in a big way.

OFFENSE

Robby Ashford is a dual-threat quarterback with a lot of potential, so he'd theoretically make for a good fit in the same offense that turned Malik Willis into a superstar. But it seems like this is Thorne's job to lose, and it's hard to argue with the logic behind that. Two seasons ago, Thorne threw for 3,240 yards with 27 touchdowns and only 10 picks for Michigan State. He struggled to replicate that in a down year for the Spartans last year, but Thorne is the son of a coach and can be trusted to run Freeze's offense. He's the safe play for a team with very inconsistent production from the quarterback position last year. With a solid offensive line and a running game that projects to be very strong, decent play is all Auburn needs out of Thorne.

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Ron Roberts should be huge for this program. Roberts oversaw a very good Baylor defense in each of the last three years, and that also means that he got to consistently pick the brain of Dave Aranda. Don't be surprised if this is one of the best units in the SEC after giving up a miserable 29.5 points per game a year ago. The right system should do wonders for a team that has legitimate talent in place. Freeze brought in a ton of transfers that are ready to contribute immediately. And the Tigers should have one of the SEC's best secondaries, with corners DJ James and Nehemiah Pritchett being two guys that should be in for big years.

OUTLOOK

This is one of the better bets you can make in this conference. Auburn completely overhauled its coaching staff, going from one of the worst ones in the SEC to one of the best groups in the entire country. When you combine that with the fact that the new staff will get to work with some experienced players, you're looking at a team that could take a massive leap in 2023. Five games on Auburn's schedule should result in easy wins, and the team should be able to find two or three more.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **52**

NATIONAL RANK: #29 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	MASSACHUSETTS	-37.5	17.5
9/9	at California	-4	45.5
9/16	SAMFORD	-24	30.5
9/23	at Texas A&M	7	56
9/30	GEORGIA	16.5	70.5
10/14	at LSU	14	62.5
10/21	OLE MISS	1.5	56
10/28	MISSISSIPPI ST	-4.5	50.5
11/4	at Vanderbilt	-11	39.5
11/11	at Arkansas	2	52
11/18	NEW MEXICO ST	-29	26
11/25	ALABAMA	13	67.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.30 #22 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.7 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

150-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS **17**

OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	23.2	90	30.7	94
Yards Per Point	15.9	106	13.2	98
Plays Per Game	69.5	77		
Time of Possession	30:02	62		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.5%	94	42.2%	97
Total Yards Per Game	367.7	78	406.5	85
Yards Per Play	5.3	75	5.5	65
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.6	23		
Rush Yards Per Game	198.6	21	182.5	101
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	33	4.8	104
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.1	116		
Completion %	50.9%	122	57.6%	28
Passing Yards Per Game	169.1	118	224	53
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.5	101	6.6	24
Turnovers	1.8	106	1.2	94

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MERCER (-30)	42-16	W	L
9/10	SAN JOSE ST (-24)	24-16	W	L
9/17	PENN ST (2.5)	12-41	L	L
9/24	MISSOURI (-7.5)	17-14	W	L
10/1	LSU (8)	17-21	L	W
10/8	at Georgia (27.5)	10-42	L	L
10/15	at Ole Miss (15)	34-48	L	W
10/29	ARKANSAS (4)	27-41	L	L
11/5	at Mississippi St (12.5)	33-39	L	W
11/12	TEXAS A&M (-2)	13-10	W	W
11/19	W KENTUCKY (-4.5)	41-17	W	W
11/26	at Alabama (21.5)	27-49	L	L

FLORIDA
GATORS

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Florida Gators went 6-7 in Billy Napier's first year at the helm, but people are still somewhat excited about the future of this program. Napier spent a lot of time working under Nick Saban at Alabama, so he's viewed as a future star in his profession. But Napier isn't going to have a lot of time to prove to Florida's higher-ups that he is the right guy for this job. He needs to turn things around quickly, and it doesn't seem like his second year with the Gators will be any better than the first. This is still a team that's in dire need of an improvement at the quarterback position, and Napier needs to find a way to beef up his offensive line. Until that happens, Florida will struggle to turn in winning seasons in this loaded conference. If we're right about the Gators in 2023, Napier could enter 2024 on the hot seat.

OFFENSE

The Gators have some studs at wide receiver. Ricky Pearsall and Caleb Douglas are two guys that can really do damage on the outside. Florida also has a nice group of running backs, with Trevor Etienne and Montrell Johnson making up a nice duo that brings different skill sets out of the backfield. The problem for the Gators is that the offensive line will likely be a weakness this year. That could cause everything to come crashing down on the offense, especially with quarterback play not being much of a strength. Whether it's Wisconsin transfer Graham Mertz or Jack Miller III under center, it'll be hard to believe in this passing game. With that being the case, the Gators will likely have one of the worst offenses in the conference.

DEFENSE

While the offense likely won't be much better in 2023, the defense should be tougher to score on this season. This program was once known for being impenetrable, and Napier clearly wants to get back to that. That's why he brought in Southern Miss defensive coordinator Austin Armstrong to work with Sean Spencer in the offseason. Florida wasn't very tough against the run last year, and the team couldn't get timely stops either. That should change this year, as the defensive line is set to flip and become a legitimate strength for this group. The Gators also have a nice group of linebackers, so they should be able to hit opponents in the backfield and fly to the ball in a hurry. The only real question mark with this group is in the secondary, with the safeties being something of a concern. Regardless, Florida should improve drastically upon the 28.8 points per game it gave up in 2022.

OUTLOOK

Maybe Napier is the right guy to turn this program around, but it's hard to see it happening this year. The defense will have a difficult time keeping this team in games, and the schedule isn't all that easy. Outside of potential victories over McNeese, Charlotte and Vanderbilt, nothing is guaranteed for the Gators.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 52

NATIONAL RANK: #27 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	at Utah	10	59
9/9	MCNEESE ST	-44.5	10.5
9/16	TENNESSEE	1.5	56.5
9/23	CHARLOTTE	-30	25
9/30	at Kentucky	3.5	52.5
10/7	VANDERBILT	-16	39.5
10/14	at South Carolina	0.5	50.5
10/28	vs. Georgia	19	70.5
11/4	ARKANSAS	-3	52
11/11	at LSU	13.5	62.5
11/18	at Missouri	0	49.5
11/25	FLORIDA ST	4.5	59.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **48.60** #10 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

100-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 11

OFFENSE: 6
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	27.7	61	29.8	87
Yards Per Point	14.6	77	13.8	78
Plays Per Game	67	100		
Time of Possession	29:30	75		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.1%	47	50.3%	129
Total Yards Per Game	403.3	46	412.3	91
Yards Per Play	6	29	5.9	105
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.8	62		
Rush Yards Per Game	193.4	26	178.4	95
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	14	4.7	98
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.7	96		
Completion %	53.2%	117	60.4%	63
Passing Yards Per Game	209.8	90	233.9	74
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	63	7.9	103
Turnovers	1.2	36	1.8	20

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	UTAH (2.5)	29-26	W	W
9/10	KENTUCKY (-6)	16-26	L	L
9/17	SOUTH FLORIDA (-23)	31-28	W	L
9/24	at Tennessee (10.5)	33-38	L	W
10/2	E WASHINGTON (-32)	52-17	W	W
10/8	MISSOURI (-11)	24-17	W	L
10/15	LSU (-1.5)	35-45	L	L
10/29	vs. Georgia (23)	20-42	L	W
11/5	at Texas A&M (1.5)	41-24	W	W
11/12	SOUTH CAROLINA (-8)	38-6	W	W
11/19	at Vanderbilt (-14)	24-31	L	L
11/25	at Florida St (9.5)	38-45	L	W
12/17	vs. Oregon St (7.5)	3-30	L	L

GEORGIA
BULLDOGS

HEAD COACH: KIRBY SMART (8TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE BOBO
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WILL MUSCHAMP / GLENN SCHUMANN

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Georgia Bulldogs have won back-to-back national championships, and Kirby Smart's team is favored to win it all again this year. Georgia will, however, need to do it without Stetson Bennett, the team's starting quarterback for the past two seasons, as well as several elite players that went on to be selected in the 2023 NFL Draft. But programs like this one never really struggle to retool on a year-to-year basis.

Georgia has five-star talent to plug into open positions on the depth chart, and the team also has 13 starters returning from last year's championship team. If quarterback Carson Beck can get himself comfortable and start playing some good football after an easy early-season schedule, the Bulldogs should once again be in the College Football Playoff. There isn't a team in the country that is as talented as this one from top to bottom.

OFFENSE
It seems like Beck is going to get the starting quarterback job, but it isn't out of the question that Brock Vandagriff will steal it from him. Either way, this passing game should be just fine with Bennett gone. Of course, Georgia will miss Bennett's poise in big games, but the Bulldogs have one of the best offensive lines in college football.

Georgia also brought back pass-catching stars in tight end Brock Bowers and wide receiver Ladd McConkey, who leads a group of gifted wideouts. The Bulldogs should also have a great running game in 2023, with Kendall Milton leading a solid stable of running backs that should mostly be running through big holes. Overall, it shouldn't surprise anybody if Georgia comes close to matching last year's 41.1 points per game, which was tied for the fourth-highest mark in college football in 2022.

DEFENSE
Georgia had the second-best scoring defense in college football last year, allowing only 12.8 points per game on the season. The team did lose some elite talent to the NFL Draft, but the Bulldogs have plenty of studs remaining — and new players ready to have their coming out parties. Georgia is especially strong in the secondary, where Javon Bullard should be one of the best players in all of college football next season. The Dawgs also have a ton of talent along the defensive line, which is always helpful in a conference that is won in the trenches. If somebody can emerge from Georgia's young group of linebackers, this should be one of the best defenses in the nation again.

OUTLOOK
Georgia obviously has a great chance of winning the College Football Playoff this year, but it's still hard to back the Dawgs to go undefeated in the regular season. Road games against Auburn and Tennessee will really test this Bulldogs team, and I just find it hard to believe they won't get tripped up somewhere along the way. With that in mind, the best way to back Georgia is probably by taking them to win the SEC at -115. That gives you some wiggle room throughout the regular season, but you'll still have a good price on them in the SEC Championship Game. They'd surely be a moneyline favorite of -115 or greater against anybody they face there.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 11.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 70.5

NATIONAL RANK: #1 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	TENN-MARTIN	-50.5	22.5
9/9	BALL ST	-42.5	30.5
9/16	SOUTH CAROLINA	-22.5	50.5
9/23	UAB	-38	35
9/30	at Auburn	-16.5	52
10/7	KENTUCKY	-20.5	52.5
10/14	at Vanderbilt	-30	39.5
10/28	vs. Florida	-19	52
11/4	MISSOURI	-24	49.5
11/11	OLE MISS	-17	56
11/18	at Tennessee	-11.5	56.5
11/25	at Georgia Tech	-30.5	39

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 43.68
#60 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.5 / 0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

-115 ODDS TO WIN SEC

+215 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 6
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	41.6	4	15.3	5
Yards Per Point	12.1	6	20.2	3
Plays Per Game	70.1	65		
Time of Possession	33:09	10		
3rd Down Conv. %	52.1%	3	28.0%	3
Total Yards Per Game	502.9	6	308.9	10
Yards Per Play	7.2	2	4.8	16
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.5	55		
Rush Yards Per Game	211.4	14	81.2	1
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.6	3	3	4
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.1	64		
Completion %	68.4%	6	57.3%	25
Passing Yards Per Game	291.4	13	227.6	61
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.1	6	6.6	25
Turnovers	1.2	40	1.3	81

2022 RESULTS
SU: 15-0, ATS: 8-7, O/U: 7-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	vs. Oregon (-16)	49-3	W	W
9/10	SAMFORD (-53.5)	33-0	W	L
9/17	at South Carolina (-25.5)	48-7	W	W
9/24	KENT ST (-45)	39-22	W	L
10/1	at Missouri (-31)	26-22	W	L
10/8	AUBURN (-27.5)	42-10	W	W
10/15	VANDERBILT (-37)	55-0	W	W
10/29	vs. Florida (-23)	42-20	W	L
11/5	TENNESSEE (-9.5)	27-13	W	W
11/12	at Mississippi St (-16)	45-19	W	W
11/19	at Kentucky (-21.5)	16-6	W	L
11/26	GEORGIA TECH (-36.5)	37-14	W	L
12/3	vs. LSU (-17)	50-30	W	W
12/31	vs. Ohio St (-5)	42-41	W	L
1/9	vs. TCU (-13.5)	65-7	W	W

KENTUCKY
WILDCATS

BY ZACHARY COHEN

After going 12-24 in his first three years as the head coach of the Kentucky Wildcats, Mark Stoops has had his team post a winning record in six of the past seven seasons. He has really done some impressive work in a situation that not many people thought could be successful. This year, Stoops is expected to flirt again with a winning record, and bringing in quarterback Devin Leary from NC State should help. Leary has big shoes to fill in replacing Will Levis, who was the 33rd pick in the 2023 NFL Draft. But the former ACC standout should be able to do it adequately, as long as he is given some time to throw. The big question for Kentucky is how the defense will perform with only five returning starters from last year's superb unit.

OFFENSE

Levis was a very good starting quarterback for the Wildcats, but the team might have upgraded in bringing in Leary after last season. Two seasons ago, Leary threw for 3,433 yards with 35 touchdowns and only five picks for NC State. He has a big arm and can throw it deep with accuracy, so he might be able to take this passing game to another level. Leary is also a better decision-maker than Levis, so this offense likely won't be gift-wrapping many turnovers to the opponent. The success of this unit will just come down to the offensive line. Stoops hit the transfer portal hard to try and patch things up along the line, but there's no guarantee that'll work. Kentucky will also miss having Chris Rodriguez in the backfield, as he's one of the best running backs in school history.

DEFENSE

Kentucky had the 12th-best scoring defense in the nation last year, as the Wildcats gave up only 19.1 points per game. It's highly unlikely they'll be able to replicate that success with only five starters back, but this should be an above-average unit in 2023. Kentucky's defensive line can probably be counted on to be productive in 2023, and the linebackers are another group that Stoops won't have to worry about. The Wildcats just need to hold up in the secondary, as they're pretty inexperienced at corner. The good news is that Kentucky has size and athleticism at the position.

OUTLOOK

With a rather favorable schedule in place in 2023, it's hard to see this team not winning seven games. All it will take is a win or two in a 50-50 game on the road. This isn't exactly a team that's impressive in any way, shape or form, but Stoops has consistently won since taking over in Lexington. I expect him to put together another year that ends with a trip to a bowl game.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 52.5

NATIONAL RANK: #25 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BALL ST	-25	30.5
9/9	E KENTUCKY	-32	23.5
9/16	AKRON	-32.5	24
9/23	at Vanderbilt	-11.5	39.5
9/30	FLORIDA	-3.5	52
10/7	at Georgia	20.5	70.5
10/14	MISSOURI	-6.5	49.5
10/28	TENNESSEE	1	56.5
11/4	at Mississippi St	0.5	50.5
11/11	ALABAMA	12	67.5
11/18	at South Carolina	0.5	50.5
11/25	at Louisville	1	50

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 46.14
#29 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.3 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

100-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

150-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 14
OFFENSE: 9
DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.5	111	20.8	16
Yards Per Point	16	107	15.4	34
Plays Per Game	65.3	116		
Time of Possession	32:43	13		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.7%	110	35.4%	35
Total Yards Per Game	311.8	115	321.3	11
Yards Per Play	4.8	106	5.1	37
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.6	75		
Rush Yards Per Game	117.3	98	147.5	54
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	112	4.3	81
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.2	115		
Completion %	62.7%	44	61.0%	75
Passing Yards Per Game	194.4	105	173.8	7
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	57	6.5	21
Turnovers	1.3	48	1.3	86

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 8-5, O/U: 1-12

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MIAMI OHIO (-15)	37-13	W	W
9/10	at Florida (6)	26-16	W	W
9/17	YOUNGSTOWN ST (-30)	31-0	W	W
9/24	N ILLINOIS (-27)	31-23	W	L
10/1	at Ole Miss (6.5)	19-22	L	W
10/8	SOUTH CAROLINA (-4.5)	14-24	L	L
10/15	MISSISSIPPI ST (3.5)	27-17	W	W
10/29	at Tennessee (10.5)	6-44	L	L
11/5	at Missouri (1.5)	21-17	W	W
11/12	VANDERBILT (-17)	21-24	L	L
11/19	GEORGIA (21.5)	6-16	L	W
11/26	LOUISVILLE (-3.5)	26-13	W	W
12/31	vs. Iowa (3)	0-21	L	L

LSU
TIGERS

HEAD COACH: BRIAN KELLY (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE DENBROCK
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT HOUSE

BY ZACHARY COHEN

By the end of Brian Kelly's first year in Baton Rouge, the LSU Tigers looked like one of the best teams in the country. Now, the expectation is that the Tigers will build on last year's success and compete for a national title. But first, LSU needs to hold off Alabama in the SEC West and eventually Georgia after that. While this team looks great on paper, it does seem like something of a difficult task. But overall, Kelly has done a good job of quickly getting the Tigers back in the conversation. And this team should be electric on both sides of the ball, which is why we're here debating whether this will be another double-digit win season.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Jayden Daniels always flashed potential in his time with Arizona State, but he looked like a legitimate star in his first year with the Tigers. Last season, Daniels threw for 2,913 yards with 17 touchdowns and only three interceptions, while also rushing for 885 yards and 11 scores. He looked very comfortable facing elite SEC competition, and he should have an outside shot at winning the Heisman Trophy this year. Daniels is flanked by a talented group of wide receivers, but can the running game take some pressure off him? Daniels probably put himself in harm's way a little too often last year, so LSU needs a running back to step up and become the guy. The offensive line is definitely good enough this year, so there's no excuse for somebody not to seize the job.

DEFENSE

In defensive tackle Maason Smith and linebacker Harold Perkins, the Tigers probably have the best defensive duo in the nation. Smith tore his ACL early last season, but he's back to bolster the defensive line this year. Meanwhile, Perkins is a game wrecker in the middle of the field, and the two of them will be nightmares for opposing offenses this year. LSU should especially be better against the run this year, which will be huge after that was a weakness in 2022. If this group has one inexperienced unit, it's probably in the secondary. But you never really have to worry about LSU fielding productive defensive backs. Overall, this should be a very difficult defense to score on this season.

OUTLOOK

There aren't many holes on this LSU roster, but how can you be confident in 10 wins with this schedule? Meetings with Florida State, Ole Miss, Alabama and Texas A&M all look like tough ones for the Tigers. And Kelly's team can easily stumble somewhere else along the way. Kelly has clearly done a good job of building this program up, and he could have some championships in his future. But it'd be shocking if he gets it done with this gauntlet of a schedule.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 62.5

NATIONAL RANK: #6 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/3	vs. Florida St	-3	59.5
9/9	GRAMBLING	-63.5	2.5
9/16	at Mississippi St	-10	50.5
9/23	ARKANSAS	-14	52
9/30	at Ole Miss	-4	56
10/7	at Missouri	-10.5	49.5
10/14	AUBURN	-14	52
10/21	ARMY	-30	36
11/4	at Alabama	7.5	67.5
11/11	FLORIDA	-13.5	52
11/18	GEORGIA ST	-31.5	34
11/25	TEXAS A&M	-9.5	56

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 46.18
#28 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 3.2 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+450 ODDS TO WIN SEC

11-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	/RANK	DEFENSE STAT	/RANK
Points Per Game	32.2	28	22.9	31
Yards Per Point	13.9	50	15.7	27
Plays Per Game	74.7	28		
Time of Possession	30:58	39		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.3%	12	40.0%	76
Total Yards Per Game	445.7	27	360.9	40
Yards Per Play	6	32	5.2	43
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	61		
Rush Yards Per Game	180.3	43	143.8	49
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	34	4	52
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.4	40		
Completion %	67.1%	10	56.0%	17
Passing Yards Per Game	265.4	31	217.2	45
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.7	45	6.9	45
Turnovers	1.3	45	1.2	90

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-4, ATS: 8-6, O/U: 8-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/4	vs. Florida St (-4)	23-24	L	L
9/10	SOUTHERN (-44.5)	65-17	W	W
9/17	MISSISSIPPI ST (3)	31-16	W	W
9/24	NEW MEXICO (-31)	38-0	W	W
10/1	at Auburn (-8)	21-17	W	L
10/8	TENNESSEE (2.5)	13-40	L	L
10/15	at Florida (1.5)	45-35	W	W
10/22	OLE MISS (0)	45-20	W	W
11/5	ALABAMA (13)	32-31	W	W
11/12	at Arkansas (-5)	13-10	W	L
11/19	UAB (-15)	41-10	W	W
11/26	at Texas A&M (-10)	23-38	L	L
12/3	vs. Georgia (17)	30-50	L	L
1/2	vs. Purdue (-15)	63-7	W	W

HEAD COACH: ZACH ARNETT (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN BARBAY
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT BROCK

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The world lost an amazing coach and an even better person when Mike Leach passed away last year. Leach was one of the most unique personalities in college football, as there was never a dull moment when he was around. Leach will also be remembered as one of the brightest offensive minds in the history of the sport, so the vibe might not feel quite right with this Mississippi State Bulldogs team in 2023. But Zach Arnett was highly regarded as a defensive coordinator, and the 36-year-old should be able to find a way to win with this team. It just might not happen right away. The wounds are still extremely fresh for Mississippi State, and there's likely an adjustment period coming. Don't be surprised if the Bulldogs are ultra-competitive throughout the year, but they might fall short of expectations.

OFFENSE

Mississippi State brings back eight starters from last year's offense, but that was a team that was built to play in Leach's Air Raid. Things might not be as smooth with new offensive Kevin Barbay installing his system. Barbay is considered one of the most innovative young minds in football, so this offense should start humming eventually. But it might take a little time for these players to get comfortable, and time isn't really a luxury when you play a schedule like this one. Look for quarterback Will Rogers to continue to make some big plays in the passing game, but the running game will be more emphasized in 2023. Four starters are back along the offensive line, and Barbay's offense will be most effective when things are clicking on the ground. With that said, Jo'Quavious Marks could be in for a big year.

DEFENSE

The Bulldogs have a very good group of linebackers, so that's a nice foundation to build on for Arnett. The defensive line should also be a productive unit for Mississippi State. The question is how the Bulldogs will hold up in the secondary. They only brought back one starter from last year's group of corners, and the talent at the position doesn't appear to be there. This defense is ready to play pretty much everywhere else, but a leaky passing game would be tough to overcome in this conference.

OUTLOOK

It might take some time for everybody to get excited about this program after the tragedy that took place last year. But Arnett is viewed as one of the most promising up-and-coming coaches in college football. He's a brilliant defensive mind and was going to get an opportunity to lead a team eventually. This year might be a little rough in Starkville, as the team is likely looking at six or fewer wins. But the future is brighter than it might seem right now.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY

UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 50.5

NATIONAL RANK: #33 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	SE LOUISIANA	-24	28.5
9/9	ARIZONA	-10.5	43
9/16	LSU	10	62.5
9/23	at South Carolina	2.5	50.5
9/30	ALABAMA	15	67.5
10/7	W MICHIGAN	-27	26
10/21	at Arkansas	3.5	52
10/28	at Auburn	4.5	52
11/4	KENTUCKY	-0.5	52.5
11/11	at Texas A&M	8.5	56
11/18	SOUTHERN MISS	-17	36
11/23	OLE MISS	3	56

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.83
#16 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.4 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

120-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

200-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12

OFFENSE: 8 QB

DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	29.6	47	24.4	43
Yards Per Point	13.2	31	14.8	52
Plays Per Game	74	33		
Time of Possession	30:24	54		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.3%	69	34.9%	27
Total Yards Per Game	390.8	59	360.4	39
Yards Per Play	5.3	76	5.1	38
Rush Attempts Per Game	23.3	131		
Rush Yards Per Game	83.1	128	136.2	39
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.6	95	4	54
Pass Attempts Per Game	48.7	1		
Completion %	66.6%	12	61.0%	74
Passing Yards Per Game	307.8	11	224.3	55
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	108	6.6	30
Turnovers	1.5	72	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MEMPHIS (-17)	49-23	W	W
9/10	at Arizona (-12.5)	39-17	W	W
9/17	at LSU (-3)	16-31	L	L
9/24	BOWLING GREEN (-31)	45-14	W	T
10/1	TEXAS A&M (-4)	42-24	W	W
10/8	ARKANSAS (-8.5)	40-17	W	W
10/15	at Kentucky (-3.5)	17-27	L	L
10/22	at Alabama (21.5)	6-30	L	L
11/5	AUBURN (-12.5)	39-33	W	L
11/12	GEORGIA (16)	19-45	L	L
11/19	E TENN ST (-39)	56-7	W	W
11/24	at Ole Miss (2.5)	24-22	W	W
1/2	vs. Illinois (-3.5)	19-10	W	W

MISSOURI
TIGERS

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Eliah Drinkwitz hasn't yet turned in a winning season since becoming head coach of the Missouri Tigers, but the team returns 15 starters from last year's team. They also happen to be getting talent back at the right positions, with quarterback Brady Cook returning after a big year and most of his offensive line back to protect him. Of course, having experience doesn't guarantee success in the SEC, but this definitely does seem like Drinkwitz's chance to make some noise with this program. Missouri opens the season with four winnable games in its first five contests, but how will things go from there? Do the Tigers have a few big wins in them?

OFFENSE

This offense feels like it can really take off in 2023. Last year, Cook threw for 2,739 yards with 14 touchdowns and seven picks, and he also added 585 yards and six scores on the ground. He's a difficult player to try and stop, and he should be even better with a year of seasoning. Cook will also be working behind a very experienced offensive line, and his wide receiver group has potential. Luther Burden was a highly touted recruit that should be ready to step up and make plays in 2023. Missouri also has a nice group of running backs, so this team should get a little something out of the ground game. Overall, the Tigers should significantly improve upon last year's 24.8 points per game. And this should be an offense that finds a way to show up against above-average defenses.

DEFENSE

Missouri only allowed 25.0 points per game last season and now has eight starters back from last year's team. The strength of this Tigers team should be the defensive backs, as Kris Abrams-Draine and Ennis Rakestraw make up one heck of a duo at corner. But Missouri also has talent at linebacker, and there's some potential along the defensive line. The big question is how the defensive ends will play for the Tigers in 2023. That is the least proven group on this defense, and it's one that has been good for the program in recent years. If somebody can step up and make plays on the edge, Missouri might be a lot better than expected.

OUTLOOK

It'd be pretty surprising if Missouri doesn't open the year with at least a 4-1 record. From there, the Tigers will have opportunities to win some games. I like their chances at home against Florida, and I don't think it's outrageous to think they can beat either Kentucky or Arkansas on the road. That makes it hard not to like the Over for their regular season win total, especially at these odds. I also think there's a chance this team ends up winning eight games. There's real talent on both sides of the ball.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 49.5

NATIONAL RANK: #39 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #13 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	S DAKOTA	-30	22.5
9/9	MIDDLE TENN ST	-20	32.5
9/16	KANSAS ST	1	53
9/23	vs. Memphis	-6	44.5
9/30	at Vanderbilt	-8	39.5
10/7	LSU	10.5	62.5
10/14	at Kentucky	6.5	52.5
10/21	SOUTH CAROLINA	-2	50.5
11/4	at Georgia	24	70.5
11/11	TENNESSEE	4.5	56.5
11/18	FLORIDA	0	52
11/24	at Arkansas	5	52

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 48.20
#14 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.9 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.1	84	25.8	54
Yards Per Point	14.9	80	13.3	95
Plays Per Game	69.8	73		
Time of Possession	30:49	45		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.9%	50	35.5%	36
Total Yards Per Game	357.7	88	344.2	29
Yards Per Play	5.1	85	5.1	36
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.4	57		
Rush Yards Per Game	151.8	64	127.5	31
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.1	69	3.7	30
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.3	83		
Completion %	62.8%	42	59.8%	54
Passing Yards Per Game	205.9	93	216.7	43
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	85	7.2	64
Turnovers	1.6	88	1.3	74

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 4-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	LOUISIANA TECH (-20.5)	52-24	W	W
9/10	at Kansas St (7.5)	12-40	L	L
9/17	ABILENE CHRISTIAN (-31.5)	34-17	W	L
9/24	at Auburn (7.5)	14-17	L	W
10/1	GEORGIA (31)	22-26	L	W
10/8	at Florida (11)	17-24	L	W
10/22	VANDERBILT (-14)	17-14	W	L
10/29	at South Carolina (3.5)	23-10	W	W
11/5	KENTUCKY (-1.5)	17-21	L	L
11/12	at Tennessee (19)	24-66	L	L
11/19	NEW MEXICO ST (-29)	45-14	W	W
11/25	ARKANSAS (4)	29-27	W	W
12/23	vs. Wake Forest (2.5)	17-27	L	L

OLE MISS
REBELS

HEAD COACH: LANE KIFFIN (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOHN DAVID BAKER / CHARLIE WEIS JR.
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PETE GOLDING

BY ZACHARY COHEN

The Ole Miss Rebels didn't quite live up to 2021's 10-3 season last year, as they went 8-5 in 2022. The season also ended with a disappointing 17-point loss against Texas Tech in the bowl game, but things have the potential to get better in 2023. Ole Miss still has Jaxson Dart at quarterback, and star running back Quinshon Judkins is back to run behind one of the conference's best offensive lines. That means the offense should be special once again under head coach Lane Kiffin, who has done nothing but pump out elite offenses over the last decade. Kiffin also brought in former Alabama defensive coordinator Pete Golding in the offseason. If that hire hits, you're looking at a team that could pull off some stunners this year.

OFFENSE

Ole Miss averaged 33.5 points per game in 2022 and should be even better offensively this season. Dart threw for 2,974 yards with 20 touchdowns and 11 picks last year, and he also rushed for 614 yards and a score. For his first year in the system, Dart really showed a lot of promise for the Rebels. If he does hold off Oklahoma State transfer Spencer Sanders for the starting job, Dart should do big things behind a stellar offensive line. It also helps that Judkins is arguably the best running back in this conference. Last year, Judkins rushed for 1,567 yards and 16 touchdowns for Ole Miss. He has a good shot at leading the conference in rushing again this year, and his ability to take over games will make the Rebels a tough team to beat this year.

DEFENSE

Not only did the Rebels bring Golding in to change up this defense, but he also has seven returning starters to work with. This defense wasn't even all that bad in 2022, as Ole Miss only gave up 24.2 points per game last season. But the Rebels should find a way to improve upon that, and that's what makes this a team with some sleeper potential in 2023. Ole Miss should be especially tough against the run, as a lot of impact players return along the line and in the linebacking corps. If there's any weakness with this group, it's the inexperienced secondary. But Kiffin did well in bringing in some talented defensive backs in the transfer portal.

OUTLOOK

Ole Miss has a really challenging schedule, but this is also a program that has won 18 games over the last two years. With 16 starters returning from last year, why shouldn't we believe in the Rebels to build on that success? Kiffin has produced nothing but elite offenses since becoming the head coach of Ole Miss, and that shouldn't change this year. The Rebels should win at least eight games and possibly even contend in the SEC West.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 56

NATIONAL RANK: #17 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	MERCER	-24	34.5
9/9	at Tulane	-4	49
9/16	GEORGIA TECH	-20	39
9/23	at Alabama	14.5	67.5
9/30	LSU	4	62.5
10/7	ARKANSAS	-7	52
10/21	at Auburn	-1.5	52
10/28	VANDERBILT	-19.5	39.5
11/4	TEXAS A&M	-2.5	56
11/11	at Georgia	17	70.5
11/18	LA MONROE	-34.5	24.5
11/23	at Mississippi St	-3	50.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 49.28 #3 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.7 / 0.1 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

45-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

100-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 16

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	31.3	35	27.4	63
Yards Per Point	15.8	100	14.6	56
Plays Per Game	78.8	5		
Time of Possession	26:37	125		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.5%	11	40.2%	79
Total Yards Per Game	495	7	400.8	79
Yards Per Play	6.3	21	5.3	48
Rush Attempts Per Game	48	4		
Rush Yards Per Game	258.3	2	173.5	91
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.4	8	4.4	86
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.6	91		
Completion %	62.3%	48	65.0%	115
Passing Yards Per Game	236.8	56	227.3	60
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	33	6.8	38
Turnovers	1.7	97	1.3	74

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 4-8, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	TROY (-21)	28-10	W	L
9/10	C ARKANSAS (-36.5)	59-3	W	W
9/17	at Georgia Tech (-17)	42-0	W	W
9/24	TULSA (-21)	35-27	W	L
10/1	KENTUCKY (-6.5)	22-19	W	L
10/8	at Vanderbilt (-17)	52-28	W	W
10/15	AUBURN (-15)	48-34	W	L
10/22	at LSU (0)	20-45	L	L
10/29	at Texas A&M (-3)	31-28	W	T
11/12	ALABAMA (11)	24-30	L	W
11/19	at Arkansas (-1)	27-42	L	L
11/24	MISSISSIPPI ST (-2.5)	22-24	L	L
12/28	vs. Texas Tech (-3.5)	25-42	L	L

SOUTH CAROLINA
GAMECOCKS

HEAD COACH: SHANE BEAMER (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DOWELL LOGGAINS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CLAYTON WHITE

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Shane Beamer has led the South Carolina Gamecocks to back-to-back winning seasons, and this team was especially impressive towards the end of 2022. South Carolina closed out the year with wins over Tennessee and Clemson, and quarterback Spencer Rattler looked like a star in the final weeks of the year. The hope is that Rattler will carry that momentum into the 2023 season, but the Gamecocks did lose a lot of talent from last year's squad. South Carolina only brought back 10 total starters, and only four returned on the defensive side of the ball. The Gamecocks were lousy defensively last season, and they can't afford to be quite as bad in 2023. Maybe some fresh faces will help.

OFFENSE

Rattler finished last season by throwing for 10 touchdowns and three interceptions over his final three games, and he also added a score on the ground. On top of that, the uber-talented thrower averaged 348.0 passing yards per game. Rattler really seemed to flip a switch late in the year, but he has fooled people before. So, which version of the former Oklahoma quarterback will we see in 2023? If it's the good one, the Gamecocks should be able to make up for a lack of returning talent. It helps that Beamer is a very good offensive coach and added some nice players from the transfer portal.

DEFENSE

The Gamecocks allowed 27.5 points per game last year, and their defense really put them in some difficult spots in their losses. This year, South Carolina has question marks at every level of the defense, but the good news is that the new starters aren't exactly replacing many studs. Experience is almost always a positive in college football, but an argument can be made that the Gamecocks will be better off with some new faces seeing an increase in snaps. The main priority for South Carolina will be finding a way to stop the run and get bodies in the backfield, in general. Beamer's defense was constantly in short-yardage situations, making it difficult to get stops. And the lack of a pass rush put the defensive backs in tough spots.

OUTLOOK

The Gamecocks don't have the easiest schedule in the world, but Beamer has proven he can deliver wins in tough games. With that in mind, South Carolina should be able to make it to seven victories in 2023. The Gamecocks have a few games they should easily come away with this season, and then there are a couple of 50-50 spots. I trust South Carolina in those games, and it might be easier than expected if the defense improves.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **50.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #34 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	vs. North Carolina	3.5	53.5
9/9	FURMAN	-17	35.5
9/16	at Georgia	22.5	70.5
9/23	MISSISSIPPI ST	-2.5	50.5
9/30	at Tennessee	9	56.5
10/14	FLORIDA	-0.5	52
10/21	at Missouri	2	49.5
10/28	at Texas A&M	8.5	56
11/4	JACKSONVILLE ST	-20	32.5
11/11	VANDERBILT	-13.5	39.5
11/18	KENTUCKY	-0.5	52.5
11/25	CLEMSON	7	59.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **50.34** #1 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.4 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

90-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

150-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **10**

OFFENSE: 6 QB

DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	30.7	40	30.4	92
Yards Per Point	12.3	9	13.8	77
Plays Per Game	66.8	103		
Time of Possession	28:39	95		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.0%	74	45.9%	119
Total Yards Per Game	377.4	68	420.5	98
Yards Per Play	5.7	46	5.7	87
Rush Attempts Per Game	31.7	108		
Rush Yards Per Game	114.1	102	202.8	117
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.6	93	5.1	118
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.6	54		
Completion %	65.7%	16	54.4%	7
Passing Yards Per Game	263.3	33	217.8	47
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	30	6.8	33
Turnovers	2	119	1.7	31

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-5, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	GEORGIA ST (-12.5)	35-14	W	W
9/10	at Arkansas (9)	30-44	L	L
9/17	GEORGIA (25.5)	7-48	L	L
9/24	CHARLOTTE (-23.5)	56-20	W	W
9/29	S CAROLINA ST (-40)	50-10	W	T
10/8	at Kentucky (4.5)	24-14	W	W
10/22	TEXAS A&M (3)	30-24	W	W
10/29	MISSOURI (-3.5)	10-23	L	L
11/5	at Vanderbilt (-6.5)	38-27	W	W
11/12	at Florida (8)	6-38	L	L
11/19	TENNESSEE (22.5)	63-38	W	W
11/26	at Clemson (14)	31-30	W	W
12/30	vs. Notre Dame (5)	38-45	L	L

TENNESSEE
VOLUNTEERS

HEAD COACH: JOSH HEUPEL (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOEY HALZLE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM BANKS

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Josh Heupel has done a great job with this Tennessee Volunteers program, as he's 18-8 since joining the team in 2021. Last year, Tennessee earned double-digit victories and concluded its season with a 31-14 win over Clemson in the Orange Bowl. It was a statement win for a program that suddenly looks like it has championship potential. The problem is that the Volunteers lost a lot of key players from last year's squad, including star quarterback Hendon Hooker. But Tennessee hopes that former Michigan quarterback Joe Milton can finally live up to his immense potential. If he can, the Vols could be extremely dangerous in 2023, as they return seven starters on defense.

OFFENSE

Hooker was so good for the Vols in 2022 that he was picked in the third round of the 2023 NFL Draft, despite being a 25-year-old coming off a torn ACL. He was a huge part of why the Volunteers led the nation in scoring at 46.1 points per game. With that said, Milton has some huge shoes to fill. Milton does have a massive arm and should be very good in the running game with his combination of mobility and size. But his accuracy will be tested in this offense, and any slip in the passing game will make it hard for this Volunteers team to win at least 10 games this year. The good news for Milton is that the blocking up front should be great, and Tennessee does have weapons all over the field. Milton also has the luxury of working with one of the brightest offensive minds in the nation.

DEFENSE

The Vols gave up only 23.5 points per game last season, and this defense brings back seven starters from that group. The key one might be linebacker Aaron Beasley, who was the team's leader in tackles last season. He's the leader of a linebacking corps that should be solid in 2023. Tennessee also has good depth along the defensive line and at defensive back. Overall, this unit should be solid at every level, and it wouldn't be surprising if they improve a bit upon last year's impressive numbers.

OUTLOOK

You'll have to lay a lot of juice to play the Under on Tennessee's win total, but you might have to suck it up if you're desperate to take something on the Vols before the year. When looking at this schedule, it's just very hard to see a path to 10 wins. You'd have to have a ton of faith in Milton to play this Over, and we really haven't seen much that suggests he's ready to play to the level Hooker did in 2022 — especially with wide receiver Jalin Hyatt now in the NFL.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 9.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 56.5

NATIONAL RANK: #16 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	VIRGINIA	-20.5	39
9/9	AUSTIN PEAY	-31	28
9/16	at Florida	-1.5	52
9/23	TX-SAN ANTONIO	-14.5	44.5
9/30	SOUTH CAROLINA	-9	50.5
10/14	TEXAS A&M	-3.5	56
10/21	at Alabama	14	67.5
10/28	at Kentucky	-1	52.5
11/4	CONNECTICUT	-28	32
11/11	at Missouri	-4.5	49.5
11/18	GEORGIA	11.5	70.5
11/25	VANDERBILT	-20	39.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.50
#19 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.9 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

14-1 — ODDS TO WIN SEC

30-1 — ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 12
OFFENSE: 5
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	44.5	1	22.7	30
Yards Per Point	11.5	4	17.9	9
Plays Per Game	73.9	34		
Time of Possession	24:52	130		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.0%	83	35.0%	29
Total Yards Per Game	511.3	1	406.5	84
Yards Per Play	6.9	4	5.2	42
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.8	31		
Rush Yards Per Game	199.3	20	119.2	22
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	28	3.3	12
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.1	62		
Completion %	68.6%	5	63.2%	99
Passing Yards Per Game	312	9	287.3	128
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.7	2	7.1	61
Turnovers	0.8	10	1.7	31

2022 RESULTS

SU: 11-2, ATS: 10-3, O/U: 7-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/1	BALL ST (-36.5)	59-10	W	W
9/10	at Pittsburgh (-6)	34-27	W	W
9/17	AKRON (-47.5)	63-6	W	W
9/24	FLORIDA (-10.5)	38-33	W	L
10/8	at LSU (-2.5)	40-13	W	W
10/15	ALABAMA (9.5)	52-49	W	W
10/22	TENN-MARTIN (-39)	65-24	W	W
10/29	KENTUCKY (-10.5)	44-6	W	W
11/5	at Georgia (9.5)	13-27	L	L
11/12	MISSOURI (-19)	66-24	W	W
11/19	at South Carolina (-22.5)	38-63	L	L
11/26	at Vanderbilt (-14)	56-0	W	W
12/30	vs. Clemson (3.5)	31-14	W	W

TEXAS A&M
AGGIES

HEAD COACH: JIMBO FISHER (6TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BOBBY PETRINO
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: D. J. DURKIN

BY ZACHARY COHEN

Last year's 5-7 record seems to have put a huge cloud over Jimbo Fisher and the Texas A&M Aggies, but this program is still 39-21 since he took over. And Fisher was adamant about last year being something of a retooling season, with the 2023 season being the one he's really excited about. Texas A&M brings back 20 starters this year, with 10 returning on both offense and defense. The Aggies also hired Bobby Petrino to overhaul the offense, which has been extremely disappointing in recent seasons. With Petrino in place as offensive coordinator and some improved play under center, Texas A&M should be one of the elite teams in the SEC this season. And the good news for bettors is that the Aggies aren't quite priced like it.

OFFENSE

It seems pretty likely that Conner Weigman will be the starter at quarterback for the Aggies. Like potential backup Max Johnson, Weigman takes good care of the football. But he has a little more arm talent, and that should allow Petrino to open up this offense a bit. Weigman will also be playing with one of the best wide receiver groups in the nation, with star wideout Ainias Smith being the leader of the pack. And he'll also have the luxury of being protected by one of the best offensive lines in all of college football. When you mix in what should be a productive running game, this Aggies offense has the potential to be special in 2023.

DEFENSE

Texas A&M's defense bent but didn't break in 2022. The Aggies gave up a decent amount of yards per game, but they only gave up 21.2 points per game. That was good for the fourth-best scoring defense in the conference. Now, Texas A&M brings back 10 starters from last year's group. The Aggies should be stellar when it comes to rushing the passer and defending the pass. If there's any question with this Texas A&M team, it's the linebackers group. But the team does have a ton of talent in the middle of the field, so it could be a strength if things click. And the Aggies do have a good defensive mind trying to figure it all out, as D.J. Durkin is a very good football coach. He should do a good job of piecing things together, and it might ultimately lead to him getting another shot as a head coach.

OUTLOOK

It's pretty stunning that the Aggies' win total is down at 8. It seems like the worst-case scenario for this team would be a push, as they're completely loaded on both sides of the ball. Texas A&M also happens to play some of its tougher games at home, with the exceptions being road games against Miami, Tennessee and LSU. But the Aggies will like their chances in all of those games, and it wouldn't be all that shocking if they end up winning 10 games this year. Texas A&M feels like the biggest threat to Alabama in the SEC West.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 56

NATIONAL RANK: #18 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	NEW MEXICO	-38.5	21
9/9	at Miami FL	-4.5	49.5
9/16	LA MONROE	-35	24.5
9/23	AUBURN	-7	52
9/30	vs. Arkansas	-4.5	52
10/7	ALABAMA	9	67.5
10/14	at Tennessee	3.5	56.5
10/28	SOUTH CAROLINA	-8.5	50.5
11/4	at Ole Miss	2.5	56
11/11	MISSISSIPPI ST	-8.5	50.5
11/18	ABILENE CHRISTIAN	-39.5	19.5
11/25	at LSU	9.5	62.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 45.88
#33 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.9 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

14-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

60-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 20
OFFENSE: 10 QB
DEFENSE: 10

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	22	97	23.1	33
Yards Per Point	15.9	104	16.5	22
Plays Per Game	64.9	118		
Time of Possession	27:27	116		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.3%	103	37.7%	53
Total Yards Per Game	348.9	96	380.4	57
Yards Per Play	5.4	65	5.2	41
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.3	117		
Rush Yards Per Game	144.7	70	218.3	124
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	38	4.9	107
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.4	58		
Completion %	55.3%	108	56.9%	19
Passing Yards Per Game	204.2	95	162.1	2
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	110	6	6
Turnovers	1.5	65	1.3	83

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 4-7, O/U: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	SAM HOUSTON ST (-36)	31-0	W	L
9/10	APPALACHIAN ST (-18)	14-17	L	L
9/17	MIAMI FL (-6.5)	17-9	W	W
9/24	vs. Arkansas (-1.5)	23-21	W	W
10/1	at Mississippi St (4)	24-42	L	L
10/8	at Alabama (24.5)	20-24	L	W
10/22	at South Carolina (-3)	24-30	L	L
10/29	OLE MISS (3)	28-31	L	T
11/5	FLORIDA (-1.5)	24-41	L	L
11/12	at Auburn (2)	10-13	L	L
11/19	MASSACHUSETTS (-32)	20-3	W	L
11/26	LSU (10)	38-23	W	W

VANDERBILT
COMMODORES

BY ZACHARY COHEN

It hasn't always looked the prettiest, but Clark Lea has the Vanderbilt Commodores moving in the right direction. After going 2-10 in 2021, the Commodores went 5-7 in 2022. The team also earned wins over Kentucky and Florida, which was massive after having gone winless in SEC play in each of the previous two seasons. Now, Vanderbilt returns 15 starters from last year's team. The hope is that the Commodores can continue to take more steps toward being a competitive football team. But the oddsmakers aren't showing Vanderbilt much respect, as the team has a regular season win total of 3.5.

OFFENSE

In Will Sheppard, Quincy Skinner and Jayden McGowan, the Commodores have a nice trio of wide receivers for AJ Swann to get the ball to. Swann unseated Ken Seals as the quarterback of the future for this Vanderbilt team, throwing for 1,274 yards with 10 touchdowns and only two picks last year. Swann has real arm talent and can fit the ball into tight windows. But with that arm talent comes the need to make good decisions with the football. He got a bit lucky on some questionable passes last year, but that comes with being a young quarterback. Vanderbilt also have a good offensive line, which should help Swann get comfortable. It'd be big if somebody could emerge as the top dog in the running game, but that group is a glaring weakness for this Commodores team.

DEFENSE

While Lea has a defensive background, Vanderbilt's defense has been a huge weakness in his two years at the helm. Last year, the Commodores gave up 36.0 points per game, the highest mark in the SEC. In fact, only six teams in all of college football gave up more points per game than Vanderbilt last year. Now, the team does get back eight starters from last year, so you'd think that some added experience will help take things to another level. But talent is still an issue for this group. There isn't any particular level of the defense that stands out as worse than others, but none of them are strong. So, this unit should once again hold the program back a bit. The 2024 season could be when things finally click for this group.

OUTLOOK

I'm not exactly sold on Vanderbilt being a better team in 2023 than it was in 2022, but it won't take much for this team to win four games. In fact, it isn't out of the realm of possibility that the Commodores will lock this up by their fifth game of the season. All four of their early-season games are extremely winnable, with 3-1 seeming like the worst possible outcome. From there, you'd have to think Vanderbilt can find one more win the rest of the way.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **39.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #72 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #14 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/26	HAWAII	-18	23
9/2	ALABAMA A&M	-34	7
9/9	at Wake Forest	9.5	45.5
9/16	at UNLV	-5.5	31.5
9/23	KENTUCKY	11.5	52.5
9/30	MISSOURI	8	49.5
10/7	at Florida	16	52
10/14	GEORGIA	30	70.5
10/28	at Ole Miss	19.5	56
11/4	AUBURN	11	52
11/11	at South Carolina	13.5	50.5
11/25	at Tennessee	20	56.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **46.33**
#27 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **1.5 / 0.3**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

500-1 ODDS TO WIN SEC

500-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **15**
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 8

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	OFFENSE RANK	DEFENSE STAT	DEFENSE RANK
Points Per Game	23	91	36.5	123
Yards Per Point	14.8	79	12.6	115
Plays Per Game	67.5	98		
Time of Possession	32:10	18		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.7%	88	41.2%	86
Total Yards Per Game	341	101	458.3	120
Yards Per Play	5.1	90	6.8	129
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.3	59		
Rush Yards Per Game	158.9	59	172.5	88
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	62	5.3	122
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.8	95		
Completion %	57.4%	92	64.9%	114
Passing Yards Per Game	182.1	113	285.7	127
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	109	8.6	125
Turnovers	1.5	65	1.4	70

2022 RESULTS

SU: 5-7, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
8/27	at Hawaii (-9)	63-10	W	W
9/3	ELON (-18.5)	42-31	W	L
9/10	WAKE FOREST (13.5)	25-45	L	L
9/17	at N Illinois (2.5)	38-28	W	W
9/24	at Alabama (40.5)	3-55	L	L
10/8	OLE MISS (17)	28-52	L	L
10/15	at Georgia (37)	0-55	L	L
10/22	at Missouri (14)	14-17	L	W
11/5	SOUTH CAROLINA (6.5)	27-38	L	L
11/12	at Kentucky (17)	24-21	W	W
11/19	FLORIDA (14)	31-24	W	W
11/26	TENNESSEE (14)	0-56	L	L

SUN BELT BETTING PREVIEW

Conference realignment is all the rage in college football, but the Sun Belt did it before it was cool. James Madison, Marshall, Southern Miss, and Old Dominion joined the conference in 2022 to give the league 14 teams and make the East Division one of the most compelling in the Group of Five.

Troy and South Alabama took advantage of the weaker West Division and went 7-1 in conference play, as the Trojans ultimately won 12 games and South Alabama won 10. It was a fiercer battle in the East, where Coastal Carolina emerged victorious via tiebreaker over James Madison, but late-season injuries cast a dark shadow over the Chanticleers to end the year.

Things look a little different this season, as last year's East Division heavyweights both experienced substantial losses, which opens the door for conference stalwart Appalachian State. The West may line up the same way, but it could be a more competitive division overall.

Full disclosure: The "Fun Belt" is one of my favorite conferences. The mid-week games are a real treat, and there are some legitimately good teams in this league every single season. With contrasting styles across the conference, the games are usually exciting, and there are some strong athletes on the field.

This season, South Alabama (+290) and Troy (+310) top the conference odds, due in large part to the easier path to the conference title game. It may simply come down to the head-to-head meeting on November 2 at Troy. Coastal Carolina (+450), Appalachian State (+700), and Marshall (+800) are the top contenders from the other division.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS *(BASED ON STEVE MAKINEN RATINGS)*

Team	2023 SM PR	Schedule Strength (Rank)	All Games PrjW's	All Games PrjL's	Conference Games PrjW's	Conference Games PrjL's	DraftKings O/U
EAST DIVISION							
MARSHALL	40.5	35.13 (94)	7.4	4.6	5.1	2.9	7
COASTAL CAROLINA	37.5	32.73 (117)	7.2	4.8	4.9	3.1	7.5
APPALACHIAN ST	37.5	35.26 (91)	6.8	5.2	4.8	3.2	6.5
JAMES MADISON	39.5	32.17 (121)	7.6	4.4	4.6	3.4	8
GA SOUTHERN	33	33.13 (112)	6.0	6.0	3.9	4.1	6
GEORGIA ST	34	36.96 (79)	5.4	6.6	3.2	4.8	5.5
OLD DOMINION	27.5	36.4 (87)	3.2	8.8	1.9	6.1	3.5
WEST DIVISION							
TROY	44.5	35.19 (92)	8.6	3.4	6.1	1.9	8
S ALABAMA	44	36.47 (86)	8.1	3.9	5.8	2.2	8
LA LAFAYETTE	38.5	31.58 (124)	7.7	4.3	5.2	2.8	6.5
SOUTHERN MISS	36	37.02 (77)	5.6	6.4	4.3	3.7	5
ARKANSAS ST	28	34.98 (97)	4.1	7.9	2.3	5.7	4.5
TEXAS ST UNIV	27.5	37.03 (76)	3.4	8.6	2.3	5.7	4.5
LA MONROE	24.5	36.75 (81)	2.9	9.1	1.7	6.3	3.5

HEAD COACH: SHAWN CLARK (4TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: FRANK PONCE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT SLOAN

BY ADAM BURKE

The 2022 season for Appalachian State was a major outlier. The Mountaineers failed to finish with a winning record for the first time since 2013 and did not participate in a bowl game because two of their six wins came against FCS foes. It was such a strange season for App State, as they lost 63-61 in the opener to North Carolina and then beat Texas A&M and Troy, but also lost to lowly Texas State and went 1-4 in conference games decided by seven or fewer points. There are some positive indicators, but also some major questions.

OFFENSE

For the first time in seemingly forever, the Mountaineers have a stable of quarterbacks without experience. Redshirt freshman Ryan Burger may get the first crack, but he had six pass attempts to his name last season. JUCO transfer Joey Aguilar has experience but below D-I. App State will have to throw to keep opposing defenses honest, while RB Nate Noel leads a group of backs that will get a ton of work.

Noel led the team with 604 yards and 6.9 yards per carry, but four backs had at least 76 carries. It projects to be something of a timeshare again, but the more experienced Noel should get more totes than anybody else. The top four receivers are all back. The quarterback that wins the job is likely to run a bit more, as Frank Ponce returns after serving as the OC in 2021. The Mountaineers have to replace both starting tackles, so QB runs may also be out of necessity to evade pass rushers.

DEFENSE

The Mountaineers also have a new defensive coordinator who is also a familiar face. Scott Sloan was the defensive backs coach in Boone from 2011-16 and then served as Georgia Southern's defensive coordinator from 2018-21, so he has lots of experience calling plays and plenty of Sun Belt exposure. There are only four returning starters on this defense. The top two tacklers, Nick Ross and Andrew Parker, are among them, but top corner Steven Jones leaves with 15 pass breakups.

What makes App State's mediocre season even more surprising is that they were +9 in turnover margin, even though the defenders only had seven interceptions. The Mountaineers were strong against the run with 3.6 yards per carry allowed and only allowed 26.8 points per game, though that was the most since 2014. The Mountaineers also took a big tumble on special teams last season.

OUTLOOK

This is a hard team to project for 2023. They were +8.1 points per game, +1.3 yards per play, and had that +9 TO margin, but finished 6-6. They outgained opponents by over 100 yards in three of their six conference losses and outgained North Carolina by 82 yards in that Week 1 defeat. A lot of indicators are pointing up in that regard, but the further head coach Shawn Clark gets from Scott Satterfield and the one year of Eli Drinkwitz, the more you wonder if the talent pipeline is the same. I ultimately like App State and have them for 8.08 wins, while the season win total line is 6.5. I have them favored in all but two games, as they avoid both Troy and South Alabama.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **37.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #86 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #7 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	GARDNER WEBB	-16	24.5
9/9	at North Carolina	18.5	53.5
9/16	EAST CAROLINA	-4	36
9/23	at Wyoming	3	38
9/30	at LA Monroe	-10.5	24.5
10/10	COASTAL CAROLINA	-2.5	37.5
10/21	at Old Dominion	-8.5	27.5
10/28	SOUTHERN MISS	-4.5	36
11/4	MARSHALL	0.5	40.5
11/11	at Georgia St	-1.5	34
11/18	at James Madison	5	39.5
11/25	GA SOUTHERN	-7.5	33

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **35.26**
#91 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.8 / 0.3**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+700 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **11**
OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	RANK	DEFENSE STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	32.8	26	31.8	106
Yards Per Point	13.4	37	12	124
Plays Per Game	73	41		
Time of Possession	31:31	31		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.9%	61	45.9%	117
Total Yards Per Game	440.7	29	380.1	55
Yards Per Play	6	28	5.6	72
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.5	24		
Rush Yards Per Game	191.9	28	129	33
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	39	3.9	38
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.9	76		
Completion %	61.8%	52	62.6%	95
Passing Yards Per Game	248.8	46	251.1	95
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	32	7.7	98
Turnovers	1	16	1.7	29

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-6, ATS: 3-9, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	NORTH CAROLINA (-3)	61-63	L	L
9/10	at Texas A&M (18)	17-14	W	W
9/17	TROY (-14)	32-28	W	L
9/24	JAMES MADISON (-6)	28-32	L	L
10/1	THE CITADEL (-39)	49-0	W	W
10/8	at Texas St Univ (-19)	24-36	L	L
10/19	GEORGIA ST (-9)	42-17	W	W
10/29	ROBERT MORRIS (-50.5)	42-3	W	L
11/3	at Coastal Carolina (-3)	28-35	L	L
11/12	at Marshall (-2.5)	21-28	L	L
11/19	OLD DOMINION (-16)	27-14	W	L
11/26	at Ga Southern (-6.5)	48-51	L	L

ARKANSAS STATE
RED WOLVES

HEAD COACH: BUTCH JONES (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LOGAN KILGORE
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROB HARLEY

BY ADAM BURKE

The Arkansas State Red Wolves have fallen on some very hard times. After being used as a springboard by guys like Hugh Freeze, Gus Malzahn, and Bryan Harsin to bigger head coaching jobs, the Red Wolves administration enjoyed six straight winning seasons from Blake Anderson before a 4-7 showing in 2020. They might be pretty excited with four wins this season after a 5-19 performance in two years under Butch Jones. While being used as a one-and-done school limits continuity, it shows you made some good hires. Jones, to this point, is not one.

OFFENSE
The Red Wolves led in the fourth quarter in eight of their 12 games last season, but they had major problems finishing. A lack of depth on both sides of the ball didn't help, and the depth is even thinner this season. Florida State transfer James Blackman is gone after posting a 14/3 TD/INT ratio with a 64.3% completion rate. Even though Blackman played fairly well, the Red Wolves mustered just 4.9 yards per play. They couldn't run the ball at all with 2.8 yards per carry, so teams keyed in on the pass and limited explosive plays.

Both guys that threw passes for the Red Wolves last season are gone, as Jones turns to Colorado transfer JT Shrout, who had a negative TD/INT ratio last season. Opponents have racked up 86 sacks against the Red Wolves over the last two seasons, so even though the offensive line has several returning starters, that may not mean much. The top two pass catchers and four of the top five are gone. It looks like a rough year on offense in Jonesboro.

DEFENSE
The defense did improve in Year 2 under a quality defensive mind in Rob Harley, who was the linebackers coach at Pitt. This side of the ball is in better shape from a returning production standpoint, but this group still allowed over 31 points per game last season. The Red Wolves did go from 7.2 yards per play allowed to 5.8 from the first year to the second year but didn't really improve against the pass. They just didn't get obliterated by the run.

The Red Wolves had a bottom-five red-zone defense, yet they somehow finished 50th in third-down defense. Leading tackler Jordan Carmouche and top corner Kenneth Harris are both gone, but Jones and Harley did a lot of work to bring in transfers. While Arkansas State had some close calls, they were still outgained by 114 yards per game in Sun Belt play and got outgained by nine of the 11 FBS teams they played.

OUTLOOK
Arkansas State visits UMass this season after winning 35-33 in Jonesboro last year, but the Red Wolves were outgained by 200 yards in that game. Their other wins came against Louisiana-Monroe and Grambling. The ULM win came right after the Warhawks beat rival Louisiana for the first time in five years. The only games I have Arkansas State favored in are against Stony Brook and at UMass, but they are only a 3.5-point-favorite there. Otherwise, they're a pick 'em at home against Texas State and a dog in every other game. With a win total of 4.5 and a projection of 3.26, this is one of my favorite win totals in the Sun Belt.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING   28

NATIONAL RANK: #118 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #11 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Oklahoma	32.5	57.5
9/9	MEMPHIS	14	44.5
9/16	STONY BROOK	-25.5	5
9/23	SOUTHERN MISS	5.5	36
9/30	at Massachusetts	-8.5	17.5
10/7	at Troy	19	44.5
10/21	COASTAL CAROLINA	8	37.5
10/28	at LA Monroe	-0.5	24.5
11/4	LA LAFAYETTE	8.5	38.5
11/11	at S Alabama	19	44
11/18	TEXAS ST UNIV	-3	27.5
11/25	at Marshall	14.5	40.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **34.98** #97 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.2 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

60-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

10000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING
STARTERS   11   OFFENSE: 5   DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	/RANK	DEFENSE STAT	/RANK
Points Per Game	22	97	34	113
Yards Per Point	13.2	32	12.7	111
Plays Per Game	66.7	104		
Time of Possession	28:21	101		
3rd Down Conv. %	27.7%	128	37.9%	55
Total Yards Per Game	291.4	123	432.6	105
Yards Per Play	4.4	123	5.9	108
Rush Attempts Per Game	29.7	122		
Rush Yards Per Game	65.4	130	172.6	89
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.2	130	4.2	66
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.6	49		
Completion %	61.4%	59	62.5%	93
Passing Yards Per Game	226	67	260	101
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	87	8.6	124
Turnovers	0.8	8	0.9	124

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 7-5, O/U: 7-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	GRAMBLING (-25.5)	58-3	W	W
9/10	at Ohio St (44.5)	12-45	L	W
9/17	at Memphis (14.5)	32-44	L	W
9/24	at Old Dominion (4.5)	26-29	L	W
10/1	LA MONROE (-7.5)	45-28	W	W
10/8	JAMES MADISON (11.5)	20-42	L	L
10/15	at Southern Miss (4.5)	19-20	L	W
10/22	at La Lafayette (5.5)	18-38	L	L
10/29	S ALABAMA (9)	3-31	L	L
11/12	MASSACHUSETTS (-17.53)	35-33	W	L
11/19	at Texas St Univ (6.5)	13-16	L	W
11/26	TROY (14)	19-48	L	L

COASTAL CAROLINA
CHANTICLEERS

HEAD COACH: TIM BECK (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TRAVIS TRICKETT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CRAIG NAIVAR

BY ADAM BURKE

The good times on the teal turf in Conway, South Carolina, have made for some great storylines over the last few seasons. The Coastal Carolina Chanticleers are 31-7 over the last three seasons and have star quarterback Grayson McCall back for probably one more season. However, head coach Jamey Chadwell is now at Liberty, and many believe that new head coach Tim Beck is a big step down. With an experienced team and a fairly favorable schedule, Coastal Carolina is one of the more polarizing teams going into the season.

OFFENSE

Was it Chadwell's offense that made McCall a star, or is he just that good? If McCall stays healthy, he'll be the all-time leading passer in Coastal Carolina history. He's already second and under 2,000 yards behind Alex Ross. He'll have his top four wide receivers back, including leading rusher CJ Beasley, who had 717 yards with a 5.1 average. Reese White should also be healthier this season after having 5.5 yards per carry on 42 fewer attempts than Beasley.

What could be missing for the Chants is what made Chadwell's offense so special. All of the pre-snap motion that created mismatches and outnumbered situations are gone with Beck and Travis Trickett, who was the offensive coordinator and QB coach at USF last season. The Bulls were 108th in passing yards per game, but they did run the ball really well to be 39th in yards per play. Beck has been an OC at NC State, Texas, Ohio State, and Nebraska, so some big schools. Given that Coastal's offense dropped by 11.8 points per game and 1.7 yards per play from 2021's outrageous numbers, maybe the drop-off won't be that big.

DEFENSE

The offense wasn't nearly as potent, and that had a major, negative effect on the defense. The Coastal Carolina defense crashed and burned last season, allowing 10.2 more points per game and 1.2 more yards per play. The pass defense gave up 94 more yards per game on average. With only three returning starters, Coastal Carolina got outscored on the season, yet they still managed to go 9-4.

Things really fell apart late in the year, though, as the Chants allowed 145 points in losses to James Madison, Troy, and East Carolina. Six of the top seven tacklers are back this time around, and the depth appears to be a bit better, but that was such a stark increase in points and yardage that you can't help but be skeptical of new defensive coordinator Craig Navier's unit.

OUTLOOK

While Coastal is stuck in the much harder division of the Sun Belt, they will avoid both Troy and South Alabama from the West Division, which is also true for App State. The Chanticleers will not play a home game from September 21 to October 28 because of the bye week and three road games, so that's an interesting schedule quirk. They also have road games at UCLA and Army. My projection is for 7.24 wins with a win total of 8, as I worry that McCall isn't as good of a fit for this offense, and the defense may not improve that much, if at all.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING **37.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #85 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #6 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at UCLA	16	51.5
9/9	JACKSONVILLE ST	-7	32.5
9/16	DUQUESNE	-33.5	6
9/21	GEORGIA ST	-5.5	34
9/30	at Ga Southern	-1.5	33
10/10	at Appalachian St	2.5	37.5
10/21	at Arkansas St	-8	28
10/28	MARSHALL	1	40.5
11/4	at Old Dominion	-8.5	27.5
11/11	TEXAS ST UNIV	-12.5	27.5
11/18	at Army	0.5	36
11/25	JAMES MADISON	0	39.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.73**
#117 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.3 / 0.5**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+450 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **1000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **14**
OFFENSE: 8 QB
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	28.9	52	32.3	109
Yards Per Point	14.2	66	12.8	109
Plays Per Game	69.2	81		
Time of Possession	32:10	17		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.5%	34	42.2%	96
Total Yards Per Game	410.3	42	412.2	90
Yards Per Play	5.9	35	6.1	116
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.4	38		
Rush Yards Per Game	169.3	52	141.3	46
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	60	4.1	61
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.6	105		
Completion %	65.0%	21	62.5%	94
Passing Yards Per Game	241	52	270.8	113
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.7	10	8.9	129
Turnovers	1.4	59	1.4	66

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 4-9, O/U: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	ARMY (-1.5)	38-28	W	W
9/10	GARDNER WEBB (-32.5)	31-27	W	L
9/17	BUFFALO (-12.5)	38-26	W	L
9/22	at Georgia St (-2.5)	41-24	W	W
10/1	GA SOUTHERN (-10)	34-30	W	L
10/8	at La Monroe (-13)	28-21	W	L
10/15	OLD DOMINION (-10.5)	21-49	L	L
10/29	at Marshall (2.5)	24-13	W	W
11/3	APPALACHIAN ST (3)	35-28	W	W
11/12	SOUTHERN MISS (-5)	26-23	W	L
11/26	at James Madison (15.5)	7-47	L	L
12/3	at Troy (6.5)	26-45	L	L
12/27	vs. East Carolina (7)	29-53	L	L

GEORGIA SOUTHERN
EAGLES

HEAD COACH: CLAY HELTON (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRYAN ELLIS
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRANDON BAILEY

BY ADAM BURKE

I've been right a lot in my sports betting career, but I've been wrong a lot as well. I was wrong about Georgia Southern last season. It seemed like a much more difficult task to go from being a spread-option team to an air-it-out team, but Clay Helton's bunch did it with relative ease. The 6-7 record wasn't overly impressive, but way better than their season win total of 4 or 4.5, as the Eagles racked up 6.2 yards per play and finished fourth in passing yards per game. Now in Year 2, this could be a legit contender in the East Division.

OFFENSE

Kyle Vantrease was a one-year wonder in Statesboro, as he threw for 4,253 yards with 27 touchdowns. He threw 16 picks, and Georgia Southern was -5 in turnover margin, but Davis Brin transfers in from Tulsa as an extremely experienced QB. Khaleb Hood and Derwin Burgess combined for 125 catches and 1,642 yards as the Eagles' top two receivers, and both are back this season. Leading rusher Jalen White also returns after 10 touchdown totes and 914 yards.

The Eagles racked up 6.2 yards per play and only gave up seven sacks. Most of the offensive line returns intact this season, so Brin, who was banged up on a weekly basis last season for the Golden Hurricane, should be in line for a huge year. Offensive coordinator Bryan Ellis has a better grasp on his personnel, and so does Helton, who has much better depth all around this season.

DEFENSE

This is the area of the team that needs help. Perhaps it will come in the form of Brandon Bailey, who is the youngest defensive coordinator in the country at the ripe old age of 28. He went from a grad assistant in 2016 to calling plays at Arkansas-Monticello in 2018 before continuing as a grad student at Texas A&M. He was Buffalo's DC last season and must have impressed Helton in the Camellia Bowl after the Bulls beat his Eagles.

Only four starters are back on this defense, but that might be a good thing. The Eagles gave up 6.5 yards per play and were absolutely exposed by being on the field more often. Georgia Southern gave up over 3,000 rushing yards on the season on 542 carries and more than 3,300 yards through the air on 433 pass attempts. Going from long, methodical drives as an option team to defending behind an up-tempo aerial assault took its toll on a depth-shy D. Georgia Southern was 15th in red zone TD% against, but they were tied for the third-most red zone attempts allowed.

OUTLOOK

Bailey has a big task, but the defense's improvement could dramatically raise the ceiling for this team. The offense should be quite potent yet again, and neither Troy nor South Alabama appears on the schedule. There aren't many "lost cause" games on the schedule. Helton not only improved the offense but also the special teams as well. Any modest upgrade from the defense makes this team a contender. The season win total is 6, and my projection is for 6.19 wins, but I think this is a worthwhile East Division long shot at +750.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 6

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **33**

NATIONAL RANK: #101 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #10 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	THE CITADEL	-24.5	12
9/9	UAB	-1.5	35
9/16	at Wisconsin	24	54
9/23	at Ball St	0	30.5
9/30	COASTAL CAROLINA	1.5	37.5
10/14	at James Madison	10.5	39.5
10/21	LA MONROE	-12.5	24.5
10/26	GEORGIA ST	-2	34
11/4	at Texas St Univ	-2.5	27.5
11/11	at Marshall	9.5	40.5
11/18	OLD DOMINION	-9	27.5
11/25	at Appalachian St	7.5	37.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **33.13** #112 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.3 / 0.3** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

18-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

3000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **12**

OFFENSE: 8
DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	30.5	41	33.7	112
Yards Per Point	15.2	87	15.1	45
Plays Per Game	75.8	18		
Time of Possession	27:18	119		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.5%	23	44.8%	114
Total Yards Per Game	463.6	16	508.7	129
Yards Per Play	6.1	24	6.6	125
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.3	126		
Rush Yards Per Game	137.2	82	236.9	128
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	36	5.7	126
Pass Attempts Per Game	47	2		
Completion %	61.0%	66	60.3%	61
Passing Yards Per Game	326.4	5	271.8	114
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	80	8.1	109
Turnovers	1.7	97	1.1	108

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MORGAN ST (-41.5)	59-7	W	W
9/10	at Nebraska (23.5)	45-42	W	W
9/17	at UAB (12)	21-35	L	L
9/24	BALL ST (-9.5)	34-23	W	W
10/1	at Coastal Carolina (10)	30-34	L	W
10/8	at Georgia St (2.5)	33-41	L	L
10/15	JAMES MADISON (13)	45-38	W	W
10/22	at Old Dominion (1.5)	28-23	W	W
11/5	S ALABAMA (3.5)	31-38	L	L
11/10	at La Lafayette (3.5)	17-36	L	L
11/19	MARSHALL (5.5)	10-23	L	L
11/26	APPALACHIAN ST (6.5)	51-48	W	W
12/27	vs. Buffalo (-6)	21-23	L	L

GEORGIA STATE
PANTHERS

HEAD COACH: SHAWN ELLIOTT (7TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TRENT MCKNIGHT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHAD STAGGS

BY ADAM BURKE

Sustaining success can be very tough at the Group of Five level. The Georgia State Panthers found that out the hard way last season. After winning eight games for the first time in program history as an FBS member in 2021, the Panthers just about flipped their 8-5 record and finished 4-8 in 2022. The losing season snapped a three-year run of making a bowl game, and now we have to wonder if Shawn Elliott's program can get back to its winning ways.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Darren Grainger returns after leading the team with 734 rushing yards, and he was the only guy to attempt a pass. He threw for 2,443 yards with an 18/7 TD/INT ratio and did virtually everything for the Panthers' offense. All-time leading rusher Tucker Gregg had a down year with 4.1 yards per carry, though he did have 12 touchdowns in his final season. Georgia State's offense actually saw modest gains from 2021 to 2022, and a lot of starters are back, along with a second-year offensive coordinator in Trent McKnight.

McKnight is actually in his seventh season with the program after coaching up the wide receivers for five years prior. He'll have to coach them up this season because Jamari Thrash leaves after having three times the receiving yards of any other player with 1,122. His 61 catches were also more than double any other player. With some losses at the skill positions and increased reliance on Grainger, the Panthers' offense has minimal margin for error.

DEFENSE

The defense took a step back last season, allowing over 30 points for the fourth time in five seasons. The Panthers had 11 fewer sacks than the season prior but did have 13 interceptions. Antavious Lane and Jacorey Crawford, the top two defensive backs for the Panthers, are gone along with Quavian White, who led the team with four picks. Elliott and new defensive coordinator Chad Staggs scoured the FCS ranks for transfers, who now have big shoes to fill.

The life of a G5 program is like that of a turnstile. Players come in and players go out via the transfer portal, and that's going to be what determines the ceiling for this defense. If history is any indication, the ceiling is low. However, Georgia State only allowed 40 red zone attempts last season, which ranked tied for 23rd, but opponents scored 30 TD, which tied for 85th.

OUTLOOK

The Panthers draw Troy, but do avoid South Alabama from the West, so that helps from a league play standpoint. The nonconference schedule isn't all that daunting, as Rhode Island, UConn, and Charlotte are winnable games. LSU is not. But the Panthers have been a fairly inconsistent, high-variance team. They started 0-4 last season, won four of five, and then lost three straight, but the early losses included a close loss to North Carolina and a loss to Charlotte as almost a three-touchdown favorite. Georgia State's win total is 5.5, and I have them for 5.76 wins, but I'd still lean Under, as they are only favored in four games for me.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 5.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING   **34**

NATIONAL RANK: #99 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #9 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
8/31	RHODE ISLAND	-12	24.5
9/9	CONNECTICUT	-5	32
9/16	at Charlotte	-7	25
9/21	at Coastal Carolina	5.5	37.5
9/30	TROY	8	44.5
10/14	MARSHALL	4.5	40.5
10/21	at LA Lafayette	7.5	38.5
10/26	at Ga Southern	2	33
11/4	JAMES MADISON	3.5	39.5
11/11	APPALACHIAN ST	1.5	37.5
11/18	at LSU	31.5	62.5
11/25	at Old Dominion	-4.5	27.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH   36.96   #79 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS   2.5 / 0.2   (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

22-1   ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP   **5000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS   **12**

OFFENSE: 7 QB

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	30	44	31.2	102
Yards Per Point	13.9	53	12.8	108
Plays Per Game	75.6	21		
Time of Possession	28:52	89		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.7%	41	41.7%	93
Total Yards Per Game	417.3	37	399.3	78
Yards Per Play	5.5	53	5.6	74
Rush Attempts Per Game	47.9	5		
Rush Yards Per Game	213.8	12	170.6	85
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	51	4.3	80
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.8	120		
Completion %	58.4%	86	60.5%	65
Passing Yards Per Game	203.6	97	228.8	62
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	21	7.6	95
Turnovers	1.6	88	2.1	7

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 6-5, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at South Carolina (12.5)	14-35	L	L
9/10	NORTH CAROLINA (7)	28-35	L	T
9/17	CHARLOTTE (-19.5)	41-42	L	L
9/22	COASTAL CAROLINA (2.5)	24-41	L	L
10/1	at Army (9)	31-14	W	W
10/8	GA SOUTHERN (-2.5)	41-33	W	W
10/19	at Appalachian St (9)	17-42	L	L
10/29	OLD DOMINION (-3.5)	31-17	W	W
11/5	at Southern Miss (2)	42-14	W	W
11/12	LA MONROE (-13.5)	28-31	L	L
11/19	at James Madison (10)	40-42	L	W
11/26	at Marshall (6.5)	23-28	L	W

BY ADAM BURKE

The first season as an FBS member was a good one for James Madison. Even though the Dukes were ineligible for a bowl game and wound up only playing 11 games, they went 8-3 and cracked the Top 25, only to lose to Georgia Southern to kick off a three-game skid. Curt Cignetti and everybody else around the football program had to be thrilled. Now, with big losses on offense, reality as a Division I-A team may set in.

OFFENSE
The Dukes were able to bring former Colorado State QB Todd Centeio along for the bump to FBS, and he had a fine season, throwing for nearly 2,700 yards and running for nearly 400 more with 32 total touchdowns. With Centeio leaving, the Dukes have very little experience at the position. Cignetti recruit Alonza Barnett had one pass attempt while redshirting last season. Billy Atkins had 43 pass attempts and only completed 44.2% of his tosses. Arizona transfer Jordan McCloud and Wake Forest transfer Brett Griffis are also on the roster.

Not only does JMU have nobody proven at the QB position, a 1,000-yard receiver left in Kris Thornton. Nobody else had more than 401 yards or 24 catches, and that guy, Reggie Brown, is the only returnee of the top five in yards. Leading rusher Percy Agyei-Obese left after rushing for 5.7 yards per carry on a team that mustered just 4.3 yards per attempt. The offensive line is full of upperclassmen with experience, but a new QB and new skill guys drop the Dukes several notches.

DEFENSE
Defensively, you've got to hand it to the Dukes. They graduated to FBS and only had minimal regression across the board. They held opponents to 20.9 points per game, with just 4.7 yards per play and just 2.5 yards per carry. JMU did avoid both South Alabama and Troy from the other division and caught Coastal Carolina at a very opportune time with Grayson McCall injured. Weak schedule or not, it was still a very impressive performance from the Dukes, but the schedule is tougher this season.

The top three tacklers and four of the top five are back, as James Madison also racked up 38 sacks in the first FBS season after having 41 in three additional games in 2021. Top sack artist Isaac Ukwu did hit the transfer portal, but defensive coordinator Bryant Haines has a lot of the same guys to work with this season, including plenty of upperclassmen. JMU was fourth in third-down defense last season, a mark I doubt they'll replicate.

OUTLOOK
As mentioned, along with the gauntlet that is the East Division, James Madison gets the top two teams in the West, with Troy on the road and South Alabama at home. The nonconference slate also features a road game against Utah State in what is the third straight away contest for the Dukes, so that profiles as a really tough spot, especially sandwiched between Troy and South Alabama. The win total of 8 is quite optimistic for JMU, as I have them down for 7.29 wins, and they have three games in my power ratings where they are -1.5 or smaller.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 39.5

NATIONAL RANK: #73 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #4 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	BUCKNELL	-46	-2.5
9/9	at Virginia	2	39
9/16	at Troy	6.5	44.5
9/23	at Utah St	-8	30
9/30	S ALABAMA	1	44
10/14	GA SOUTHERN	-10.5	33
10/19	at Marshall	2.5	40.5
10/28	OLD DOMINION	-15.5	27.5
11/4	at Georgia St	-3.5	34
11/11	CONNECTICUT	-11.5	32
11/18	APPALACHIAN ST	-5	37.5
11/25	at Coastal Carolina	0	37.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **32.17** #121 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.5 / 0.4** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

NA ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **50000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS 13
OFFENSE: 6
DEFENSE: 7

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	34.4	21	22.3	26
Yards Per Point	13.1	27	13.4	92
Plays Per Game	76	17		
Time of Possession	33:32	7		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.3%	70	29.0%	6
Total Yards Per Game	451.5	24	298	6
Yards Per Play	5.9	33	4.5	6
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.5	10		
Rush Yards Per Game	181.9	38	87.3	2
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	67	2.6	1
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.3	82		
Completion %	60.1%	71	55.7%	14
Passing Yards Per Game	269.6	28	210.7	35
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.9	7	7.1	59
Turnovers	2	119	2	8

2022 RESULTS

SU: 8-3, ATS: 7-4, O/U: 7-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	MIDDLE TENN ST (-4.5)	44-7	W	W
9/10	NORFOLK ST (-41.5)	63-7	W	W
9/24	at Appalachian St (6)	32-28	W	W
10/1	TEXAS ST UNIV (-21.5)	40-13	W	W
10/8	at Arkansas St (-11.5)	42-20	W	W
10/15	at Ga Southern (-13)	38-45	L	L
10/22	MARSHALL (-9.5)	12-26	L	L
11/5	at Louisville (6.5)	10-34	L	L
11/12	at Old Dominion (-7)	37-3	W	W
11/19	GEORGIA ST (-10)	42-40	W	L
11/26	COASTAL CAROLINA (-15.5)	47-7	W	W

BY ADAM BURKE

A play here or a play there and things could have been very different for the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns last season. They lost by six points to Troy and three points to South Alabama, who wound up finishing No. 1 and No. 2 in the West Division. When all was said and done, Louisiana had its first losing season since 2017, thanks to a 23-16 loss in the Independence Bowl. It could've been a special first year as head coach for Michael Desormeaux, but now the focus falls on his second season.

OFFENSE

Regression was pretty inevitable for the Ragin' Cajuns. They lost a good bit of production on both sides of the ball after having 20 returning starters in 2021, and this team was +25 in turnover margin in 2020 and 2021 en route to going 23-2. Without Levi Lewis and others, the offense was sure to slide, and that did happen, as the team gained just 5.3 yards per play and managed just 26.2 points per contest. You have to go back to 2016 to find the last time Louisiana had offensive numbers like that.

The weird part is that Louisiana did have a combined 27/10 TD/INT ratio from the quarterbacks, and all three return here. Ben Wooldridge and Chandler Fields were both limited by injuries in the spring, so the position may be in a state of flux. Leading rusher Chris Smith is gone, but Dre'lyn Washington was more explosive at times anyway. The bigger loss is leading receiver Michael Jefferson, who had more than double the catches and receiving yards of anybody else.

DEFENSE

Louisiana's defensive numbers slid a little as well, though not as much as the offense's production. The Ragin' Cajuns still held opponents to just 5.3 yards per play and 22.8 points per game, but the losses are very heavy this time around. After going from 10 returning starters in 2021 to five in 2022, Louisiana only brings back three starters this year. The top four tacklers are all gone, and sixth-ranked tackler Andre Jones was drafted by the Commanders.

The defense will have to be completely rebuilt by LaMar Morgan, who is just a second-year defensive coordinator. On the plus side, Morgan was a defensive back at Louisiana and has mostly coached them in his career, which helps because there are zero returning starters in the secondary. For a team that dropped by 10 sacks year over year and loses the top two sack men, that secondary could be under duress with a depressed pass rush.

OUTLOOK

After hosting Troy and South Alabama last season, Louisiana goes to Alabama twice in four weeks for those games. Minnesota and Buffalo are part of the nonconference schedule. The Desormeaux hire was met with some skepticism, and he took a lot of Billy Napier's roster and went 6-7. What will he do now with a lot of new faces in new spaces on the field? I can't say I'm very optimistic, despite my projection for 7.21 wins. That just speaks to how weak the schedule is in terms of Louisiana's favorite roles. I actually think this team could bottom out, and I like the Under, despite my projection.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 6.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **38.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #82 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #5 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	NORTHWESTERN ST	-37	5
9/9	at Old Dominion	-9.5	27.5
9/16	at UAB	-1.5	35
9/23	BUFFALO	-10.5	31.5
9/30	at Minnesota	14.5	50.5
10/7	TEXAS ST UNIV	-15	27.5
10/21	GEORGIA ST	-7.5	34
10/28	at S Alabama	8	44
11/4	at Arkansas St	-8.5	28
11/9	SOUTHERN MISS	-6	36
11/18	at Troy	7.5	44.5
11/25	LA MONROE	-18	24.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **31.58**
#124 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3.4 / 0.4**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

10-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **9**

OFFENSE: 6 QB

DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	26.3	70	24.2	40
Yards Per Point	13.9	51	15.3	38
Plays Per Game	70.5	61		
Time of Possession	29:32	73		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.2%	72	39.6%	73
Total Yards Per Game	365.8	80	370.9	46
Yards Per Play	5.2	81	5.2	45
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.3	86		
Rush Yards Per Game	144.8	69	144.9	51
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	64	4	49
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.3	42		
Completion %	56.6%	100	57.1%	20
Passing Yards Per Game	221	76	226	59
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	103	7	46
Turnovers	1.6	88	1.8	20

2022 RESULTS

SU: 6-7, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 6-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	SE LOUISIANA (-13)	24-7	W	W
9/10	E MICHIGAN (-11)	49-21	W	W
9/17	at Rice (-12.5)	21-33	L	L
9/24	at La Monroe (-9.5)	17-21	L	L
10/1	S ALABAMA (8.5)	17-20	L	W
10/12	at Marshall (10)	23-13	W	W
10/22	ARKANSAS ST (-5.5)	38-18	W	W
10/27	at Southern Miss (-2.5)	24-39	L	L
11/5	TROY (3.5)	17-23	L	L
11/10	GA SOUTHERN (-3.5)	36-17	W	W
11/19	at Florida St (25)	17-49	L	L
11/26	at Texas St Univ (-5)	41-13	W	W
12/23	vs. Houston (6)	16-23	L	L

BY ADAM BURKE

Louisiana-Monroe has been the king of the fun upset the last two seasons. In 2021, the Warhawks beat Troy as a 23.5-point underdog, Liberty as a 33-point pup, and South Alabama as a two-touchdown dog. In 2022, two of ULM's four wins came as an underdog, topping Louisiana in the Battle on the Bayou getting 9.5, and beating Georgia State on the road getting almost two touchdowns. It's a hard way to make a living, and Terry Bowden's bunch is only 8-16 over the last two seasons, but they're getting the most out of their victories.

OFFENSE

Matt Kubik's second stint as OC in Monroe started a lot like his first. Kubik inherited an offense that managed just 4.5 yards per play in 2015 and took them up to 5.1 in 2016 during his first season. The 2021 Warhawks averaged 4.6 yards per play, and Kubik took them up to 5.2. By the time he left ULM in 2019, the team averaged 6.4 yards per play and got him a job at Southern Miss.

Progress is always a good thing, but progress may be hard to make this season. QB Chandler Rogers is out, and a whole cast of inexperienced signal callers will battle it out to see who emerges victorious. The position could be in a state of flux, which is also true of the running back position, though leading rusher Malik Jackson only had 3.6 yards per carry, and the team had 3.5. The team went to the transfer portal to find help at RB and WR, but none of it will matter if Kubik can't find a QB.

DEFENSE

The Warhawks defense has allowed over six yards per play every season since 2015, and it will take a lot of improvement to avoid that fate again. Vic Koenning got a second chance to be a defensive coordinator after West Virginia players accused him of mistreatment in 2019. The defense improved by 0.2 yards per play though they allowed more points than the previous season. This year's unit will be missing top tackler Zack Woodard, but four of the top tacklers are back otherwise.

Koenning has been a very successful DC, but it does take time for his scheme to take hold. The Warhawks only had six interceptions last season and finished -7 in turnover margin. The defense got worn down by the run in a lot of games and finished in the bottom 20 in third-down conversion rate against. We'll find out about the run defense very quickly with a season opener against Army.

OUTLOOK

ULM has a flair for the dramatic and could pull a couple more upsets, but I only have the Warhawks favored in two games this season. They should take care of Lamar, and I have them -3 against Arkansas State, so that is hardly a gimme game. With a lot to figure out on offense, the defense will be under a lot of pressure again. My projection is for 3.01 wins, and the market has 3.5 with heavy Under juice. They may pick off a team or two, but they play nine straight weeks against Sun Belt foes and Ole Miss because of an early bye week. There isn't enough depth for that.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 24.5

NATIONAL RANK: #126 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #14 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	ARMY	8.5	36
9/9	LAMAR	-26.5	1
9/16	at Texas A&M	35	56
9/30	APPALACHIAN ST	10.5	37.5
10/7	S ALABAMA	16.5	44
10/14	at Texas St Univ	6	27.5
10/21	at Ga Southern	12.5	33
10/28	ARKANSAS ST	0.5	28
11/4	at Southern Miss	14	36
11/11	TROY	17.5	44.5
11/18	at Ole Miss	34.5	56
11/25	at LA Lafayette	18	38.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 36.75 #81 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.7 / 0.5 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

150-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 10000-1

RETURNING STARTERS 10

OFFENSE: 5

DEFENSE: 5

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	21.2	101	36.9	124
Yards Per Point	15	83	11.9	125
Plays Per Game	65.4	115		
Time of Possession	29:19	77		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.6%	66	43.5%	111
Total Yards Per Game	317	113	438.5	108
Yards Per Play	4.8	102	6.2	117
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.5	83		
Rush Yards Per Game	116.4	99	205.6	120
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	105	4.9	110
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.7	102		
Completion %	65.6%	18	67.1%	124
Passing Yards Per Game	200.6	99	232.8	72
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.2	68	8.4	121
Turnovers	1.4	54	0.6	131

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Texas (37.5)	10-52	L	L
9/10	NICHOLLS ST (-4.5)	35-7	W	W
9/17	at Alabama (49.5)	7-63	L	L
9/24	LA LAFAYETTE (9.5)	21-17	W	W
10/1	at Arkansas St (7.5)	28-45	L	L
10/8	COASTAL CAROLINA (13)	21-28	L	W
10/15	at S Alabama (17)	34-41	L	W
10/22	at Army (6.5)	24-48	L	L
11/5	TEXAS ST UNIV (-2.5)	31-30	W	L
11/12	at Georgia St (13.5)	31-28	W	W
11/19	at Troy (14.5)	16-34	L	L
11/26	SOUTHERN MISS (3)	10-20	L	L

MARSHALL
THUNDERING HERD

HEAD COACH: CHARLES HUFF (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CLINT TRICKETT
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JASON SEMORE / CHEVIS JACKSON

BY ADAM BURKE

The quietest nine-win season in college football came out of Huntington, West Virginia. The Marshall Thundering Herd went 9-4 with one of the most suffocating defenses in the nation. Unfortunately, Marshall also had one of the most boring offenses in the country. Herd games averaged 40.5 combined points. Their eight conference games featured 35 combined points per game, with Marshall averaging 19 and opponents coming away with 16. The bowl game against UConn in Myrtle Beach had a whopping 619 yards of combined offense. But, sometimes boring wins, and boring won a lot for Marshall in 2022.

OFFENSE
Marshall's keep-away strategy was effective last season, as the Herd finished 25th in average time of possession and ran for over 200 yards per game. They averaged just 4.5 yards per carry, but they leaned on the opposition by having early-down success with the run and the occasional play-action toss or swing pass. Marshall was actually just 84th in the nation in third-down conversion rate, despite being 25th in number of plays run.

Marshall was also just 113th in the nation in TD% in the red zone at 51.02% with 25 touchdowns in 49 tries. Second-year offensive coordinator Clint Trickett will try to get more out of incumbent starter Cam Fancher, who ran for 466 yards and only threw for 1,558 after taking over for Henry Colombi. Fancher had a 10/6 TD/INT ratio. Perhaps the pressure will shift off of him a bit with the return of Rasheen Ali, who missed the first 10 games with a knee injury. Khalan Laborn ran for 1,513 yards and 15 touchdowns in his stead, but he is now in the NFL as a UDFA with the 49ers.

DEFENSE
Marshall's defense tied for fifth in the nation in takeaways with 29. Only five teams forced more interceptions than the 18 that the Herd came away with, and they also scooped 11 fumbles. It wasn't just the rash of turnovers that helped. Opponents only mustered 93 rush yards per game and 2.9 yards per carry. Overall, opponents only managed 4.6 yards per play. The losses are heavy on defense, though, as a new defensive coordinator takes over in Jason Semore. Lance Guidry took the same position at Miami (FL).

Top tackler Eli Neal returns, along with top sack man Owen Porter, but only three of the top 10 tacklers are back. Marshall will run a 4-2-5 under Semore, and there are players to replace at each level of the defense, including four in the secondary. After allowing 34 points to Bowling Green, Marshall didn't allow more than 24 points the rest of the way, so this group came together very quickly, and maybe the same thing can happen this season. Marshall led the nation by more than 3% in third-down defense last season.

OUTLOOK
Defensive regression looks likely with all the moving parts and some potentially unsustainable stats, but the offense also moved the ball effectively, protected it well, and failed to capitalize on scoring chances. That means Marshall could be in line for more points, especially with a more experienced QB and less uncertainty at the position. Marshall's schedule is tough, though. While Coastal Carolina and James Madison are rebuilding, the Herd face South Alabama on the road, along with NC State in nonconference action. Marshall plays six road games, and five of those teams made bowl games last season. Despite the tough schedule, my projection is for 7.78 wins with a win total of 7.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 7

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **40.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #71 OF 133
CONFERENCE RANK: #3 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	ALBANY	-28	15
9/9	at East Carolina	-2	36
9/23	VIRGINIA TECH	-3	39.5
9/30	OLD DOMINION	-15	27.5
10/7	at NC State	10.5	48.5
10/14	at Georgia St	-4.5	34
10/19	JAMES MADISON	-2.5	39.5
10/28	at Coastal Carolina	-1	37.5
11/4	at Appalachian St	-0.5	37.5
11/11	GA SOUTHERN	-9.5	33
11/18	at S Alabama	6	44
11/25	ARKANSAS ST	-14.5	28

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 35.13 #94 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 1.9 / 0.4 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+800 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **11**
OFFENSE: 7 QB
DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	21.4	100	18	8
Yards Per Point	17.6	115	18	8
Plays Per Game	74.9	26		
Time of Possession	30:56	40		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.6%	91	25.5%	1
Total Yards Per Game	377	70	324.8	16
Yards Per Play	5	94	4.6	10
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.6	8		
Rush Yards Per Game	188	35	105.5	12
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	66	3.2	6
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.6	104		
Completion %	58.6%	84	53.2%	4
Passing Yards Per Game	189	111	219.3	49
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	84	6.4	18
Turnovers	1.5	83	2.1	6

2022 RESULTS

SU: 9-4, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 3-10

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	NORFOLK ST (-41)	55-3	W	W
9/10	at Notre Dame (20.5)	26-21	W	W
9/17	at Bowling Green (-17.5)	31-34	L	L
9/24	at Troy (-3)	7-16	L	L
10/1	GARDNER WEBB (-31)	28-7	W	L
10/12	LA LAFAYETTE (-10)	13-23	L	L
10/22	at James Madison (9.5)	26-12	W	W
10/29	COASTAL CAROLINA (-2.5)	13-24	L	L
11/5	at Old Dominion (-3.5)	12-0	W	W
11/12	APPALACHIAN ST (2.5)	28-21	W	W
11/19	at Ga Southern (-5.5)	23-10	W	W
11/26	GEORGIA ST (-6.5)	28-23	W	L
12/19	vs. Connecticut (-12)	28-14	W	W

OLD DOMINION
MONARCHS

HEAD COACH: RICKY RAHNE (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN DECKER
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BLAKE SEILER

BY ADAM BURKE

The move from Conference USA to the Sun Belt did not work out for Old Dominion last season. The Monarchs went from making a bowl game to finishing with a 3-9 record. They went 2-6 in league play, though that did include a huge win over Coastal Carolina on the teal turf. It was a shame because the season started with a monumental win for the program over Virginia Tech, but those magical moments were few and far between. As Ricky Rahne starts his fourth season with the program and third with football games, the Monarchs are in a rebuilding year.

OFFENSE

ODU did not play in 2020 because of COVID, so going 6-7 in 2021 was a minor miracle, especially after a 1-6 start. Reality set in with a step up in class moving to the Sun Belt East Division. Things don't look too promising this season either. Quarterback Hayden Wolff transferred out, as did backup Brendon Clark, so nobody on the ODU roster has a pass attempt with the program. Even likely starter Grant Wilson transferred in from Fordham with only 13 attempts to his name.

Rahne, who played QB at Cornell, has a lot of unanswered questions at the position. To make matters worse, leading rusher Blake Watson transferred out after amassing 916 yards on 159 carries. Top wide receiver Ali Jennings also bolted. Returning production is very hard to find for Rahne and first-year offensive coordinator Kevin Decker, who is the reason why Wilson transferred in from Fordham, as he was there as the OC last season. Fordham did have one of the nation's most potent offenses, but this is a huge leap in competition.

DEFENSE

All things considered, the defense really battled. The offense mustered just 19.5 points per game, which gave the defense no margin for error. They tried, allowing 26.6 points per game and 5.7 yards per play. ODU was dead last in the nation by almost a full minute in time of possession on offense, so the defense was on the field a ton.

Super sophomore Jason Henderson had 186 tackles for the Monarchs last season. He's one of two guys with more than 40 tackles to return this season. The Monarchs also lost 11 pass breakups from Tobias Harris and also lost Tre Hawkins, who was a sixth-round pick for the Giants. The defense did yeoman's work last season to keep the Monarchs in games, but with three returning starters and low hopes on offense, it could be a long year.

OUTLOOK

Virginia Tech will be out for revenge in Blacksburg in Week 1, as the Monarchs also play Louisiana, Wake Forest, and an FCS opponent in the nonconference. They miss Troy and South Alabama in crossover play with the West Division, but I'm not sure that matters. This is a rebuilding year for Rahne in hopes of putting something together in 2024 or 2025. I have the Monarchs as a touchdown or more underdog in all 11 games against FBS competition. I project them for 3.21 wins, with the Texas A&M-Commerce game in "gimme" territory, but Under 3.5 is the play with this team.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 3.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **27.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #121 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #13 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Virginia Tech	14.5	39.5
9/9	LA LAFAYETTE	9.5	38.5
9/16	WAKE FOREST	16	45.5
9/23	TEXAS A&M-COMM	-17.5	11.5
9/30	at Marshall	15	40.5
10/7	at Southern Miss	11	36
10/21	APPALACHIAN ST	8.5	37.5
10/28	at James Madison	15.5	39.5
11/4	COASTAL CAROLINA	8.5	37.5
11/11	at Liberty	12.5	36.5
11/18	at Ga Southern	9	33
11/25	GEORGIA ST	4.5	34

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **36.40**
#87 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2 / 0.2**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

80-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **7**

OFFENSE: 4
DEFENSE: 3

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.5	111	26.6	59
Yards Per Point	17.5	114	16.8	16
Plays Per Game	63.3	126		
Time of Possession	24:07	131		
3rd Down Conv. %	29.6%	121	41.2%	86
Total Yards Per Game	341.8	100	447.5	115
Yards Per Play	5.4	62	5.6	81
Rush Attempts Per Game	25.5	129		
Rush Yards Per Game	94.6	124	203.3	118
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	88	4.3	82
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.8	38		
Completion %	56.7%	99	64.8%	113
Passing Yards Per Game	247.2	49	244.3	88
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	73	8.2	114
Turnovers	1.5	72	1.6	38

2022 RESULTS

SU: 3-9, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 3-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/2	VIRGINIA TECH (6)	20-17	W	W
9/10	at East Carolina (13)	21-39	L	L
9/17	at Virginia (9)	14-16	L	W
9/24	ARKANSAS ST (-4.5)	29-26	W	L
10/1	LIBERTY (3.5)	24-38	L	L
10/15	at Coastal Carolina (10.5)	49-21	W	W
10/22	GA SOUTHERN (-1.5)	23-28	L	L
10/29	at Georgia St (3.5)	17-31	L	L
11/5	MARSHALL (3.5)	0-12	L	L
11/12	JAMES MADISON (7)	3-37	L	L
11/19	at Appalachian St (16)	14-27	L	W
11/26	at S Alabama (16.5)	20-27	L	W

SOUTH ALABAMA
JAGUARS

BY ADAM BURKE

What a season it was for Kane Wommack's crew in Mobile. South Alabama had never had a winning season as an FBS member, but the Jaguars rewrote the record books and rattled off 10 wins. The Jags are still searching for their first bowl win in program history, so that will be among Wommack's chief goals this season, and he has the team to do it. With a ton of returning production and a weak division, more records may be broken.

OFFENSE

Both sides of the ball improved for South Alabama last season, even with the loss of 2021 QB Jake Bentley. Carter Bradley beat out Desmond Trotter for the job and threw for 3,343 yards with a 28/12 TD/INT ratio. He could cut down on the picks this season with his top two pass catchers and six of the top seven back in the fold. He also gets Memphis transfer Javon Ivory to line up with top returnees Devin Voisin and Caullin Lacy.

The top three rushers are all back as well, including 1,000-yard man La'Damian Webb, who was a Sun Belt first-teamer with 13 rushing scores. The depth here is strong, as evidenced by all the returning production at the skill positions and also the presence of Trotter, who is actually the program's third all-time leading passer. Offensive coordinator Major Applewhite is also in his third year with a lot of the same players. This group improved by 0.6 yards per play from '21 to '22, and I'd expect improvement again.

DEFENSE

Wommack was a top-flight defensive coordinator before becoming a head coach, and he seems to have a good one in Corey Batoon. The Jaguars shaved more than five points per game off their total last season and 0.3 yards per play. The defense really stiffened up against the run and only allowed 3.3 yards per carry, which ranked 15th in the nation. The top six tacklers are back this season, and once again, many of these players have been around since the Wommack regime began.

Usually, it is a huge blow when a program like South Alabama loses an NFL-caliber player, but the loss of Darrell Luter may not be that big of a deal because Yam Banks is back after six interceptions and 11 pass breakups. South Alabama did give up some yardage through the air and actually had fewer sacks in 2022, but improvement is not out of the question.

OUTLOOK

While South Alabama went 10-3, the Jaguars weren't exactly dominant. Of their seven conference wins, five were by seven or fewer points. Red zone defense played a huge role, as the Jags were tied for fourth in TD% against inside the 20, surrendering only 18 TD in 42 attempts. Even if there are some mild regressions in the key situational stats, the schedule is pretty weak, though the head-to-head meeting with Troy is on the road. The win total line is 8, and my projection is for 8.83 wins, with South Alabama favored in 10 of 12 games, including -1 at Troy.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING 44

NATIONAL RANK: #62 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #2 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Tulane	8.5	49
9/9	SE LOUISIANA	-18.5	28.5
9/16	at Oklahoma St	6.5	47.5
9/23	C MICHIGAN	-14.5	32.5
9/30	at James Madison	-1	39.5
10/7	at LA Monroe	-16.5	24.5
10/17	SOUTHERN MISS	-11	36
10/28	LA LAFAYETTE	-8	38.5
11/2	at Troy	3	44.5
11/11	ARKANSAS ST	-19	28
11/18	MARSHALL	-6	40.5
11/25	at Texas St Univ	-14	27.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **36.47** #86 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **3 / 0.2** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+290 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 18

OFFENSE: 9 QB
DEFENSE: 9

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	29.8	45	22.5	28
Yards Per Point	14	56	15.5	33
Plays Per Game	74.8	27		
Time of Possession	32:31	14		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.2%	30	32.3%	14
Total Yards Per Game	417	38	347.8	30
Yards Per Play	5.6	51	5.2	39
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.4	47		
Rush Yards Per Game	154.1	62	98.1	6
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	73	3.5	18
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.4	39		
Completion %	64.2%	32	60.2%	58
Passing Yards Per Game	262.9	34	249.7	92
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	48	6.8	36
Turnovers	1.3	48	1.5	51

2022 RESULTS

SU: 10-3, ATS: 7-6, O/U: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	NICHOLLS ST (-13.5)	48-7	W	W
9/10	at C Michigan (6)	38-24	W	W
9/17	at UCLA (15.5)	31-32	L	W
9/24	LOUISIANA TECH (-13)	38-14	W	W
10/1	at La Lafayette (-8.5)	20-17	W	L
10/15	LA MONROE (-17)	41-34	W	L
10/20	TROY (-3)	6-10	L	L
10/29	at Arkansas St (-9)	31-3	W	W
11/5	at Ga Southern (-3.5)	38-31	W	W
11/12	TEXAS ST UNIV (-16.5)	38-21	W	W
11/19	at Southern Miss (-7.5)	27-20	W	L
11/26	OLD DOMINION (-16.5)	27-20	W	L
12/21	vs. W Kentucky (-4)	23-44	L	L

SOUTHERN MISS
GOLDEN EAGLES

HEAD COACH: WILL HALL (3RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SAM GREGG
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAN O'BRIEN

BY ADAM BURKE

Southern Miss was Team Chaos last season. The Golden Eagles went 7-6, which represented a four-win improvement in head coach Will Hall's second season. Six of the 13 games were decided by seven or fewer points, including a four-overtime loss to Liberty to open the season. The swing game to fall on the right side of .500 was the first bowl win since 2016 for the program, with a 38-24 triumph over Rice in the LendingTree Bowl. Is another bowl appearance in store?

OFFENSE
Figuring out the quarterback position would go a long way toward helping Southern Miss grow on offense. Five guys, including star RB Frank Gore, saw time at the position last season. They combined for a 55% completion rate and 20 touchdown passes against 14 interceptions. Southern Miss only ran for 3.9 yards per carry, despite a huge season from Gore, who had 6.1 yards per pop and 1,382 yards with nine touchdowns. He'll be the best back in the Belt if he stays healthy, but this team needs to find some balance.

Clemson transfer Billy Wiles and JUCO transfer Holman Edwards seem to be duking it out for the starting spot. Top receiver Jason Brownlee is gone, but finding a guy to run the offense should allow the WR position to shake itself out. Whoever wins the job should be well-protected by a veteran offensive line. More decisiveness at the position should cut down on the 34 sacks from last season as well. We saw what Southern Miss could be without a QB. What if they find one?

DEFENSE
A mostly rebuilt secondary is the biggest concern for the Golden Eagles on defense. The front seven is pretty experienced, and Hall found success with the JUCOs he brought in last season. The Golden Eagles shaved off 4.4 points per game and 0.4 yards per play from Year 1 to Year 2, but they have a new defensive coordinator in Dan O'Brien. Not much will change, though, as O'Brien was coaching safeties and was an analyst at Georgia prior to that.

The top three tacklers are gone from last year's team, but a lot of players got to the quarterback, as the defense was really aggressive with 44 sacks. Dominic Quewon was the best at it with 10 sacks, but his eligibility ran out. The Golden Eagles really pressure hard on third down, which does leave them open to some big gains, but also led to a lot of stops.

OUTLOOK
Most Sun Belt West Division schedules aren't that tough, but Southern Miss has a tricky one. The nonconference slate includes Florida State, Tulane, and Mississippi State, which are all underdog roles, and there are four road games in the span of a month from October 17 to November 18 before playing Troy at home in the finale. If a QB emerges, the Golden Eagles could be a long shot pick to win the West, but that's a big if. Nevertheless, their win total line is 5, and I have a projection of 5.95 wins, so I think six and a bowl bid is more likely than 5.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 5

STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING 36

NATIONAL RANK: #93 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #8 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	ALCORN ST	-27.5	10.5
9/9	at Florida St	25.5	59.5
9/16	TULANE	11	49
9/23	at Arkansas St	-5.5	28
9/30	TEXAS ST UNIV	-11	27.5
10/7	OLD DOMINION	-11	27.5
10/17	at S Alabama	11	44
10/28	at Appalachian St	4.5	37.5
11/4	LA MONROE	-14	24.5
11/9	at LA Lafayette	6	38.5
11/18	at Mississippi St	17	50.5
11/25	TROY	6.5	44.5

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **37.02** #77 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.1 / 0.1** (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

25-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

5000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS 15

OFFENSE: 9 QB

DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	22.1	96	24.7	44
Yards Per Point	14.9	82	15.6	30
Plays Per Game	65	117		
Time of Possession	28:20	102		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.1%	108	37.8%	54
Total Yards Per Game	330.1	106	384.8	65
Yards Per Play	5.1	87	5.3	51
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.8	72		
Rush Yards Per Game	138.4	80	149.5	57
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	81	3.9	40
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.5	112		
Completion %	54.7%	112	60.8%	71
Passing Yards Per Game	191.7	106	235.3	79
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.2	69	7.6	87
Turnovers	2.2	123	1.7	31

2022 RESULTS

SU: 7-6, ATS: 10-3, O/U: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	LIBERTY (3.5)	27-29	L	W
9/10	at Miami Fl (27.5)	7-30	L	W
9/17	NORTHWESTERN ST (-33)	62-10	W	W
9/24	at Tulane (11.5)	27-24	W	W
10/8	at Troy (7)	10-27	L	L
10/15	ARKANSAS ST (-4.5)	20-19	W	L
10/22	at Texas St Univ (-2.5)	20-14	W	W
10/27	LA LAFAYETTE (2.5)	39-24	W	W
11/5	GEORGIA ST (-2)	14-42	L	L
11/12	at Coastal Carolina (5)	23-26	L	W
11/19	S ALABAMA (7.5)	20-27	L	W
11/26	at La Monroe (-3)	20-10	W	W
12/17	vs. Rice (-6.5)	38-24	W	W

TEXAS STATE
BOBCATS

HEAD COACH: G. J. KINNE (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MACK LEFTWICH
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JONATHAN PATKE

BY ADAM BURKE

You have to be a college football junkie to get excited about a team with a season win total of 4.5, but the Texas State Bobcats are one of the most interesting teams to me this season. Former Tulsa QB GJ Kinne gets his first crack at being an FBS head coach as a rapid riser in the profession after serving as the head coach of Incarnate Word last season. All the Cardinals did was average 51.5 points and 581 yards per game. Get hyped, San Marcos!

OFFENSE

There are some quarterbacks very interested in playing for Kinne. How else could you explain the Bobcats having Malik Hornsby from Arkansas and TJ Finley from Auburn as graduate transfers? Lindsey Scott Jr.. seemed to enjoy playing for Kinne; he threw 60 touchdown passes against eight interceptions and won the Walter Payton Award for the best FCS player. Last year's Bobcats scored 21.1 points per game and had 4.7 yards per play. It's safe to say that those numbers will go up.

Junior wide receiver Ashtyn Hawkins has to be thrilled after leading the team with 56 catches for 587 yards last season. Nobody else had more than 29 catches, but the ball will be spread around a ton this year. It wasn't just an all-out aerial assault at Incarnate Word, as the team also ran for over 215 yards per game. The top five in rushing yards are all back for Texas State. If nothing else, this is going to be a fascinating offense, as Kinne led the Cardinals to the FCS Semifinals. He also brought offensive coordinator Mack Leftwich with him.

DEFENSE

If the offense fails in spectacular, and fast, fashion, then this defense is in for a rude awakening. Only four starters are back from a group that improved by 6.7 points and 0.5 yards per game last season. The losses are heavy with four of the top six tacklers gone, but much like on the offensive side, Kinne went shopping in the transfer portal. He plucked a bunch of Power Five transfers for the defensive line and the secondary.

The UIW offense was quite a bit more successful at stopping the pass than the run, so we'll see what sort of scheme defensive coordinator Jonathan Patke can cook up. Everybody will be learning it all at once, so all of the new faces from the portal aren't that big of a deal. We will find out quickly, as Texas State opens with Baylor and UTSA.

OUTLOOK

Texas State will put the "Fun" in Fun Belt this season. Kinne's got two promising QB prospects, and he knows he's going to have to outscore the defensive shortcomings for the team to win games. This is a team we may have to adjust quickly as the season goes along if the offense is working and the defense is holding up its end. For now, my projection is for 3.22 wins, so I'm well below the 4.5 in the market that is heavily juiced towards the under, but they are favored in three games (-3 or less) and a pick 'em in another, so we'll have to see how the season starts.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
UNDER 4.5

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **27.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #120 OF 133
CONFERENCE RANK: #12 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	at Baylor	28	52
9/9	at TX-San Antonio	20.5	44.5
9/16	JACKSON ST	2.5	32
9/23	NEVADA	-3.5	26.5
9/30	at Southern Miss	11	36
10/7	at LA Lafayette	15	38.5
10/14	LA MONROE	-6	24.5
10/28	TROY	14.5	44.5
11/4	GA SOUTHERN	2.5	33
11/11	at Coastal Carolina	12.5	37.5
11/18	at Arkansas St	3	28
11/25	S ALABAMA	14	44

SCHEDULE STRENGTH 37.03 #76 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS 2.5 / 0.4 (HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

70-1 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP **10000-1**

RETURNING STARTERS **11**

OFFENSE: 7
DEFENSE: 4

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	19.9	108	28.7	77
Yards Per Point	15.6	96	13.3	96
Plays Per Game	70.1	66		
Time of Possession	30:02	63		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.8%	86	36.3%	41
Total Yards Per Game	311.2	117	382.4	60
Yards Per Play	4.4	120	5.4	56
Rush Attempts Per Game	31.3	111		
Rush Yards Per Game	102.9	116	124.5	29
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	114	3.6	27
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.6	27		
Completion %	61.5%	57	65.0%	116
Passing Yards Per Game	208.3	91	257.8	99
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	122	7.4	78
Turnovers	1.5	65	1.7	26

2022 RESULTS

SU: 4-8, ATS: 5-7, O/U: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Nevada (-2)	14-38	L	L
9/10	FLA INTERNATIONAL (-14)	41-12	W	W
9/17	at Baylor (30)	7-42	L	L
9/24	HOUSTON BAPTIST (-23)	34-0	W	W
10/1	at James Madison (21.5)	13-40	L	L
10/8	APPALACHIAN ST (19)	36-24	W	W
10/15	at Troy (16.5)	14-17	L	W
10/22	SOUTHERN MISS (2.5)	14-20	L	L
11/5	at La Monroe (2.5)	30-31	L	W
11/12	at S Alabama (16.5)	21-38	L	L
11/19	ARKANSAS ST (-6.5)	16-13	W	L
11/26	LA LAFAYETTE (5)	13-41	L	L

TROY
TROJANS

HEAD COACH: JON SUMRALL (2ND)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE CRADDOCK
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GREG GASPARATO / TAYLER POLK

BY ADAM BURKE

If only the formula was as simple as hiring former Kentucky Wildcats assistants. Then a lot of teams could do what the Troy Trojans have done. Troy has four double-digit winning seasons in the last seven years. Three came with Neal Brown, former Kentucky offensive coordinator, and the most recent came last season with Kentucky co-defensive coordinator Jon Sumrall. The Trojans went 12-2 with one of the nation's most suffocating defenses and will look to defend their first outright Sun Belt Conference championship since 2009.

OFFENSE

The offense made some modest gains, but nothing like what the defense did. Maybe Year 2 will give the offense a chance to make a big leap, as OC Joe Craddock has his quarterback and leading rusher back in the fray. Gunnar Watson is just over 1,100 yards away from being the third all-time leading passer, as he comes off of what could've been a better season. He had a 61.5% completion rate with 2,818 yards but a really pedestrian 14/12 TD/INT ratio.

Kimani Vidal is on track to be the all-time program leader in rushing yards. After gaining 701 yards in 2021, he racked up 1,132 and added 10 touchdowns in his sophomore season. Depth is a bit of a concern here with DK Billingsley gone, but Vidal is a bruiser at 5-8 and 215 pounds. He could be magnified in importance, though, as Troy lost 92 catches and nearly 2016 yards from Tez and RaJae' Johnson. That said, Jabre Barber does return, and he was leading the team before getting hurt. Troy added 2.8 points and 0.4 yards per play from the previous year, so we'll see if they can grow from that.

DEFENSE

Despite 15 INT from Watson and Jarret Doege, the Trojans still finished +6 in turnover margin, as they tied for seventh with 26 takeaways. They were +7 in fumbles, which could regress for this season, but six starters are back on defense in hopes of keeping up the monumental gains of last year. The Troy defense allowed just 17.1 points per game and just 4.7 yards per play. They were eighth nationally in yards per play and points per game, which was a huge step forward.

But this season could result in a step back. The top three tacklers are all gone, including the nation's Defensive Player of the Year in Carlton Martial, who is the all-time FBS leader in tackles. On the plus side, both starting corners are back in Reddy Steward and O'shai Fletcher, who combined for 20 pass breakups. It was surprising to see Troy's overall defensive numbers given that they were 82nd in third-down defense and just 43rd in red zone TD% against. Regression seems likely, especially with DC Shiel Wood gone.

OUTLOOK

The offense could be better, and the defense could be worse, but the Trojans should still be a very good team in the weaker half of the Sun Belt. Furthermore, Troy misses App State, Marshall, and Coastal Carolina from the East. The nonconference is tough, though, with Western Kentucky and Kansas State on the ledger. The win total line for Troy is 8, and my projection is for exactly 8.00 wins. I'd lean towards nine wins over seven wins, though.

SEASON WIN TOTAL PLAY
OVER 8

STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATING **44.5**

NATIONAL RANK: #61 OF 133

CONFERENCE RANK: #1 OF 14

2023 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	EST. LINE	OPP PR
9/2	STEPH F AUSTIN	-28.5	18
9/9	at Kansas St	11.5	53
9/16	JAMES MADISON	-6.5	39.5
9/23	W KENTUCKY	-5.5	40.5
9/30	at Georgia St	-8	34
10/7	ARKANSAS ST	-19	28
10/14	at Army	-6.5	36
10/28	at Texas St Univ	-14.5	27.5
11/2	S ALABAMA	-3	44
11/11	at LA Monroe	-17.5	24.5
11/18	LA LAFAYETTE	-7.5	38.5
11/25	at Southern Miss	-6.5	36

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **35.19**
#92 TOUGHEST OF 133

FIELD RATINGS **2.1 / 0.1**
(HOME/ROAD)

2023 ODDS

+310 ODDS TO WIN SUN BELT

1000-1 ODDS TO WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

RETURNING STARTERS **12**
OFFENSE: 6 QB
DEFENSE: 6

2022 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT/RANK		DEFENSE STAT/RANK	
Points Per Game	24.6	79	17.2	7
Yards Per Point	14.1	61	18.9	5
Plays Per Game	66.7	105		
Time of Possession	30:51	44		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.1%	108	40.9%	84
Total Yards Per Game	347.2	98	324.8	15
Yards Per Play	5.2	80	4.6	9
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.9	69		
Rush Yards Per Game	121.3	97	124.5	27
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	106	3.6	24
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.4	106		
Completion %	62.6%	46	61.5%	81
Passing Yards Per Game	225.8	68	200.3	25
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	20	6	7
Turnovers	1.4	57	1.8	14

2022 RESULTS

SU: 12-2, ATS: 11-3, O/U: 6-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	ATS
9/3	at Ole Miss (21)	10-28	L	W
9/10	ALABAMA A&M (-37.5)	38-17	W	L
9/17	at Appalachian St (14)	28-32	L	W
9/24	MARSHALL (3)	16-7	W	W
10/1	at W Kentucky (4.5)	34-27	W	W
10/8	SOUTHERN MISS (-7)	27-10	W	W
10/15	TEXAS ST UNIV (-16.5)	17-14	W	L
10/20	at S Alabama (3)	10-6	W	W
11/5	at La Lafayette (-3.5)	23-17	W	W
11/12	ARMY (-8.5)	10-9	W	L
11/19	LA MONROE (-14.5)	34-16	W	W
11/26	at Arkansas St (-14)	48-19	W	W
12/3	COASTAL CAROLINA (-6.5)	45-26	W	W
12/16	vs. Tx-San Antonio (3)	18-12	W	W

COLLEGE FOOTBALL RECRUITING RANKINGS HELP PREDICT SUCCESS

by Steve Makinen

College sports are ever-evolving, and the recent phenomenon in acquiring talent relies heavily on both courting high school stars and the transfer portal. Simply put, it has changed the way programs build their teams, and it can have an instant impact. Weak teams can reload quickly. Strong teams can be decimated in the same fashion. Patience to wait out maturing incoming classes is no longer mandated. Essentially, this is the nature of the recruiting game nowadays, and coaches have to be able to both sell their programs to experienced players and develop young ones. Being versed in the recruiting game shouldn't only be considered essential for coaches, however, as those betting should have a good handle on it as well. There is naturally a direct relationship between the success a team has on the recruiting trail to what it has on the field.

The importance of recruiting has never been greater than it is now in college sports, and all of us have been thrown for a loop lately by not only the extraordinary growth of the transfer portal but also by the havoc that COVID-19 wreaked on the sports world. We are finally getting close to clearing out the remaining players competing on that extra year(s) of eligibility they were granted because of the pandemic. These things have made life a little more difficult for bettors who study recruiting rankings as a fundamental part of their offseason handicapping.

It was a few years ago that 247Sports, the source I use for my recruiting ranks article every year, added a "transfer" rating to their "recruit" ratings, as well as combined the two ratings into an "overall" rating. Because of the transfer portal's impact in quickly reshaping rosters, I was forced to implement this overall rating into my annual study.

The recruiting game is quite interesting, and 247Sports covers it as well or better than anyone. This site logs all of the recruits/transfers for every team each season and generates a numerical grading process based on the combined scores of the players a team signs. In 2020, I started looking hard at these numerical recruiting rankings of the FBS programs over the last decade and more. I have found, as usual, that anything numerically rated can be turned into useful foundational betting analysis.

Most fans and bettors typically know who tends to do well annually in the recruiting game, and the usual suspects have once again risen to the top of the rankings for their 2023 classes. Alabama, Georgia, Texas, Ohio State, and LSU comprise the Top 5. These programs' consistent on-field success can easily be attributed accordingly. Alabama has scored the highest national rating on 247Sports in 10 of the last 13 seasons, with Georgia filling in the gaps in two other years and Texas A&M filling the final void in 2022.

None of what I just shared about the high-ranking teams in recruiting is earth-shattering news, but with all that said, finding other lower-radar teams that might be ready to surprise because of unusually good or bad recent recruiting classes can be crucial to success in betting college football. Similarly, knowing which teams are trending in the right or wrong direction regarding their recruiting success can also benefit the handicapper.

Of course, and this is the third straight year that I will emphasize this, there's also the matter of taking recruits and making a team out of them, otherwise known as coaching. Knowing which programs make the most or least out of their recruiting classes should also be a fundamental part of your college football knowledge base.

I will address all of those subjects in this article, including projecting this year's standings for the newly reshaped conferences based SOLELY on the recruiting rankings from 247Sports and a predictive formula that I was able to uncover using regression analysis. This is always an interesting topic that I have now made a permanent fixture in my preparations for each coming college season.

2023 PROJECTED STANDINGS USING THE LAST FOUR YEARS OF RECRUITING RANKINGS

After compiling all of the year-by-year recruiting rankings for the FBS teams since 2007, comparing different options to the actual records and my power ratings that teams closed at in a given season, I was able to determine that the most predictive time frame of a team's success on the field came when considering its Last Four Recruiting Classes. It was greater than one year, two years, three years, and any special combined formulas I derived using the 1-4 year window. This changed since last year, as I used the three-year window as the basis. However, I believe that the extra year of eligibility granted during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the value of age and experience over the last two seasons. As is the case with any statistical study, there are exceptions to the rule. Still, knowing what I know from 20+ years in this industry on both sides of the counter, I am comfortable using this four-year time window to analyze teams' prospects for a season. That said, I will analyze the results of this again next year to see if the results return to the pre-COVID norms.

On the following two pages are the would-be projected standings for the 2023 season for each conference using their combined average rank for their last three recruiting classes (2023, 2022, 2021, 2020). Remember that these projections include no other factor than the perceived talent level of the players when they signed into each team's recruiting class.

ACC

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	CLEMSON	9.25	7
2	MIAMI FL	11.25	10
3	NORTH CAROLINA	18.00	17
4	FLORIDA ST	20.00	19
5	LOUISVILLE	35.50	35
6	GEORGIA TECH	44.75	42
7	PITTSBURGH	46.75	47
8	NC STATE	50.25	48
9	VIRGINIA	51.00	52
10	VIRGINIA TECH	51.25	53
11	BOSTON COLLEGE	52.50	55
12	DUKE	62.50	63
13	SYRACUSE	63.50	66
14	WAKE FOREST	67.50	69

AMERICAN ATHLETIC

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	SMU	56.00	61
2	MEMPHIS	62.50	64
3	TULANE	74.50	73
4	EAST CAROLINA	79.25	74
5	SOUTH FLORIDA	79.50	75
6	TX-SAN ANTONIO	80.75	77
7	FLA ATLANTIC	85.25	80
8	NORTH TEXAS	88.00	84
9	RICE	96.75	94
10	TEMPLE	98.00	96
11	UAB	101.50	99
12	CHARLOTTE	108.00	113
13	TULSA	113.50	123
14	NAVY	120.75	129

BIG 12

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	TEXAS	8.00	
2	OKLAHOMA	9.25	8
3	TCU	35.00	34
4	OKLAHOMA ST	38.75	36
5	WEST VIRGINIA	41.00	39
6	BAYLOR	44.25	4
7	CINCINNATI	46.25	4
8	TEXAS TECH	50.50	50
9	UCF	50.50	5
10	KANSAS ST	52.00	54
11	IOWA ST	53.00	5
12	KANSAS	62.75	6
13	BYU	65.25	6
14	HOUSTON	66.00	6

BIG TEN

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	OHIO ST	3.75	3
2	PENN ST	14.50	13
3	MICHIGAN	14.75	14
4	NEBRASKA	25.50	21
5	MARYLAND	29.75	25
6	WISCONSIN	30.50	28
7	MICHIGAN ST	33.50	30
8	IOWA	34.50	31
9	MINNESOTA	45.00	43
10	INDIANA	46.00	45
11	RUTGERS	50.50	49
12	PURDUE	52.75	56
13	NORTHWESTERN	53.00	58
14	ILLINOIS	69.25	71

CONFERENCE USA

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	FLA INTERNATIONAL	87.75	83
2	LOUISIANA TECH	90.25	87
3	LIBERTY	101.63	100
4	W KENTUCKY	107.75	112
5	MIDDLE TENN ST	110.50	118
6	NEW MEXICO ST	111.25	119
7	SAM HOUSTON ST	116.75	127
8	UTEP	127.00	131
9	JACKSONVILLE ST	132.25	133

MAC

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	TOLEDO	85.75	8
2	MIAMI OHIO	93.25	89
3	BUFFALO	95.00	9
4	C MICHIGAN	96.75	9
5	N ILLINOIS	97.25	9
6	W MICHIGAN	101.25	98
7	E MICHIGAN	105.25	10
8	BOWLING GREEN	105.75	10
9	BALL ST	106.00	108
10	KENT ST	111.50	12
11	OHIO U	113.50	12
12	AKRON	115.25	124

MOUNTAIN WEST

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	BOISE ST	68.50	70
2	SAN DIEGO ST	80.00	76
3	FRESNO ST	85.00	79
4	COLORADO ST	86.25	82
5	UNLV	93.50	90
6	NEVADA	105.00	104
7	SAN JOSE ST	107.25	109
8	AIR FORCE	107.50	110
9	NEW MEXICO	108.00	114
10	WYOMING	110.00	117
11	UTAH ST	111.25	120
12	HAWAII	121.00	130

PAC-12

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	OREGON	10.75	9
2	USC	18.75	18
3	UCLA	29.25	24
4	UTAH	30.00	26
5	WASHINGTON	34.75	33
6	STANFORD	39.75	37
7	ARIZONA ST	41.00	38
8	CALIFORNIA	42.25	40
9	COLORADO	45.25	44
10	ARIZONA	53.75	59
11	WASHINGTON ST	62.00	62
12	OREGON ST	71.25	72

SEC

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	ALABAMA	1.50	
2	GEORGIA	2.50	
3	LSU	4.75	
4	TEXAS A&M	6.25	
5	FLORIDA	12.25	
6	AUBURN	16.25	
7	TENNESSEE	16.50	
8	OLE MISS	21.25	
9	ARKANSAS	25.75	
10	KENTUCKY	26.75	
11	MISSISSIPPI ST	30.50	
12	MISSOURI	32.00	
13	SOUTH CAROLINA	34.50	
14	VANDERBILT	54.00	

SUN BELT

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	APPALACHIAN ST	83.50	78
2	LA LAFAYETTE	89.25	85
3	ARKANSAS ST	90.00	86
4	SOUTHERN MISS	92.25	88
5	COASTAL CAROLINA	94.50	91
6	GA SOUTHERN	100.75	97
7	MARSHALL	101.75	101
8	S ALABAMA	102.25	102
9	TROY	102.50	103
10	GEORGIA ST	105.25	106
11	OLD DOMINION	109.25	115
12	TEXAS ST UNIV	109.75	116
13	LA MONROE	118.50	128
14	JAMES MADISON	131.00	132

INDEPENDENTS

CONF RK	TEAM	4-YEAR AVG	NATL RK
1	NOTRE DAME	12.00	11
2	MASSACHUSETTS	107.75	111
3	CONNECTICUT	115.50	125
4	ARMY	116.25	126

As you look at the projected standings, you will see that there aren't any major surprises projected at the top of any of the Power Five conference standings. The Group of Five conference projections have changed dramatically over the course of a year, mostly due to all of the realignment across the country. Some unusual teams, such as SMU and Florida International, are now leaders in their respective leagues for their recruiting efforts. We'll see how this plays out this fall. It will also be interesting to see how the new additions to the Big 12 shape up. Cincinnati, Houston, UCF, and BYU had grown accustomed to recruiting against the American Conference and Independents. Hopefully, you can find more useful tidbits as you study the Recruiting Rankings chart by conference.

TEAMS THAT DO THE MOST/LEAST WITH THEIR RECRUITING CLASSES

Signing a quality recruiting class is only the start of the story. Coaches need to develop the individual talent they acquire and mold them into a functioning unit in order to be successful. Some programs have demonstrated this ability far better than others. While some programs take a modestly rated recruiting class and make a winning program out of it, there are others that take a highly rated class and underachieve on the field. Let's look at some of the programs that have distinctly demonstrated the opposite ends of this spectrum.

The teams below are sorted by the difference between their average national recruiting rankings over the last five years and their end-of-year power rating on my scale. As you analyze the merits of why each of these teams appears on the list, be sure to consider which programs have undergone coaching changes in recent years and, as a result, how relevant this info might be for 2023.

TOP 20 TEAMS WHOSE ON-FIELD PERFORMANCE CONSISTENTLY EXCEEDS ITS RECRUITING RATING

As you look at the teams on the "overachieving" list, you'll see a common trend: three of the top four programs are service academies, a credit to the quality character of kids those teams recruit.

Also of note here is that of the top nine teams, for the second straight year, seven of them are the same. New entries are BYU and Tulsa, replacing UCF and Liberty. This is a sign of programs with a consistent method of operation.

All but five of the teams on this list are from Group of Five conferences. Only Iowa State (#13), UCF (#16), Cincinnati (#17), and Kansas State (#18) represent the Power Five leagues, and all are from the Big 12. Truthfully, it's hard to compete consistently for conference titles in the Power Five leagues if you aren't recruiting consistently well. It will be interesting to see how much more effective teams like Cincinnati and UCF are in their recruiting efforts going forward with the step up in conference.

1. ARMY: Recruit Rank - 123.4, SM PR Rank - 72, Difference +51.4
2. AIR FORCE: Recruit Rank - 111.2, SM PR Rank - 62.4, Difference +48.8
3. APPALACHIAN ST: Recruit Rank - 92.2, SM PR Rank - 47.6, Difference +44.6
4. NAVY: Recruit Rank - 121.2, SM PR Rank - 78.8, Difference +42.4
5. TULSA: Recruit Rank - 111.8, SM PR Rank - 73.4, Difference +38.4
6. OHIO U: Recruit Rank - 117.4, SM PR Rank - 83.2, Difference +34.2
7. BYU: Recruit Rank - 73.8, SM PR Rank - 44, Difference +29.8
8. WYOMING: Recruit Rank - 110.6, SM PR Rank - 82, Difference +28.6
9. BUFFALO: Recruit Rank - 109.4, SM PR Rank - 80.8, Difference +28.6
10. LA LAFAYETTE: Recruit Rank - 90, SM PR Rank - 61.6, Difference +28.4
11. LIBERTY: Recruit Rank - 98.7, SM PR Rank - 70.3, Difference +28.3
12. FRESNO ST: Recruit Rank - 87.8, SM PR Rank - 60.8, Difference +27
13. IOWA ST: Recruit Rank - 50.8, SM PR Rank - 24.4, Difference +26.4
14. UAB: Recruit Rank - 97.6, SM PR Rank - 71.6, Difference +26
15. UTAH ST: Recruit Rank - 106, SM PR Rank - 82, Difference +24
16. CINCINNATI: Recruit Rank - 51.6, SM PR Rank - 28, Difference +23.6
17. UCF: Recruit Rank - 57.2, SM PR Rank - 33.6, Difference +23.6
18. KANSAS ST: Recruit Rank - 59.6, SM PR Rank - 36.6, Difference +23
19. BOISE ST: Recruit Rank - 62.2, SM PR Rank - 40, Difference +22.2
20. COASTAL CAROLINA: Recruit Rank - 104, SM PR Rank - 81.8, Difference +22.2

TOP 20 TEAMS WHOSE RECRUITING RATINGS HAVE EXCEEDED THEIR ON-FIELD PERFORMANCE

The programs on this "underachieving" list are those that, more often than not, are forced to fire their coaches due to a lack of success. They recruit fairly well but are typically found at or near the bottom of their conference standings. For a second straight season, Rutgers holds the dubious honor of the top spot.

Essentially the teams on this list don't do nearly as well as what 247Sports thought its signees were capable of.

Overall, this list is dominated by Power Five conference schools, who use the lure of playing in big-time college football games to sign good athletes but haven't had the same luck transferred to the field. You might be surprised to see some programs like Florida State, North Carolina, or Tennessee on this list. Another good year or two on the field under their newer coaches could see them graduate from it.

The only four Group of Five schools you'll find among this collection of underachievers are Florida International (#5), UNLV (#13), and Massachusetts (#17).

Five teams from this group have welcomed in new head coaches for 2023, Colorado, Stanford, South Florida, UNLV, and Nebraska. It will be interesting to follow the direction of those programs in the coming seasons.

1.   RUTGERS: Recruit Rank - 51.8, SM PR Rank - 97.6, Difference +-45.8
2.   VANDERBILT: Recruit Rank - 49, SM PR Rank - 93.2, Difference +-44.2
3.   GEORGIA TECH: Recruit Rank - 42, SM PR Rank - 78.4, Difference +-36.4
4.   MARYLAND: Recruit Rank - 32.2, SM PR Rank - 65.6, Difference +-33.4
5.   FLA INTERNATIONAL: Recruit Rank - 82.6, SM PR Rank - 114.8, Difference +-32.2
6.   FLORIDA ST: Recruit Rank - 18.6, SM PR Rank - 50.6, Difference +-32
7.   COLORADO: Recruit Rank - 51.4, SM PR Rank - 82, Difference +-30.6
8.   STANFORD: Recruit Rank - 31.6, SM PR Rank - 61.8, Difference +-30.2
9.   SOUTH FLORIDA: Recruit Rank - 75.8, SM PR Rank - 105.6, Difference +-29.8
10. ARKANSAS: Recruit Rank - 29, SM PR Rank - 56.8, Difference +-27.8
11. KANSAS: Recruit Rank - 63.8, SM PR Rank - 91.2, Difference +-27.4
12. SOUTH CAROLINA: Recruit Rank - 32, SM PR Rank - 57, Difference +-25
13. UNLV: Recruit Rank - 89.2, SM PR Rank - 114.2, Difference +-25
14. ARIZONA: Recruit Rank - 56.2, SM PR Rank - 80.4, Difference +-24.2
15. MIAMI FL: Recruit Rank - 14.4, SM PR Rank - 38.2, Difference +-23.8
16. NORTH CAROLINA: Recruit Rank - 18.8, SM PR Rank - 41.6, Difference +-22.8
17. MASSACHUSETTS: Recruit Rank - 106.4, SM PR Rank - 125.8, Difference +-19.4
18. DUKE: Recruit Rank - 58.8, SM PR Rank - 78, Difference +-19.2
19. NEBRASKA: Recruit Rank - 22.2, SM PR Rank - 41, Difference +-18.8
20. TENNESSEE: Recruit Rank - 17.8, SM PR Rank - 36.4, Difference +-18.6

TEAMS WHOSE RECRUITING APPEARS TO BE TRENDING IN EACH DIRECTION

The recent success or lack thereof on the recruiting trail for teams figures to have a direct relationship with how they fare on the field in the coming years. Teams whose classes are improving consistently are likely to become more prominent on the national/conference stage, while those whose class strengths are declining could be experiencing downturns in the near future. There are also unique situations where a staff added an unusually highly rated or lowly rated class in a given year as opposed to typical results. Let's look at teams on both ends of the recruiting momentum spectrum.

22 TEAMS WHOSE RECRUITING RANKINGS ARE TRENDING IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION

Baylor (Last four recruiting ranks: 54, 45, 42, 36)
Dave Aranda took over a Baylor team still reeling from off-the-field problems. His efforts in recruiting have it back on the right track, as each of their last three classes has been better than the prior one. However, the Bears still have a way to go to catch up to Texas and Oklahoma.

Buffalo (Last three recruiting ranks: sub-100. Prior 10 years: no such occurrences)
Maurice Linguist inherited a Buffalo team that was trending in the wrong direction in terms of recruiting. His first three classes have ranked 99th in 2021, 75th last year, and 79th this spring. The latter two are very high by MAC standards. It could be a good sign for a team that reached a bowl game last year.

BYU (Last five recruiting ranks: 81, 78, 75, 57, 51)
The step up to the Big 12 conference has had a good impact on BYU's recruiting rankings recently, and the 51st-ranked class of 2023 is the highest ranking for the program since 2016. However, it's not quite Big 12 caliber yet and needs to keep trending upward for this team to compete for conference titles.

Colorado (2023 recruiting rank: 21. Prior two-year avg: 62)
Hiring Head Coach Deion Sanders was huge on the recruiting trail. How long will it take for the results to show on the field? It will be quite interesting to follow.

Eastern Michigan (2023 recruiting rank: 90, best since prior to 2010)
Chris Creighton capitalized on the momentum of his team's 9-4 season last year to reel in the best recruiting class in well over a decade. In two of the previous three years, Creighton has brought in a class ranked in the 90s, decent by MAC standards. Before that, the best recent rank was 108 in 2012.

East Carolina (2023 recruiting rank: 66, best since prior to 2010)
Like Eastern Michigan, East Carolina was able to jump on the momentum from an 8-5 season to bring in its best recruiting class in a long time. This year's class ranked 66. The last two classes were 96 and 85. The Pirates would be perennial contenders in the new weakened AAC if they recruit at this level.

Florida State (2023 recruiting rank: 16 – highest since 2018)
Mike Norvell could be on the verge of bringing Florida State back into national prominence after scoring the program's highest-rated recruiting class since 2018. It continued a three-year trend of improvement as well.

Houston (Last two recruiting ranks: 51, 48. Prior five-year avg: 75.8)
Houston has put together its best back-to-back recruiting classes on record in preparation for its move to the Big 12. The Cougars were 12-2 in 2021 and seem to have parlayed that on-field success to the recruiting game.

Illinois (Last four recruiting ranks: 87, 71, 65, 54)
Third-year coach Bret Bielema brought in Illinois' best recruiting class since 2019 this spring and continued a four-year trend of continuous improvement. Off their first bowl game in four years, this program is moving in the right direction.

Kansas State (2023 recruiting rank: 39. Prior 13-year best: 49)
Chris Klieman's K-State team won double-digit games for the first time since 2012 this past year. He used that success to step up the recruiting efforts, enhancing the chances of continued success.

Louisville (2023 recruiting rank: 27, best since 2011)
You have to love the hiring of Jeff Brohm at Louisville, as the former star quarterback returns to his alma mater. The initial results are in, and they are fantastic, the best recruiting class in over a decade.

Ole Miss (Last three recruiting rank avg: 17.0. Prior four-year avg: 29.8)
Lane Kiffin has taken Ole Miss recruiting efforts to the next level, and the Rebels are now competing in that area with the likes of Florida, Auburn, and Tennessee. The results have shown on the field the last two years and should continue in '23.

Oregon (Last six recruiting rank avg: 10.5. Prior five-year avg: 20.4)
Despite four coaching changes since 2017, recruiting has taken off for Oregon once again after a downturn in the years prior. The Ducks have been at a top-10 level in terms of adding players in three of the last six years. Are they poised to get back into the national title consideration in the immediate future?

Oregon State (Last three recruiting ranks: 108, 71. 53)
Oregon State's 2021 class reached new depths for program standards, but the efforts for HC Jonathan Smith picked up over the last two seasons. Off last year's 10-3 campaign, Smith brought in a class ranked 53rd in the country, the Beavers' best since 2019.

Rice (Last four recruiting ranks avg: 97.0. Prior five-year avg: 112.6)
During its recent heyday of football success (2012-14), Rice was playing with players obtained in recruiting classes ranked in the low 90s typically. Three of the last four classes were at such a level, and the Owls could be ready to see those efforts bear fruit on the field.

South Alabama (Last two years recruiting rank: 95, 83. Prior five-year avg: 117.4)
There is a lot of positive momentum brewing for Head Coach Kane Wommack at South Alabama as his team comes off a strong 10-3 campaign. He parlayed that into an 83rd-ranked recruiting class, its second straight respected group, and the highest for the program on record.

SMU (Last three recruiting ranks: 51, 50, 42. Prior 11-year avg: 75.2)
With three powerful recruiting classes in tow and most of the other formidable AAC powers having left for the Big 12, it sure looks like SMU could be the team to beat in the conference for the immediate future.

South Carolina (Last two recruiting ranks: 24, 17. 2021 rank: 79th)
It's easily explainable when a new incoming coach strikes out on his first recruiting trail, and that is exactly what happened to Shane Beamer two years ago at South Carolina. He has redeemed himself since, scoring the program's best-respected class since 2012 this spring. Off back-to-back winning seasons, the Gamecocks are a team on the rise.

Texas A&M (Last five recruiting ranks: 4, 6, 8, 1, 10. Prior nine-year avg: 15.4)
Head Coach Jimbo Fisher has brought Texas A&M to the elite of the recruiting rankings, with the program scoring five straight Top 10s. The seat is getting warmer as the talent in College Station is good enough to compete with Alabama and Georgia. At least on paper.

TX-San Antonio (Last three recruiting ranks: 74, 73, 72. Prior 10-year avg: 74.2)
After three straight well-respected recruiting classes, it's safe to say that UTSA has reached a new echelon in its recruiting standards, so be prepared to see this program do fairly well in its transition to the AAC.

UCF (Last three recruiting average: 43.7. Prior 10-year avg: 68.1)
Head Coach Gus Malzahn has taken UCF recruiting to another level in his three years, so much so that the Golden Knights are projected ninth of 14 teams in the Big 12 for 2023. They are even ranked higher than three standing Big 12 foes.

Utah (2023 recruiting rank: 23rd, best on record)
Head Coach Kyle Whittingham scored his best class at Utah in his tenure this spring, and with the program having been given ranks of 35th or better in four straight years now, it sure looks as if the Utes will continue building on back-to-back double-digit win seasons.

23 TEAMS WHOSE RECRUITING RANKINGS ARE TRENDING IN A NEGATIVE DIRECTION

Auburn (Last six years recruiting rank avg 14.7. Prior eight-year avg: 8.0)
This might not seem like a big transformation, dropping by an average of 6.7 over the time period, but in the SEC West it is. This is a big reason why Auburn is having trouble competing with the likes of Alabama and LSU lately. The Tigers were a consistent Top 10 recruiting team in the early part of last decade. They've been in double-digits in five of the last six years.

Bowling Green (Last three years recruiting rank avg 113.0. Prior four-year avg: 96.0)
The 2023 season will be Scott Loeffler's fifth at Bowling Green, and he will no longer have veteran QB Matt McDonald as his stabilizing force. Recent recruiting classes suggest this year could be a struggle for the Falcons.

Charlotte (Last four years recruiting ranks: 88, 107, 112, 126)
It's not a real surprise when the first recruiting class for a new coach at a program doesn't measure up to recent years. However, Charlotte's Biff Poggi brought in the school's worst-rated class since 2019, extending a downward trend that could prove a challenging factor as the 49ers jump up to the AAC in '23.

Clemson (Last two years recruiting rank avg: 14.5. Prior four-year avg: 6.3)
Could the magic be wearing off at Clemson for Head Coach Dabo Swinney? The last two recruiting classes rank as the worst consecutive seasons since 2013 and 2014. It's not as big of a problem in the ACC as it would be in the SEC, but is this program no longer a perennial national title contender?

Connecticut (Last five years recruiting rank best: 110. Prior eight-year avg: 89.7)
There was talk this offseason that the Big 12 was considering adding Connecticut as an all-sports member. Surely, they were only focused on basketball. The Huskies' recent football recruiting efforts are not only trending horribly, they are also nowhere near Big 12 caliber.

Duke (Last two recruiting ranks: 68, 64, both worse than any year since 2013)
Mike Elko's first two classes are the program's worst-rated since 2013. However, he guided his team to an unexpected 9-4 record in 2022. It doesn't look favorable for that success to continue, however.

LA Lafayette (Last two recruiting ranks: 120, 91. Prior three-year avg: 74.3)
Transitioning from a huge four-year run under Billy Napier was expected to be tough. Unfortunately, Head Coach Micheal Desourmeaux has lowered the recruiting standards in his first two classes. The results showed on the field last year. It will probably continue.

LA Monroe (Last two recruiting ranks: 128, 129, worst classes on record)
ULM doesn't figure to get out of the rut it's been in anytime soon as the two most recent recruiting classes rank in the bottom 6 of the country and are nowhere near the level needed to compete in the Sun Belt.

Marshall (Last four years recruiting rank avg: 101.75. Prior 10-year avg: 69.4)
Marshall was 9-4 last year, its sixth straight season over-.500. You have to wonder how long that streak might last, though, as the Herd has not been recruiting at a level previously reached by past administrations. This spring's class ranked 119th, tied for worst on record, with the 2021 class.

Michigan (Last four recruiting rank best 12th. Prior eight years: 5 top 8's)
Despite back-to-back CFP appearances, Michigan has been unable to capitalize on the recruiting trail. Their 2023 class ranked 20th, very low by Wolverines' standards, and the worst since 2018. Could the window for Michigan to compete for national titles be closing?

Middle Tennessee St (Last three recruiting rank avg: 117.7. Prior eight-year avg: 90.5)
It's hard to measure how fatiguing the new age of recruiting can be for a veteran coach like MTSU's Rick Stockstill. Typically, those guys aren't keen on the transfer portal and things like that. His last three classes reflect a new era of the recruiting game, and the Blue Raiders don't appear ready to compete in it.

Mississippi St (Last two recruiting ranks 32, 37. Prior seven years: all sub-29)
Losing a coach with the engaging personality of Mike Leach would naturally have an impact on recruiting. However, his final class and the current group brought in by Zach Arnett were not up to MSU standards, and it could show on the field in the coming years.

Navy (Last five recruiting rank avg: 121.4)
For anyone wondering why Navy's football program has fallen on hard times, look no further. Before 2019, the eight-year recruiting average was around 103, and the Navy staff always did well in developing those players. This new task is a little tougher.

Northwestern (Last four recruiting ranks: 47, 49, 56, 60)
With Northwestern's high education standards, it's never as easy to recruit there as it is at some other Big Ten schools. That said, the Wildcats have typically fared well at getting the most out of player development. That seems to be until recently, as the Wildcats have won three or fewer games in the last four seasons. With a recruiting trend moving steadily downward, we could soon be witnessing the end of an era in Evanston. What will things look like without Pat Fitzgerald?

Old Dominion (Last four years recruiting ranks: 94, 102, 117, 124)
Old Dominion's recruiting class ranks are headed in the wrong direction, and there's a good chance it could come back to bite the Monarchs in 2023. Not only have the recruiting classes dropped in three straight years, but starting QB Hayden Wolff transferred to Western Michigan, and the Sun Belt Conference is stacking up tougher than Conference USA did.

Pittsburgh (Last two years recruiting ranks: 60, 56. Prior 10-years: once over 48)
There could be some reason for concern around the Pitt football program in the next few years, as back-to-back sub-standard recruiting classes will occupy positions on the field against the rest of the ACC. They produced quality records in the last two seasons, so it was a surprise to see the recruiting efforts not bear fruit.

San Jose State (Last five recruiting classes: Four worse than 110th. Prior five-year avg: 84.2)
Recruiting efforts have dropped off severely at San Jose State. Could this be the year the Spartans go into a tailspin because of it?

Stanford (2023 recruiting class rank: 61, worst on record)
Incoming new Head Coach Troy Taylor's first recruiting class bombed, according to the experts, setting a new low standard for the program by nine points. Off back-to-back 3-9 seasons, there's little reason to believe things will turn around this fall.

Toledo (Last two recruiting ranks: 99, 106. Prior 12-year avg: 77.8)
Toledo was a remarkably consistent performing program in terms of recruiting from 2010 through 2021. Since then, the two most recent classes have flopped. It might not be this year, with upperclassmen still in place at most positions, but I could easily see this team falling off in the next few years.

Tulsa (Last four recruiting ranks: 107, 112, 126, 113, 103. Prior three-year avg: 92.3)
Tulsa had three straight sub-100 ranked recruiting classes from 2016-18, and that group of underclassmen produced two consecutive winning seasons in 2020 and 2021. The last five years of recruiting classes have bottomed out, and after a 5-7 season a year ago, the program may continue feeling the consequences in 2023.

UNLV (Last two years recruiting ranks: 100, 130. Prior two-year avg: 72.0)
Things have fallen apart from a recruiting standpoint at UNLV, which is quite surprising considering the locale. This year's 130th ranking puts the Runnin' Rebels better than just three other schools. Not exactly momentum-building for new head coach Barry Odom.

Virginia Tech (Last four years recruiting rank avg: 51.3. Prior 10-year avg 28.0)
From 2010 through 2019, Virginia Tech averaged a recruiting ranking of 28.0, without a single year being ranked worse than 42nd. All of the most recent four classes were ranked 43rd or worse. For whatever reason, elite players aren't drawn to Blacksburg like they once were. Don't expect recognizable improvement from this program till they are.

Western Kentucky (Last three recruiting ranks: 129, 91. 131)
WKU has played an exciting brand of football recently, and its record has not been reflective of a team ranking 129th or worse in recruiting in two of the last three years. Is this the season it catches up?

ANALYZING COLLEGE FOOTBALL COACHING CHANGES FOR 2023

by Steve Makinen

The 2023 college football season will feature 23 new head coaches at schools across the country, 14 of whom will be taking the lead role on programs for a full season for the first time. As I start my month-long dig into everything college football prepping for the 2023 campaign, my first subject matter is the coaching changes. They are always impactful on teams' prospects for a season, particularly early on. Most VSiN readers will recognize that coaching changes play a huge role in formulating my College Football Stability Scores prior to each season.

About a month or so ago on VSiN.com, I put together a piece detailing the performance trends of rookie and veteran NFL head coaches in their first seasons with new teams. In that article, I found that most of the rookie coaches over the last decade managed to improve their teams' won-lost records in their first season while the experienced guys won only about 40% of their games. I'll have more numbers regarding this for college football in a few weeks when I look at carryover systems, but I can tell you that the success rate at the college level for coaching changes is nowhere near as high as NFL. There are a few reasons for this, with instability being the primary one. A head coach leaving in college football typically means new coordinators and new systems on both sides of the ball. This is a lot for younger players to overcome in a short time.

Typically, coaching changes at the college level are a result of just a few possibilities. First, poor performance. In most cases, this comes from a shortage of talent. Building a better overall talent level takes time for new coaches. Second, a highly successful coach leaves for a bigger, more established program. This is a painful one for all the Group of Five teams each year, and re-establishing the magic can prove difficult for the replacement. Third, longtime coaches simply retire, leaving a huge void in the leadership position, as a program naturally grows accustomed to certain routines, and change is never easy nor always accepted willingly. In all three of these cases, you can see how finding that lightning in a bottle in a coach's first year can be a challenge. This is opposed to the NFL, where teams are more talent-equal, and a breath of fresh air can make a world of difference.

With that in mind, let's run through the 23 different head coaching changes that have occurred since the conclusion of last season at the FBS level. I'll try to provide my insights as well as a prediction on how that coach and program might fare in 2023, with a particular focus on the DraftKings season win total props. Following the breakdown of the new head coaches, you'll find a list showing all of the coordinator changes across the country for 2023 as well.

ARIZONA STATE
Conference: Pac-12
New Head Coach: Kenny Dillingham
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Herm Edwards - 6 seasons
2022 Record: 3-9 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Things got stale at Arizona State in Herm Edwards era, and there was talk of utter chaos behind the scenes regarding preparation level and players buying in. Obviously, this was a prudent time to make a coaching change. Tempe will always be a rich environment for being able to recruit kids so I wouldn't suspect that this program will be down for long. Kenny Dillingham takes over in 2023 after serving last season as Oregon's OC. He was a Sun Devils offensive assistant back in 2014 and 2015 and has served on staffs at four different schools since.

Better or Worse in '23: ASU was 3-9 last year, and DraftKings has set the win-total prop for this season at 5. Naturally, that means the experts think the Sun Devils will be better. There are 12 total starters back for Dillingham, and he should have an interesting quarterback situation to build on, a room that includes Notre Dame transfer Drew Pyne. While I don't think ASU will be playing in a bowl game at the end of the '23 season, they should be better if for no other reason than the toxicity is gone.

AUBURN
Conference: SEC
New Head Coach: Hugh Freeze
Career Record: 82-43
Former Head Coach: Bryan Harsin - 2 seasons
2022 Record: 5-7 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Like Arizona State, the scene in the Auburn football program got rather ugly in Bryan Harsin's two seasons. There were on- and off-the-field problems that weren't going away until a change was made. The Tigers made a pretty intriguing hire in luring Hugh Freeze away from Liberty, where he had brought the Flames from virtual nothingness to a perennial bowl squad with a very entertaining style of play. Other than perhaps QB Bo Nix in '21, there was little that was entertaining in watching Auburn play over the last two years.

Better or Worse in '23: Freeze served as head coach at Ole Miss from 2012-16 so he is familiar with the rigors that are the SEC West Division. Auburn usually recruits very well, and Freeze should improve on this, particularly on the offensive side of the ball. DraftKings calls for 6.5 wins, which would be an improvement of 1.5 games. There are just 12 starters back, and Freeze seems to be favoring Michigan State transfer Peyton Thorne at the key QB position. I lean Under the 6.5.

CHARLOTTE
Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Biff Poggi
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Will Healy - 4 seasons
2022 Record: 3-9 SU & 4-7-1 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: There were some reasonably high expectations for Charlotte last season, returning 14 starters from the 2021 team that finished 5-7. That group included multi-year starter Chris Reynolds at quarterback. While he was not as good as in '21, he was far from the biggest problem. The defense allowed a tick under 40 Points per game, including 56+ three times, and the 49ers won just three games. Exit Will Healy and insert Biff Poggi, who comes over from Michigan where he served as associate head coach over the last two years to Jim Harbaugh.

Better or Worse in '23: Poggi was clearly critical to Michigan's success as the Wolverines made the CFP in both years he served there. It will be interesting to see how he is able to guide a situation that is a complete rebuild. QB Reynolds was a stabilizing factor while with the 49ers, but he is no longer there. Look for this Charlotte team to be one of the most unstable programs out of the gate in '23.

CINCINNATI
Conference: Big 12
New Head Coach: Scott Satterfield
Career Record: 72-40
Former Head Coach: Luke Fickell - 6 seasons
2022 Record: 9-4 SU & 3-9-1 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Luke Fickell led the Cincinnati program to new heights in his six-year tenure, including a CFP berth following the '21 season. The impact of his departure and the void left by many of his former players choosing to leave with him will be great. Left to pick up the pieces is Scott Satterfield, who comes over after four years at Louisville. He was able to spend some time with the Bearcats during bowl season however so he won't be starting completely fresh.

Better or Worse in '23: The DraftKings win prop for Cincy in '23 is just 5.5 as it heads into its first season of Big 12 play. The last season they fell below that number was in 2017, Fickell's first season, when they went 4-8. Since then, the program has averaged 10.6 wins per season. Even with the conference change, that in itself is a testament to how much the experts think this program will fall this season. While the number of returning players is low, Satterfield will have an experienced QB back in ASU transfer Emory Jones. Still, get it out of your head now if you're thinking this is the same Cincinnati team that has been ruling the AAC lately.

COASTAL CAROLINA
Conference: Sun Belt
New Head Coach: Tim Beck
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Jamey Chadwell - 4 seasons
2022 Record: 9-4 SU & 4-9 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Tim Beck has served as an assistant offensive coach at six different FBS schools dating back to '91, but this will be his first shot at a top job. It won't be an easy one, as he takes over a Coastal Carolina program that blossomed under Jamey Chadwell, winning 31 games against just seven losses over the last three years. Beck comes over from NC State, where he was OC and QB coach, so he is familiar with the Carolina area and should do fairly well over time in recruiting.

Better or Worse in '23: Beck got a huge early gift when three-year starting quarterback Grayson McCall pulled his name from the transfer portal and decided to stay with the Chanticleers for another season. He has carried the offense for three seasons, accumulating an amazing 77-8 TD-Int ratio, and he has done it with completely experienced rosters beside him or working with newbies. The offense will be fine. The defense is where the questions lie, as that unit allowed 31+ Points per game last season, a decline of over 10 Points per game. CCU should still be very competitive in the Sun Belt, but they will have to do it with scoring and will be a play against team early because of it.

COLORADO
Conference: Pac-12
New Head Coach: Deion Sanders
Career Record: 0-0 in FBS
Former Head Coach: Karl Dorrell - 3 seasons
2022 Record: 1-11 SU & 2-10 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Coach Prime made a name for himself by resurrecting the football program at FCS Jackson State, doing it by stealing top talent from some of college football's elite teams. He has always done things with theatrics as well, so what has happened at Colorado since his hiring was not unexpected. It has literally been "showtime" since he arrived in Boulder, but not always for the good. The Buffaloes program has brought in a lot of talent not seen around those parts for decades, but in the process has blown up any level of transitional stability that may have been in place. Regardless of what happens in 2023, this will be a fun situation to watch.

Better or Worse in '23: The Colorado season win total is 3.5 according to DraftKings. That would be an improvement of 2.5 wins off the 2022 season. Regardless of where they got that number from, in my opinion, it is a total guess. It seems impossible at this point to have any idea of how good of a coach Sanders will be in the Pac-12, how much chemistry this completely rebuilt roster will have, and how long the enthusiasm for the new Buffaloes will last. Undeniably the roster is better, and there is a ton of energy surrounding the program, both from fans and the TV networks apparently. Will a thumping at TCU in the opener send things swirling on opening day? Could a competitive effort (or massive upset win) build the hype beyond comprehension? If I had to bet, I'd lean over on the 3.5 wins, but don't hold me to it.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Tom Herman
Career Record: 54-22
Former Head Coach: Willie Taggart - 3 seasons
2022 Record: 5-7 SU & 6-6 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Admittedly, I have never been a big Willie Taggert fan, and almost as if I predicted three years ago, he was never able to fill the shoes of Lane Kiffin at FAU. Kiffin left him the remnants of a program that was 11-3 in 2019, and Taggert proceeded to win five games in each of the next three years. That said, I am a big fan of the new hire by the Owls. Tom Herman made a name for himself with Houston, going 22-5 in two seasons there. He didn't live up to the billing at Texas, but in my opinion, there are very few coaches capable of doing that. He is back in familiar surroundings now as FAU sets sail in its first season in the American Conference. Boca Raton is a great place to recruit, and Herman should do well.

Better or Worse in '23: For as much as I like the hiring of Herman long-term, this will be a highly unstable situation to start the season. Not only are the Owls bringing back relatively few starters, including a new quarterback, but they also have a pair of new coordinators and are switching to a new conference. All of this adds up to what could be a rebuilding situation in '23. Play against, perhaps all season long.

KENT STATE
Conference: MAC
New Head Coach: Kenni Burns
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Sean Lewis - 6 seasons
2022 Record: 5-7 SU & ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Kent State was 5-7 last year following up a 7-7 season in '21. The Golden Flashes lost three games by seven points or less and did this while breaking in a new quarterback in Collin Schlee, who took over for multi-year starter Dustin Crum. In other words, the team remained competitive last season and the program expected to do so again in '23. That is until Head Coach Sean Lewis tendered his resignation to pursue the OC job for Deion Sanders at Colorado, and QB Schlee packed his bags and left for UCLA via the transfer portal. Kenni Burns takes over the program after spending the last four years as Associate Head Coach/Running Backs Coach at Minnesota.

Better or Worse in '23: The Golden Flashes seemed to be poised to become a consistent contender in the MAC under Lewis, as they had gone 22-21 in four years and proved to be one of the league's more potent offenses in that span. That is relatively all flushed now with Lewis gone. Burns has a tough job to do here, particularly in his first season. Almost impossible to see this team be better in '23.

LIBERTY
Conference: C-USA
New Head Coach: Jamey Chadwell
Career Record: 39-22
Former Head Coach: Hugh Freeze - 4 seasons
2022 Record: 8-5 SU & 6-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Other than cashing a bigger paycheck, it's hard to get behind Jamey Chadwell choosing to leave Coastal Carolina in favor of Liberty. Yes, it's a new challenge, and yes, the Flames are making the leap from an Independent program to Conference USA, but how could this not be considered at best a lateral move? After his success with CCU, I would have expected a bigger promotion to draw him away. That said, there are big shoes to fill here, as Freeze won at least eight games in all four seasons at Liberty.

Better or Worse in '23: The Flames' offense plummeted to a sixth-year low 27.5 Points per game last season after averaging at least 32 Points per game since, so perhaps Freeze knew the time was right to move on. Projected QB Johnathan Bennett was good, not great in his starts last year and figures to get the nod again this year. As usual, however, Liberty plays one of the weakest schedules in the country once again, and the won-lost record might not be impacted that greatly by the changeover. However, I wouldn't be comfortable laying points with Chadwell's club early in the season.

LOUISVILLE
Conference: ACC
New Head Coach: Jeff Brohm
Career Record: 65-44
Former Head Coach: Scott Satterfield - 4 seasons
2022 Record: 8-5 SU & ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Jeff Brohm is an almost ideal hire at Louisville, returning to the school where he starred as a quarterback in the early 90s. Since then, he has made coaching stops at six different schools, including Louisville to start his career as an assistant from '03 to '08. This will be his third different head coaching gig, and his teams at Western Kentucky and Purdue were well-known for their offensive explosiveness. Unless this turns out to be a "Scott Frost returning to Nebraska scenario," it's hard to see Brohm not doing well at his alma mater.

Better or Worse in '23: Brohm takes over a program that is in pretty good shape coming off an 8-5 campaign. However, things will look much different going forward as the program moves on from multi-talented QB Malik Cunnigham, who started the last four years as a run/pass threat. The new attack will be more pro-style, and fortunately, Brohm brings his starting quarterback at Purdue over with him in Jack Plummer. He threw 47 TDs versus 19 interceptions for the Boilermakers and is a big, strong kid. The Cardinals are projected to eight wins by DraftKings, and it looks to be a very sharp number. If anything, I might lean slightly Under due to the sizeable offensive transition.

MISSISSIPPI STATE
Conference: SEC
New Head Coach: Zach Arnett
Career Record: 1-0
Former Head Coach: Mike Leach - 3 seasons
2022 Record: 9-4 SU & 7-5-1 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: The passing of Mike Leach left a huge void in the Mississippi State program, and college football for that matter. The unenviable job of replacing Leach this past December fell to Zach Arnett, who although a defensive-oriented coach, had bled Bulldog-red for the last three seasons as the DC. The team responded well to Arnett by beating Illinois in its bowl game, so I wouldn't expect any major change in this program for '23.

Better or Worse in '23: Arnett gets half of his starters back from the nine-win team of 2022, including QB Will Rogers, so it should be all systems go in this case. That said, only four of the starters back are on defense, and that unit was pretty sound last year, allowing 23.0 Points per game, a four-year best, while holding five foes to 17 points or fewer. This has to be why DraftKings expects just 6.5 wins from MSU in '23. In my opinion, it's far easier to rebuild quickly on that side of the ball, and thus I'll project an over for this team in '23. The other coaching changes show far more instability than this one.

NAVY
Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Brian Newberry
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Ken Niumatalolo - 16 seasons
2022 Record: 4-8 SU & 7-5 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: You have to go back 20 years to the last time that Navy won just 11 games or fewer in a three-year span. It was time for change for the Midshipmen although anyone expecting a grandiose transition will have to modify their expectations. The program has named its former Defensive Coordinator Brian Newberry as the replacement for Ken Niumatalolo, who was here for 16 seasons.

Better or Worse in '23: Newberry has indicated the Navy will keep the option attack as its modus operandi moving forward but he would like new Offensive Coordinator Grant Chestnut (Kennesaw St OC) to help the offense "evolve." The stability of the system, the program, and its athletes helps in cases of coaching changes at places like Navy. Off back-to-back 4-8 seasons, there isn't a whole lot of reason to suspect that this year's team will be much better or worse than its predecessors. Any positive or negative fluctuation would likely come from an unexpected win or loss early. As always, avenging the Army loss will be the top priority.

NEBRASKA
Conference: Big Ten
New Head Coach: Matt Rhule
Career Record: 47-43
Former Head Coach: Scott Frost - 5 seasons
2022 Record: 4-8 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: The Scott Frost era at Nebraska turned out to be an utter disappointment after being introduced with such hope and hype five years ago. The Cornhuskers never won more than five games in the tenure of Frost, despite noteworthy expectations. The new hire, Matt Rhule, hasn't been as glorified. However, it should produce better results, as Rhule enjoyed great success with Baylor before a failed try in the NFL with Carolina. While at Baylor, he took a program in big trouble both on and off the field and went from 1-11 to 11-3 in just two seasons.

Better or Worse in '23: DraftKings puts Nebraska's win total for 2023 at six, somewhat surprising considering that record would land the Cornhuskers in a bowl game for the first time since 2016. Is the fresh start under Rhule enough to make that big of a difference? It could be. Nebraska has been a top 30-type of recruiting program over the last five years, and there figures to be an experienced QB under center in dual-threat Jeff Sims, who started 23 games with Georgia Tech. In all, expect about 14 starters returning. The Big Ten West is also very winnable once again for any team that catches fire. I'll take the bait on this one and go over, figuring the Cornhuskers will benefit from being a bit less under the radar this season.

NORTH TEXAS
Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Eric Morris
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Seth Littrell - 7 seasons
2022 Record: 7-7 SU & 8-6 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: With the program seemingly stuck in neutral, North Texas fired Head Coach Seth Littrell this past December. For the past four seasons, he has been unable to replicate the success he had driven in 2017 and 2018. A lot of that was using recruits from the previous regime, however, and Littrell's leadership didn't take the

program any higher. With a step-up move to the American Conference in 2023, UNT starts fresh with Eric Morris, who has helped lead high-powered offenses at schools like Texas Tech, Incarnate Word, and Washington State over the last decade or so in various roles. This will be his first FBS head coaching job.

Better or Worse in '23: The first year(s) of Morris' assignment at North Texas are going to be a challenge. Not only is the team taking a step up in play by joining the American Conference, but they will also be without QB Austin Aune, who after starting three seasons for the Mean Green, opted for the NFL draft after 2022 and landed with the Atlanta Falcons. There was some significant optimism surrounding this program last year, rightfully there is not as much heading into '23. I don't expect UNT to be in position for a bowl bid again this December.

NORTHWESTERN
Conference: Big Ten
New Head Coach: David Braun
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Pat Fitzgerald - 17 seasons
2022 Record: 1-11 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: The firing of Pat Fitzgerald happened fast and happened late. In light of a hazing scandal, the university fired its 17-year head coach for what it deemed to be a broken culture. That might explain a lot of what happened on the field last year, as clearly something was broken. You have to wonder if the behavior was there all along but the 4-20 record over the last two seasons is what tipped things over the scale. In any case, Fitzgerald is replaced for 2023 on an interim basis by the man he hired to be defensive coordinator this season, David Braun, who came over from the DC position at North Dakota State. He was part of two national titles over the four years he spent in Fargo.

Better or Worse in '23: It's almost impossible to get worse than 1-11 so I would expect that the Wildcats may have bottomed out last season. They will be riding an 11-game losing skid into their opener at Rutgers on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend. This team in turmoil will be front and center in front of the country on a national TV broadcast. There are 12 starters back for '23, including QB Ryan Hilinski, who was serviceable in the position last fall. The defense also only allowed 28.3 Points per game, not typical for a one-win club. I can see at least three winnable games on the schedule and possibly more if this bunch can put the negative drama behind it.

PURDUE
Conference: Big Ten
New Head Coach: Ryan Walters
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Jeff Brohm - 6 seasons
2022 Record: 8-6 SU & 5-9 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Purdue fans probably feel like they missed out on a great window of opportunity for success under Jeff Brohm. The offenses were explosive, there was solid talent at quarterback, and the Big Ten West Division has seemingly been there for the taking for most of the last five years. Only last year did the Boilermakers make it to Indianapolis for the first time to play for a conference title. They proved to be competitive in the game as well, putting up 456 yards of offense on Michigan. Moving forward, it will be a big change, however, as the program moves on from the offensive-minded Brohm to Eric Morris, who has served as a defensive coordinator at Missouri, and most recently Illinois, since 2016.

Better or Worse in '23: Morris gets only 11 starters back, third-fewest in the Big Ten. While he is a defensive guy, he will rely on the prowess of new OC Graham Harrell to keep the offense firing. And while QB Aiden O'Connell has moved on to the NFL, the cupboard isn't completely bare, as Texas transfer and former highly-regarded recruit Hudson Card has set himself apart in spring and figures to be the new starter. Still, there is a reason that transitioning to a new head coach and new systems is a challenge and the 2023 season at Purdue figures to be a step back. The DK total is set at 5.5, meaning a third straight bowl bid is unlikely. I agree. Lean Under.

SOUTH FLORIDA
Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Alex Golesh
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Jeff Scott - 3 seasons
2022 Record: 1-11 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Jeff Scott presided over the three worst seasons in South Florida football history, with the team winning just four games in his tenure. It has been a brutal run, and I can't think of another program at this point that was in more need of a fresh start. With a vastly different, and probably weaker, AAC lined up for 2023, new head coach Alex Golesh has a chance to immediately improve his team's record, even if they aren't measurably better.

Better or Worse in '23: Golesh served as the OC at Tennessee over the last two seasons and earned a shot at a first head coaching job by leading the Vols offense to explosive numbers. In his first season at UT, the offense went from 21.5 Points per game to 39.3 Points per game. Talk about making a difference. Can he have that type of impact at USF? Probably, but only if he can change things on the defensive side of the ball. The 2023 Bulls couldn't be nearly as bad as last season when they allowed nine of 12 opponents to score 40+ points. The offense is in good shape with QB Gerry Bohanon returning. That group scored 31.7 Points per game in the second half of the season. For a variety of reasons, I think things will be a little better for USF this fall.

STANFORD
Conference: Pac-12
New Head Coach: Troy Taylor
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: David Shaw - 12 seasons
2022 Record: 3-9 SU & 2-10 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: There were so many good moments in the David Shaw era at Stanford, and it's difficult to comprehend how badly things fell apart in recent years. Since the 9-4 season of 2018, the Cardinal didn't win more than four games in any year, sinking to a low of 3-9 SU and 2-10 ATS in '22. Obviously, change was needed. Insert Troy Taylor, who comes over from Sacramento State, where he led one of the more successful and overachieving programs at the FCS level. This will be his first head coaching job in FBS, but he has served as an assistant offensive coach in the Pac 12 at Utah and California previously.

Better or Worse in '23: Recruiting is paramount in college football, and Stanford struggled this year in the transition from Shaw to Taylor, not surprisingly. Their overall rank on 247Sports dropped to 61st in the country, very low by Cardinal standards. That's not a great way to begin a tenure. There are also just six total starters returning, the lowest in the Pac-12 by far, and QB Tanner McKee is not one of them as he has moved on to the NFL. The DraftKings win total prop is just three and for good reason. It will take some time for this team to start being a winning football program again.

TEXAS STATE
Conference: Sun Belt
New Head Coach: G. J. Kinne
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Jake Spavital - 4 seasons
2022 Record: 4-8 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Texas State scored fewer than 20 points in seven of its 12 games last season, compiling a 4-8 record in the process. Clearly, a lot of offense, and hence a lot of excitement was missing from the program. So long Jake Spavital, insert G.J. Kinne, former head coach of the only Division 1 football program that scored 50 Points per game last season, Incarnate Word. It might take a while, but it should make the Bobcats a more entertaining watch in the years to come.

Better or Worse in '23: Texas State hasn't had a winning record since 2014. Spavital actually got the program to four wins in each of his final two seasons. Those were the best in-season totals for the program since the 7-5 campaign nine years ago. Theoretically, the program is trending upward. I wouldn't be surprised if that pattern continues under the leadership of a young, energetic offensive mind like Kinne, who is just 34 years old. One of his first moves was to add Auburn transfer QB TJ Finley, a huge athletic specimen at the position. This should be an interesting situation to watch.

TULSA

Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Kevin Wilson
Career Record: 26-47
Former Head Coach: Philip Montgomery - 8 seasons
2022 Record: 5-7 SU & 3-8-1 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Tulsa underachieved last season, the final one in the eight-year tenure of HC Philip Montgomery. The Golden Hurricane had a good supply of starters returning from their 7-6 bowl-winning team of 2021, including QB Davis Brin, but they wound up just 5-7 after being upset three times. They were also just 3-8-1 ATS, a sure sign of a team not playing to its potential. Montgomery was subsequently fired, and Brin transferred to Georgia Southern. Hence the slate is virtually wiped clean for new head coach Kevin Wilson, who most recently served as the offensive coordinator at Ohio State since '17. Prior to that, he served six seasons as HC at Indiana.

Better or Worse in '23: Wilson has proven to be a far more effective offensive coordinator than head coach in his experience with Big Ten programs over the last decade-plus. He is riding some solid momentum however having just led one of the nation's most explosive offenses. It's been about seven years since Tulsa was prolific on that side of the ball. I eventually think his team could get there as the AAC has been weakened, but this will be a transitional year for Wilson with new systems and a new quarterback in play. Games in Week 2 at Washington and Week 3 at home versus Oklahoma figure to be play against games on my Stability Mismatch system.

UAB

Conference: American Athletic
New Head Coach: Trent Dilfer
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Bryant Vincent - 1 season
2022 Record: 7-6 SU & 4-9 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: The hiring of Trent Dilfer at UAB will be one of the most interesting coaching transitions to follow in '23. Dilfer comes over with plenty of football experience, having played in the NFL and owning a Super Bowl ring, and having served as an ESPN analyst for many years afterward. His only coaching experience however has been at the prep school level since 2019 at Lipscomb Academy in Tennessee. He is a big name though, and often that's a big benefit in recruiting.

Better or Worse in '23: Dilfer's job isn't going to be easy, as not only does he lack head coaching experience, but he also is replacing an interim coach in Bryant Vincent whom the players really got behind. On top of that, UAB is moving from CUSA to the AAC in 2023. There will definitely be a lot new this fall for this program that has earned bowl bids in every season since returning from the college football dead back in 2017. I wouldn't be surprised if that streak comes to an end. Keep an eye on the progress of former four-star transfer QB Jacob Zeno from Baylor. He should get the opportunity to strut his stuff for Dilfer this fall.

UNLV

Conference: Mountain West
New Head Coach: Barry Odom
Career Record: 25-25
Former Head Coach: Marcus Arroyo - 3 seasons
2022 Record: 5-7 SU & 7-5 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: It seems so difficult to comprehend that a football team out of Las Vegas can't find consistent success. UNLV has been to just four bowl games over the last 40 seasons, despite being in a locale and stadium that would figure to be a gold mine for recruiting while playing in a middle-of-the-road conference. This past season, the Runnin' Rebels were close, finishing 5-7, their best record since 2017 and a five-win improvement over just two years prior. Still, it wasn't enough, as a 1-6 collapse cost Marcus Arroyo his job. This time around, the school went for experience in hiring Barry Odom, a former head coach at Missouri. If you recall, UNLV plucked Arroyo from a local high school.

Better or Worse in '23: Is Odom the right guy to finally build UNLV football to its potential? Time will tell, but the entire sports landscape in Las Vegas has grown tremendously in recent years, and the emergence of this football program would only add to the fervor. The starting QB is back in Doug Brumfield, who had a decent season in 2022. The schedule is also quite manageable, and this team did show some progress last year, particularly early, and three of their last losses were by seven points or less. Another fast start is possible with a relatively easy schedule early. If the Rebels can avoid another late collapse, I could see this team in a bowl game in December.

WESTERN MICHIGAN

Conference: MAC
New Head Coach: Lance Taylor
Career Record: 0-0
Former Head Coach: Tim Lester - 6 seasons
2022 Record: 4-8 SU & 5-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: Last year, I actually called for the demise of the Western Michigan football program after a fairly long run of success. It had seemed to be in doing a recruiting study that the program had become lazy, and the standards had bottomed in recent years. The Broncos were also bringing back a rather inexperienced team. That turned out to be prophetic as WMU sunk to 4-8, its worst season since 2013. Consequently, Tim Lester was removed and replaced by Lance Taylor. If you aren't familiar, Taylor has coached at some high levels previously, serving for two different NFL teams and five different FBS schools, including, most recently, Louisville. He was the offensive coordinator there.

Better or Worse in '23: This will be Taylor's first head coaching job at any level, and it figures to be a challenge. WMU has a recent history of winning quite a bit in the MAC, but as I indicated earlier, the recruiting grades in recent years have been trending downward. That's not a good sign for an instant turnaround. There also isn't a returning full-time starter at QB or Power Five transfer at the key position in for this first season either. New coach, new systems, new QB, downward recruiting trend...it all adds up to continued struggles for the Broncos in '23.

WISCONSIN

Conference: Big Ten
New Head Coach: Luke Fickell
Career Record: 63-25
Former Head Coach: Paul Chryst - 8 seasons
2022 Record: 7-6 SU & 6-7 ATS

Steve's Thoughts: There is no other program in college football that is making a bigger transition in 2023 than Wisconsin, who moves on from Paul Chryst/Jim Leonard to Luke Fickell. There might not be another team across the landscape where the excitement level for the coming year(s) is higher as well. Why is that? Well, the Badgers turn to an Air Raid offense in '23 under new OC Phil Longo after years of a dedicated rushing attack, one that has essentially defined the program over the last 30 years.

Better or Worse in '23: This is a tough one for me to call for the coming season, as theoretically, the Badgers have so much going for them, heightened recruiting standards, including transfers in for '23, renewed enthusiasm, the most returning starters in the Big Ten including highly regarded RB Braelon Allen, and they play in one of the weakest divisions of the Power Five conferences. Still, this big of a transition is never easy, and rarely does it take off in year one. I am anticipating the defense still being strong, the better unit by far. In the Spring Game, the new offense struggled behind SMU transfer QB Tanner Mordecai. I anticipate growing pains here and the DraftKings win total prop has dropped from 9 to 8.5 since I first saw it. Both might be a bit overzealous.

I've mentioned some of the key coordinator changes in my analysis above but here is the complete list of changes for 2023. If you're unfamiliar with any of the names and are intrigued by any season-win total wager opportunities for those teams, I would encourage you to just do a quick internet search on them. I only reference changes when an entire position is taken over. This does not include when one of two co-coordinators leaves and the other stays.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR CHANGES FOR 2023

These are all of the offensive coordinator changes for the 2023 season, with 65 in all, almost half of the nation's 133 teams. The most influential situations figure to revolve around the situations at Alabama, Georgia, and Ohio State, all of whom figure to be in the national title hunt once again. The move at Wisconsin is also very curious, as the Badgers transition from a long-run power-rushing attack to an air raid style under Phil Longo.

AKRON: Billy Fessler replaces Joe Moorhead
ALABAMA: Tommy Rees replaces Bill O'Brien
APPALACHIAN ST: Frank Ponce replaces Kevin Barbay
ARIZONA ST: Beau Baldwin replaces Glenn Thomas
ARKANSAS: Dan Enos replaces Kendal Briles
ARKANSAS ST: Logan Kilgore replaces Keith Heckendorf
ARMY: Matt Drinkall / Drew Thatcher replaces Brent Davis
AUBURN: Philip Montgomery replaces Eric Kiesau
BOISE ST: Bush Hamdan replaces Tim Plough
BOSTON COLLEGE: Steve Shimko replaces John McNulty
BOWLING GREEN: Greg Nosal / Max Warner replaces Terry Malone
BUFFALO: DJ Mangas replaces Shane Montgomery
CALIFORNIA: Jake Spavital replaces Bill Musgrave
CHARLOTTE: Mike Miller replaces Mark Carney
CINCINNATI: Brad Glenn replaces Gino Guidugli
CLEMSON: Garrett Riley replaces Brandon Streeter
COASTAL CAROLINA: Travis Trickett replaces Willy Korn / Newland Isaac
COLORADO: Sean Lewis replaces Mike Sanford Jr.
FLA ATLANTIC: Charlie Frye replaces Brent Dearmon
FRESNO ST: Pat McCann replaces Kirby Moore
GEORGIA: Mike Bobo replaces Todd Monken
GEORGIA TECH: Buster Faulkner replaces Chip Long
HOUSTON: Dana Holgorsen replaces Shannon Dawson / Brandon Jones
IOWA ST: Nathan Scheelhaase replaces Tom Manning
KENT ST: Matt Johnson replaces Andrew Sowder
KENTUCKY: Liam Coen replaces Rich Scangarello
LIBERTY: Newland Isaac / Willy Korn replaces Kent Austin / Maurice Harris
LOUISVILLE: Brian Brohm replaces Lance Taylor
MARYLAND: Josh Gattis / Kevin Sumlin replaces Dan Enos / Mike Miller
MIAMI FL: Shannon Dawson replaces Josh Gattis
MIAMI OHIO: Patrick Welsh replaces Eric Koehler
MISSISSIPPI ST: Kevin Barbay replaces Mike Leach
MISSOURI: Kirby Moore replaces Curtis Luper
NAVY: Grant Chesnut replaces Brent Davis
NC STATE: Robert Anae replaces Tim Beck
NEBRASKA: Marcus Satterfield replaces Mark Whipple
NEW MEXICO: Bryant Vincent replaces Derek Warehime
NORTH CAROLINA: Chip Lindsey replaces Phil Longo
NORTH TEXAS: Jordan Davis replaces Mike Bloesch / Tommy Mainord
NOTRE DAME: Gerad Parker replaces Tommy Rees
OHIO ST: Brian Hartline replaces Kevin Wilson
OLD DOMINION: Kevin Decker replaces Dave Patenaude
PURDUE: Graham Harrell replaces Brian Brohm
RUTGERS: Kirk Ciarrocca replaces Sean Gleeson
SAM HOUSTON ST: Brad Cornelson replaces John Perry
SAN DIEGO ST: Ryan Lindley replaces Jeff Hecklinski
SOUTH CAROLINA: Dowell Loggains replaces Marcus Satterfield
SOUTH FLORIDA: Joel Gordon / Matt Merritt replaces Travis Trickett
STANFORD: Troy Taylor replaces Tavita Pritchard
SYRACUSE: Jason Beck replaces Robert Anae
TENNESSEE: Joey Halzle replaces Alex Golesh
TEXAS A&M: Bobby Petrino replaces Darrell Dickey
TEXAS ST UNIV: Mack Leftwich replaces Jake Spavital
TULANE: Slade Nagle replaces Jim Svoboda
TULSA: Steve Spurrier Jr. replaces Philip Montgomery
TX-SAN ANTONIO: Justin Burke replaces Matt Mattox / Will Stein
UAB: Alex Mortensen replaces Bryant Vincent
UCF: Darin Hinshaw replaces Chip Lindsey
UNLV: Brennan Marion replaces Nick Holz
UTAH ST: Kyle Cefalo replaces Anthony Tucker
UTEP: Scotty Ohara replaces Dave Warner
W MICHIGAN: Billy Cosh replaces Eric Evans / Jeff Thorne
WASHINGTON ST: Ben Arbuckle replaces Eric Morris
WEST VIRGINIA: Chad Scott replaces Graham Harrell
WISCONSIN: Phil Longo replaces Bobby Engram

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR CHANGES FOR 2023

There were 65 offensive coordinator changes. There are much fewer on the defensive side of the ball, 48 to be exact. There aren't as many high-profile changes in this grouping as in the offense, although Alabama does move on from Pete Golding. He will be replaced by Kevin Steele, who comes over from Miami. Lance Guidry is the new Hurricanes' DC.

ALABAMA: Kevin Steele replaces Pete Golding
APPALACHIAN ST: Scott Sloan replaces Dale Jones
ARIZONA ST: Brian Ward replaces Donnie Henderson
ARKANSAS: Travis Williams / Marcus Woodson replaces Barry Odom
AUBURN: Ron Roberts replaces Jeff Schmedding
BAYLOR: Matt Powledge replaces Ron Roberts
BOSTON COLLEGE: Aazaar Abdul-Rahim / Sean Duggan replaces Tem Lukabu
BOWLING GREEN: Sammy Lawanson / Steve Morrison replaces Eric Lewis
BUFFALO: Robert Wright replaces Brandon Bailey
BYU: Jay Hill replaces Ilaisa Tuiaki
CHARLOTTE: Ryan Osborn replaces Greg Brown
CINCINNATI: Bryan Brown / Nate Fuqua replaces Mike Tressel
COASTAL CAROLINA: Craig Naivar replaces Chad Staggs
COLORADO: Charles Kelly replaces Chris Wilson
DUKE: Tyler Santucci replaces Robb Smith
E MICHIGAN: Taver Johnson / Ben Needham replaces Neal Neathery
FLA ATLANTIC: Roc Bellantoni replaces Todd Orlando
GA SOUTHERN: Brandon Bailey replaces Will Harris
GEORGIA ST: Chad Staggs replaces Nate Fuqua
ILLINOIS: Aaron Henry replaces Ryan Walters
KENT ST: David Duggan replaces Jeremiah Johnson
LOUISVILLE: Ron English replaces Bryan Brown / Wes McGriff
MARSHALL: Jason Semore / Chevis Jackson replaces Lance Guidry
MIAMI FL: Lance Guidry replaces Kevin Steele / Charlie Strong
MISSISSIPPI ST: Matt Brock replaces Zach Arnett
NAVY: P.J. Volker replaces Brian Newberry
NEBRASKA: Tony White replaces Erik Chinander
NEW MEXICO: Troy Reffett replaces Rocky Long
NORTH TEXAS: Matt Caponi replaces Phil Bennett / Jim Gush
NORTHWESTERN: David Braun replaces Jim O'Neil
OKLAHOMA ST: Jim Bob Clements / Bryan Nardo replaces Derek Mason
OLE MISS: Pete Golding replaces Maurice Crum Jr. / Chris Partridge
PURDUE: Kevin Kane replaces Ron English / Mark Hagen
SOUTH FLORIDA: Todd Orlando replaces Bob Shoop
SOUTHERN MISS: Dan O'Brien replaces Austin Armstrong
STANFORD: Bobby April III replaces Lance Anderson
SYRACUSE: Rocky Long replaces Tony White
TEMPLE: Everett Withers replaces D. J. Eliot
TEXAS ST UNIV: Jonathan Patke replaces Brian Gambel / Zac Spavital
TROY: Greg Gasparato / Tayler Polk replaces Shiel Wood
TULANE: Shiel Wood replaces Chris Hampton
TULSA: Chris Polizzi replaces Luke Olson
UAB: Sione Ta'ufo'ou replaces David Reeves
UCLA: D'Anton Lynn replaces Bill McGovern
UNLV: Michael Scherer replaces Keith Heyward
UTAH ST: Joe Cauthen replaces Ephraim Banda
WASHINGTON ST: Jeff Schmedding replaces Brian Ward

STEVE MAKINEN'S
4-YEAR EFFECTIVE STATS

Everything in the VSiN College Football Betting Guide is in there for a reason. One of the areas that draws questions every year is the 4-YEAR EFFECTIVE STATS charts on each team's page. The stats shown on here are what I refer to as my Effective Stats. In other words, they are raw stats weighted against schedule strength and other in-game adjustment I make to my ratings sets. In my opinion, these provide a clearer picture of a team's strength of lack thereof than raw statistics.

As far as how to get the best usage out of these EFFECTIVE STATS, for me, I use them to spot teams that are 1) trending upward or downward 2) showing unusual patterns. You might look for one-year flashes in Effective Offensive Points, or unusually low of high Effective Yards Per Point totals. These types of things can result from unusual circumstances, like head coach or coordinator changes, bad turnover luck, or seasons impacted by key injuries.

In general, teams that are trending upward offensively or defensively, and have stable coaching situations tend to make for the most optimal picks to do well, and vice versa.

AIR FORCE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		44	16	0.9	-11.4	8 QB	30.3	5.91	13.23	7, DC	15.3	5	16.52
2021		46	17.8	1.25	-16	7-QB	35.8	6.08	12.52	7	17.9	4.83	15.24
2020		41.5	18	0.58	2.9	4-QB	23.8	5.93	15.53	5	20.7	5.35	15.52
2019		49.5	22.3	1.71	-21.2	7-QB	37.2	6.79	12.15	7	15.7	5.08	18.88

AKRON

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	24.5	-4.3	-0.22	6.9	8, OC	24.1	5.4	16.39	8, DC	29.6	5.63	12.93
2021		17	-12.4	-1.08	11.1	10-QB	22.3	5.65	16.51	10	35.2	6.73	12.48
2020		15.5	-17.8	-3.6	25.5	7-QB	10	4.43	26.55	6	40.9	8.03	11.95
2019	Yes	7.5	-23.8	-1.56	18.2	7-QB, OC	10.3	4.07	23.91	3, DC	34.9	5.63	11.7

ALABAMA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		69.5	42	4.2	-39.4	5 QB	48.7	8.08	11.62	7	8.2	3.89	32.8
2021		71	39.5	3.87	-41.2	4, OC	50.6	7.94	11.56	8	11.1	4.07	23.73
2020		80	53.9	3.96	-36.2	7	54.9	8.58	10.85	5	14.1	4.62	22.83
2019		72.5	45.5	4.63	-42.7	6-QB, OC	55.8	8.9	10.46	6	12.4	4.26	22.92

APPALACHIAN ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		42	12.4	1.54	-16.3	7 QB, OC	38.5	6.76	12.17	5	27.1	5.22	12.56
2021		48	21.1	1.84	-18.3	7, OC	37.2	6.55	12.23	10	16.1	4.71	19.1
2020	Yes	45.5	15.6	0.18	-6	8-QB, OC	26.4	5.57	15.16	5, DC	23.9	5.4	14.43
2019	Yes	51.5	24.6	1.77	-18	10-QB, OC	40.5	6.57	11.28	6, DC	16.7	4.8	19.34

ARIZONA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		42.5	14	2.63	-11.1	7 QB	37.9	8.25	14.71	8, DC	25	5.63	16
2021	Yes	31.5	1.5	0.63	-6.3	7, OC	25.7	5.76	16.18	8, DC	24.2	5.13	13.33
2020		35	-0.2	-0.97	1.5	7-QB	20	5.33	19.84	6, DC	34.7	6.29	12.74
2019		41.5	10.7	1.77	-13	7-QB	34.6	7.24	15.21	8	25.2	5.47	16.06

ARIZONA ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		40.5	10.3	1.5	-13.1	3, OC	30.9	6.8	14.47	4, DC	21.6	5.3	17.19
2021		50	18.4	2.47	-20.3	9-QB	34.5	7.03	12.78	11	16.1	4.56	18.7
2020		53.5	34.6	2.37	-8.5	4-QB, OC	40.5	7.57	11.77	8, DC	19.1	5.21	21.98
2019		49	20	2.19	-19.4	8	33.4	6.94	13.46	7	14.2	4.74	23.59

ARKANSAS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		53	22.9	2.06	-23.2	7 QB	40.2	7.52	13.71	4	19	5.46	20.29
2021		55	23.8	2.86	-25.1	9	38.5	7.57	13.5	10	14.7	4.71	21.99
2020	Yes	46	18.7	1.62	-6.1	8, OC	31.5	6.63	14.25	6, DC	26.2	5.01	15.29
2019		35.5	4.3	0.74	-8.6	6	30.7	6.31	13.41	6	27.2	5.58	14.12

ARKANSAS ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		26	1.2	-0.33	1.6	5 QB	29.5	5.17	11.33	5	29.3	5.5	13.03
2021	Yes	25	-6.4	-0.98	2.8	6	28.7	5.8	14.73	9, DC	35.1	6.78	13.51
2020		33.5	2.7	-0.64	10.4	9-QB	29.6	6.02	15.68	4	40.1	6.66	12.41
2019		34	6.2	0.79	-8	6, OC	34.6	6.59	13.27	7, DC	29.5	5.8	15.47

ARMY

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		41	9.8	0.55	-8.3	8 QB	31.1	6.28	12.67	6	22.3	5.73	16.03
2021		42	14.4	0.3	-11.8	6-QB	36.8	5.94	11.1	8	20.4	5.64	15.39
2020		40.5	12.6	-1.34	4.9	5	22.7	4.38	12.78	7, DC	23.1	5.73	13.33
2019		38	8.5	0.27	-7.5	7-QB	28.8	5.83	13.78	4, DC	21.4	5.56	15.84

AUBURN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		50.5	18.5	2.57	-19.2	7, OC	35.8	7.16	13.27	6, DC	18.4	4.59	17.83
2021	Yes	54	24.7	2.4	-22.8	9-QB, OC	38.5	6.92	12.45	7, DC	14.4	4.52	22.31
2020		52.5	25.8	1.03	-12	5-QB, OC	30.3	6.21	14.04	5, DC	17.6	5.17	20.83
2019		63.5	37.3	3.05	-30.9	7, OC	43.7	6.98	11.9	7	7.2	3.93	37.68

BALL ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		29.5	1.4	0.47	-0.2	6	24.6	5.34	16.08	5	24.2	4.87	15.73
2021		36.5	4.1	-0.15	-6.6	10-QB	26.4	5.32	13.48	10	22.3	5.47	17.59
2020		41.5	14.4	-0.8	6.1	7-QB, OC	27.9	5.56	15.56	7, DC	26.6	6.36	17.44
2019		37	9.1	0.8	-7.9	8	36.2	6.39	13.37	9	28	5.59	14.6

BAYLOR

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		54.5	25	2.27	-28.5	6	39.9	6.94	12.74	6	15.9	4.67	20.16
2021		56	27.2	2.54	-24.8	7, OC	37.7	7.26	13.03	10	10.9	4.72	28.29
2020	Yes	44	15.6	-0.34	-3.4	7-QB, OC	26.8	4.8	12.51	2, DC	24.3	5.14	14.7
2019		60	31.6	3.15	-16.3	8-QB	41.1	7.43	12.1	7	10.3	4.28	30.75

BOISE ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		45.5	16.2	1.52	-17.8	8 QB	33.8	5.98	11.75	9	18.6	4.47	14.47
2021	Yes	48	21.4	0.89	-16.5	9-QB, OC	36.1	5.86	11.77	8, DC	14.7	4.97	22.5
2020		47.5	16.7	-0.15	-8.1	5-QB	36	5.26	9.42	6	32.4	5.42	11.88
2019		52.5	24.2	1.56	-20.5	6	39.2	6.51	11.95	7, DC	16.5	4.95	19.82

BOSTON COLLEGE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		36	4.2	0.43	-8.3	6 QB, OC	26.6	5.39	13.53	8	24.5	4.96	13.61
2021		43	13	0.78	-15	9-QB	28.5	5.83	13.25	8	17.8	5.05	17.98
2020	Yes	46.5	17.7	0.04	-4.3	6-QB, OC	29	5.9	13.91	9, DC	24.7	5.87	16.22
2019		42	14.4	0.98	-13.6	6-QB, OC	37.7	6.73	13.65	3, DC	24.8	5.75	17.27

BOWLING GREEN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		28	-1.6	-0.15	-1.0	9 QB	26.9	5.34	13.34	9	29.9	5.49	13.29
2021		27	-3.1	0.2	2.7	5-QB	23.3	5.19	14.4	8, DC	26.5	4.99	13.36
2020		11	-27.5	-2.15	26.7	5	4.5	4.92	68.94	6	45.1	7.07	11.17
2019	Yes	12.5	-16.7	-1.91	19	7, OC	19.2	4.8	17.46	5, DC	36.7	6.7	12.16

BUFFALO

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		32	5	-0.89	-3.4	3	30.1	5.01	12.75	6, DC	26.1	5.89	14.69
2021	Yes	31.5	1.4	-0.77	-5.7	7-QB, OC	28.7	5.48	14.41	8, DC	28	6.25	14.65
2020		46.5	22.4	0.85	-5.9	8-QB	37	7	12.21	7	27.6	6.15	15.74
2019		40	11.2	0.69	-7.8	5	32.2	5.5	12.46	3	21.9	4.81	13.27

BYU

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		45.5	13.3	2.03	-14.6	8 QB	36	7.52	13.51	11	23.7	5.49	15.79
2021		48.5	20.1	2.31	-18.9	7, OC	39	7.49	13.01	3	18.9	5.18	18.64
2020		57.5	34.7	2.12	-16.6	8-QB	41.5	7.29	11.57	7	19.9	5.16	16.55
2019		45.5	15.1	1.74	-17.8	9-QB	33.3	6.78	14.46	8	19.8	5.04	17.84

C MICHIGAN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		29.5	-0.1	0.34	-4.1	7 QB, OC	26.5	5.43	14.24	4	27.6	5.08	13.28
2021		41.5	10.4	0.74	-8.9	11-QB, OC	33	6.28	14.15	10	22.6	5.54	16.8
2020		36	9.2	-0.62	3.5	5	25.5	5.54	15.71	7	30.1	6.16	14.96
2019	Yes	38.5	9.4	1.1	-7	8-QB, OC	33.1	6.29	13.76	3, DC	25.5	5.19	13.49

CALIFORNIA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		40	13	1.44	-12.4	3	29.5	6.53	14.49	5	17.5	5.09	21.42
2021		45.5	15.1	2.01	-15.9	10-QB	30.2	6.74	14.59	9	15.4	4.73	21.27
2020		46	14.7	-0.54	-4.3	10-QB, OC	22.4	4.78	15.35	8, DC	20.8	5.32	16.54
2019		47.5	18.8	1.48	-15.7	4-QB	28.9	6.03	13.44	7	12.2	4.55	26.94

CHARLOTTE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		22.5	-7.5	-0.61	5.8	8 QB	25.8	6.12	15.85	6, DC	35	6.73	13.13
2021		24	-5.6	-1.08	3.3	9-QB	25.8	5.94	15.8	5	31.4	7.02	14.58
2020		28.5	-0.6	-2.09	11.2	7-QB, OC	24.2	5.04	14.47	6, DC	38.8	7.13	11.75
2019	Yes	33.5	2.7	0.59	0.6	5-QB, OC	32.5	6.57	13.36	7, DC	30.6	5.98	12.41

CINCINNATI

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		48.5	20.1	2.23	-18.5	8, OC	33.7	6.43	12.55	5	15	4.21	20.43
2021		59.5	30.2	3.35	-24.9	7-QB	42	7.4	10.9	7, DC	11.9	4.05	24.15
2020		58.5	33.8	2.23	-19.4	6-QB	36.6	6.71	12.45	9	16	4.48	20.17
2019		49	21.2	1.67	-18	7-QB	34.1	6.33	12.87	7	13.7	4.66	24.59

CLEMSON

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		59.5	29.9	2.42	-26.9	9 QB, OC	42	6.89	11.12	6, DC	13	4.48	22.53
2021		56	24.4	1.95	-22.5	5	32.9	5.94	12.49	10	8.4	3.99	32.86
2020		74.5	45.8	2.45	-30	5-QB	47.9	6.93	10.93	6	16.5	4.48	17.55
2019		79	50.1	4.89	-46.3	8-QB	52.8	8.43	11.63	4	3.5	3.54	62.39

COASTAL CAROLINA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		35.5	7.4	0.42	-10.9	4 QB	32.7	6.47	13.37	3	27.1	6.06	14.36
2021		46.5	18.7	2.05	-18.5	9-QB	38.3	7.42	12.54	10	20.3	5.37	16.46
2020		49.5	25.2	0.53	-6.3	8-QB	33.5	6.25	12.55	6, DC	21.9	5.72	16.64
2019	Yes	29.5	2.2	-0.4	0.8	7, OC	27.6	5.61	14.49	8	26.2	6.01	14.57

COLORADO

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		23.5	-5.8	-0.33	-0.4	7 QB, OC	24.1	5.66	14.64	5	31.6	5.99	13.43
2021		39	7.8	-0.16	-7.7	9-QB	27.7	5.12	10.87	8, DC	19.9	5.28	18.46
2020	Yes	45.5	19.1	0.53	-4.6	6, OC	31.7	5.79	13.7	8	25.7	5.26	14.24
2019	Yes	42.5	13	1.26	-10	7-QB, OC	33.3	6.76	14.32	4, DC	21.2	5.49	17.63

COLORADO ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	26	-5.2	0.35	5.6	6, OC	18.6	5.19	16.45	6, DC	25.3	4.84	13.18
2021		34	4.5	0.93	-9.4	10, OC	29.6	5.98	15.36	10	25.1	5.05	13.93
2020	Yes	35	-0.6	-0.06	6.4	7-QB, OC	24.6	4.76	13.16	8, DC	38.2	4.82	9.39
2019		35.5	3.4	1.26	-6.7	5-QB	31.7	6.58	14.56	6	29.1	5.31	12.34

CONNECTICUT

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	28.5	-0.7	-0.19	2.2	7, OC	24.2	5.16	13.03	8	25.9	5.35	14.32
2021		15	-14.5	-1.09	13.2	7-QB	20.8	4.4	13.82	8	35.4	5.49	11.85
2020		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019		16	-14	-1.17	12.4	6, OC	21.1	5.43	17.34	10, DC	36.2	6.61	12.15

DUKE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	47	20.3	1.59	-16.5	6, OC	38.7	6.76	11.85	5, DC	19.4	5.17	18.21
2021		25	-5.1	-0.39	-2.8	6, OC	25.8	6.03	18.19	6	31.2	6.42	14.94
2020		34	4.2	-0.79	1.1	7	25.7	5.23	15.31	7	34.6	6.01	12.4
2019		40.5	13.2	0.65	-14.5	4	33.4	5.31	11.56	8	21	4.66	15.73

E MICHIGAN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		33	2.6	-0.13	-1.6	8	29.5	5.31	12.39	6	28.2	5.43	12.88
2021		35	6.4	-0.27	-4.8	10-QB, OC	32.7	5.7	11.99	10	26.4	5.97	15.84
2020		32	5	-1.22	13.4	5, OC	25	5.49	15.32	6, DC	33.1	6.71	15.56
2019		30.5	2.7	0.44	-1.6	6	30.5	6.29	13.65	4	28.6	5.85	14.54

EAST CAROLINA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		42	14.3	1.53	-16.1	7 QB	34.7	7.22	14.49	8	21.4	5.68	17.68
2021		40.5	12.2	0.78	-12.2	10-QB	33.5	6.32	14.1	10	21.3	5.54	17.13
2020		37.5	8.6	-0.6	9.3	8-QB	29	5.58	13.98	4, DC	33.5	6.18	13.27
2019	Yes	26.5	-1.4	-0.31	0.3	7-QB, OC	28.3	5.99	15.9	7, DC	30.5	6.3	14.82

FLA ATLANTIC

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		36	8	0.05	-5.3	8 QB, OC	30	5.88	14.22	6, DC	23	5.83	17.87
2021		31	2.9	0.29	-8.8	10-QB, OC	25.6	5.95	16.21	10, DC	22.7	5.66	17.5
2020	Yes	33	3.2	-1.05	1.5	4, OC	15.9	4.52	18.52	3, DC	25.8	5.56	14.35
2019		47.5	19.1	1.12	-13.3	7-QB	38.8	6.24	12	6, DC	20.5	5.13	17.24

FLA INTERNATIONAL

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	14	-17.1	-1.27	13.4	4, OC	17.7	4.73	18.32	5, DC	35.8	6	12.53
2021		11.5	-17.4	-0.58	8.9	8-QB, OC	19.9	5.99	18.78	9, DC	37.4	6.57	12.93
2020		23.5	-7.4	-2.16	15.5	4	22.1	4.19	11.6	6	42.6	6.35	10.94
2019		33.5	2.2	0.09	-2	8-QB	27.7	5.64	13.62	8, DC	26.3	5.56	14.24

FLORIDA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	53	23	3.11	-22.8	6	39.9	8.19	13.37	7, DC	18	5.07	19.71
2021		49	19.4	2.92	-21.5	5, OC	37.3	7.71	14.52	5	17.9	4.79	17.82
2020		64.5	33.9	2.62	-24.1	6-QB	44.4	7.95	12.3	6	23.6	5.33	16.04
2019		66.5	37.9	3.57	-31.3	5-QB	44.3	7.69	11.45	8	7.2	4.12	35.7

FLORIDA ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		60	31.5	3.65	-28.9	8 QB, OC	44.7	7.85	12.18	8	14.2	4.19	19.25
2021		48	16.4	2.21	-17	10-QB	34.3	6.75	12.91	6	17.8	4.54	18.55
2020	Yes	40.5	7.7	-0.43	1.9	7-QB, OC	27.4	5.77	15.07	10, DC	33.1	6.21	13.24
2019		48	16.2	2	-17.6	8-QB, OC	35.4	6.74	13.13	8	20	4.74	19.22

FRESNO ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	47.5	16.3	1.01	-15.4	8 QB, OC	34.6	6.1	11.82	7, DC	20.5	5.09	16.5
2021		46	17.4	1.63	-15.1	9-QB	36.4	6.57	13.2	11	19	4.94	17.39
2020	Yes	34.5	2.8	-1.4	4.5	7	27.9	5.55	15.41	7, DC	38.2	6.95	12.74
2019		36.5	9.1	1.2	-9.8	3, OC	33.7	6.53	12.39	6	25.4	5.33	15.35

GA SOUTHERN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	35	8.8	0.23	-5.9	8, OC	38.2	6.54	13.05	5, DC	30.4	6.31	15.49
2021		28.5	-4.8	-0.75	3.6	7, OC	23	5.36	15.76	7	27.8	6.11	15.08
2020		37.5	6.9	-0.49	7.3	8-QB	22.4	5.35	14.78	6	29.7	5.84	12.48
2019		40	10.6	0.46	-6.4	7-QB	30	5.72	12.04	7	21.1	5.27	16.64

GEORGIA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		74.5	47	4.4	-47.1	7 QB	48	8.45	12.42	3	2.1	4.05	118.26
2021		72	46.3	4.6	-43.2	8-QB	47.6	8.1	10.87	5	1.3	3.5	174.57
2020		65.5	35.5	2.16	-22.7	3-QB, OC	38.1	6.66	12.05	8, DC	15.7	4.5	19.02
2019		67	38.3	3.68	-37.5	6-QB	42	7.38	11.75	6, DC	4.5	3.71	51.92

GEORGIA ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		38.5	8.1	0.86	-9.8	8 QB, OC	33.2	6.21	13.65	7	26.1	5.35	14.19
2021		38.5	6.8	0.79	-5.6	11-QB	29.2	5.93	14.13	8	22.4	5.14	16.86
2020		37	7.3	-0.59	7.8	8	30.6	5.4	13.03	8	36.3	5.98	12.3
2019		29	3.2	-0.12	-6	7-QB, OC	33.9	6.19	13.94	7	31.5	6.31	13.56

GEORGIA TECH

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		40.5	9	0.93	-7.9	5 QB, OC	26.6	5.95	14.8	3	19.1	5.02	17.94
2021		37.5	9	1.16	-11.2	7-QB	32.1	6.8	13.88	9	23.1	5.64	16.83
2020		39.5	6.1	0.4	5.2	9-QB	25.9	5.96	15.93	10	32.9	5.56	13.24
2019	Yes	33.5	0.9	0.5	-6.3	5, OC	26.4	5.6	12.67	4, DC	26.3	5.1	14.06

HAWAII

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	20.5	-10.1	-1.22	9.9	4, OC	23.7	5.15	14.97	2	35	6.37	12.1
2021		33.5	4	0.79	-0.4	8-QB, OC	30.9	6.24	13.88	10	27.5	5.45	15.35
2020	Yes	34	4.6	-1.03	6.7	6, OC	25.4	5.23	15.01	5, DC	33.9	6.26	13.03
2019		39	12.5	1.56	-9.4	9-QB	38.4	7.34	13.42	9	26.7	5.78	14.66

HOUSTON

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		44	15	1.91	-15.9	7 QB	38.5	7.35	13.31	6	24.5	5.45	16.01
2021		48.5	20.4	1.45	-19.6	6-QB	38.2	6.18	11.28	9	17.8	4.73	16.14
2020		45	16.6	0.31	-6	10-QB, OC	32.6	6.02	13.45	9, DC	29.1	5.71	13.89
2019	Yes	36.5	11.7	0.84	-9.6	8-QB, OC	33.6	6.9	13.35	4, DC	22.7	6.06	18.37

ILLINOIS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		54.5	28.1	2.31	-22.3	6, OC	35.6	6.08	12.44	6	8.5	3.77	27.4
2021	Yes	42	13.5	1.16	-10.1	9-QB, OC	29	5.75	13.07	9, DC	15.8	4.59	20.33
2020		40.5	8.9	-0.14	-2.6	9-QB	28.9	5.88	13.23	5	33.9	6.02	12.7
2019		42.5	14.9	0.48	-13.1	7	35.7	5.53	10.05	10, DC	21.8	5.04	17.02

INDIANA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		38	10.9	0.59	-6.5	4, OC	34.4	5.54	11.76	7, DC	24.5	4.95	15.41
2021		36	6.2	0.52	-11.7	8-QB	27.8	5.26	12.91	9, DC	23.5	4.74	13.77
2020		59.5	33.6	0.6	-9.8	8-QB, OC	35.4	5.61	10.96	9, DC	15.6	5.01	21.42
2019		50	20.8	1.9	-21	7-QB, OC	39.5	6.78	12.51	7, DC	20	4.88	15.92

IOWA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		50	21	1.46	-21.8	7 QB	28.3	5	10.68	7	8.3	3.54	29.04
2021		50	20.4	1.2	-20.8	6-QB	33.5	5.32	10.39	7	13.1	4.12	21.82
2020		60	35.2	1.62	-12	7	38	5.73	10.27	4	15.9	4.12	18.71
2019		56	28.4	2.42	-27	6-QB	33.3	6.54	13.11	4	5.7	4.12	46.5

IOWA ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47.5	20.6	2.2	-22.8	5	28.6	6.21	15.76	3	9.1	4.01	26.69
2021		58	28	3.26	-27.6	10-QB	40.5	7.73	12.68	9	12.5	4.47	21.69
2020		60	30.7	1.95	-16.8	5-QB	35.5	6.94	13.21	8	17.9	4.99	18.16
2019		54	27	3.3	-28	8-QB, OC	42.4	7.82	12.87	8	16.1	4.52	19.38

JACKSONVILLE ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	33	1.9	-0.11	2.7		27.7	5.86	13.86		25.8	5.98	16.84
2021		21.5	-9.7	-0.69	8.8		19.7	5.27	17.76		29.4	5.96	13.78
2020		29.5	-4.6	-0.15	-2.7		20.3	5.36	15.89		25	5.51	15.22
2019		16	-14.1	-0.9	11.2		19.6	5.23	19.04		33.7	6.13	12.9

JAMES MADISON

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47.5	18.6	1.59	-14.1	5	37.7	6.27	12.17	4	20.1	4.68	14.26
2021		45.5	17.2	0.91	-11.1	9-QB	37.8	5.75	10.71	11	22.2	4.83	13.58
2020		34	10.5	0.68	-3.2	N/A	37	6.11	11.02	N/A	26.2	5.01	13.38
2019	Yes	49.5	20	1.36	-16.2	N/A	41.7	6.25	10.76	N/A	21.7	4.88	13.73

KANSAS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47.5	22	3.48	-23.7	9 QB	41.3	8.52	12.49	8	21.6	5.04	17.72
2021	Yes	30.5	-3.4	-0.01	5.4	8-QB, OC	28.3	6.19	13.73	9, DC	31.7	6.2	13.18
2020		24.5	-8.8	-2.19	16.2	6, OC	20.7	3.96	13.57	5, DC	42.6	6.16	10.01
2019	Yes	35.5	5.2	1.58	-9.5	5, OC	30.8	6.94	14.5	5, DC	26.4	5.36	15.66

KANSAS ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		62	34.7	3.02	-31.0	6, OC	41.7	7.53	12.27	7	8.8	4.51	35.25
2021		51.5	21.5	2.59	-22.8	10-QB	32.5	7.24	12.71	6	12.2	4.65	25.07
2020		44	16.7	0.18	-8.5	3-QB	28.8	5.96	12.43	6, DC	28	5.78	15.02
2019	Yes	51.5	25.3	1.14	-20.8	6-QB, OC	37.1	6.52	11.72	8, DC	12.6	5.38	25.42

KENT ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		36.5	7.7	0.77	-5.5	4	31	6.19	14.43	6, DC	24.5	5.42	16.6
2021		34	3.7	1.11	-6.3	10-QB	34.2	6.83	14.94	9	30.5	5.72	14.48
2020		39.5	9.6	-0.97	4.1	7-QB	37.8	6.55	14.14	6	41.3	7.52	11.89
2019		33	4.6	0.26	-0.5	9-QB	31.2	6.17	13.54	6	27.4	5.91	16.1

KENTUCKY

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		50.5	21.4	1.85	-20.9	6 QB, OC	29.9	6.41	13.29	5	10.3	4.56	27.04
2021		53.5	22.8	2.41	-19.4	7, OC	38.5	7.33	12.48	6	15.7	4.92	19.37
2020		48	18.9	0.46	-6	8-QB	25.7	5.57	13.27	7	20.7	5.11	17.2
2019		53	22.4	2.37	-18.1	6-QB	34.3	7.01	12.98	4, DC	13	4.65	22.12

LA LAFAYETTE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	40.5	11.8	0.54	-7.3	6	30.2	5.56	12.81	5, DC	20.6	5.02	16.74
2021		46.5	17.1	1.35	-13.6	9-QB, OC	32.4	6.25	13.16	11	15.3	4.9	21.55
2020		49	20.7	1.11	-0.2	7-QB	32	6.07	12.73	7, DC	24.4	4.96	14.86
2019		48	22.7	1.92	-19.8	8	37.6	7.25	13.71	7	15.7	5.33	23.1

LA MONROE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		28	-0.9	0.1	-0.7	8 QB, OC	28.5	5.76	12.64	4, DC	30.4	5.66	12.86
2021	Yes	28.5	-3.2	-0.85	3.2	7-QB, OC	25.6	5.01	13.94	10, DC	29.8	5.86	14
2020		13	-19.3	-2.65	23.2	5, OC	14.4	4.59	20.04	8, DC	46.9	7.23	10.46
2019		33.5	1.7	0.64	-2.1	7-QB	33.5	6.87	14.85	8	32.5	6.24	13.84

LIBERTY

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		38.5	10.8	1.07	-17.8	7	31.4	5.92	13.31	4, DC	23.7	4.84	14
2021		43	14.4	1.89	-18.4	11-QB	33.6	6.49	13.29	9	19.2	4.6	15.77
2020		43.5	15.4	-0.04	-1.1	5	31.3	5.84	13.46	4	29	5.88	12.23
2019	Yes	32.5	3.8	0.43	-2.9	8-QB, OC	30.9	6.41	14.1	7, DC	27.9	5.98	15.38

LOUISIANA TECH

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	25	-1.8	-0.24	2.6	6, OC	30.2	5.95	13.71	8, DC	33.3	6.19	13.38
2021		29	1.3	0.24	-2.5	6-QB	29.7	5.96	13.87	10	28.4	5.72	14.33
2020		30.5	2.1	-2.04	11.4	6-QB, OC	25.7	4.37	12.01	2, DC	36.7	6.41	12.22
2019		37.5	8.8	0.52	-8.6	6-QB	32.6	6	13.26	5, DC	25.5	5.48	15.74

LOUISVILLE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		52	25.7	2.53	-23.6	7 QB, OC	36.3	7.07	13.25	7	12.2	4.54	24.58
2021		49.5	20	2.72	-17.9	6-QB, OC	38.5	7.77	13.61	6	18.4	5.05	19.15
2020		50.5	20.1	1.28	-6.3	8-QB	31.4	6.87	14.63	8	24.7	5.59	14.46
2019	Yes	44	17	2.31	-16.4	6-QB, OC	41.7	7.82	12.53	10, DC	25.9	5.51	14.95

LSU

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	55	29.5	2.91	-28.4	5, OC	42.2	7.57	12.84	5, DC	13.7	4.67	22.39
2021		50	20.5	1.87	-19.8	9-QB, OC	35.6	6.46	12.69	9, DC	15.2	4.59	20.92
2020		52	21	-0.7	-7.1	3	35	6.01	13.49	5, DC	28.7	6.71	15.87
2019		76	46.9	5.1	-43	8-QB	57.4	9.39	11.63	8	11.3	4.29	25.69

MARSHALL

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		43	14.3	1.35	-12.2	5, OC	26.4	5.69	16.15	6	13.1	4.34	21.26
2021	Yes	43	14.9	1.69	-14.6	9-QB	34.8	6.61	13.97	7, DC	20	4.92	18.85
2020		44	18.4	0.41	-7.7	8-QB	27.7	5.4	13.19	4	22.5	4.99	13.93
2019		37.5	8.1	0.93	-11	8-QB	28.3	6.07	14.62	6, DC	20.9	5.13	16.61

MARYLAND

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		50.5	22	2.39	-18.6	9 QB	36.8	6.81	12.9	7	16.2	4.42	19.6
2021		43	9.4	1.75	-13.1	8-QB, OC	36.1	6.94	14.02	9, DC	26.7	5.19	13.66
2020		41.5	14.8	2.35	1.2	5	31.4	7.26	14.39	5	29.7	4.91	13.16
2019	Yes	36.5	7.7	1.05	-7.7	5-QB, OC	33.7	6.26	11.87	5, DC	27.5	5.21	14.29

MASSACHUSETTS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	16	-12.8	-1.64	12.6	8 QB, OC	16	4.18	17.32	8, DC	29.8	5.82	11.9
2021		10	-20.2	-1.84	18.3	6-QB, OC	18	5.09	17.66	8	39.3	6.93	11.67
2020		10.5	-24.3	-3.44	36.5	7-QB, OC	9	3.45	20.76	7, DC	46.4	6.89	10.36
2019	Yes	3.5	-31.8	-3.34	24.2	5, OC	21.8	4.32	13.55	3, DC	54.4	7.66	10.15

MEMPHIS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		43.5	16.8	1.32	-12.7	7 QB, OC	36.1	6.27	12.63	6, DC	20.3	4.95	17.06
2021		43	11.6	1.47	-14.4	7	31.8	6.52	14.7	8	23.2	5.05	16.79
2020	Yes	43	11	-0.14	-0.6	4-QB	27.6	5.92	16.1	8, DC	29.7	6.06	15.64
2019		54	25.9	2.67	-24.1	6-QB, OC	43.8	7.5	11.93	8, DC	18.7	4.83	18.42

MIAMI FL

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	41	9.5	0.63	-13.9	7 QB, OC	30.3	5.98	13.58	7, DC	22.2	5.36	15.33
2021		56	23.4	2.38	-24.6	10-QB	39.4	7.12	13.24	9, DC	18.7	4.74	18.27
2020		54	28.2	1.04	-11.3	8, OC	36.1	6.37	12.78	5, DC	21	5.33	18.3
2019	Yes	45.5	19.4	2.22	-20.9	6-QB, OC	34.2	6.5	12.37	6, DC	15.6	4.28	17.81

MIAMI OHIO

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		31	0.5	-0.4	-0.3	9 QB	22.1	4.92	14.09	5, DC	23.4	5.32	15.75
2021		39.5	8.9	1.2	-7.6	8-QB	30	6.6	14.7	10	21.1	5.4	17.05
2020		36.5	8	-0.89	4.2	10-QB	22.2	5.57	15.48	7	27.3	6.46	15.38
2019		34	4.6	0.45	-2.4	5	28.1	5.31	11.64	5	24.3	4.86	14.66

MICHIGAN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		69	41.6	3.64	-39.8	9 QB, OC	50	7.58	10.44	4, DC	9.3	3.94	26.27
2021		66.5	36.9	3.42	-31.6	8	46.3	7.54	11.36	8, DC	9.4	4.12	29.47
2020		49.5	14.8	1.14	-9.6	5	35.2	6.37	11.62	5	33.5	5.23	12.11
2019		62.5	33.8	3.33	-33.4	8-QB, OC	44.4	7.11	11.02	5	11.4	3.78	21.88

MICHIGAN ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		46.5	17.2	1.71	-16.0	5 QB	35.6	6.65	12.05	9	19.4	4.93	18.29
2021		52.5	23.7	2.92	-22.1	10	40.4	7.79	12.73	7	16.7	4.87	23.45
2020	Yes	41	9	0.7	-0.6	5, OC	26.5	5.43	14.09	2, DC	30.6	4.72	11.63
2019		48	20.2	2.01	-25	9-QB, OC	32.9	6.21	13.4	8	13.6	4.2	19.91

MIDDLE TENN ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		32	5.1	-0.06	-2.8	5 QB, OC	30.3	5.4	13.26	6	26.4	5.45	15.26
2021		36.5	7.8	0.3	-1.6	9, OC	29.9	5.24	12.19	10	23.3	4.94	15.39
2020		27	-7.6	-1.81	13.8	8-QB	21.6	4.71	14.87	5	42.3	6.52	11.4
2019		33.5	3.7	0.9	-5.7	5	31.3	6.75	13.86	6	28.4	5.85	15.28

MINNESOTA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		54	26.6	2.07	-22.3	6 QB	36.1	6.56	12.32	6	11.3	4.49	22.73
2021		51.5	21.8	1.85	-17.6	10-QB	35	6.25	11.84	10	13.1	4.4	19.21
2020		49	17.3	-0.5	-2.6	8-QB, OC	33.2	6.02	12.48	4, DC	29.6	6.52	13.27
2019		55.5	27	2.74	-28	9-QB	43.7	7.27	11.21	7, DC	17.5	4.53	15.87

MISSISSIPPI ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		56	27.9	2.1	-26.1	8 QB	41.1	6.56	11.47	9	14.3	4.46	21.01
2021		51.5	21.2	2.28	-23.1	8-QB	38.4	7	13.68	8	17.2	4.72	16.86
2020	Yes	45.5	16.6	0.49	-2.3	6, OC	25.5	5.49	15.11	5, DC	22	4.99	15.78
2019		49.5	21	2.31	-18.2	7, OC	37.8	7.56	13.04	4	18.1	5.26	18.23

MISSOURI

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47	18.8	2.05	-21.1	6	33.3	6.59	13.24	8, DC	15.5	4.53	18.79
2021		41.5	9.8	1.04	-8.8	8-QB	37.1	6.76	12.85	8, DC	27.5	5.72	14.28
2020	Yes	45.5	15.5	0.36	-4.9	4, OC	30.4	6.06	14.25	7	28	5.7	13.63
2019		51	22.3	1.84	-23.4	7	35.4	6.11	12.25	6	14.3	4.27	19.21

N ILLINOIS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		28	-1.1	-0.06	-4.4	9 QB	29.4	5.69	13	9	32.4	5.75	11.95
2021		35.5	6.7	0.18	-3.4	8	33.8	6.43	13.36	10	27.3	6.25	15.31
2020		26.5	-3.7	-1.96	15.6	6-QB	19	4.86	18.86	4	35.7	6.81	12.04
2019	Yes	32.5	3.2	-0.13	-4.6	6-QB, OC	26.7	5.58	14.33	7, DC	25	5.71	14.53

NAVY

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		40.5	11	-0.14	-5.9	5 QB, OC	27.5	5.32	13.61	6	17.5	5.46	18.26
2021		37	5.6	-0.51	-7.7	5	26.6	4.89	12.3	8	21.5	5.4	14.75
2020		33.5	-0.1	-1.41	9.3	6	17.1	4.55	16.1	7	30.4	5.96	12.63
2019		51.5	24.3	2.2	-20.2	4-QB	41.6	7.32	12.07	4, DC	18.2	5.12	17.54

NC STATE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		48.5	19.4	0.91	-16.0	7 QB	31.5	5.47	12.25	10	13.5	4.56	21.7
2021		54	26.7	2.54	-23.2	8-QB	38.5	6.95	12.26	10	11.8	4.41	24.96
2020		47	17.7	0.32	-6.7	10-QB	30.3	5.7	13.16	5	27	5.38	15.24
2019		33	3.1	0.63	-9.1	4, OC	25.8	5.73	16.34	7	23.4	5.11	15.57

NEBRASKA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		45.5	12.6	1.59	-11.9	6, OC	33	6.37	12.24	5	21.9	4.78	16.48
2021		51	23.7	3.23	-23.2	7-QB	37.7	7.77	14.27	10	14.3	4.54	21.87
2020		47.5	15.5	1.1	-7.2	9-QB, OC	28.2	6.11	15.27	5, DC	25.8	5.01	13.76
2019		49.5	19.4	2.03	-20.1	7-QB	38.5	6.87	12.89	6	20.6	4.84	16.28

NEVADA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	20	-5	-0.82	8.0	2, OC	25.1	4.7	12.84	4, DC	31.1	5.52	12.01
2021		44.5	17.6	1.37	-11.2	11-QB	40.9	6.5	11.33	11	23.2	5.13	16.31
2020		39	10.7	0.1	0.7	10-QB	27.7	5.94	14.54	7, DC	30.1	5.84	13.73
2019		30.5	-2.5	-0.39	1.6	6	25.7	5.28	15.02	5	29	5.67	12.85

NEW MEXICO

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		19	-5.4	-0.96	6.4	5	18.6	4.16	12.97	7	25	5.12	13.36
2021		20.5	-9.9	-0.96	4.8	8-QB	16.2	4.1	15.33	8	26.6	5.06	12.93
2020	Yes	28.5	0.5	-1.83	16.4	8, OC	25.1	5.26	15.07	4, DC	38.3	7.09	12.16
2019		23.5	-5.7	0.06	2.4	8-QB, OC	25.9	6.28	16.8	2, DC	32.4	6.22	13.89

NEW MEXICO ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	28	-1.7	0.32	8.1	4, OC	26	5.46	12.03	9, DC	28.7	5.13	12.28
2021		16	-11.1	-1.6	9.1	1-QB	26.1	5.33	15.11	1	37.4	6.93	12.35
2020		20.5	-10.8	-0.58	14.7	4-QB	23.6	5.59	16.39	6	35.6	6.17	12.61
2019		19.5	-11.2	-0.58	9.8	8-QB, OC	23.6	5.59	16.39	6	35.6	6.17	12.61

NORTH CAROLINA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47	19.9	2.03	-20.7	5	43.9	7.39	12.49	8, DC	25	5.36	15.4
2021		50	18.6	2.5	-22.6	8-QB	40.4	7.79	13.56	9	22.2	5.29	16.32
2020		59.5	28.1	2.18	-13.5	10-QB	41.6	7.83	13.41	7	26.6	5.65	14.84
2019	Yes	51.5	21.6	2.4	-16.3	7, OC	38.9	7.31	13.83	7, DC	18.1	4.91	18.68

NORTH TEXAS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		36	8	1.22	-10.3	8 QB	33.4	7.05	14.46	5	26.5	5.83	16.72
2021		36.5	4.3	0.08	0.9	7	28.8	5.62	15.76	10, DC	24.5	5.54	14.97
2020		26.5	-8.4	-1.64	12.3	6	26.1	5.97	17.42	6, DC	47.6	7.61	12.37
2019		30.5	1.2	0.42	-3.7	8-QB, OC	31.7	6.03	13.49	5	31.3	5.62	12.86

NORTHWESTERN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		36	7	0.86	-9.7	9 QB	26.2	5.55	15.65	5	21	4.69	15.06
2021		32.5	1.5	0	-7.5	4	26.1	5.43	14.18	5, DC	24.6	5.43	15.48
2020		54	30.1	0.53	-10.5	9, OC	28.9	5.04	12.92	9, DC	11.9	4.52	26.7
2019		41.5	10.2	0.59	-9	6	25	4.99	13.99	6	15.6	4.4	18.72

NOTRE DAME

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	56	25.4	2.21	-25.0	7	38.1	6.74	11.66	8, DC	13.9	4.53	20.69
2021		61.5	32.5	2.65	-25.4	3	42.5	7.14	11.4	6, DC	10	4.49	29.53
2020		62	35	1.53	-22.9	7-QB, OC	36.7	6.66	12.99	5, DC	14.8	5.13	21.61
2019		62.5	34.1	3.09	-27.6	7-QB	43.9	7.21	11.3	6	10.6	4.13	27.1

OHIO ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		70	41.4	4.2	-46.6	6 QB	55.1	8.48	10.39	8, DC	14.7	4.29	18.1
2021		70	40.5	4.43	-40.6	7	55.3	9.01	11.54	5	15.1	4.58	21.26
2020		71	42.9	2.63	-30.3	6-QB	49.8	7.74	11.29	4	20.8	5.11	16.15
2019	Yes	80.5	56.5	5.13	-50.1	4	61.1	8.47	10.49	9, DC	5.3	3.34	39.66

OHIO U

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		37	10.5	0.65	-8.4	5 QB	34.7	6.59	12.92	9, DC	25.3	5.94	16.42
2021		30.5	-4.3	0.39	-3.4	9-QB	23.8	6.17	16.09	8	28.1	5.78	14.82
2020		36.5	8.7	-1.52	5.5	7	23.4	5.32	12.95	8	27.8	6.84	17.47
2019		41.5	9.6	0.91	-13.6	4-QB	35.5	6.77	12.62	6, DC	26.7	5.86	14.86

OKLAHOMA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	53.5	23.5	2.83	-25.3	5, OC	40.9	7.58	13.97	5, DC	18.7	4.74	20.59
2021		58	27.2	2.84	-29.5	7-QB	43.4	7.8	11.69	8	16.2	4.96	20.8
2020		65.5	36.9	1.96	-20.8	8	43.8	6.87	11.08	8	20	4.92	16.44
2019		66.5	35.7	4.92	-38.3	4	49.9	9.54	12.99	8, DC	15	4.63	19.32

OKLAHOMA ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47	18.4	1	-18.2	7 QB	37.1	6.08	12.88	4, DC	20.4	5.09	19.1
2021		58	31.3	2.65	-29.5	5-QB	38.3	6.39	12.48	8	7.3	3.74	32.27
2020		55.5	27.3	0.99	-11.6	7-QB, OC	32.6	5.9	13.88	10, DC	19.1	4.92	18.15
2019		51	24.7	2.64	-22.2	7, OC	40.6	7.66	13.6	5	17	5.02	21.26

OLD DOMINION

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		32.5	3.2	0.84	-3.3	10 QB, OC	24.3	6.13	15.3	7	22.1	5.28	18.43
2021	Yes	34.5	3.3	0.25	1.2	6-QB	27.3	5.46	14.44	3	24	5.21	15.2
2020		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019		18.5	-8	-1.2	8	4	19	4.24	15.03	5, DC	27.8	5.44	12.79

OLE MISS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		54.5	28	3.04	-26.5	5, OC	43.2	7.62	13.45	7	16.2	4.58	20.28
2021		57	28.5	3.05	-25	8-QB	43.8	7.8	13.8	10	15.2	4.75	24.25
2020	Yes	50.5	21.4	1.09	-8.6	8-QB, OC	43.9	7.6	13.77	5, DC	35.7	6.5	14.03
2019		49	19.3	2.2	-20.9	3, OC	35	7.19	15.25	10, DC	16.5	4.99	21.6

OREGON

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	57.5	29.2	2.96	-31.2	7, OC	45	8.11	13.19	7, DC	16.7	5.15	20.17
2021		52	22	2.75	-27.8	10	40.1	7.32	12.26	7, DC	18.1	4.57	17.81
2020		57	26.3	1.98	-15.9	3, OC	35.8	7.18	12.78	5, DC	22.6	5.2	17.09
2019		66	39.2	3.65	-34.2	10-QB	44.8	7.74	12.03	7, DC	6.4	4.09	44.01

OREGON ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		57	29.2	2.57	-24.0	6 QB	38.4	7.18	12.18	9, DC	11.5	4.6	25.95
2021		47.5	20.1	2.22	-15.6	9-QB	40.3	7.35	12.18	9	20.2	5.13	17.11
2020		44	16.8	0.16	-3.4	5	32.1	6.25	13.67	9	29	6.08	14.31
2019		46	16.8	1.82	-16.2	7-QB	39.5	7.05	12.37	9	23.5	5.23	16.42

PENN ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		63	35.4	3.12	-29.0	7 QB	45.3	7.11	11.22	4	10.9	4	25.24
2021		55.5	27.4	2.36	-25.6	8-QB, OC	36.4	6.36	12.54	7	9.3	4	31.85
2020		55	21.8	1.04	-11.4	8-QB, OC	34.3	5.81	13.35	4, DC	25.6	4.77	12.12
2019		61.5	37.6	2.9	-34.3	6	43.9	6.97	10.75	6	7.3	4.07	39.19

PITTSBURGH

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		51	21.1	2.15	-18.8	7, OC	37.9	6.61	11.96	7	18.1	4.46	15.9
2021		58.5	29.9	2.43	-26	8-QB	45.9	7.09	12.05	6	16	4.66	19.97
2020		50.5	21.8	0.64	-6.3	8-QB	30.7	5.34	12.86	7	22	4.71	14.89
2019		45	13	1.86	-19.8	5-QB, OC	26.9	5.8	15.91	6	14.7	3.94	18.32

PURDUE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		49.5	21.5	1.69	-21.6	7 QB	40.1	6.49	12.09	7, DC	19.9	4.8	15.27
2021		51.5	24.1	2.12	-19.1	9-QB	37.7	6.82	13.36	8, DC	13.6	4.7	21.66
2020		45.5	16.2	0.87	-8.3	9-QB	33.5	6.01	12.28	8	30.4	5.13	12.49
2019		46	15.7	1.3	-16.2	3	36.8	6.5	12.7	9	24	5.2	15.67

RICE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		28	-0.4	0.09	0.4	7 QB	25.8	5.97	15.26	7	27.7	5.88	12.84
2021		25	-7.6	-0.6	4.8	9, OC	22.5	5.69	17.24	10	30.2	6.29	13.58
2020		34	10.6	-1.54	13.7	7	20.1	4.53	15.75	10	22.6	6.07	16.13
2019		27.5	0	-0.59	6.3	6	21.6	5.01	14.54	6	22.4	5.6	15.93

RUTGERS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		34	4.8	0.66	-10.6	6 QB	27	5.16	12.17	6, DC	23.2	4.49	13.1
2021		36	10.2	-0.03	-8.1	11-QB	29.3	5.22	12.35	9	19.1	5.25	18.15
2020	Yes	40.5	15.4	-0.54	1.8	8-QB, OC	31	4.96	11.63	8, DC	28.7	5.5	14.67
2019		28.5	-4	-0.04	3.5	8-QB	22.2	5.32	14.68	5	27.6	5.35	13.5

S ALABAMA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		43.5	15.6	1.2	-14.4	8	33.1	5.93	13.02	8	18.5	4.73	16.2
2021	Yes	32	2.4	0.13	-2.9	7-QB, OC	26.3	5.38	14.4	9, DC	24.7	5.25	13.94
2020		27.5	0	-1.85	11.6	8-QB	16.6	4.93	20.7	6	29.7	6.78	15.45
2019		23.5	-5.4	-0.22	8.8	8	19.1	5.3	18.27	5	25.3	5.52	15.4

SAM HOUSTON ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		19.5	-12.3	-1.17	5.0		12.8	4.31	23.76		25.1	5.48	15.27
2021		35.5	10.7	0.4	-6.8		36.3	5.98	12.18		25.6	5.58	15.37
2020		34	4.7	0.47	-4.7		27.4	5.25	13.54		22.7	4.76	14.88
2019		23.5	-5.3	-0.62	4.2		19.8	4.58	18.61		25.1	5.2	15.99

SAN DIEGO ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		37.5	6.3	0.45	-5.7	4	24.5	5.43	13.62	7	19.2	4.98	16.82
2021		41	12.2	0.86	-13.8	9	29.5	5.29	11.85	8	17.5	4.43	17.46
2020	Yes	43.5	15.1	0.24	0.3	6-QB, OC	23.5	4.82	14.3	8, DC	21.5	4.58	13.83
2019		41.5	12.9	0.48	-11.6	7-QB	21.5	4.88	16.2	5	9.4	4.4	29.1

SAN JOSE ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		34.5	8.4	0.59	-6.9	6	29.8	5.58	11.99	8	22.4	4.99	14.86
2021		34.5	0.2	0.74	-10.2	9-QB	21.6	5.66	16.47	11	23.4	4.92	15.22
2020		45	21	1.45	0.8	6	30.9	6.51	13.72	7	23	5.06	15.38
2019		35.5	5.2	1.26	-6.7	7-QB	33.2	6.75	13.65	6	28.8	5.49	14.61

SMU

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	44.5	16.1	1.45	-19.5	6 QB, OC	40.7	6.97	13.11	7, DC	25.9	5.52	15.62
2021		45.5	18.3	1.32	-18.9	8	40.7	6.8	12.4	9, DC	22.4	5.48	17.21
2020		44.5	15.4	0.22	-8.9	7-QB, OC	35.1	6.27	13.45	6, DC	32.8	6.04	13.8
2019		48	21.2	1.52	-19.1	7	45	6.79	11.99	9	24.6	5.28	16.49

SOUTH CAROLINA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		49	20.6	2.14	-17.0	8	38.7	7	11.49	5	19	4.87	18.03
2021	Yes	42.5	13.1	1.02	-15.6	8, OC	29.5	5.89	12.65	5, DC	17.5	4.87	17.91
2020		38.5	9.2	-0.29	2.6	7-QB, OC	27.2	5.8	14.16	6, DC	31.1	6.09	13.47
2019		49	21.2	1.99	-21.2	7-QB	35.8	6.55	13.16	7	16.1	4.57	20.14

SOUTH FLORIDA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		30.5	1	0.31	1.7	10 QB, OC	32	6.94	13.89	9, DC	32.5	6.64	14.22
2021		30.5	1.5	-0.55	-3	9	28.7	5.69	13.92	8	27.2	6.24	15.45
2020	Yes	30.5	-1.9	-0.81	11.8	7-QB, OC	23.8	5.14	15.61	7, DC	38.8	5.96	11.19
2019		34	4.9	0.84	-6.7	9-QB, OC	25.4	5.72	14.5	6	22.3	4.89	16.22

SOUTHERN MISS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		35	6.7	0.33	-2.8	9 QB, OC	27.1	5.44	12.86	7	21.4	5.1	16.4
2021	Yes	26	-6.1	-1.25	10	8, OC	18.8	4.37	14.59	10, DC	26	5.62	13.4
2020		28	-5.2	-1.17	17.8	7-QB, OC	21.9	5.25	15.39	4, DC	40.5	6.42	11.05
2019		37.5	9.2	1.12	-11.6	10-QB, OC	30.9	6.5	14.11	6	22.7	5.38	14.54

STANFORD

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		36.5	9.1	0.8	-10.0	10 QB	28.9	6.38	15.18	7	20.8	5.59	17.76
2021		36.5	6.9	0.75	-10	7	30	6.3	12.19	8	23.6	5.55	16.35
2020		49.5	18.7	0.31	-1.7	8-QB	32.9	6.46	13.71	6	27.4	6.15	14.98
2019		44	14.7	1.46	-17.8	4-QB	31.1	6.8	14.42	5	19.3	5.34	18.89

SYRACUSE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		45	19.5	2.36	-18.6	9 QB, OC	36	6.8	11.45	8	18	4.44	16.88
2021		42	12	1.91	-16.3	9-QB	32.1	6.45	13.02	9	20.2	4.54	14.56
2020		35.5	7.9	-0.6	9.5	7-QB, OC	20.9	4.81	13.7	4, DC	27.2	5.41	15.84
2019		41.5	10.6	0.4	-8.4	6	33.5	5.86	13.24	7	23.7	5.46	17.64

TCU

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	61.5	35.2	3.66	-32.3	9, OC	46.8	8.28	12.22	8, DC	12.7	4.61	25.88
2021		41	10.1	1.52	-18.3	9-QB, OC	35.9	7.78	14.13	8	25.8	6.26	15.54
2020		52.5	24.5	1.16	-8.1	5	32.4	6.27	13.23	7	21	5.11	16
2019		49.5	21.6	1.82	-24.8	7	36.8	6.38	13.07	5	16	4.56	18.28

TEMPLE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	30	-0.1	0.23	0.8	7 QB, OC	24.9	5.56	14.94	7, DC	26	5.33	14.24
2021		17.5	-16	-0.36	8.7	7	18.6	4.97	16.1	6	34.9	5.33	10.87
2020		29	-2.7	-1.78	12.2	7-QB	16.9	4.64	20.62	4	34.3	6.42	12.64
2019	Yes	40	10.3	1.22	-8.6	7-QB, OC	29	5.74	14.62	7, DC	19.4	4.52	17.85

TENNESSEE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		67.5	41.7	3.94	-35.4	8 QB	55.6	8.62	11.36	7	15.3	4.68	22.7
2021	Yes	54	25.5	2.84	-24.9	4, OC	45.2	7.46	11.65	7, DC	19.7	4.62	18.13
2020		46	16.1	0.54	-2.9	9-QB	27.3	5.83	14.09	8	24.3	5.29	15.2
2019		52.5	21.1	2.58	-23.2	10-QB, OC	34.7	6.93	12.49	6, DC	14.4	4.34	20.13

TEXAS

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		63	36.9	3.69	-31.8	7	43.5	7.81	12.13	7	8.6	4.12	35.56
2021	Yes	49	21.3	2.33	-21.2	8, OC	43.1	7.55	11.72	6, DC	21.7	5.22	16.94
2020		59	30.8	1.56	-12.2	7-QB, OC	44.8	6.62	10.78	9, DC	27.4	5.06	14.13
2019		53.5	26.4	2.32	-24.4	5-QB	43.5	7.63	13.07	3	17.9	5.31	21.22

TEXAS A&M

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		49	18.5	2.16	-16.7	5	30.5	6.69	13.84	5, DC	13.3	4.52	24.07
2021		56.5	26.8	2.59	-26.6	5	35.5	6.76	12.47	9	9.5	4.17	30.8
2020		62.5	31.5	1.8	-20	8-QB	35	6.85	13.41	9	16.6	5.05	17.82
2019		55.5	26.7	2.54	-28.6	7-QB	39.4	7.01	12.17	4	13.5	4.47	21.61

TEXAS ST UNIV

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		27.5	-1	-0.28	-1.8	9, OC	23.1	4.85	14.45	5	25.1	5.13	13.99
2021		26.5	-4.8	-0.4	2.2	8-QB	24.6	5.17	14.54	8	29.8	5.57	13.87
2020		27.5	0.1	-0.87	13.4	8-QB, OC	27.2	5.59	13.32	4, DC	40.2	6.45	12.57
2019	Yes	24.5	-4.7	0.1	3.4	9-QB, OC	20.4	5.39	16.89	10, DC	25.9	5.29	14.89

TEXAS TECH

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	52	23.7	1.53	-18.2	6 QB, OC	40.4	6.52	13.55	6, DC	18.8	5	19.02
2021		46.5	14	2.3	-15.8	7, OC	36	7.56	13.11	8	23.5	5.26	15.38
2020		41.5	9.7	0.55	-3.4	6-QB	29.9	6.07	14.93	8	33.3	5.52	12.88
2019	Yes	45	19.4	1.46	-19.1	7-QB, OC	37.5	7.19	14.94	6, DC	20.4	5.73	20.39

TOLEDO

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		40	9.2	1.03	-10.6	7 QB	33.2	5.71	12.4	8	25.2	4.68	13
2021		44.5	14.7	1.92	-11.3	11-QB	33.7	6.71	13.11	11	19	4.79	17.78
2020		39.5	12.1	-0.15	-0.3	7-QB, OC	25.8	5.82	17.33	7, DC	26.8	5.97	15.05
2019		30	1.5	-0.09	-4.9	6-QB	29	6.31	15.51	5	30.1	6.4	15.28

TROY

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	45	15.5	1.76	-11.4	9 QB, OC	29.6	6.21	13.42	9, DC	15.1	4.45	20.43
2021		30.5	1.1	0.49	-6.3	10-QB, OC	25.7	5.37	13.68	11	24.6	4.88	13.18
2020		37	8.1	-0.68	7.7	7	23.9	5.2	15.5	6	29.1	5.88	14.82
2019	Yes	32.5	1.3	0.11	-7.1	7-QB, OC	33.7	6.22	13.71	6, DC	33.3	6.12	12.89

TULANE

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		52.5	24.6	2.43	-18.2	9 QB, OC	37.8	6.9	12.41	9	14.7	4.47	21.68
2021		38.5	6.4	1.18	-6.2	10-QB, OC	32.2	6.38	13.56	7, DC	26.2	5.2	14.71
2020		46	18.6	-0.16	-2.4	5	33.8	5.56	11.46	7	28.3	5.72	15.18
2019		44.5	17.4	1.83	-17.9	5-QB, OC	36.7	6.86	13.73	8	20.1	5.03	17.15

TULSA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		38.5	9.1	1.11	-8.0	6 QB	33.7	6.47	13.49	6, DC	25.7	5.36	14.72
2021		43	10.3	1.88	-11.8	9	30.3	6.8	16.07	10	20	4.92	17.2
2020		48.5	23	1.25	-5.7	9-QB	27.3	5.82	15.3	4	17.5	4.57	18.91
2019		40.5	11.3	1.19	-8.4	6-QB	32.1	6.17	15.18	8, DC	21.6	4.98	16.01

TX-SAN ANTONIO

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		45.5	16.4	1.08	-13.2	8 QB, OC	37.8	6.69	13.24	5	22.4	5.62	17.54
2021		43.5	16.8	0.83	-14.9	10-QB	38.1	6.26	11.89	11, DC	21.3	5.43	16.61
2020	Yes	33.5	6.7	-0.78	13.8	8-QB, OC	23.8	5.24	16.07	5, DC	30.2	6.02	13.16
2019		22	-7.8	-0.98	10	8-QB, OC	23.2	5.28	15.51	5	32.3	6.26	12.75

UAB

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	42.5	12.5	1.79	-13.6	6 QB	30.2	7.02	15.17	8	19.1	5.23	18.62
2021		44.5	14	2.13	-12.1	8-QB	32.8	6.73	12.52	9	19.2	4.6	15.84
2020		43.5	14.7	0.63	-1.6	9-QB	28.1	5.62	13.56	9	27.1	5	12.19
2019		34	0.9	0.66	-6.3	4-QB	24.1	5.38	14.27	4	24.3	4.72	12.45

UCF

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		47.5	22	1.62	-22.4	9 QB, OC	38.4	6.87	13.68	8	17.8	5.25	19.82
2021	Yes	45	14.3	1.48	-16.5	8-QB, OC	33	6.33	12.62	7, DC	21.7	4.85	16.34
2020		54.5	26.4	0.91	-12.2	8-QB, OC	43	6.83	13.61	8, DC	29.7	5.92	15.96
2019		54.5	27.9	3	-26.4	8-QB	46.8	7.26	12.14	5	19.7	4.27	16.54

UCLA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		53	22.7	2.52	-26.2	6 QB, OC	42.8	7.73	13.14	2, DC	21	5.2	17.35
2021		55	23.9	2.27	-20.8	10-QB	44.7	7.13	11.35	10	21.1	4.86	16.13
2020		51	26	1.42	-11.6	7-QB	38.6	6.54	12.56	6	26.9	5.13	14.36
2019		42.5	12.9	0.8	-24	9-QB, OC	37.2	6.48	13.32	10	25.4	5.69	15.25

UNLV

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		30	3.8	0.58	-4.5	6 QB, OC	31.4	5.85	11.83	6, DC	29	5.27	12.71
2021		29	-0.5	0.23	1.3	6	26.3	5.78	13.28	10	26.8	5.55	13.79
2020	Yes	18.5	-11.2	-2.8	20.5	8-QB, OC	18.8	4.58	17.09	4, DC	43.1	7.38	11.53
2019		29	-0.3	-0.09	0.9	8-QB	28.5	5.78	14.07	5	30	5.87	13.83

USC

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	58.5	31.1	3.05	-32.0	7, OC	48	8.5	12.33	3, DC	17.8	5.46	20.15
2021		42	13.7	1.41	-15	8-QB	37.8	6.96	13.79	8	24.4	5.55	14.54
2020		56.5	26.9	0.71	-12.6	8-QB	34.7	5.91	12.75	9, DC	20.8	5.19	16.78
2019		55.5	26.4	3.19	-20.1	6-QB, OC	44.3	8.05	12.72	5	19	4.87	18.51

UTAH

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		63	35.4	2.73	-27.1	8 QB	44.8	7.68	12.15	6	10.8	4.95	26.65
2021		60.5	28.5	2.91	-25.4	9	42.5	7.24	11.51	9	14	4.33	20.08
2020		53	21.8	0.87	-10.5	7	31.3	6.15	13.63	2	22.6	5.28	15.51
2019		65	36.2	3.88	-36.8	7-QB, OC	41.2	7.77	12.36	7	5.8	3.89	39.18

UTAH ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		33	0.6	-0.28	-3.5	7 QB	29.3	5.17	13.12	5	30.5	5.45	12.33
2021	Yes	41.5	13.5	0.76	-8.2	8, OC	37.9	6.24	12.57	8, DC	24.4	5.48	15.24
2020		21.5	-11.2	-2.42	20.2	8, OC	15.6	4.4	16.99	5, DC	39.9	6.82	12.66
2019	Yes	39	10.6	1.3	-10	2-QB, OC	34.1	6.37	13.79	7, DC	24.2	5.06	16.24

UTEP

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		32	1.3	-0.22	-0.6	7 QB	24.4	5.5	15.81	8	24.5	5.72	14.04
2021		31	0.3	0.78	-5.3	11-QB, OC	24.9	5.92	15.7	8, DC	24.6	5.14	13.79
2020		20.5	-7.3	-2.21	20.3	5	15.5	4.66	20.24	5	35.9	6.87	11.93
2019		14.5	-15.3	-1.59	10.8	7-QB	19	5.15	17.32	4	35.1	6.74	12.24

VANDERBILT

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		37.5	9.4	0.52	-13.0	7 QB, OC	33.2	6.42	12.73	7, DC	25.2	5.9	15.52
2021	Yes	28	-5.3	-0.72	3	8-QB, OC	22.2	5.24	16.27	6, DC	28	5.96	14.42
2020		28	-1.9	-1.76	10	5-QB, OC	17.5	5.06	20.2	11, DC	32.6	6.82	14.04
2019		35.5	4.3	0.13	-7.2	7, OC	28.2	5.75	12.63	5	24.8	5.62	15.08

VIRGINIA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	38.4	7.1	1.38	-8.9	4 QB, OC	25.3	5.81	15.49	6, DC	19.2	4.44	16.66
2021		46.5	18	2.22	-21.7	8-QB	40	8.03	14.91	7	22.3	5.81	18.35
2020		46	19.2	-0.18	-6.7	7	31	5.94	14.27	8	24.9	6.12	17.01
2019		49.5	20.8	1.5	-17.7	6-QB	40.1	6.45	11.13	8	20.1	4.96	15.84

VIRGINIA TECH

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	37	5.9	0.27	-7.5	4, OC	25.3	5.21	13.75	7, DC	20.4	4.94	16.6
2021		45	15.9	1.56	-12.2	7	30.6	6.54	13.92	6	14.7	4.98	23.18
2020		50	21.3	1.41	-10.5	8-QB	33.4	7.18	14.24	9, DC	26.1	5.77	15.94
2019		50.5	17.3	1.36	-15.9	6-QB	36.1	6.17	11.79	10	19.7	4.81	16.93

W KENTUCKY

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		44	17.5	1.79	-15.0	4, OC	36.7	6.84	13.68	7, DC	20.2	5.05	18.14
2021		47.5	18.5	2.1	-15.5	6-QB, OC	43.4	7.36	12.69	5	24.9	5.26	16.35
2020		32	2.2	-0.87	12.3	7	19.1	4.36	14.52	9	30	5.24	11.77
2019	Yes	39.5	11.1	0.73	-10.2	10-QB, OC	28.2	5.8	14.04	6	18.2	5.07	17.83

W MICHIGAN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		29	-0.6	-0.63	4.5	4	20.6	4.64	14.92	7	22.4	5.27	15.05
2021		41	10.4	1.23	-12.2	9-QB, OC	33.5	6.73	14.94	10	23.1	5.5	13.6
2020		39	9.8	0.51	-1.6	5	33.4	6.7	13.13	6	36.7	6.19	12.05
2019		40	11.5	0.92	-11.1	7-QB	34	6.62	13.78	10	23.3	5.71	17.4

WAKE FOREST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		51	21.2	1.45	-21.0	7 QB	43.7	6.67	11.54	6, DC	23.8	5.22	15.53
2021		51.5	23.9	1.54	-23.2	11-QB	45.8	6.86	11.63	8	21.9	5.32	17.31
2020		48	22.1	0.06	-8.9	3-QB	36.5	5.97	12.33	8	27.5	5.91	16.12
2019		43.5	17.4	1.41	-20.2	7-QB	38.9	6.54	13.8	5	22.3	5.13	16.42

WASHINGTON

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022	Yes	55.5	26.2	2.75	-21.3	8 QB, OC	43.9	7.78	13.17	5, DC	18.7	5.03	17.92
2021		42	13.1	1.31	-15.3	10-QB	29	5.74	12.85	8	15.9	4.43	18.73
2020	Yes	50	18.2	0.69	-12.1	4, OC	29.5	6.04	13.68	6	24.3	5.34	14.23
2019		57.5	29	2.51	-28.6	7	38.9	6.97	12.02	2	10.7	4.46	28.8

WASHINGTON ST

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		48.5	22	1.51	-19.1	4, OC	34.2	6.52	12.82	6, DC	13.2	5.01	26.11
2021		48.5	17.4	1.74	-13.4	8-QB	34.7	6.73	12.74	10	17.8	4.99	19.08
2020	Yes	43.5	13.6	0.47	-3.3	6, OC	31.6	6.53	13.52	8, DC	31.2	6.07	13.43
2019		50.5	21.6	1.98	-23.5	7	46	8.07	12.73	6	25.2	6.09	16.2

WEST VIRGINIA

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		45.5	17.2	1.46	-14.4	7, OC	38.8	6.61	12.37	4	22.7	5.16	15.56
2021		46	16	1.33	-18.4	9-QB	32.5	6.26	13.5	7, DC	16.4	4.93	18.89
2020		50	20.1	0.81	-12.3	8-QB, OC	26.7	5.55	15.93	6, DC	19.7	4.74	15.02
2019	Yes	45	12.4	1.33	-9.8	3, OC	29.6	5.98	13.27	6	18	4.65	18.84

WISCONSIN

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		50.5	22.8	2.54	-24.1	5 QB, OC	38.3	6.73	11.07	3	16.5	4.2	16.18
2021		57	27.6	3.13	-28.6	7-QB	37.1	6.7	12.17	8	9.6	3.57	21.54
2020		56	28.5	0.99	-19.1	6-QB	28.8	5.41	13.49	9	13.4	4.42	18.31
2019		65.5	40.5	3.87	-34.4	6	46.5	7.93	11.69	6	6.7	4.07	36.54

WYOMING

Season	New HC?	SM PR	Eff Strg	EffYPP+/-	SM BR	O RS-NEW?	EffOffPPG	EffOffYPP	EffOffYPPT	D RS-NEW?	EffDefPPG	EffDefYPP	EffDefYPPT
2022		32	2.8	0.32	-4.8	4, OC	25.1	5.47	13.09	4	23.5	5.15	15.13
2021		37	5.1	0.92	-9.9	10-QB, OC	26.5	5.82	14.21	11	21.3	4.9	15.6
2020		41.5	11.7	-0.27	1.6	7	22.3	5.07	15.49	5, DC	25.8	5.35	13.8
2019		42.5	14.8	0.93	-11.9	5-QB	28.3	5.65	12.6	6	15.5	4.72	22.31