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2021 COLLEGE FOOTBALL BETTING GUIDE

**VSIN EXPERTS
PREVIEW ALL
130 TEAMS**

VSIN

BRYCE YOUNG (ALABAMA, +225), SPENCER RATTLER (OKLAHOMA, +650) AND D.J. UIAGALELEI (CLEMSON, +300) WILL ATTEMPT TO LEAVE THEIR OWN LEGACY AND WIN A NATIONAL TITLE

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COMMON ABBREVIATIONS USED THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE

ATS - Against the Spread • Avg - Average • DC - Defensive Coordinator • Def - Defense • Dog - Underdog • Eff Strg - Steve Makinen Effective Strength Rating • Fav - Favorite
FL - Final Line • 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 Game • 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

VSiN STAFF/CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR: Steve Makinen

DATABASE MANAGER: Jason Latus

LAYOUT AND DESIGN: Matt Devine

VP OF DIGITAL CONTENT: Ben Fawkes

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND EDITORS: Tom Carkeek, Adam Kramer, Bruce Marshall, Aaron Moore, Tim Murray, Wes Reynolds, Mike Sansone, Paul Stone, Dave Tuley, Jonathan Von Tobel and Matt Youmans

photos by USA Today Sports Images

Hello, college football fans!

Over the last four years with VSiN, I have had the pleasure of introducing all kinds of great projects that we have put together, but to be honest, I don't think I've ever been more excited to unveil a publication than I am for this one. Not only is there a huge effort put into it as usual, but I can't remember ever anticipating a season of any sport more than this college football campaign. The 2021 VSiN College Football Betting Guide helps everyone get ready for what should be one of the most memorable seasons ever.

As much as we were all excited to see college football on the field last season, you have to admit that something was missing with the empty (or partially filled) stands, lack of high-stakes nonconference tilts and players either opting out or held out of games because of Covid-19 circumstances. What figures to come out of the tough 2020 season is what I am especially looking forward to: I personally feel that the extra year of eligibility granted to players by the NCAA has the potential to completely upset the apple cart, at least for one season.

Think about it, the elite teams like Clemson, Alabama, and Ohio State have lost their usual amount of talent to the NFL draft and in many cases will be replacing this star group of players with first-year players or other inexperienced options. At the same time, the tier two teams not only get most of their starters back for 2021, but a season's worth of experience comes with it.

This is the first time in many years where I think we could have multiple new teams in the College Football Playoff, as we find out the answer to the age-old question: Does elite talent or experience matter more? I personally feel there are three or four new teams capable of winning a national title, and another handful of making the playoff should the usual suspects falter. Who do you think could contend? Who do you trust to tell you? Hopefully that's where VSiN and its College Football Betting Guide comes into play, as we have put together a great team of experts that have shared their insights in this pub in hopes of getting you ready for this much anticipated season!

Take a look at the experts we have assembled, all of whom you are surely familiar with if you've followed VSiN's college football coverage in the past:

- Wes Reynolds has put together the previews for the American, ACC, and Big Ten.
- Matt Youmans pitched in with Reynolds on the Big Ten and assembled the Pac 12 team previews, predictions, and betting tips.
- Bruce Marshall of Gold Sheet did some real heavy lifting, previewing the Big 12, Conference USA, SEC, and Sun Belt conferences.
- Tim Murray and Dave Tuley shared duties on getting us informed for the MAC and Independents.
- Jonathan Von Tobel, our NBA guru, shows his versatility by bringing us all the key info on the Mountain West.

We also have a ton of great season handicapping articles prepared for you. Adam Kramer shares my excitement for the season and dishes on some of the biggest storylines, games to watch and teams that may be under- or over-rated. You should be as pumped for the season as he is after reading this piece. Kramer and Aaron Moore also breakdown the Heisman Trophy race for 2021 from different perspectives. Paul Stone, one of our regular CFB season handicappers in Point Spread Weekly, brings us five bet-on and bet-against teams to watch for. And finally, I have contributed a handful of pieces, ranging from betting systems that project improvement or decline in teams, to my "world famous" Stability Scores, a look at the new coaching staffs and the recent recruiting rankings and how they may influence team success this season.

Add all of that to two-page spreads on each of the 130 teams in FBS and you have the makings of a massive and valuable publication that you'll want to keep handy all season long.

I've actually worked myself up in putting this letter together. I'm telling you, it's going to be a fantastic -- and potentially unexpected -- season. Enjoy the guide, and best of luck on all of your 2021 college football wagers from everyone at VSiN.

Steve Makinen @SteveMakinen
Editor
steve@vsin.com



VSIN EXPERT PREDICTIONS



CONFERENCE

ACC

ATLANTIC CHAMPION

COASTAL CHAMPION

ACC CHAMPION

AMERICAN

REGULAR SEASON FIRST

REGULAR SEASON SECOND

AMERICAN CHAMPION

BIG TEN

EAST DIVISION CHAMPION

WEST DIVISION CHAMPION

BIG TEN CHAMPION

BIG 12

REGULAR SEASON FIRST

REGULAR SEASON SECOND

BIG 12 CHAMPION

CONFERENCE USA

EAST DIVISION CHAMPION

WEST DIVISION CHAMPION

CONFERENCE USA CHAMPION

MAC

EAST DIVISION CHAMPION

WEST DIVISION CHAMPION

MAC CHAMPION

TIM MURRAY	MATT YOUMANS	DAVE TULEY	WES REYNOLDS	ADAM KRAMER	BRUCE MARSHALL	JONATHAN VON TOBEL	POWER RATINGS
Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson
North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	Miami, FL	North Carolina
Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson
Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	UCF	Cincinnati	Cincinnati
Houston	UCF	UCF	Houston	Houston	Cincinnati	Houston	Memphis
Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	UCF	Cincinnati	Cincinnati
Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Minnesota	Iowa	Iowa	Wisconsin	Wisconsin
Ohio State	Ohio State	Wisconsin	Ohio State	Ohio State	Iowa	Wisconsin	Ohio State
Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma
Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State	Iowa State
Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Iowa State	Iowa State	Oklahoma
W Kentucky	W Kentucky	Marshall	Marshall	Marshall	W Kentucky	Florida Atlantic	Marshall
UAB	UTSA	UTSA	UTSA	UAB	UAB	UTSA	UAB
W Kentucky	W Kentucky	Marshall	Marshall	Marshall	UAB	Florida Atlantic	UAB
Ohio	Kent State	Ohio	Buffalo	Kent State	Ohio	Kent State	Buffalo
Toledo	Ball State	Ball State	Toledo	Ball State	Ball State	Ball State	Toledo
Toledo	Ball State	Ball State	Toledo	Ball State	Ohio	Ball State	Toledo

VSIN EXPERT PREDICTIONS



CONFERENCE

MOUNTAIN WEST

MOUNTAIN DIVISION CHAMPION

WEST DIVISION CHAMPION

MWC CHAMPION

PAC-12

NORTH DIVISION CHAMPION

SOUTH DIVISION CHAMPION

PAC-12 CHAMPION

SEC

EAST DIVISION CHAMPION

WEST DIVISION CHAMPION

SEC CHAMPION

SUN BELT

EAST DIVISION CHAMPION

WEST DIVISION CHAMPION

SUN BELT CHAMPION

CFP FINAL FOUR

TEAM SEED #1

TEAM SEED #2

TEAM SEED #3

TEAM SEED #4

CFP NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

TEAM #1

TEAM #2

CFP NATIONAL CHAMPION

TIM MURRAY	MATT YOUNG	DAVE TULEY	WES REYNOLDS	ADAM KRAMER	BRUCE MARSHALL	JONATHAN VON TOBEL	POWER RATINGS
Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Boise State	Air Force	Boise State	Boise State
Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	San Jose State	San Jose State
Nevada	Nevada	Boise State	Nevada	Nevada	Nevada	San Jose State	Boise State
Washington	Oregon	Oregon	Washington	Oregon	California	Oregon	Oregon
Utah	Utah	USC	Arizona State	USC	UCLA	Utah	USC
Washington	Utah	USC	Washington	USC	UCLA	Utah	Oregon
Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Florida	Georgia	Georgia
Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama
Georgia	Alabama	Alabama	Georgia	Georgia	Alabama	Georgia	Alabama
Coastal Carolina	Appalachian St	Appalachian St	Coastal Carolina	Coastal Carolina	Coastal Carolina	Coastal Carolina	Coastal Carolina
Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana
Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana	Coastal Carolina	Coastal Carolina	Louisiana	Louisiana	Coastal Carolina
Georgia	Clemson	Clemson	Georgia	Georgia	Clemson	Clemson	Alabama
Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Alabama	Clemson	Clemson	Alabama	Georgia	Clemson
Alabama	Alabama	Oklahoma	Alabama	Ohio State	Iowa State	Alabama	Oklahoma
Clemson	Cincinnati	USC	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Iowa State	Ohio State
Alabama	Clemson	Clemson	Clemson	Georgia	Clemson	Clemson	Alabama
Clemson	Alabama	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Ohio State	Alabama	Georgia	Clemson
Alabama	Clemson	Clemson	Oklahoma	Georgia	Clemson	Clemson	Alabama

WELCOME BACK, COLLEGE FOOTBALL

By Adam Kramer



Justyn Ross,
Clemson

The game changed, and it changed quickly.

College football players can get paid now. Well, allow me to rephrase. College football players can now be paid out in open. What would once get you suspended can now earn you a nice little living.

Oh, and the College Football Playoff is expanding. Not now and probably not next year, but a bigger bracket is imminent. More meaningful games to wager on. More meaningful matchups between programs that rarely cross paths. More of everything.

For as much as college football is changing, the biggest change 2021 will welcome should be familiar. Fans. Full stadiums. Live mascots. Pageantry. Traditions. Elements that make college football the greatest sport on the planet — to watch and to wager on — are back.

With that, let us preview this glorious season.

The Five Biggest Storylines Entering the Season

1. Home-field advantage is back

Let's build off the theme above for a moment. Gambling on college football games in largely or completely empty stadiums took some getting used to.

Let me be more direct: I hated it, and I am sure you did too.

It did, however, allow underdogs to have their moments. It made a road trip, in many instances, far less daunting. Playing in an empty Happy Valley last year wasn't kind to Penn State. The same can be said for a team like Wisconsin in Madison and Ohio State in Columbus. In a limited season, none of the three was over .500 ATS at home.

Barring the unforeseen, college football will completely welcome back fans and home-field advantages in 2021.

Normally, this wouldn't be a story. You handicap matchups with the environment accounted for. This year, those environments will almost certainly be more amped than usual.

2. Welcoming a new crop of gifted QBs

Consider just how much star power college football lost this offseason. Trevor Lawrence, Justin Fields and Mac Jones are gone, and yet Clemson, Ohio State and Alabama will all be ranked in the top five when the season begins.

We have an idea who some of the next stars will be. D.J. Uiagalelei showed us glimpses last year for Clemson. Spencer Rattler showcased even more for Oklahoma. Sam Howell for North Carolina posted video-game numbers at times, and he

likely will again. All three will be among the most popular wagers to win the Heisman, with Rattler and Uiagalelei two of the chalks to win the award.

But there will be fresh faces in meaningful games — faces we learn early on.

Who will be the next Zach Wilson or Joe Burrow? If you have an idea, don't wait long to pounce. There will be money to be made early before the rest catch on.

3. Can a non-quarterback win the Heisman again?

On the topic of QBs, perhaps we will once again see a non-QB win the most prestigious award in sports.

Although if I am being completely honest, it seems likely that DeVonta Smith's magnificent triumph will likely be an outlier. That said, we know now a wide receiver is still capable of winning the Heisman.

As for who I like to win this year, I wrote the Heisman extensively. My picks, from chalk to long shots, are on Page 24.

4. Alabama is good again, huh?

In a word, probably, though this one is a bit more complicated than usual.

In four years, Alabama has lost four games. And despite being dealt lofty point spreads every week, the Crimson Tide has still covered 30 of 55 games in that time.

I don't need to tell you about how good Nick Saban is. You know this by now.

But there is reason to question just how dominant Alabama will be. The team loses seven starters on offense. Those losses include the starting quarterback, the Heisman winner, another dynamic wide receiver, one of the greatest running backs to ever play at the school and meaningful pieces on an offensive line that made it the best unit in America.

Still, sophomore quarterback Bryce Young (+600 to win the Heisman) could find immediate stardom. The sophomore, while small, is incredibly gifted and seemingly perfect for the opportunity. How he meshes with new offensive coordinator Bill O'Brien will be fascinating to watch.

The defense should once again be a strength. While it also lost pieces to the draft, a youthful group should be much improved. Last year this unit was up and down by Alabama's ridiculous historical standards. While the offense will likely still be what makes this program go in this post-Lane Kiffin world, an improved defense could go a long way.

Another element of concern? The schedule. Alabama travels to Texas A&M, Florida and Auburn. It also plays Ole Miss, which was a nightmare matchup last year, Miami, LSU and maybe Georgia in the SEC championship game.

Alabama is Alabama. Nothing should surprise. But I don't love this team at -170 to win the conference and am staying clear of national championship futures as well.

(continued on next page)

5. Is this finally Georgia's year?

In a word, maybe.

Over the last five years, Georgia has Alabama-ified its roster with five-star recruits. And this fall it welcomes back 20 returning starters.

The offensive line could be the best in the country. The quarterback, JT Daniels, should rapidly develop. The defense should be excellent — perhaps even better than it was a season ago — headlined by a superb line.

Everything is in place for this to finally be the year, including Alabama having to replace so many important pieces at once. But we've had this conversation before. Georgia fans know it all too well.

At -425, there isn't much value in betting the team to win the SEC East. But I like Georgia to win the SEC at +225.

This, to me, is the most gifted and complete football team in the country.

The 10 Games You Need to See This Year

We're going to disagree on what we deem to be the must-watch games of 2021. That's perfectly fine.

I would, however, like to highlight that meaningful out-of-conference games always get the nod, and that I would like to see more of them. To take that further, let's continue to play these games on college campuses.

Mini-rant over. Here is my Top 10.

1. Clemson vs. Georgia (Sept. 4)

The game of the year comes in Week 1. Clemson has been labeled a four-point favorite, which is certainly noteworthy. I would like to point out that I can still see both teams making the playoff. Both rosters are stockpiled with five-stars. Both quarterbacks have Heisman aspirations. So much to love about this one. This is why we watch college football.

2. Alabama at Texas A&M (Oct. 9)

Jimbo Fisher and Nick Saban have plenty of history. In fact, Fisher has made it clear he's gunning for the throne as recently as last year. At home with one of the best crowds in football — with a roster that has certainly closed the talent gap in recent years — feels like a good place to try and take it. Currently A&M is a double-digit underdog. I expect that number to go down significantly. This could be a great deal of fun.

3. Oregon at Ohio State (Sept. 11)

We were deprived of this matchup last year, which is a shame. We get it this year (and next), and it will be played on campuses with fabulous college environments. Can Oregon slow Ohio State's ridiculous crop of wideouts? How will the Ducks manage what should be an overwhelming crowd? The 10-point spread is lofty for a game as anticipated as this one, but I cannot wait to see how it plays out. (Also, very tempted to lay those points.)

(continued on next page)



JT Daniels,
Georgia

4. Notre Dame vs. Wisconsin (Sept. 25)

Soldier Field in Chicago will play host to a delightful Midwest tussle. Wisconsin is a small favorite, although this line has ample time to move. Notre Dame will look to replace its starting quarterback, while the Badgers will try to find their rhythm after a lost season. I am curious to see if Wisconsin's defense will be as good as advertised. Notre Dame likely is as well.

5. Oklahoma vs. Texas (Oct. 9)

I'm intrigued. Yes, Oklahoma has largely dominated the rivalry and the conference. But Steve Sarkisian was a bold hire, one I really liked. Beyond the fried food at the State Fair of Texas and the homegrown hatred between these two, watching perhaps the two best play-callers in the sport go toe to toe is something you should line up to see. At the moment, the Sooners are nearly double-digit chalk. That feels like too much to me, but recent history says I might be very wrong.

6. Miami vs. Alabama (Sept. 4)

It might not be close. Let's start there. History says Alabama should dominate, and the 18-point spread certainly amplifies that possible theme. Still, the return of Miami QB D'Eriq King is huge, and he has the skill set that has tortured Nick Saban defenses in the past. The problem? Miami also lost some really good players, and Alabama's roster is still light-years better in so many areas.

7. Auburn at Penn State (Sept. 18)

What a spectacular, odd, lovely out-of-conference game between two historic programs that have rarely played. And the fact that this game will take place in Happy Valley is a) superb for all of us and b) a big reason the spread is currently north of a touchdown. For teams with mixed expectations heading into the year, this is a massive tussle.

8. Florida at LSU (Oct. 16)

Remember this game last season? The outcome was decided when a player threw a shoe, which resulted in a penalty. Although it feels like a dream, it was very real. The series is unpredictable, the teams are somewhat difficult to handicap and the stakes will be enormous per usual. The game is nearly pick-'em at the moment, which feels right. We should learn a lot about both before they meet in the middle of the year.

9. Cincinnati at Notre Dame (Oct. 2)

If Cincinnati is to make a run at the College Football Playoff — and that is an enormous “if” — the Bearcats must win this game. Coming off a one-loss season with their starting quarterback returning, it's not out of the realm of possibility. Notre Dame has been pegged as a small home favorite, which is not surprising. But I'm inclined to take the points.

10. USC at Notre Dame (Oct. 23)

The Irish have been penciled as a field-goal favorite, which feels about right. But the glimpses we saw last year indicated that perhaps the Trojans are close to being finally free of Pac-12 mediocrity. There is a lot to like about starting QB Kedon Slovis, who could become a star this year. As for the game, the importance plus the rivalry makes this a doozy.

Six Win Totals I Like in 2021

Texas A&M Over 9.5 (+105)

Maybe I am sipping too much of the Jimbo Fisher Kool-Aid, but outside of a home game against Alabama (and maybe a final game at LSU), the schedule looks somewhat manageable.

While the offense will need to be reworked, the defense returns nine starters and should be one of the best in the country. Despite the loss of Kellen Mond at QB, this is an offense that should have plenty of meaningful pieces thanks to recent recruiting. According to 247Sports, A&M's classes have ranked nationally as follows: No. 8 in 2021, No. 6 in 2020 and No. 4 in 2019.

It would be a shock if the Aggies are not unbeaten entering the Oct. 9 game against Alabama. After that? Missouri, South Carolina, Auburn, Ole Miss, Prairie View A&M and LSU. Not bad.

Wisconsin Under 9.5 (-115)

This team wasn't great last year (4-3 overall and 3-4 ATS). Granted, it was a bit of a broken season, but I think a 10-win rebound is asking a lot. And the season begins with three very losable games in the first five weeks with a bye wedged in between.

Let's start with the schedule. The Badgers play Notre Dame and Army, which won't be easy. They also open with Penn State, play Michigan after the Irish and have Iowa and a handful of other losable tussles on deck.

They return 15 starters and should have one of the better defenses in the conference, but my concern lies on the offensive side. If this group is not considerably more explosive, the Badgers are likely to top out at eight or nine wins.

USC Over 8.5 (-120)

It wouldn't shock me if the Trojans flirt with a chance to make the College Football Playoff. Lost in the COVID-19 season was a rather impressive -- albeit abbreviated -- performance by USC. While a perfect year was undone by Oregon in the final week, there are reasons to finally be optimistic.

We've said this before, of course, and it hasn't gone well. But the schedule really does set up nicely.

A road game in South Bend will not be easy, but games at Washington State, Colorado, Arizona State and Cal should be wins. USC also draws BYU in the final game, although that team will likely look very different without Zach Wilson.

A total of 16 starters are back. Also, the return of offensive coordinator Graham Harrell could be enormous on an offense poised to make another leap forward.

West Virginia Over 7 (+105)

So, the Oklahoma game might not go great. Iowa State could get ugly as well. Let us address the two box scores from last season that might not be easy on the eyes. (The Oklahoma matchup in 2020 was ultimately canceled, although the Mountaineers were crushed by Iowa State 42-6.)

(continued on next page)

West Virginia will welcome back 16 starters from a team that showed flashes outside of those two games. I like the renovation that head coach Neal Brown has done -- providing balance to both sides, particularly a defense that certainly needed it.

The opening game at Maryland is crucial for this over to hit. Week 3 against Virginia Tech will also be huge for this total. Down the slate a bit, I believe WVU will win enough swing games (Texas Tech, at Baylor and OK State) to eclipse seven wins.

Indiana Under 8 (-130)

By Big Ten standards, the schedule is pretty ugly. In fact, by national standards, it is ranked as one of the top 20 hardest schedules on the docket.

Road games at Iowa, Penn State and Michigan won't be easy. Home games against Ohio State and Cincinnati are brutal, too. There are very few gimmies on tap for a team attempting to validate a 2020 season that was magical in nature: The Hoosiers finished the year 6-2 overall and 7-1 ATS.

The good news? Indiana welcomes back 17 starters, headlined by wide receiver Ty Fryfogle. He was truly exceptional. This roster certainly has talent. I'm just unsure about carrying this momentum forward, and I believe many of the teams Indiana beat last season should be improved.

Great story in 2020. I just see regression.

Texas Over 8 (+105)

I'm buying into the Steve Sarkisian hype. While he was blessed with historic talent at Alabama, his evolution as an offensive guru has been striking. Perhaps lost in the discussion is the fact that he inherits a decent roster. It's not like the one he just left, but there is talent.

Getting a win against a quality Louisiana team out of the gate is pivotal. Oklahoma in the Red River Rivalry and Iowa State on the road are tricky but both winnable. The rest of the schedule is ripe with opportunities.

Texas returns eight starters on offense, has one of the nation's most dynamic running backs and has viable options at QB. The results might not be instant, but they are coming.

And I think they'll start to show sooner than many think.

Five Names to Know in 2021

1. Justyn Ross (Clemson, WR)

Before he missed last season with what sounded like a potential career-ending injury, Justyn Ross was a monster in the making. As a true frosh, Ross delivered a 1,000-yard season and majestic highlight reel. He followed that up with an impressive encore in 2019 before missing all of 2020.

While not fully cleared yet, Clemson seems optimistic about his future and his potential impact. And if the junior is truly healthy once again, the 6-foot-4 target could once again become one of the most difficult matchups in the country.

2. C.J. Stroud (Ohio State, QB)

A player many casual fans don't know is also +800 to win the Heisman. Such is the life of a quarterback at Ohio State under Ryan Day.

While the Buckeyes will have a competition leading up to the year, Stroud is considered the favorite to win the job. He's been on campus, played behind Justin Fields and has received positive reviews. While Ohio State is loaded at QB, he'll get every chance to win this job.

Regardless of who wins, they will be throwing to the best 1-2 punch in the country. Garrett Wilson and Chris Olave are both special. Stroud, assuming he wins the job, has a chance to become a star -- and fast.

3. Jack Sawyer (Ohio State, DE)

I'm doubling up on Ohio State, although I am doing so for good reason.

In my opinion, this is the best true freshman in the country. Yes, it'll be tough for Sawyer to get an abundance of playing time with so many good pass-rushers on the roster. But the five-star recruit is so good -- also a homegrown talent from Columbus -- that he will find his way onto the field.

While I don't want to overreact to a spring game performance, Sawyer's four-sack day was a sign of things to come. He looks like a future top-five pick already, and he has yet to play a down in an actual game.

4. Darnell Washington and Arik Gilbert (Georgia)

OK, I cheated. But here's why.

Georgia has two of the most unique offensive weapons on its roster, and both could explode in 2021.

Washington, just a sophomore, is a 6-7 tight end and one of the most unique athletes to ever play the position. That is not hyperbole. I covered him in high school, and I have never seen anyone quite like him. He flashed some as a frosh, although I expect that to become the norm now.

Gilbert, considered one of the highest-rated tight end recruits ever, originally played at LSU only to transfer to Georgia in the offseason. He was electric in small doses last year, and Georgia says he will be eligible to play now. It sounds like Gilbert will be featured at wide receiver and tight end.

While their numbers might not be huge, both will likely be nightmare matchups and huge contributors.

5. Jamey Chadwell (Coastal Carolina, Coach)

Let's change it up.

Chadwell was fabulous in 2020, turning Coastal Carolina into one of the season's best stories. At just 44 years old, I don't think it's long before Chadwell becomes one of the most coveted young coaches in the sport. Heck, he's probably already there.

Last year, Chadwell led his team to a record of 11-1 (8-3 ATS). They'll welcome back 19 starters, and it's reasonable to expect a worthy follow-up. If that's the case, it'll be hard for the program to hang onto him as the interest is likely to become overwhelming.

If you are a fan of a Power 5 program with a coach on the hot seat, make sure to tune in. He's a name you should know.

FIVE TEAMS TO BET AGAINST, FIVE TO BET ON THIS SEASON

By Paul Stone



Gus Malzahn's eight-year tenure at Auburn played out much like a rocky romance.

Some days were better than others, but, in the end, the bad ones outnumbered the good.

At least according to the powers that be on the Plains.

After last season's middle-feeding 6-5 showing, Auburn decided to part ways with Malzahn and ultimately selected Boise State coach Bryan Harsin as his successor.

The hiring of the 44-year-old Harsin, who has spent most of his playing and coaching career west of the Rockies, was curious in some corners.

After all, Auburn resides in the SEC West -- inarguably college football's toughest neighborhood. Nick Saban still rules the roost in Tuscaloosa, and the Tigers' new man in charge will have to win at least a few recruiting battles against St. Nick and the almighty Crimson Tide.

And Harsin is not exactly a familiar face in living rooms across the Deep South. His experience east of the Rockies includes exactly two seasons as Texas' offensive coordinator under Mack Brown in 2011-12 and one more as head coach of Sun Belt Conference entry Arkansas State in 2013.

Time will tell whether Harsin's hiring turns out to be a stroke of genius, an exercise in poor judgment or somewhere in between. But in Year 1, the deck looks at least somewhat stacked against Auburn.

Besides having a new coaching staff, the Tigers face the nation's second-hardest schedule, according to Phil Steele's 2021 College Football Preview. They are just 9-9 in their last 18 games against FBS opponents, and all but one victory came against teams that finished with non-winning records.

And former five-star quarterback recruit Bo Nix has been good but not great in his first two seasons piloting the Tigers' offense.

For these reasons, Auburn makes my list of bet-against teams for the 2021 season.

(continued on next page)



Other Bet-Against Teams

Arkansas

The Hogs have a lot of folks back from last year's 3-7 team, but they must replace quarterback Feleipe Franks, who was an upgrade over his recent predecessors. Arkansas' defense returns 10 starters but was far from stellar in 2020, giving up 35 points per game and allowing three of its final four opponents to score 50 or more. It might be wise to pump the brakes a little as coach Sam Pittman attempts to take the next step in his second season in Fayetteville. Three wins is one thing, playing .500 football in this league quite another.

Tennessee

The Volunteers have lost 25 players to the transfer portal, the most in college football. And not just any players. The defections included talented linebacker Henry To'oTo'o to Alabama and their top two backs from last season, Eric Gray to Oklahoma and Ty Chandler to North Carolina. The specter of an NCAA investigation also hangs over the program, so first-year coach Josh Heupel and his staff have their work cut out for them.

Colorado

In the COVID-delayed 2020 season, Colorado opened with four straight victories before being brought back to earth in back-to-back losses to Utah and Texas by a combined 49 points. The final 4-2 record looks good on paper, but looks can be deceiving, and I believe the Buffaloes are slightly overvalued entering this season. Sam Noyer, last season's starting quarterback and a second-team All-Pac-12 selection, has transferred to Oregon State, leaving Colorado with no clear answer under center.

Indiana

Many pundits will be touting Indiana as a team to watch in 2021. And why not? After all, the Hoosiers are 14-7 straight up across the last two seasons and boast one of the nation's most energetic and uplifting coaches, Tom Allen. But to quote William Shakespeare, "Heavy is the head that wears the crown." Not that the Hoosiers have won the Big Ten or anything of that magnitude, but they will almost certainly be included in the Associated Press preseason Top 25 poll for the first time since 1969. Plus Indiana won three games outright last season as the betting underdog and was plus-8 in the turnover category over just eight games. Those things tend to ultimately even out in the wash, as they say.



Bet-On Teams

Utah

Wagering your hard-earned, pretax dollars on Kyle Whittingham's Utah Utes has proven a wise investment in recent years. In fact, over the last seven seasons, the Utes are 51-33-1 ATS for a winning mark of 61%, a return on investment of more than 15%. Some are reporting an August quarterback competition in Salt Lake City, but I would be shocked if Baylor grad transfer Charlie Brewer is not under center when the curtain opens in September. Brewer was hindered by a shaky Baylor offensive line that allowed 146 sacks in his four seasons in Waco, but he still threw for more than 9,500 yards during his Big 12 career.

Nevada

The Wolf Pack can make a little noise on the national scene out of the gate with September road games against Power 5 schools Cal and Kansas State. The Wolf Pack arguably have the Mountain West's top offense engineered by the conference's returning offensive player of the year, Carson Strong, who has thrown for almost 5,200 yards in two seasons in Reno. Romeo Doubs and Elijah Cooks are terrific receivers in any league. Nevada is my dark-horse candidate to win the MWC title.

Boston College

The Eagles should make significant strides in Year 2 of their makeover to a pass-oriented offense under former Ohio State assistant Jeff Hafley. Before he arrived, 59% of BC's total yards came on the ground in 2019, compared with just 26% last year. Former Notre Dame signee Phil Jurkovec had a solid first season as the starting quarterback and throws to a talented corps of pass catchers led by first-team All-ACC selection Zay Flowers, who totaled 56 receptions for 892 yards and nine touchdowns in 2020.

UTSA

The Roadrunners of Conference USA might return the most experience of any FBS team. Texas-San Antonio welcomes back its top 14 tacklers, top four quarterbacks, top six running backs and six of its top seven pass-catchers from 2020. In fact, the Roadrunners claim 71 returning lettermen and 21 of a possible 22 returning starters. September trips to Illinois and Memphis provide UTSA with a pair of prime opportunities to enhance its national reputation.

Liberty

In just its fourth FBS season, Liberty is playing an exciting and winning brand of football under former Mississippi coach Hugh Freeze. The Flames averaged 38.2 points per game last year and feature a potential NFL first-rounder at quarterback in dual-threat Malik Willis, who threw for 2,260 yards and ran for 944 in 2020. Liberty plays one of the nation's easiest schedules and has covered 13 of its last 16 games. The Flames' most challenging games do not come until November when they travel to Mississippi and host Louisiana and Army.

CFB TEAMS WHOSE '20 STATS HINT AT BETTER, WORSE YEARS

By Steve Makinen



Dorian Thompson-Robinson,
UCLA

Among the most difficult things in handicapping college sports is evaluating teams from one season to the next. A lot of factors can affect a team's strengths and how much different it might be from the previous season. Among these are personnel losses, coaching changes and momentum lost or gained. Adding to the difficulty is that many programs are taking players right out of their most recent recruiting classes and plugging them into starting spots.

Increasing the challenge for the upcoming season are the eligibility rules giving players another season due to COVID-19 and the fact that the number of games teams played last year varied widely, from as much as a full season to as few as two games. Many teams also played conference-only slates, leading to a schedule strength much different from normal. We'll see how this impacts this week's study as the statistical differences from the usual figures are noticeable.

In recent years, I have tried to quantify the signs of potential improvement or decline considering some year-to-year transitional situations. So let's dive into statistics from last season that can best forecast a team's upcoming prospects.

Can any statistics from the previous season predict the coming season?

Sometimes teams just catch consistently good or bad breaks in a given season that impact their records and spread success significantly. Let's mine the data for anything that might help us find strong fade or follow teams for 2021.

- Over the last eight seasons, 46 teams have endured losing seasons despite outscoring their opponents. Of those, 14 brought back 13 or more starters, including the

quarterback. The collective improvement of this group was about 13.3% SU. These teams were a profitable 52.9% ATS.

Potential improve teams for 2021: Penn State, Troy, UCLA, Wake Forest, Wyoming.

- Fifty teams over the last eight seasons have enjoyed winning seasons despite being outscored. Of those, 12 brought back 13 or fewer starters and turned to new starting quarterbacks. Only one team improved — by one win — and the collective decline was about 15.9% SU. This bunch included Michigan State and Utah State in 2020, and they combined to go 3-10 SU and ATS.

Potential decline teams for 2021: None in this season of super seniors, though Stanford came closest, returning 15 starters.

Turnover luck is an easy-to-recognize opportunity for spotting teams capable of improving or in danger of falling. For the last eight seasons, teams that had turnover ratios of -1.0 or worse per game improved by an 11.5% winning percentage the next season. Those that were in the -0.1 to -0.9 range improved by 3.8%. On the opposite side of the coin, teams with turnover ratios of +1.0 or more dropped by 13.6%, while those in the +0.1 to +0.9 range were about 3.5% worse the next year. With this much data, we must study this further.

- Over the last six seasons, 11 teams went .500 or better against the spread despite having -1.0 or worse turnover differentials per game. Those teams bounced back the next season, improving by over 15%.

Potential improve team for 2021: Oregon.

- In the “there’s nowhere to go but up” category, 36 teams since 2013 have won two or fewer games in a season while enduring -1.0 or worse turnover ratios. Only three got worse, while the average win improvement was 2.0 per season. The SU win percentage upgrade was 17.2%, and the ATS improvement was 15.1%. Despite the mistake-prone play, the most dramatic improvement came from teams that brought back 15 or more starters. That group of 16 teams improved by 4.6 wins, a 24.3% SU winning percentage and 24.1% ATS.

Potential improve teams for 2021: Arizona, Maryland, Michigan State, Utah State.

- A potential land-mine system has affected teams coming off seasons in which they enjoyed positive 1.0 or better turnover differentials but are now starting fresh at quarterback. The 26 most recent teams that have fit this description have dropped by 1.8 wins the next campaign, representing a 20.8% plunge outright and 14% dip ATS. Furthermore, none of the 26 won more games the next season.

Potential decline teams for 2021: Clemson, Kentucky, Ohio State, Texas.

- It can be argued easily that the teams that got the luckiest the previous season had the best turnover differentials combined with the smallest point differentials. It can also be predicted that these teams are due for a fall when starting over. Historically, that is the case, as none of the last 15 teams to have a turnover differential of +1.0 or better and points-per-game differential of +12.0 or less with 14 or fewer starters returning improved their winning percentage the next season. The average decline was 2.6 wins for an average percentage drop of 23.1% outright and 7.1% ATS. Collectively, they were 45% ATS.

Potential decline teams for 2021: Kentucky.

Analyzing the quality of wins and losses from the previous season.

A lot of prognosticators tout close wins or losses as motivation for a team heading into the next season. I’ll look at that as well as blowout wins and losses. I define close wins and losses as seven or fewer points and blowouts as 20 or more points.

- Experienced teams have shown a penchant for bouncing back. Coming off seasons in which they lost at least six games by 20 points or more, teams with at least 14 starters back have wiped the slate clean enough to improve by 3.8 wins the next season over the last eight years. This represents a 17.7% improvement outright and jump of 23.3% ATS.

Potential improve teams for 2021: Kansas, Louisiana-Monroe, Vanderbilt.

- Fifty teams over the last eight seasons have lost one or no games by 20 points or more in a season but still finished with a losing record. Of the 22 that brought back 14 or more starters the next season, only five finished with worse records. The average win improvement of this group was 2.5, good for a 16% jump.

Potential improve teams for 2021: Arizona, Baylor, California, Charlotte, Eastern Michigan, Florida International, Maryland, Michigan, Northern Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon State, Penn State, Purdue, Rice, Rutgers, Texas Tech, UCLA, Washington State, Wyoming.

- As another sign of experienced teams being able to wipe the slate clean, only two of the last 37 qualifiers that failed to record a blowout win and were bringing back 16 or more starters got worse the next season. The average win gain was a whopping 2.2, good for an 18.7% bump. This group also recorded a 55.8% ATS mark.

Potential improve teams for 2021: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Colorado State, Eastern Michigan, Florida International, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana-Monroe, Maryland, Michigan State, Middle Tennessee State, Mississippi State, Northern Illinois, NC State, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon State, Purdue, Rutgers, San Jose State, Southern Miss, Syracuse, UNLV, Utah, Utah State, Washington, Washington State.

- Not being tested by close losses can be a warning signal for inexperienced teams on the verge of dropping. Over the last eight seasons, 39 teams have won nine, 10 or 11 games while suffering zero or one close losses and brought back only half their starters or fewer. Of these, only three teams won more games the next season, with an average win drop of 3.5, a 22.4% slide.

Potential decline teams for 2021: BYU, Notre Dame.

- Subpar teams that experience zero close wins in a season also tend to improve, particularly when choosing to stay the course. In fact, 25 teams have finished under .500 and had zero close wins the year before, then brought back their starting QB, at least 12 total starters and their head coach and both coordinators. Of those, 21 finished better the next season. The average win bump was 2.6, a 21.2% surge.

Potential improve teams for 2021: Akron, Charlotte, East Carolina, Houston, Syracuse, Washington State.



Malik Willis,
Liberty

VSIN STAFF'S FAVORITE COLLEGE FOOTBALL WIN TOTALS



Adam Kramer: USC Over 8.5 (-120)

It wouldn't shock me if the Trojans flirt with a chance to make the College Football Playoff. Lost in the COVID-19 season was a rather impressive -- albeit abbreviated -- performance by USC. While a perfect year was undone by Oregon in the final week, there are reasons to finally be optimistic.

We've said this before, of course, and it hasn't gone well. But the schedule really does set up nicely.

A road game in South Bend will not be easy, but games at Washington State, Colorado, Arizona State and Cal should be wins. USC also draws BYU in the final game, although that team will likely look very different without Zach Wilson.

A total of 16 starters are back. Also, the return of offensive coordinator Graham Harrell could be enormous on an offense poised to make another leap forward.

Jonathan Von Tobel: New Mexico Over 4.5 (-125)

No program turned in a more impressive performance in 2020 than New Mexico. In Danny Gonzales' first year as coach, the Lobos won just twice, but they covered four of their seven games and were one of the most competitive teams in the Mountain West despite not playing a single game at home. This season, Gonzales gets a traditional home schedule and 17 returning starters, meaning New Mexico can really build on an impressive start to the Gonzales era.

The Lobos bring back eight starters on offense, most of them at key positions. Every quarterback who played a snap in 2020 returns, and they add former Kentucky QB Terry Wilson. Leading rusher Bobby Cole is back, and he lines up behind an offensive line that returns four starters. On defense, New Mexico has nine starters back with a ton of depth on the line and at defensive back. The Lobos open at home against Houston Baptist and New Mexico State. Those are two perfectly winnable games, so New Mexico should be undefeated before being fed to Texas A&M on Sept. 18 at College Station. The next week the Lobos travel to El Paso in a coin-flip spot against a UTEP team returning as much talent as the Lobos. New Mexico's conference schedule does provide some hurdles, playing division powers Boise State and Wyoming on the road and drawing San Diego State from the West. However, the Lobos also get UNLV and Fresno State from the other division, avoiding Nevada and San Jose State.

New Mexico's home schedule is very favorable, and if it is to surpass 4.5 wins, it will do so by taking advantage. Air Force, Colorado State, UNLV and Utah State will visit Albuquerque. Those four programs have the lowest win totals in the conference, opening the door for the Lobos to win five or more games for the first time since 2016.



Matt Youmans: Ole Miss Over 7.5 (-110)

Like him or not, Lane Kiffin has developed into a sharp college coach. His offense looks explosive again this year with Matt Corral coming back as arguably the top quarterback in the SEC. Nine starters return on defense. The Rebels should open with wins over Louisville, Austin Peay and Tulane to get to 3-0 before the Oct. 2 game at Alabama. The Ole Miss-Alabama game was tied at 42 in the fourth quarter last year, and that was proof the Rebels can hang with any team in the conference. The rest of the schedule breaks well for Ole Miss, which gets Arkansas, LSU, Liberty, Texas A&M and Vanderbilt at home in addition to Tennessee, Auburn and Mississippi State on the road. It's reasonable to project nine wins for the Rebels, but 8-4 appears to be a good bet.





Adam Kramer: Texas Over 8 (+105)

I'm buying into the Steve Sarkisian hype. While he was blessed with historic talent at Alabama, his evolution as an offensive guru has been striking. Perhaps lost in the discussion is the fact that he inherits a decent roster. It's not like the one he just left, but there is talent. Getting a win against a quality Louisiana team out of the gate is pivotal. Oklahoma in the Red River Rivalry and Iowa State on the road are tricky but both winnable. The rest of the schedule is ripe with opportunities.

Texas returns eight starters on offense, has one of the nation's most dynamic running backs and has viable options at QB. The results might not be instant, but they are coming.

And I think they'll start to show sooner than many think.

Bruce Marshall: Texas Over 8 (+105)

For some reason, it became almost obligatory for sports analysts to degrade the Longhorns in the Tom Herman era, and many are doing it again even as Sarkisian takes control after a successful stint as Nick Saban's offensive coordinator with title-winning Alabama. Sarkisian inherits a program that was a handful of plays from playoff consideration a year ago after narrow losses by two and three points, respectively, and another in OT against Oklahoma. We also saw enough of sophomore QB Casey Thompson in the blowout of Colorado in the Alamo Bowl to suggest he could be a worthy successor to four-year starter Sam Ehlinger, though sophomore Hudson Card has some support.

Whichever QB takes snaps will spend time handing off to sophomore RB Bijan Robinson, perhaps the highest-touted back from the 2020 recruiting class and posed for a breakout after gaining 8.2 ypc last fall. An experienced secondary and plenty of potential within the front seven suggests the defense should be at least functional. Meanwhile, Sarkisian will embrace this second chance as a head coach after the USC adventure went off the rails and he was fired in 2015. The combination of his Pac-12 experience plus the rehabilitation of his reputation under Saban suggests Sarkisian should hardly be over his head in the Big 12

Jonathan Von Tobel: UNLV Under 1.5 (-125)

Not often will bettors see a win total of 1.5 shaded to the Under, but the Rebels have no big positives. Marcus Arroyo's first season as coach went as poorly as possible, with zero wins and one cover for a team that seemed to get worse as the season went along. UNLV lost every game by double digits and brings back 18 starters from that team. Couple that with a brutal schedule and another winless season is not out of the question.

The quarterback's job will likely come down to Doug Brumfield or Justin Rogers. Both appeared in two games last season and combined to throw for 312 yards and one touchdown. Whoever gets the job will have some quality talent to work with, at the very least. At wide receiver, Mountain West freshman of the year Kyle Williams is back, and senior running back Charles Williams is a fantastic runner who averaged over 5 yards per carry in his first four seasons. The defense is making a transition to a 3-4 scheme, which means key pass-rushers Adam Plant and Jacoby Windmon are making the change to outside linebacker. The roster is not devoid of talent, but with another massive hole at quarterback and a scheme change on defense, it is hard to see this team being very competitive.

The schedule will do the Rebels no favors either. They open against a quality Eastern Washington team before games against Arizona State and Iowa State. In conference play, the Rebels must face San Jose State, Nevada and San Diego State — and will be substantial underdogs every time. In fact, UNLV will be an underdog in every game this season, and for good reason.



Matt Youmans: Nevada Over 7.5 (-120)

It should not come as a surprise if the Wolf Pack win the Mountain West. Ten starters return on each side of the ball, and Carson Strong is the best quarterback in the conference. Strong completed 70% of his passes with 27 touchdowns and four interceptions last season, when Nevada finished 7-2. Strong is working with three elite playmakers — running back Toa Taua and wide receivers Romeo Doubs and Elijah Cooks — so he's set to put up big numbers. Strong might not be Josh Allen, who starred in this league at Wyoming, but he's an NFL prospect. The schedule is tough, especially the road portion against California, Kansas State, Boise State, Fresno State, San Diego State and Colorado State. But the Wolf Pack are capable of winning a few road games and should go 6-0 at home. The wolves will be howling in Reno because this team is loaded.



Adam Kramer: Wisconsin Under 9.5 (-115)

This team wasn't great last year (4-3 overall and 3-4 ATS). Granted, it was a bit of a broken season, but I think a 10-win rebound is asking a lot. And the season begins with three very losable games in the first five weeks with a bye wedged in between.

Let's start with the schedule. The Badgers play Notre Dame and Army, which won't be easy. They also open with Penn State, play Michigan after the Irish and have Iowa and a handful of other losable tussles on deck.

They return 15 starters and should have one of the better defenses in the conference, but my concern lies on the offensive side. If this group is not considerably more explosive, the Badgers are likely to top out at eight or nine wins.

Bruce Marshall: Air Force Over 6.5 (-125)

Underestimate coach Troy Calhoun at your own risk. With the exception of 2013, when injuries decimated his roster, Calhoun's Air Force teams have usually punched above their weight. The Falcons split six games last year despite almost the entire projected defense opting out. Several starters from the 2019 defense thus resurface to compete with many who stepped into their roles a year ago, with the result likely a highly combative unit.

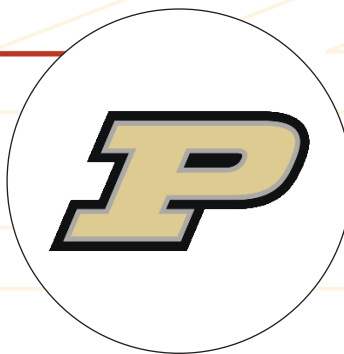
Competition has often been the ingredient to the most successful Calhoun teams, as on the other side of the ball, longtime offensive coordinator Mike Thiessen is usually able to cobble together a functional option-based attack. In fact, the offense led the nation in rushing a year ago. Starters must be replaced en masse along the line, but reloading up front is standard operating procedure for the Falcons, and Haaziq Daniels flashed enough upside in his QB audition last fall to suggest this could be another dynamic Calhoun offense.

The schedule presents many win opportunities, with nonconference games against Florida Atlantic and Commander-in-Chief's Trophy foes Army and Navy all winnable, besides many opportunities for wins in the modest Mountain West. Getting above .500 and to another bowl is well within reach.



Matt Youmans: Purdue Over 5 (-125)

This is a buy-low price on Jeff Brohm, who heads into his fifth year knowing the honeymoon is over. Since the Boilermakers' blowout victory over No. 2 Ohio State in 2018, Brohm's record is 8-16. His last two teams were plagued by injuries. Feeling the heat, Brohm made important changes to his defensive coaching staff. Purdue returns nine starters on each side of the ball, with defensive end George Karlaftis and wide receiver David Bell ranking among the Big Ten's best players. Brohm is an aggressive offensive coach, and sophomore quarterback Jack Plummer has the experience and talent to trigger a high-scoring attack. The Boilermakers are expected to be favored in four of the first five games — against Oregon State, Connecticut, Illinois and Minnesota — so this play should be a push at worst, and a 6-6 season is realistic.



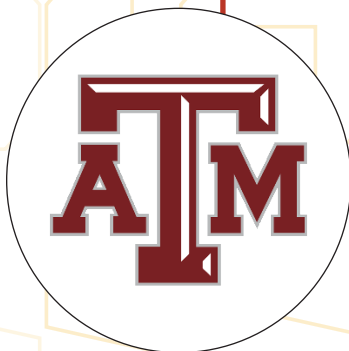
Adam Kramer: Texas A&M Over 9.5 (+105)

Maybe I am sipping too much of the Jimbo Fisher Kool-Aid, but outside of a home game against Alabama (and maybe a final game at LSU), the schedule looks somewhat manageable.

While the offense will need to be reworked, the defense returns nine starters and should be one of the best in the country. Despite the loss of Kellen Mond at QB, this is an offense that should have plenty of meaningful pieces thanks to recent recruiting. According to 247Sports, A&M's classes have ranked nationally as follows: No. 8 in 2021, No. 6 in 2020 and No. 4 in 2019.

It would be a shock if the Aggies are not unbeaten entering the Oct. 9 game against Alabama. After that? Missouri, South Carolina, Auburn, Ole Miss, Prairie View A&M and LSU.

Not bad.



Matt Youmans: Utah Over 8.5 (-120)

Kyle Whittingham is the most reliable coach in the Pac-12, and his team reflects his blue-collar image. It starts up front, where the Utes return all their starters on the offensive line and boast a deep, experienced defensive line. Ten starters return on defense. The team's most important starter could be a newcomer -- Baylor graduate transfer quarterback Charlie Brewer, who can lift the offense to the next level after poor quarterback play doomed the Utes early last season. Utah could be favored in 11 games, with the only obvious underdog spot Oct. 9 at USC. The Utes catch a scheduling break by getting home games against Arizona State, Oregon and UCLA. Whittingham is a bet-on coach, and he has the league's top offensive and defensive lines, so Utah has the potential to win nine or 10 games if Brewer delivers as expected.





Bruce Marshall: Over 5.5 (-125)

For the first time in years, genuine excitement abounds at Rice, where what once seemed a stubborn resolve to install a Stanford-type power offense by David Shaw disciple Mike Bloomgren is starting to pay dividends. The Owls impressed in their compressed 2020 slate, in position to win all five games, and return eight starters from the stingiest Rice defense since the Jess Neely era in the middle of the last century, ranking 12th nationally in scoring defense. With depth on the OL and a big WR target in 6-5 Bradley Rozner (55 catches in 2019 before opting out in 2020) all Bloomgren needed was a QB. And the transfer market provided options with former Nebraska prospect Luke McCaffrey (Christian's brother) and ex-Weber State starter Jake Constantine, who already has 33 career TD passes.

True, the schedule opens like an old Southwest Conference slate with Arkansas, Houston and Texas. But even if the Owls swallow the big doughnut against that trio, plenty of wins await in watered-down C-USA, and they also face crosstown rival Texas Southern of the FCS. Bloomgren can get Rice to a bowl and start to get mentioned as the heir apparent at Stanford whenever Shaw decides it's time to move to the NFL.



Adam Kramer: West Virginia Over 7 (+105)

So, the Oklahoma game might not go great. Iowa State could get ugly as well. Let us address the two box scores from last season that might not be easy on the eyes. (The Oklahoma matchup in 2020 was ultimately canceled, although the Mountaineers were crushed by Iowa State 42-6.)

West Virginia will welcome back 16 starters from a team that showed flashes outside of those two games. I like the renovation that head coach Neal Brown has done -- providing balance to both sides, particularly a defense that certainly needed it.

The opening game at Maryland is crucial for this over to hit. Week 3 against Virginia Tech will also be huge for this total. Down the slate a bit, I believe WVU will win enough swing games (Texas Tech, at Baylor and OK State) to eclipse seven wins.

Adam Kramer: Indiana Under 8 (-130)

By Big Ten standards, the schedule is pretty ugly. In fact, by national standards, it is ranked as one of the top 20 hardest schedules on the docket.

Road games at Iowa, Penn State and Michigan won't be easy. Home games against Ohio State and Cincinnati are brutal, too. There are very few gimmies on tap for a team attempting to validate a 2020 season that was magical in nature: The Hoosiers finished the year 6-2 overall and 7-1 ATS.

The good news? Indiana welcomes back 17 starters, headlined by wide receiver Ty Fryfogle. He was truly exceptional. This roster certainly has talent. I'm just unsure about carrying this momentum forward, and I believe many of the teams Indiana beat last season should be improved.

Great story in 2020. I just see regression.



HOW CFB PERSONNEL CHANGES AFFECT IMPROVEMENT, DECLINE

By Steve Makinen

College sports present some different challenges from the pros in that turnover is typically much greater with rosters, and even coaching staffs, from one season to the next. Evaluating these changes properly is one of the most crucial aspects to season-long success for bettors. A lot of factors can affect a team's strengths and how much different it might wind up being from the previous season. Among the factors to consider are personnel losses, coaching changes and momentum lost or gained. Sometimes the change is immense. Adding to the difficulty is that many programs are taking players right out of their most recent recruiting classes and plugging them into starting spots.

The 2021 college football season will be different from any in recent memory because the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions have introduced some new variables into offseason handicapping. First, and perhaps most importantly, players were granted an extra year of eligibility. This has resulted in a greater number of returning experienced players, or essentially starters. This season could provide an answer to the age-old argument of what means more — raw talent or experience? Second, teams played a widely varying number of games in 2020, anywhere from zero to a full season. How are bettors supposed to accurately judge the mostly incomplete 2020 campaign and the impact it will have this fall? Third, with most games last season played in environments resembling scrimmages, how will the full return of fans affect the players' motivation?

A couple of weeks ago, I released my College Football Stability Scores for the season. As usual, I was inundated with questions. Most stemmed from the eligibility-rule change and how I thought that might affect the season. No one can tell for sure, but I have been answering with my belief that the gap from the elite to the second-tier teams could close a bit. Teams not affected as much by the loss of talent to the NFL could benefit the most, as they are getting players with an extra year of experience back on the field. Other questions I have fielded usually revolved around changes in coaching staffs and how to interpret won-lost records for teams that didn't play complete seasons in 2020. The answers are impossible to predict, and we'll just have to see how the 2021 season plays out.

Though the new variables wreaked some havoc on my typical offseason work, I have sought in recent years to address the usual concerns by trying to quantify the signs of teams' potential improvement or decline when considering some year-to-year transitional situations. All the things that come into play here were factors in my College Football Stability Scores. After identifying some key criteria for each factor, I went back and looked at teams from recent seasons fitting this criteria to determine their average improvement or decline.

As my findings indicate, teams have gotten significantly better or worse from one season to another for a number of reasons. Taking

this a step further, I am using my findings to point out some teams to watch for in 2021. Hopefully this will provide a foundation on which to start a successful handicapping run. Again, though, it will be up to the handicapper to try to best weigh what effect the unusual circumstances of the previous year might have.

The data I used dates back to the 2013 season, or the last eight seasons.

Analyzing Number of Returning Starters

Just looking at the sheer number of returning starters on a team can provide great clues. Here are some of the systems I have discovered and continue to track annually:

- Over the last eight years, 74 teams have had at least six fewer returning starters than the previous season, and only 13 improved. The average drop was a winning percentage decline of 13.8% and ATS drop of about 4.7%.

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: New Mexico State, Northwestern, Old Dominion, Tennessee.

- Alternatively, of the 77 teams over the last eight years that brought back at least six starters more than the previous season, only 17 got worse. The average improvement was a winning percentage bump of 11.7% and ATS rise of 5.6%. The combined ATS winning percentage of the 77 teams was 52.8% (473-423 ATS). Over the last two years, all but three of 21 teams that qualified for this system improved their won-lost mark, including 2019-20 national champ LSU in the last full season.

Potential Improve Teams for 2021: Arizona State, Auburn, Ball State, Baylor, Boise State, Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Florida Atlantic, Florida International, Hawaii, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Louisiana, Liberty, Louisiana Tech, LSU, Maryland, Miami, Michigan State, Minnesota, San Jose State, Syracuse, Toledo, Troy, Tulsa, Texas-San Antonio, UCLA, Utah, UTEP, Western Michigan, Wake Forest, Washington, Wyoming. (This list is much longer than usual due to the extra year of eligibility granted.)

- The total number of starters returning has also proven to be a great predicting factor, as 137 teams in the last eight seasons returned 10 or fewer starters and only 26 have improved their winning percentage. The average drops for this group were 13.6% in win percentage and 4.2% in ATS percentage. The combined ATS mark of these teams was 757-883 ATS, or 46.1%, a clear play-against group.

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: New Mexico State, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Old Dominion.

- The opposite group of that last system contains teams that return 16 or more total offensive and defensive starters. That

group has included 210 teams over the last eight seasons, and only 54 (25.7%) have recorded a worse won-lost record. The average improvement was a bump of 9.3% outright and 3.7% against the spread. These 210 teams combined for an ATS winning percentage of 52.3%.

Potential Improve Teams for 2021: Akron, Appalachian State, Arizona State, Arkansas, Auburn, Ball State, Baylor, Boise State, Boston College, Central Michigan, California, Coastal Carolina, Colorado, Colorado State, Eastern Michigan, East Carolina, Florida Atlantic, Florida International, Florida State, Fresno State, Georgia State, Georgia Tech, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Kent State, Louisiana, Louisiana-Monroe, Liberty, Louisiana Tech, LSU, Marshall, Maryland, Miami, Miami (Ohio), Michigan, Michigan State, Middle Tennessee State, Minnesota, Mississippi State, Missouri, Northern Illinois, NC State, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Texas, Ohio, Ole Miss, Oregon, Oregon State, Purdue, Rice, Rutgers, South Alabama, San Diego State, San Jose State, SMU, South Florida, Southern Miss, Syracuse, TCU, Texas State, Toledo, Troy, Tulane, Tulsa, Texas-San Antonio, UAB, UCLA, UNLV, USC, Utah, Utah State, UTEP, Western Michigan, Wake Forest, Washington, Washington State, West Virginia, Wyoming. (Again, this list is about three times longer than usual due to the extra year of eligibility granted.)

What does a returning starting quarterback mean?

In a generic sense, returning a starting quarterback has meant an increase of about 2.4% on winning percentage. However, oddsmakers seem to place an emphasis on this, as there is an average decline in ATS winning percentage and these teams have covered about 50.5% of their games. So in the end, it is still advantageous to back teams with returning QBs. On the other hand, teams with new quarterbacks see their records drop by 5.3% on average while covering just 48.7% of point spreads. Let's dig deeper to see if we can uncover more.

- Since 2013, a total of 52 teams have brought in new starting quarterbacks and four or fewer total offensive starters. Of these, only 12 teams improved, and the average decline was a 12.9% decrease in winning percentage. Combined ATS percentage was just 46.7%.

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: Alabama, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Tennessee.

- The opposite group is one you'll want to keep track of for backing in 2021, though it includes many more than usual. Teams with returning starting quarterbacks as well as at least nine other offensive starters have shown great improvement, about 12.2% on winning percentage and 5.4% ATS. Collectively, these 47 teams have gone 54.9% against the spread over the last eight seasons.

Potential Improve Teams for 2021: Akron, Ball State, Central Michigan, California, Eastern Michigan, East Carolina, Florida Atlantic, Florida State, Georgia State, Iowa State, Kansas State, Kent State, Liberty, Miami, Minnesota, Nevada, Rutgers, Toledo, Troy, Tulane, Texas-San Antonio, UCLA, UTEP, Wake Forest, Washington, Wyoming.

- A dangerous assumption is made about teams bringing back starting quarterbacks from what was an explosive unit to an otherwise relatively new offensive group. In fact, teams that scored 40-plus points per game the previous season and return the starting QB but four or fewer other starters have declined by 3.0 wins per season on average and by 11.1 PPG. The combined ATS winning percentage of these eight teams was only 35.6% (36-65 ATS).

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: None. Oklahoma State comes closest with four other offensive starters back but averaged only 30.2 PPG in 2020.

- Teams returning a quarterback for at least his third straight season as starter usually show nice improvement, typically by about 2.5% in winning percentage and 1.0 PPG. When you add the same head coach and offensive coordinator to the recipe along with at least eight other total offensive returning starters, the improvement jumps by 10.3% in won-lost record per season and 52.3% ATS combined.

Potential Improve Teams for 2021: East Carolina, Iowa State, Kansas State, Kent State, Nevada, Purdue, UCLA, Wake Forest.

- One of the biggest improvements in wins from one season to the next comes when nine or more offensive starters, including the quarterback, return from a team that won 33% or less of its games against the spread the previous season. The average win increase is 19.6% SU and 27.3% ATS. These teams score nearly 8.0 PPG more as well and combined to go 53.9% ATS.

Potential Improve Teams for 2021: Akron, California, Florida Atlantic, Florida State, Ohio, Purdue, Washington.

- On the opposite side of that mix come the teams that are off seasons in which they won 66.7% or more of their games against the spread and return six or fewer offensive starters, plus are breaking in new quarterbacks. The 26 teams that have fit that description have dropped by 15.2% outright, 17.9% ATS and 5.0 PPG offensively. The four teams that added a new head coach plummeted by 5.8 wins per season.

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: Alabama, Northwestern.

What impact does a new coaching staff have?

New head coaches or coordinators on either side of the ball can change a team's fortunes dramatically. It's not always negative, however, as much depends on the combination of coaches and player experience. Take a look at these recent results:

- Entire new coaching staffs (HC, OC, DC) combined with a new starting quarterback and 11 or fewer total starters returning is a real unstable situation, certainly not a winning recipe in college football. These 20 teams over the last eight seasons have seen their winning percentage drop by 16.4% on average, and the teams have collectively gone just 34.5% SU and 38.5% ATS.

Potential decline team for 2021: Tennessee.

- Clearly, major room for improvement exists when a team wins 25% or fewer games, but some of the biggest improvement is realized when these teams bring back their starting quarterback and hire a new head coach and coordinators. Over the last eight seasons, the average winning percentage increase of the 48 teams that have done this has been 15.6% SU and 13.3% ATS.

Potential Improve Teams for 2021: Arizona, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana-Monroe, South Carolina, Utah State, Vanderbilt.

- Offensive coordinator changes when combined with little experience returning is also a sign of trouble. A total of 44 teams have hired new offensive coordinators the same season they had five or fewer offensive starters returning and a new quarterback. These teams have declined by 16.9% in winning percentage and 4.5% ATS. They collectively have gone just 40.8% ATS, making them the best play-against group we have found. The average scoring output dropped about 5.3 PPG.

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: Alabama, Florida, Tennessee.

- Defensive coordinator changes and inexperience is also a recipe for disaster. Of the 103 teams that have changed defensive coordinators and brought back five or fewer defensive starters, only 28 have improved their won-lost percentage. The average decline was 10.2% in winning percentage and 4.3% ATS. These teams have covered only 45.5% of their point spreads and allowed 3.2 PPG more.

Potential Decline Teams for 2021: Northwestern, South Carolina.

HEISMAN VALUE BETS PROVE IT'S STILL AN AWARD FOR QBS

By Adam Kramer



D.J. Uiagalelei,
Clemson

For the first time since 2015, a non-quarterback won the Heisman Trophy last year. Many of us rejoiced. Given the voting monotony exhibited over the previous decades, this was a moment.

Whether it was the start of a movement or a blip, however, will be decided in the years to follow. For a wide receiver to win, everything had to align. A sensational player on a sensational team delivered a sensational season while playing with a quarterback who never quite captured the buzz necessary to win.

Alabama wide receiver DeVonta Smith deserved it. But this still is a quarterback award until further notice, and the betting odds as we churn toward the 2021 season reflect that.

Before I make my selections, here are my personal Heisman betting tips.

Quarterbacks will always have the edge: I've said it plenty already. You know the drill. While the value in top QBs simply won't be there, there's a reason for this. Maybe last season was the start of a magical trend, though it seems unlikely.

It's never just about the player; it's about the team: A dazzling athlete on even a good team will struggle mightily to win the award. Excellence isn't just about the player or the stats. His team must win a lot of games, if not every game. For many

gifted players with possible roads to the award, the path often falls apart here.

Oh, and the helmet matters: As much as I would love to tell you that a star player at a middling Power 5 school has a fair shot at this, that simply isn't the case. You know this. Not only does a team have to be good, but the brand also impacts this heavily.

My Favorite Chalk: Clemson QB D.J. Uiagalelei (+800)

Trevor Lawrence didn't win a Heisman at Clemson. It seems reasonable to think (and perhaps expect) that D.J. Uiagalelei will accomplish this at least once over the next two seasons. A true sophomore, Uiagalelei was allowed ample seasoning as a freshman when Lawrence was unable to play due to testing positive for COVID-19.

Against Notre Dame in his first start, all Uiagalelei did was throw for 439 yards on the road in a 47-40 double-OT loss. He followed it up the following week by throwing for 342 yards against Boston College.

I feel confident in saying Uiagalelei has the strongest arms in college football and might have one of the strongest arms we've seen in the last decade. He shouldn't just produce at Clemson — he has a chance to dazzle.

In terms of garnering buzz, Uiagalelei shouldn't have to wait long. Clemson plays Georgia to start the season, one of the most anticipated openers in recent memory. A win and sizable performance early on will catapult Uiagalelei above the field. The schedule from that point on is quite frankly one he should dominate. (Clemson's very favorable slate could be viewed as both a positive and a negative.)

Even with the loss of running back Travis Etienne and some quality pass catchers, the offense should be loaded. The return of wide receiver Justyn Ross is also massive.

If Clemson beats Georgia, Uiagalelei's 8-1 odds will be long gone. And even if the Tigers fall short, he'll be right there.

Down the Board (Slightly): Georgia QB JT Daniels (25-1)

We don't have to stray far for our next contender. Daniels, the other QB in the season's marquee opener, is also a fascinating prospect with better value.

The journey to this position has not been spotless. Daniels was a standout prospect in high school, played at USC and transferred to Georgia. While the belief early on was that he would thrive from the start, that was not the case last year.

However, once given an opportunity, he showed flashes. Daniels closed with 10 touchdowns and two interceptions in Georgia's final four games, finishing with a 392-yard passing performance against a quality Cincinnati defense in the bowl season.

Surrounded by incredible talent at wide receiver, Daniels has a chance to make these flashes more consistent. And with the possibility of an SEC championship game against Alabama late in the year, it is fair to reason no player could have a larger late-season spotlight than Daniels.

Let's Pick a Non-Quarterback: Texas RB Bijan Robinson (30-1)

Mark my words: By the end of the 2021 season, assuming he stays healthy, Robinson will be one of the faces of college football and one of the sport's most electric talents.

The arrival of Steve Sarkisian only adds to this intrigue, as Robinson will likely take advantage of an offense that should afford him ample carries and targets out of the backfield.

While he started slowly in 2020, largely due to a lack of touches, Robinson exploded in the back half of the season. In the last two games, he totaled 443 yards from scrimmage and six touchdowns.

Texas' schedule is conducive to much more production, though beating Oklahoma, which has not come easily for the Longhorns, would certainly help this cause. Playing for the Longhorns — a massive brand in a constant game of "Are they back?!?!?" — doesn't hurt his chances either. Whether Texas ever gets back or not, the Longhorns are a huge draw.

A lot to like here, minus the fact that he doesn't play QB. Still, Robinson might just have that kind of season.

The Value Play: Florida QB Emory Jones (80-1)

This pick has high boom-or-bust potential; hence, the odds. But here's what we know.

Jones is athletically special. He is largely inexperienced, with just 221 passing yards and two touchdowns in 2020. He plays for a team that will get plenty of high-profile moments. And working under coach Dan Mullen, one of football's great quarterback whisperers, it's reasonable to assume he will be a much more polished player this fall.

He can also run. While Jones was Kyle Trask's backup last year, he also totaled 217 rushing yards and averaged nearly 7 yards per carry.

There is plenty to like about his game, the fit and his potential. But can he grow that much?

The loss of key pass catchers to the NFL doesn't help, though Florida is still plenty stockpiled at the skill positions. Jones will need a Joe Burrow-esque transformation for this bet to cash, though it's not unreasonable given the odds.

HEISMAN RACE WILL PIVOT ON ATTENTION FROM MEDIA

By Aaron Moore

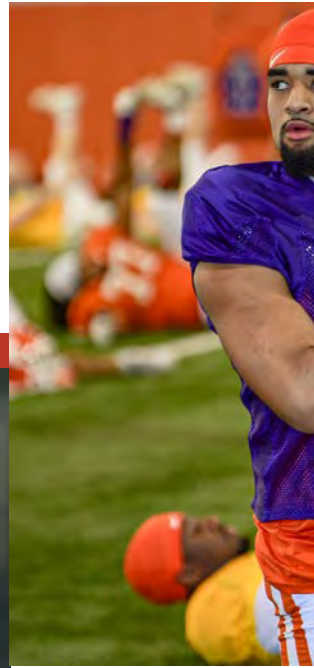
When handicapping the college football preseason, the first destination for my eyes is the Heisman Trophy futures board. It is home to the longest odds and where the most options are truly in play.

That's not the case for the national championship, where Alabama, Clemson and Ohio State hover in the 4-1 range, and even longer shots like Oklahoma and Georgia don't exceed 7-1 on DraftKings.

The odds for the national championship are just reminders that the deck is stacked in favor of the Power 5 schools. This gives bookmakers the upper hand for most college football futures. However, preseason Heisman futures somewhat minimize that power.

Previously, Heisman campaigns were spurred by sports information directors who creatively developed marketing strategies to gain attention and secure votes.

Then came the cable sports television explosion, with every game or highlight basically a nationally televised commercial for the top candidates. Now this year we need to see what happens with the rise of sponsored social media posts driving publicity.



Undoubtedly, the next Heisman winner will come from a Power 5 school, just as everyone before him since Andre Ware in 1989 and Ty Detmer in 1990. Still, this expansive board allows bettors a legitimate opportunity to scan up and down to identify a number of potential plays.

This won't be based on making statistical projections for 12 regular-season games but instead will be about breaking down all the factors needed to gain valuable media attention, which fuels this popularity contest.

Candidates playing in today's crowded media marketplace need superior individual accomplishments, team success and the press to latch on to a sustainable narrative for as long as possible. That translates into a number of dominoes falling into place. At this point of the year, handicapping the Heisman field means determining who has the fewest dominoes to deal with. A new domino is in play this season: the ability for players to be compensated for the use of their name, image and likeness.

If a Heisman candidate signs a marketing agreement with a commercial sponsor, that business will have incentive to help

promote its influencer. How that plays out with voting members is still to be determined. Hype might be converted to votes, or it could antagonize media members who think social media is an end-around to the traditional methods. Either way, expect a lot of NIL stories this season that will likely bring some coattail publicity for the top players.

Here is an early look at some Heisman candidates and a rundown of what needs to happen for them to win the award.

Spencer Rattler
(+550 DraftKings, BetMGM, BetRivers)

From a qualitative standpoint, Rattler has every reason to be the top candidate. The name alone draws attention, as will the comparisons to Patrick Mahomes.

The Oklahoma quarterback comes into 2021 on a top-5 squad that should contend for the national championship.

Somewhere in that +550 is a built-in Lincoln Riley tax because the preseason stories about the returning QB will likely include references to his coach's Heisman success with Baker Mayfield and Kyler Murray.

Riley is 0-3 in the College Football Playoff, but that plays no role in Heisman voting.

Rattler has relatively few obstacles in his way to a Heisman right now, but +550 just isn't worth tying up a portion of a college football bankroll before any games are played. Last year's leading candidates, Trevor Lawrence and Justin Fields, were about +400 before the season began, but COVID-19 altered their odds.



Lawrence and Fields got as high as 12-1 and 25-1, respectively, by Week 15, about the time DeVonta Smith was 50-1, according to SportsOddsHistory.com.

Pandemic issues may be diminished, but what happened last year demonstrates there should be little rush to bet the top candidate too early when other variables inevitably arise.

The best time to address a Rattler bet is in early October after road games with Kansas State and Texas. One average game will likely bump up his odds to a better price before the Baylor and Iowa State games in mid-November, which could put him back on track.

D.J. Uiagalelei
(+600 DraftKings, BetMGM, BetRivers)

Much of the narrative about Rattler applies to the new Clemson QB, even down to his name, which those in the media will likely enjoy saying repeatedly.

With no injuries, the Uiagalelei campaign will encounter limited impediments this season ... but that doesn't mean you should jump on any preseason bets.

One number is concerning when it comes to his Heisman chances, and that is -835, the odds DraftKings posted for the Tigers to win the Atlantic Coast Conference. So it again appears that Clemson will roll through the conference, run up scores, then sub out the QB during blowouts.

This is one reason Lawrence's Heisman chances were tempered even though the media narrative supported him being the best player in college football.

A current bet on Uiagalelei is also showing support for Miami and North Carolina (+700 DraftKings) to contend for the ACC title.

Looking at Clemson's schedule, the opening game against Georgia should create some juice to his campaign. Then comes a mediocre ACC schedule.

Last season Alabama also had a smooth regular-season run, but the internal competition among Smith, Mac Jones and Najee Harris created optimal media interest and betting variance.



Ironically, if you want to back Uiagalelei, the preference is to have more obstacles in his way.

Bryce Young
(+1000 BetMGM,
+800 DraftKings
and BetRivers)

Young takes over at QB for the Crimson Tide and is already a top candidate after playing a limited role last year.

I'm concerned with Alabama fatigue for voters after last year, and Young's current odds won't assuage these feelings. Other Alabama players are creating a Heisman hopeful crowd in Tuscaloosa: Jase McClellan (+6600 DraftKings and BetRivers, +5000 BetMGM), John Metchie III (+8000 DraftKings and BetRivers, +5000 BetMGM) and Brian Robinson Jr. (+5000 BetMGM).

(continued on next page)

Considering Young is grouped with other Crimson Tide candidates, a more prudent approach at this time is to eliminate the subjectivity and put some of your college football bankroll on the entire team at +225 to win the national championship. This ticket will serve as a safety net all season and help buy some time to see who in this group is worth a play individually.

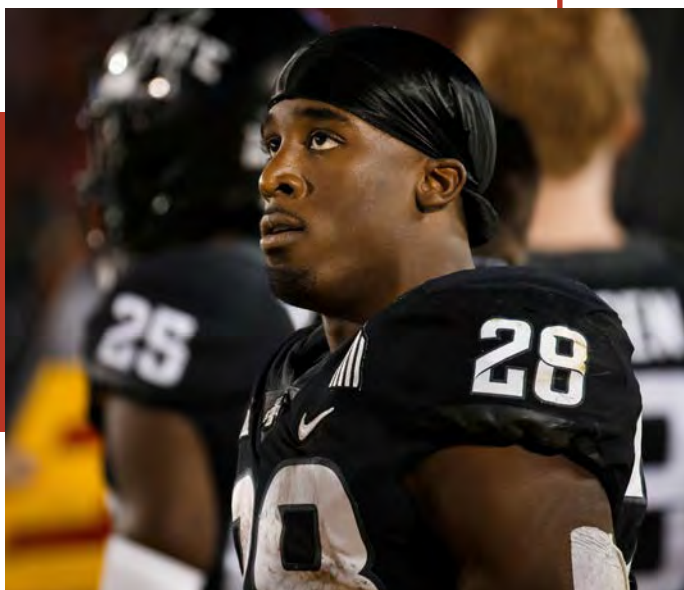
So analyzing the big three: Rattler, Uigalelei and Young should have no problem piling up media attention and wins. The concern playing them is the odds just aren't substantial enough for a preseason Heisman wager.

That means look down the board for value and identify other plays that are best made before the season kicks off.

Breece Hall

(+6600 BetMGM, +4000 DraftKings and BetRivers)

Hall deserves summer action, especially at 66-1. Expect numerous media outlets to take on the angle of Iowa State being "the next big thing" during the early stages of the season. A cyclone of coverage is probably coming ISU's way, so get some of Hall before it happens.



Even though Iowa State isn't a conventional home to a

Heisman candidate (do you remember the name Troy Davis?), Hall had the most 2020 votes of any returning player. That equity makes a nice companion to these odds.

Iowa State starts the season as a borderline top-10 program, and the Big 12 title is a reasonable goal.

The season opener against Northern Iowa should immediately place Hall in the trending-up category. Then comes a home game against Iowa, so plenty of nationally recognized college football experts and insiders should be heading to Ames.

Any Hall bet needs to be placed before the production crews reach town and eat their first breaded pork tenderloin sandwiches.

A tremendous outing by Hall against the Hawkeyes on Sept. 11 will substantially reduce the current odds. If Iowa's excellent defensive coordinator, Phil Parker, prevents this from

happening, it won't derail Hall's candidacy. High-profile Big 12 games in late October through mid-November could reignite Hall's chances.

If you are going to place one Heisman bet at this juncture, consider Hall based on his output last year, the rising interest in Iowa State and the possible payday down the line.



Brock Purdy

(+6600 BetMGM, +5000 DraftKings and BetRivers)

Hall's teammate is also in the Heisman conversation. The Iowa State QB comes in at a similar price and, like Hall, made a name for himself during last season's run to the conference championship game. The All-Big 12 first-teamer should once again post attractive totals against the consistently weak secondaries in his conference.

Nonetheless, from a media narrative perspective, Hall is the better bet. Purdy is one of many QBs vying for the Heisman, while a feature back can separate himself.

The number of QB candidates, and the difficulty of having so many worthy arms to choose from, will be one of the main themes of this year.

It used to be that the bottleneck of Heisman candidates was at running back, but no RB has won the award since Derrick Henry in 2015.

Bijan Robinson

(+3000 BetMGM, +2000 DraftKings and BetRivers)

Texas' Bijan Robinson is another viable RB attempting to break the recent trend.

Voters last saw Robinson end 2020 with 183 yards on just 10 carries in the Alamo Bowl victory over Colorado.

That game, plus the addition of former Alabama offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian as his head coach, should make him one of the first RBs mentioned when Heisman talk picks up.

The stories about Sarkisian moving to Austin are going to bolster the Robinson campaign.



Just winning games won't be enough to break through the logjam of all these QB candidates. As a result, the current odds for this group will have plenty of shelf life.

Stroud inherits the Buckeyes' offense from Fields, and even though he is a five-star recruit, nothing is exciting about the odds for a freshman on an offense that likes to spread the wealth.

Putting up great numbers has been no problem at all for Howell over the last two seasons with the Tar Heels. That should cool any desire to pull the trigger now on a Howell play. Are you willing to wager that a UNC quarterback will get enough attention to bypass the one at Clemson to win over the hearts and minds of voters?

On those highlight-driven shows, Howell's work will be in the B block, while Uiagalelei and gang will live in the A block for the season.

Also, last year's playmaking group of Dyami Brown, Dazz Newsome, Javonte Williams and Michael Carter departed UNC, so this traditional drop-back passer must post Joe Burrow-like numbers with a new cast.

These are more obstacles than the 14-1 odds indicate.

The Alabama winning machine is what stands in the way of Daniels at Georgia and Corral at Mississippi.

A number of stories over the last decade have contended that (fill in the blank) could overtake the Crimson Tide in the SEC West. This year that distinction goes to the Rebels. So a Corral bet is also a side wager against Nick Saban.

With that in mind, wait for some tangible evidence once the season starts at the expense of higher odds.

One QB who does have a good chance to separate himself from the crowded field is USC's **Kedon Slovis (+2500 DraftKings, BetMGM, BetRivers)**. You can see the path Slovis needs to take, and at these odds, it is worth it to go along.

He is cast as the Pac-12's best offensive player in a season the conference is billing as its comeback on the national stage. The last member of the conference to take home the trophy was Oregon's Marcus Mariota in 2014.

Without much regional competition, Slovis should gain traction with voters in the Mountain and Pacific time zones. When Mariota won, only one other player from a school west of Texas, Scooby Wright of Arizona, even made the top 10 in total votes.

Conference officials are also looking into some flexible scheduling to make their product more available to East Coast eyeballs.

A bet now for Slovis makes sense and comes with value.

If you prefer to wait, make sure to get action on Slovis in advance of the Trojans' game Oct. 23 at Notre Dame. This is the

Others

Ohio State's **C.J. Stroud (+1200 BetMGM, +1000 DraftKings and BetRivers)**, North Carolina's **Sam Howell (+1700 DraftKings and BetRivers, +1400 BetMGM)**, Georgia's **JT Daniels (+1200 DraftKings and BetRivers, +1000 BetMGM)** and Mississippi's **Matt Corral (+2200 BetMGM, +2000 DraftKings and BetRivers)** are the next QB tier following Rattler, Uiagalelei and Young.

All in this group fit the profile of legitimate Heisman candidates as QBs in offense-friendly environments. Handicapping this from a media narrative says the odds in this range aren't commensurate with the amount of early-season headlines they will need to acquire at the expense of other candidates.

type of singular event that breeds media exposure and public interest that could shift the odds board.

All this talk about whether Reggie Bush deserves his vacated 2005 trophy since the NCAA is entering the NIL age will provide some ancillary assistance to Slovis in the promotion department.

Michael Penix Jr. (+5000 DraftKings, BetMGM, BetRivers) is another QB who has summertime value attached to his name.

Penix Jr.'s Indiana squad will join Iowa State in any preseason story that mentions the following terms: under the radar, sleeper, Cinderella, party crasher or underdog.

He also enters the season with some momentum after his spectacular (albeit debatable) game-winning touchdown in overtime against Penn State in October.

This is a reasonable long-shot play.

No reason to act on it now, but still keep an eye on UCF's **Dillon Gabriel (+6600 BetMGM, +5000 DraftKings and BetRivers)** to see what Gus Malzahn can offer early on as the lefty QB's coach. Profiles of what the former Auburn coach is doing in Orlando will help burnish the third-year starter's reputation.

A possible lottery ticket to add to a Hesiman portfolio is Ohio State WR **Chris Olave (+10000 DraftKings and BetRivers, not on BetMGM's board)**. He has long odds for a reason, but he faces no insurmountable obstacles. The preseason All-American deep threat has a chance to rack up yards, long TDs and highlight-reel footage. Sounds a little like last year's winner.

The Rest of the Under 50-1 Crowd

Emory Jones
(+5000 BetMGM, +3300 DraftKings and BetRivers)

The Florida QB will try to duplicate what Kyle Trask did last year in Gainesville. The Sept. 18 home game against Alabama is decision day. If he can do well against the Tide, the Gators' ensuring favorable schedule will help.

Hold off until the Alabama game to determine whether a ticket on Jones is warranted. It will be less than the current number, but from a futures standpoint, the Alabama game comes at an opportune time since nine more regular-season games will be left.

Desmond Ridder
(+4000 BetMGM, +3300 DraftKings and BetRivers)

Ridder is the hard-nosed QB you want on your team. Unfortunately, there is a glass ceiling for the Heisman in Cincinnati.

The same was said about Lamar Jackson in Louisville, but his transcendent qualities were able to shatter that obstacle. In short, Ridder isn't Jackson.

Jayden Daniels
(+4000 DraftKings and BetRivers, +3000 BetMGM)

The Arizona State QB is already getting attention for what he could bring to an NFL team with comparisons made to Robert Griffin III.

With so many other QBs on the board and Slovis in his conference, Daniels is an example of a player with too many hurdles to jump to win a Heisman. He needs his team to contend nationally (which seems unlikely), he must outplay a number of other high-profile QBs and then have the media get behind his Heisman status at a school not otherwise associated with the award.

Casey Thompson
(+5000 BetMGM, +4000 DraftKings and BetRivers)

The Texas QB already has taken care of the positive publicity qualifications needed to win the Heisman. Using his newfound ability to gain NIL compensation, Thompson is offering fans the opportunity to purchase personalized video messages for \$50 apiece. Instead of pocketing the cash, he is pledging to donate the proceeds to No Kid Hungry, a national campaign to combat childhood hunger.

It's a fantastic charitable effort that certainly deserves national attention. His significant impediments are playing with Robinson and a crowded list of Big 12 candidates.

Malik Willis
(+4000 DraftKings and BetRivers)

Don't fall for the banana-in-the-tailpipe trick.

No matter how many stories that advocate for Group of 5 players and teams, the hegemonic structure perpetuated by the power conferences and their media partners won't have room for a Liberty QB to win the award.

The same holds true for Coastal Carolina's **Grayson McCall (150-1 BetMGM)**.

Contrarian Play

If not for some eligibility issues, Ohio State defensive end Chase Young very well could have won the 2019 Heisman Trophy. Oregon edge rusher **Kayvon Thibodeaux (200-1 BetMGM, 150-1 DraftKings and BetRivers)** plays like Young, will have the same exciting highlights sprinting past OTs and chasing down QBs like Young, and is expected to go near the top of the next draft. Thibodeaux's problem is he will operate in the Pac-12, while Young did his work under the favored-nation status of the Big Ten.

The Ducks head to Columbus on Sept. 11. That is the time to address whether you want to add a defensive player to your Heisman portfolio.

WISE BETTORS WILL KEY IN ON STABILITY IN COLLEGE FOOTBALL

By Steve Makinen

If you're one of the many readers of VSiN's Point Spread Weekly who have been with us since kickoff of the 2017 football season, you will recognize 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 early value. 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 for teams to get over. 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 people take on can vary greatly from book to book and from bettor to bettor. Because of this, there can be huge misses by those setting the numbers. Doing the homework early has become one of the most important aspects for college football bettors hoping to enjoy a successful season. Those bettors who 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.

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 of program, and of course player transgressions off the field. The result is that there is always significant 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 are most often startled at 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 feeling is that oddsmakers don't adjust the point spread enough for the "instability."

Over the last nine 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. In those nine years, I have never experienced a losing record by playing the games on the lists for the first four weeks of the season. The degree of success has varied during that span, but in all nine years I have closed with a profit. 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.

I've put together a chart of the College Football Stability Scores for 2021. 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.

Here are the basics for how I determine each team's Total Stability Score. In essence, the score is determined from five 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 2020: 4 points
No, new head coach for 2021: 0 points
Returning Offensive Coordinator Points
Yes, same offensive coordinator as 2020: 3 points
No, new offensive coordinator for 2021: 0 points
Returning Defensive Coordinator Points
Yes, same defensive coordinator as 2020: 3 points
No, new defensive coordinator for 2021: 0 points
Returning Starting Quarterback Points
Yes, same starting quarterback as 2020: 4 points
No, new starting quarterback for 2021: 0 points

Returning Starter Points

0-7 returning offensive and defensive starters: 0 points
8-9: 1 point
10-12: 2 points
13-16: 3 points
17-19: 4 points
20-22: 5 points

(continued on next page)

Team (Conference)	2020 Rec	HC?	Change? (0=yes)				Ret Strs	TOT STAB	Team (Conference)	2020 Rec	HC?	Change? (0=yes)				Ret Strs	TOT STAB
AIR FORCE (MTN WEST)	3-3	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17		MISSOURI (SEC)	5-5	4	3	0	4	3 (16)	14	
AKRON (MAC)	1-5	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		N ILLINOIS (MAC)	0-6	4	3	3	0	4 (18)	14	
ALABAMA (SEC)	13-0	4	0	3	0	2 (12)	9		NAVY (AMER ATH)	3-7	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13	
APPALACHIAN ST (SUN BELT)	9-3	4	0	3	0	4 (17)	11		NC STATE (ACC)	8-4	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18	
ARIZONA (PAC 12)	0-5	0	0	0	0	3 (15)	3		NEBRASKA (BIG TEN)	3-5	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18	
ARIZONA ST (PAC 12)	2-2	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		NEVADA (MTN WEST)	7-2	4	3	3	4	5 (22)	19	
ARKANSAS (SEC)	3-7	4	3	3	0	4 (19)	14		NEW MEXICO (MTN WEST)	2-5	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17	
ARKANSAS ST (SUN BELT)	4-7	0	3	0	0	3 (15)	6		NEW MEXICO ST (IND)	1-1	4	3	3	4	0 (2)	14	
ARMY (IND)	9-3	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17		NORTH CAROLINA (ACC)	8-4	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18	
AUBURN (SEC)	6-5	0	0	0	4	3 (16)	7		NORTH TEXAS (CUSA)	4-6	4	3	0	0	4 (17)	11	
BALL ST (MAC)	7-1	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		NORTHWESTERN (BIG TEN)	7-2	4	3	0	0	1 (9)	8	
BAYLOR (BIG 12)	2-7	4	0	3	0	4 (17)	11		NOTRE DAME (IND)	10-2	4	3	0	0	1 (9)	8	
BOISE ST (MTN WEST)	5-2	0	0	3	4	4 (17)	11		OHIO ST (BIG TEN)	7-1	4	3	3	0	2 (12)	12	
BOSTON COLLEGE (ACC)	6-5	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18		OHIO U (MAC)	2-1	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	18	
BOWLING GREEN (MAC)	0-5	4	3	0	4	3 (13)	14		OKLAHOMA (BIG 12)	9-2	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17	
BUFFALO (MAC)	6-1	0	0	0	4	3 (15)	7		OKLAHOMA ST (BIG 12)	8-3	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17	
BYU (IND)	11-1	4	0	3	0	2 (10)	9		OLD DOMINION (CUSA)	0-0	0	3	3	4	1 (9)	11	
C MICHIGAN (MAC)	3-3	4	0	3	4	5 (21)	16		OLE MISS (SEC)	5-5	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18	
CALIFORNIA (PAC 12)	1-3	4	3	3	4	4 (19)	18		OREGON (PAC 12)	4-3	4	3	0	0	4 (17)	11	
CHARLOTTE (CUSA)	2-4	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17		OREGON ST (PAC 12)	2-5	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18	
CINCINNATI (AMER ATH)	9-1	4	3	0	4	3 (14)	14		PENN ST (BIG TEN)	4-5	4	0	3	4	3 (15)	14	
CLEMSON (ACC)	10-2	4	3	3	0	3 (15)	13		PITTSBURGH (ACC)	6-5	4	3	3	4	3 (14)	17	
COASTAL CAROLINA (S BELT)	11-1	4	3	3	4	4 (19)	18		PURDUE (BIG TEN)	2-4	4	3	0	4	4 (17)	15	
COLORADO (PAC 12)	4-2	4	3	0	4	4 (17)	15		RICE (CUSA)	2-3	4	0	3	0	4 (19)	11	
COLORADO ST (MTN WEST)	1-3	4	0	3	0	5 (20)	12		RUTGERS (BIG TEN)	3-6	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19	
CONNECTICUT (AMER ATH)	0-0	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17		S ALABAMA (SUN BELT)	4-7	0	0	0	4	3 (16)	7	
DUKE (ACC)	2-9	4	0	3	0	2 (12)	9		SAN DIEGO ST (MTN WEST)	4-4	4	3	3	0	4 (17)	14	
E MICHIGAN (MAC)	2-4	4	0	3	4	5 (20)	16		SAN JOSE ST (MTN WEST)	7-1	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19	
EAST CAROLINA (AMER ATH)	3-6	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		SMU (AMER ATH)	7-3	4	3	0	0	4 (17)	11	
FLA ATLANTIC (CUSA)	5-4	4	0	0	4	5 (20)	13		SOUTH CAROLINA (SEC)	2-8	0	0	0	0	3 (13)	3	
FLA INTERNATIONAL (CUSA)	0-5	4	0	0	4	4 (17)	12		SOUTH FLORIDA (AMER ATH)	1-8	4	3	3	0	4 (17)	14	
FLORIDA (SEC)	8-4	4	0	3	0	2 (10)	9		SOUTHERN MISS (CUSA)	3-7	0	0	0	0	4 (18)	4	
FLORIDA ST (ACC)	3-6	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17		STANFORD (PAC 12)	4-2	4	3	3	0	3 (15)	13	
FRESNO ST (MTN WEST)	3-3	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		SYRACUSE (ACC)	1-10	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18	
GA SOUTHERN (SUN BELT)	8-5	4	0	3	0	3 (14)	10		TCU (BIG 12)	6-4	4	0	3	4	4 (17)	15	
GEORGIA (SEC)	8-2	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17		TEMPLE (AMER ATH)	1-6	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13	
GEORGIA ST (SUN BELT)	6-4	4	3	3	4	4 (19)	18		TENNESSEE (SEC)	3-7	0	0	0	0	2 (11)	2	
GEORGIA TECH (ACC)	3-7	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17		TEXAS (BIG 12)	7-3	0	0	0	0	3 (14)	3	
HAWAII (MTN WEST)	5-4	4	0	3	4	4 (18)	15		TEXAS A&M (SEC)	9-1	4	3	3	0	3 (14)	13	
HOUSTON (AMER ATH)	3-5	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17		TEXAS ST UNIV (SUN BELT)	2-10	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17	
ILLINOIS (BIG TEN)	2-6	0	0	0	4	4 (18)	8		TEXAS TECH (BIG 12)	4-6	4	0	3	0	3 (15)	10	
INDIANA (BIG TEN)	6-2	4	3	0	4	4 (17)	15		TOLEDO (MAC)	4-2	4	3	3	4	5 (22)	19	
IOWA (BIG TEN)	6-2	4	3	3	4	3 (13)	17		TROY (SUN BELT)	5-6	4	0	3	4	5 (21)	16	
IOWA ST (BIG 12)	9-3	4	3	3	4	4 (19)	18		TULANE (AMER ATH)	6-6	4	0	0	4	4 (17)	12	
KANSAS (BIG 12)	0-9	0	0	0	4	4 (17)	8		TULSA (AMER ATH)	6-3	4	3	3	0	4 (19)	14	
KANSAS ST (BIG 12)	4-6	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17		TX-SAN ANTONIO (CUSA)	6-5	4	3	0	4	5 (21)	18	
KENT ST (MAC)	3-1	4	3	3	4	4 (19)	18		UAB (CUSA)	6-3	4	3	3	4	4 (17)	16	
KENTUCKY (SEC)	5-6	4	0	3	0	3 (13)	10		UCF (AMER ATH)	6-4	0	0	0	4	3 (15)	7	
LA LAFAYETTE (SUN BELT)	10-1	4	0	3	4	5 (20)	16		UCLA (PAC 12)	3-4	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19	
LA MONROE (SUN BELT)	0-10	0	0	0	4	4 (17)	8		UNLV (MTN WEST)	0-6	4	3	3	0	3 (16)	13	
LIBERTY (IND)	10-1	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		USC (PAC 12)	5-1	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17	
LOUISIANA TECH (CUSA)	5-5	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17		UTAH (PAC 12)	3-2	4	3	3	0	4 (18)	14	
LOUISVILLE (ACC)	4-7	4	0	3	4	2 (12)	13		UTAH ST (MTN WEST)	1-5	0	0	0	0	3 (16)	3	
LSU (SEC)	5-5	4	0	0	4	4 (18)	12		UTEP (CUSA)	3-5	4	0	0	4	4 (19)	12	
MARSHALL (CUSA)	7-3	0	3	0	4	3 (16)	10		VANDERBILT (SEC)	0-9	0	0	0	4	3 (14)	7	
MARYLAND (BIG TEN)	2-3	4	0	0	4	4 (17)	12		VIRGINIA (ACC)	5-5	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17	
MASSACHUSETTS (IND)	0-4	4	0	3	4	3 (14)	14		VIRGINIA TECH (ACC)	5-6	4	3	3	0	3 (13)	13	
MEMPHIS (AMER ATH)	8-3	4	3	3	0	3 (15)	13		W KENTUCKY (CUSA)	5-7	4	0	3	4	2 (11)	13	
MIAMI FL (ACC)	8-3	4	3	0	4	4 (19)	15		W MICHIGAN (MAC)	4-2	4	0	3	4	4 (19)	15	
MIAMI OHIO (MAC)	2-1	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18		WAKE FOREST (ACC)	4-5	4	3	3	4	4 (19)	18	
MICHIGAN (BIG TEN)	2-4	4	3	0	0	3 (16)	10		WASHINGTON (PAC 12)	3-1	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18	
MICHIGAN ST (BIG TEN)	2-5	4	3	3	0	4 (17)	14		WASHINGTON ST (PAC 12)	1-3	4	3	3	4	4 (18)	18	
MIDDLE TENN ST (CUSA)	3-5	4	0	3	0	4 (19)	11		WEST VIRGINIA (BIG 12)	6-4	4	3	0	4	3 (16)	14	
MINNESOTA (BIG TEN)	3-4	4	3	3	4	5 (20)	19		WISCONSIN (BIG TEN)	4-3	4	3	3	4	3 (15)	17	
MISSISSIPPI ST (SEC)	4-7	4	3	3	4	3 (16)	17		WYOMING (MTN WEST)	2-4	4	0	3	4	5 (21)	16	

Key

2020 Rec = 2020 Record
HC? = Head Coach
OC? = Offensive Coordinator

DC? = Defensive Coordinator
Ret Strs = Returning Starters
TOTAL STAB = Total Stability

As you analyze the chart of the 130 FBS teams on the next page, you'll see that there are teams this season in both very stable and very unsettling situations. However, there are far fewer "unstable" situations this season because of the additional year of eligibility granted last season because of COVID-19. In fact, before the 2020 season, there were 19 teams that were returning 17 starters or more. For 2021, there are 69 such teams, more than half of the total FBS programs! Furthermore, there are 89 teams bringing back their starting quarterbacks, eight entire starting offensive units returning, along with nine full defenses. There will certainly be a lot of recognizable players on the field this fall. That said, there are 18 new head coaches along with 82 new coordinators, resulting in five teams with Stability Scores of 3 or less, just one fewer than last year. Let's dig into the teams on both ends of the stability scale a little deeper.

Highly Stable Teams with Scores of 19 or Higher

Last year there were seven teams with scores of 18 or higher, and in the prior season, there were only three. For 2021, there are 30 teams that meet that benchmark for stability. The maximum score is 19, and because of the added stability this season, for this piece I am choosing to focus only on those "perfect" scores. These programs figure to be in good shape for the coming season, at least early.

AKRON (MAC) – 19

Akron was only 1-5 last season for second-year head coach Tom Arth, but his program gained some valuable experience along the way. Most of his expected postseason departures decided to stick around for another season with the added year of eligibility. In fact, a healthy 86% of this team's production is back for 2021, including starting QB Zach Gibson. With most of the MAC teams coming back in good shape, however, it's hard to foresee any massive improvement here as a benefit of the perfect stability score.

ARIZONA STATE (PAC-12) – 19

Herm Edwards' 2020 Arizona State season could best be described as "incomplete." The Sun Devils lost to USC and UCLA and beat Oregon State and rival Arizona. Not exactly a whole lot to brag about. It was Edwards' third season in Tempe. Year 4 has a lot of promise with 20 starters back, including one of the best quarterbacks in the Pac-12, and the country for that matter, in Jayden Daniels, who has a sparkling 22-3 touchdown-interception ratio in his two years as starter to go along with nearly 600 yards rushing and 7 TDs. ASU also ran for 264-plus yards per game in the four games last season. It's not a surprise DraftKings set this team at 9.0 wins for 2021.

BALL STATE (MAC) – 19

When we last saw Ball State, the Cardinals were completing a memorable 7-1 2020 season that included a MAC title as well as an impressive Arizona Bowl win over San Jose State. Head coach Mike Neu's team won its final five games both outright and against the spread, and he has 20 starters back to build on that momentum. Quarterback Drew Plitt is the biggest name of that bunch. The 2021 schedule features a challenging nonconference slate with games at home versus Army and at Penn State and Wyoming. This team might have to be perfect in league play to beat its DraftKings win prop of 9. If stability matters, it could be.



Zach Gibson,
Akron



**Jake Haener,
Fresno State**

EAST CAROLINA (AMERICAN) – 19

East Carolina was just 3-6 last season but will carry the momentum of season-ending wins over Temple and SMU into the 2021 season. The Pirates will also have the benefit of bringing back 20 starters from that team, including QB Holton Ahlers, who will be starting his fourth season under center in Greenville. This will be head coach Mike Houston's third year atop the program, and he has a good chance of breaking the trend of a .333 winning percentage. (4-8 and 3-6). The DK win total is set at 4.5, but Houston surely has higher goals for his team.

FRESNO STATE (MOUNTAIN WEST) – 19

Jake Haener took over as starting quarterback for Fresno State last year and gained a great deal of experience without losing a season of eligibility. He ended up leading the Bulldogs to a 3-3 record, throwing for over 2,000 yards and 14 TDs in what is normally just half a season. He might be the most important of the 20 returning starters for head coach Kalen DeBoer, who gets a bit of a redo for his rookie year. End-of-year losses to Nevada and New Mexico spoiled what was otherwise an encouraging start for DeBoer's team. A DraftKings win prop of 6.0 awaits, as do tough nonconference road trips to UCLA and Oregon.

LIBERTY (INDEPENDENT) – 19

There probably aren't many teams in the country more excited about getting back to work in 2021 than Liberty, as the Flames are in very good shape for coach Huge Freeze's third season, coming off a 10-1 season that culminated with a 37-34 win over previously unbeaten Coastal Carolina in one of the year's best bowl games. Quarterback Malik Willis had a huge season, throwing for 2,250 yards, rushing for 944 and accounting for 34 touchdowns. He is back along with 19 other starters. This year's schedule is very manageable with the toughest game theoretically at Ole Miss. The DraftKings win prop of 9.0 could be a little modest.

MINNESOTA (BIG TEN) – 19

After a record-setting 11-win season in 2019, Minnesota's program was derailed by COVID-19 last year as the Golden Gophers suffered from opt-outs and an overall loss of momentum. They failed to even reach a bowl game after going 3-4, falling to Wisconsin in the waning seconds of the season finale. For 2021, coach P.J. Fleck, now in his fifth season, brings back 20 starters, including fourth-year starting QB Tanner Morgan. The DK win prop is set at 7.0, and the challenges come early with a season opener at home versus Ohio State. I don't see this team finishing .500 or below, but this 7.0 could be one of the sharpest numbers on the board.

NEVADA (MOUNTAIN WEST) – 19

The return of QB Carson Strong gives Nevada one of the best potential offenses in the Mountain West and a very good shot at beating the DraftKings season win prop of 7.5. The Wolf Pack won seven games last year in a season shortened to nine games, including a bowl victory over Tulane. Strong threw for 2,858 yards and 27 TDs. All 22 starters return for coach Jay Norvell, whose team has won at least seven games in each of the last three seasons.

RUTGERS (BIG TEN) – 19

Rutgers made an exciting coaching hire last year in bringing back Greg Schiano, who led the program to its best seasons in the early 2010s. I'm not sure even the most optimistic Scarlet Knights fans could have imagined the resurgence the

program experienced in his first year back. While 3-6 isn't an overwhelming level of success, the three wins matched the total of the previous two years combined, and the three conference wins tied for the most since Schiano last left in 2011. With 20 starters back and his staff in place for another season, Schiano has a chance for an even better run in 2021. With a favorable nonconference slate on tap, Rutgers has a chance to head to Michigan on Sept. 25 at 3-0.

SAN JOSE STATE (MOUNTAIN WEST) — 19

When QB Nick Starkel announced after San Jose State's bowl game last year that he was coming back for yet another season, it certainly laid the foundation for continued success for the Spartans in 2021. He is just one of 20 total starters back for coach Brent Brennan's team, which received a bowl bid for the first time since 2015. There is continued success expected, with DraftKings setting the season win total at 7.5. Recapturing the momentum it had at 7-0 before the blowout loss to Ball State could be tough, considering Game 2 is at USC, the start of a crucial three-game road trip.

TOLEDO (MAC) — 19

After an incredible run of success, Toledo has failed to reach a bowl game in each of the last two seasons, although, to be fair, in any other year, a .667 winning percentage (4-2) would have qualified. That said, sixth-year coach Jason Candle is counting on big things from his returning starters in 2021 as all 22 are back. The offense averaged 35 points per game, so it should be one of the better units in the MAC again. The win total is set at 8.0, so expect this team to be back competing at its customary pre-2019 season level.

UCLA (PAC-12) — 19

If Chip Kelly's ever going to have success at UCLA, this HAS to be the season. He has 20 starters back, including senior QB Dorian Thompson-Robinson, who seems to get more and more prolific in the Kelly offense each season. The pressure is mounting on Kelly as the Bruins have not made a bowl game in any of his three seasons. This could and should be the end of that streak, with the DK win total set at 7.0. The Bruins face a huge game in Week 2 when they host LSU. A win there and people might start thinking higher of their 2021 prospects.

Unstable Teams with Scores of 3 or Lower

Over the last two seasons, 11 teams have gone into the fall with Stability Scores of 3 or lower. The combined record of those teams wound up being 43-61 ATS, good for just 41.3%. This shows a solid foundational system to use in fading teams that have undergone a lot of changes from one season to the next. For 2021, there are five teams that meet the criteria of scoring 3 or lower.

TENNESSEE (SEC) — 2

A good way to describe the shape Jeremy Pruitt left the Tennessee program in would be "in flames." He was fired after an internal investigation revealed recruiting improprieties. Josh Heupel takes over after a good run at UCF, having scored 40-plus points per game in four straight seasons. He brings over a new staff with him as well. His QB competition figures to be down to end-of-2020 starter Harrison Bailey and Virginia Tech transfer Hendon Hooker. There is promise there, but it does usually take time for these massive overhauls to prosper. Only 11 starters are

back and the schedule is tough as always in the SEC, including trips to Florida and Alabama. This team probably should be on your early fade list for 2021 as the country's most unstable situation.

UTAH STATE (MOUNTAIN WEST) — 3

Blake Anderson comes to Logan after a solid run at Arkansas State, however, his last team was his worst. He figures to completely overhaul the systems that were in place under predecessor Gary Andersen, as he prefers a high-tempo aerial assault. Utah State actually gained more yardage on the ground last year than it did passing, a rarity in today's college football. That group also scored only 15.5 points per game, so a change was obviously in order. The natural assumption is that a team like this can only get better. However, in college football, this instability is tougher to overcome than it is at the pro level, so expect continued struggles for the Aggies.

TEXAS (BIG 12) — 3

Texas also heads into the 2021 season with a lot of question marks. The Tom Herman era ended in disappointment, and most experts figured he would have been around Austin for much longer and have had a bigger impact in recruiting. The program is turned over to Steve Sarkisian, the unofficial architect of the prolific offenses of Alabama of the last few years. The problem is the Longhorns didn't struggle to score, in fact, they averaged 42 points per game in senior QB Sam Ehlinger's final season. With Ehlinger gone, Sarkisian will have to fill the massive void left at the game's most important position. The new coach has prior experience at the FBS level but never really broke through to any elite success at either Washington or USC. I'd expect a lot of oddsmakers and other experts to get it wrong with this program, especially early. There could be some roadblocks in the first month or so before the Longhorns get into the thick of the Big 12 slate.

SOUTH CAROLINA (SEC) — 2

Another SEC East Division team makes our list of programs with Stability Scores of 3 or lower for 2021, perhaps leaving the door open for a team like Missouri or Kentucky to rise this fall. South Carolina is coming off a horrible 2-8 season, and first-time head coach Shane Beamer takes the reins. The Beamer name is well known in college football circles, so figure that most analysts will be more optimistic than not in looking at this program's fortunes for 2021. I have to disagree, however. Completely new staff, new quarterback, a low number of 13 starters returning ... it all adds up to what looks to be another tough year in Columbia. After all, usually these unstable teams struggle early. Unfortunately, that is the winnable part of the schedule. I can't see this team winning any of its final five games.

ARIZONA (PAC-12) — 3

New coach Jedd Fisch left what is thought of as one of the NFL's top franchises in New England to take over a college program that has fallen off the cliff. Arizona was 0-5 last season, getting outscored 39.8-17.4 per game. It was actually fortunate that the season was as short as it was, so the misery wasn't expended any longer than it had to be. Fisch brings a new staff with him, and although he probably would have been changed out anyhow, QB Grant Gunnell has also moved on. DraftKings oddsmakers don't see a whole lot of promise for this fall, setting the Wildcats' season win O/U at 2.5. In all honesty, that is probably generous considering how bad this team was in 2020 combined with what amounts to a very tough schedule.

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE *PREFVIEW*

BY
WES REYNOLDS



Desmond Ridder,
Cincinnati

THE FAVORITE

CINCINNATI

Cincinnati represented the Group of 5 in the New Year's Six last season, but the Bearcats ended their year in disappointment. They led No. 9 Georgia 21-10 going into the fourth quarter, but couldn't make the lead stand up as Georgia kicked a 53-yard field goal with three seconds left to win the Peach Bowl 24-21. That spoiled Cincinnati's unbeaten season, but the Bearcats earned their first outright conference championship since 2009, when they went 12-1 under Brian Kelly, won the Big East and made their previous appearance in a BCS/New Year's Six bowl game at the Sugar Bowl.

This year, Cincinnati returns QB Desmond Ridder, who posted career bests in completion percentage (66.2), passing yards per game (229.2), passing yards per attempt (8.2), rushing yards per game (59.2) and total touchdowns (31). He should be able to improve those numbers with four of his top five receivers returning. On defense, Cincinnati returns over two-thirds of its tackle, sack and forced-turnover production. New defensive coordinator Mike Tressel spent nearly

a decade and a half with Mark Dantonio at Michigan State and takes over a defense that was ranked No. 2 nationally by Football Outsiders. Cincinnati is the clear favorite to win another AAC title, but if the Bearcats want to return to the New Year's Six or even be a live dark horse for the College Football Playoff, they must prove themselves in major road tests Sept. 18 at Indiana and Oct. 2 at Notre Dame.

LIVE DOGS

UCF and HOUSTON

Gus Malzahn was not exactly seeking a new coaching gig with a \$20 million buyout coming after being fired at Auburn. But when Josh Heupel took off for Tennessee, new UCF athletic director Terry Mohajir called his old friend with whom he had worked at Arkansas State. Malzahn saw UCF's potential firsthand when the Knights defeated his Auburn team in the 2017 Peach Bowl to cap an undefeated season. UCF has gone 2-1 in New Year's Six games, so this program has proved it can compete with and even defeat Power 5 teams.

Malzahn inherits one of the nation's top passers in junior QB Dillon Gabriel, who led the nation with 357 passing yards per game last season, along with 34 total touchdowns and just four interceptions. Historically, Malzahn has run a read-option-heavy offense, and Gabriel is more of a pocket passer. Will he adjust his system to his personnel or force his personnel to adjust to his system? Furthermore, UCF will need to replace a lot of skill-position players and is relying

on 10 transfers, including seven from Power 5 programs. The defense needs to improve, especially against the pass. After consecutive undefeated regular seasons, UCF hasn't played for the AAC title in two years. The Knights go into the deep end immediately, facing Boise State, Louisville and the conference opener at Navy all in the first month. They also face Cincinnati and SMU on the road. UCF will have talent under Malzahn, but will it be able to hold up against such a difficult schedule?

Meanwhile, this is a big year for Dana Holgorsen in Houston. The school is not paying \$4 million a year for a 7-13 combined record the last two seasons. While the Cougars went just 3-5 last season, at least they found their QB in the post-D'Eriq King era. Senior Clayton Tune is in his second year as a full-time starter, and while he loses a couple of transfers in the receiving corps, he also gains three Power 5 transfers from Texas Tech, Minnesota and UCLA. The offense should be able to put points on the board. When the Cougars scored 30 or more last year, they went 3-0; when they were under 30, they went 0-5. The defense looks to be the strength of the team with 11 starters back — but from a unit that gave up 32 PPG. Houston also forced only six turnovers in eight games in 2020.

The Cougars get some breaks in the conference schedule this season, not having to face Cincinnati, and avoiding UCF and getting SMU and Memphis at home. The Cougars get to measure themselves against a Big 12 opponent in their hometown at NRG Stadium when they open against Texas Tech. Houston has been a disappointment for two years, but this group might be just a little under the radar.

DEAD MONEY

SOUTH FLORIDA

South Florida should be improved under second-year coach Jeff Scott, but it might not show in the win column. Scott comes from a winning culture, having spent 12 seasons under Dabo Swinney at Clemson and winning two national championships as the offensive coordinator. He has already upgraded USF's recruiting, moving from 109th to 65th this season in the 247 Sports recruiting rankings, but this is going to take time.

On offense, USF should be improved from averaging only 365 YPG and 23 PPG in Scott's first year. North Carolina transfer Cade Fortin seems to have the inside track at QB over Miami transfer Jarren Williams. Whoever wins the job will have nine returning starters with whom to work. The good news on defense is that the Bulls return nine starters ... the bad news is that the unit gave up 441 YPG and 40 PPG. USF will show incremental improvement and should be more competitive, but the early schedule is daunting, with nonconference trips to

NC State and BYU and a game in Tampa against Florida. The Bulls also close with road games against two bowl teams last season in Tulane and UCF.

BOISE STATE AT UCF SEPT. 2

Two non-Power 5 powerhouses meet in the opening week as the Gus Malzahn era in Orlando gets under way. The Knights return one of the nation's best QBs in sophomore Dillon Gabriel. Boise State starts a new era of its own as Andy Avalos returns to serve as head coach. Avalos had been at Boise from 2012-18 and was Oregon's defensive coordinator for the last two seasons. Last time Boise State opened its season in the Sunshine State, it won at Florida State. This is a massive game right away for Malzahn.

**BIG
GAMES
ON THE
BOARD**

CINCINNATI AT INDIANA SEPT. 18 & CINCINNATI AT NOTRE DAME OCT. 2

Many thought Cincinnati did not get a fair shot at the final spot in the CFP last season. The Bearcats beat three Top 25 teams in Army, SMU and Tulsa, but no one in the Power 5. This season they get big opportunities to prove they belong in the CFP discussion with two trips to the Hoosier State, one in Bloomington and one in South Bend.

SMU AT TCU SEPT. 25

The Battle for the Iron Skillet was postponed and rescheduled twice but ended up not taking place in 2020 due to COVID-19. SMU coach Sonny Dykes will try to incorporate another highly touted transfer QB from the Big 12 into his Air Raid offense. Oklahoma transfer Tanner Mordecai will try to revitalize his career as Shane Buechele did after transferring from Texas. But in this game he will face a TCU team that might be Gary Patterson's best in five years.

HOUSTON AT TULSA OCT. 1

Tulsa reached the AAC Championship Game last season and nearly knocked off undefeated Cincinnati, then was out of gas and lost to Mississippi State in the Armed Forces Bowl, its first bowl appearance since 2016. Houston is looking to rebound after two disappointing years under Dana Holgorsen. This game is a likely early eliminator in the Western Division.

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
CINCINNATI	55	2.4	-0.1	36.62 (75)	9.7	2.3	6.9	1.1
MEMPHIS	47.5	4.1	0	33.87 (90)	8.8	3.2	5.6	2.4
UCF	46.5	4.3	0.6	31.62 (106)	8.6	3.4	5.5	2.5
HOUSTON	43	3.8	-0.5	29.84 (119)	8.2	3.8	5.0	3.0
TULSA	43.5	3.6	-0.1	38.75 (63)	6.5	5.5	4.6	3.4
SMU	43	3.7	0	35.61 (80)	6.8	5.2	4.0	4.0
TULANE	43.5	3.3	-0.1	39.04 (62)	5.8	6.2	4.0	4.0
EAST CAROLINA	35.5	3.2	-0.9	36.52 (76)	4.6	7.4	2.8	5.2
NAVY	32	3.5	-0.1	40.04 (57)	3.0	9.0	2.0	6.0
SOUTH FLORIDA	32	3.1	0.2	37.97 (69)	3.2	8.8	2.0	6.0
TEMPLE	28	3.1	0.5	33.88 (89)	3.4	8.6	1.5	6.5

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
CINCINNATI	55
MEMPHIS	47.5
UCF	46.5
TULANE	43.5
TULSA	43.5
HOUSTON	43
SMU	43
EAST CAROLINA	35.5
SOUTH FLORIDA	32
NAVY	32
TEMPLE	28

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
UCF	-4.3
MEMPHIS	-4.1
HOUSTON	-3.8
SMU	-3.7
TULSA	-3.6
NAVY	-3.5
TULANE	-3.3
EAST CAROLINA	-3.2
SOUTH FLORIDA	-3.1
TEMPLE	-3.1
CINCINNATI	-2.4

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
UCF	0.6
TEMPLE	0.5
SOUTH FLORIDA	0.2
MEMPHIS	0
SMU	0
CINCINNATI	-0.1
NAVY	-0.1
TULANE	-0.1
TULSA	-0.1
HOUSTON	-0.5
EAST CAROLINA	-0.9

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
EAST CAROLINA	20
TULSA	19
SMU	17
TULANE	17
SOUTH FLORIDA	17
HOUSTON	15
MEMPHIS	15
UCF	15
CINCINNATI	14
TEMPLE	13
NAVY	13

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
EAST CAROLINA	10
TULANE	10
TULSA	9
SOUTH FLORIDA	9
SMU	8
UCF	8
MEMPHIS	7
TEMPLE	7
CINCINNATI	7
HOUSTON	6
NAVY	5

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
EAST CAROLINA	10
TULSA	10
SMU	9
HOUSTON	9
SOUTH FLORIDA	8
MEMPHIS	8
NAVY	8
TULANE	7
UCF	7
CINCINNATI	7
TEMPLE	6

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

CINCINNATI BEARCATS

HEAD COACH: LUKE FICKELL (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE DENBROCK • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE TRESSEL

LOCATION: CINCINNATI, OH • STADIUM: NIPPERT STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

10

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
PASS

The Bearcats are by and large power-rated as the best team in the Group of 5. They had Georgia down 21-10 early in the fourth quarter last season before losing on a field goal in the final seconds. Fifth-year senior QB Desmond Ridder returns to lead an offense that averaged 37.5 PPG and led the AAC at 6.7 YPP. Cincinnati's defense held opponents to 115 YPG under their season average, which was No. 2 in the nation. Foes averaged just 16.8 points and 325 yards per game. The Bearcats return seven starters on each side of the ball but lost defensive coordinator Marcus Freeman, who took the same position at Notre Dame.

Cincinnati will be easily favored in all six games at home, where the Bearcats have won 20 straight. For the program to take the next step, they must prove they can stand up to the Power 5 schools. Last year's Peach Bowl against Georgia went a long way toward proving they can, but they were unable to finish the job. Luke Fickell's program has clearly improved every year and won its first conference title during his tenure.

Nevertheless, games at Indiana and Notre Dame will be the barometer of whether Cincinnati can be the first Group of 5 squad to make the CFP.

The season win total of 10 looks to be right on the number. The Bearcats likely will get a split at best in their two big nonconference road tests, and they could get clipped once in conference play. Cincinnati is just 14-14-2 ATS under Fickell, so there is a major risk that it will play down to its competition at least once. - Wes Reynolds

55

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#15 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		50.5	23.9	2	-6.8	5-QB	35.8	6.36	13.42	7	11.9	4.36	23.3
2017	Yes	28.5	-2.1	0.35	9	5-OC	23.2	5.75	16.65	5-DC	25.2	5.4	15.71

NOTEWORTHY...

- CINCINNATI IS 11-4 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD ON NON-GRASS FIELD
- CINCINNATI IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) ON GRASS FIELD
- CINCINNATI IS 14-1 UNDER (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+8000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MIAMI OHIO (-22.5)

9/11 MURRAY ST (-39.5)

9/18 at Indiana (+0.5)

10/2 at Notre Dame (+6.5)

10/8 TEMPLE (-29)

10/16 UCF (-10.5)

10/23 at Navy (-19.5)

10/30 at Tulane (-8)

11/6 TULSA (-14)

11/12 at South Florida (-20)

11/20 SMU (-14.5)

11/27 at East Carolina (-16)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

36.62
(#75 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.4 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 9-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	AUSTIN PEAY	55-20	W	-39.5	L	53.5 O
9/26	ARMY	24-10	W	-12.5	W	44 U
10/3	SOUTH FLORIDA	28-7	W	-22	L	44.5 U
10/24	at SMU	42-13	W	1	W	57.5 U
10/31	MEMPHIS	49-10	W	-6.5	W	58 O
11/7	HOUSTON	38-10	W	-12.5	W	51.5 U
11/13	EAST CAROLINA	55-17	W	-27	W	56.5 O
11/21	at UCF	36-33	W	-4	L	65.5 O
12/19	TULSA	27-24	W	-13.5	L	44.5 O
1/1	vs. Georgia	21-24	L	7.5	W	53 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	35.6	18	16.4	7
Yards Per Point	12.5	16	19.8	6
Plays Per Game	69.6	88		
Time of Possession	32:33	16		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.3%	34	33.3%	18
Total Yards Per Game	442.8	27	325.1	13
Yards Per Play	6.4	22	4.4	4
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.8	65		
Rush Yards Per Game	205.3	26	111.6	14
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.4	13	3.2	8
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.9	79		
Completion %	66.9%	15	52.9%	8
Passing Yards Per Game	237.4	57	213.6	41
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	41	6.1	9
Turnovers	1.7	89	2.2	8

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

EAST CAROLINA PIRATES

HEAD COACH: MIKE HOUSTON (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DONNIE KIRKPATRICK • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BLAKE HARRELL
LOCATION: GREENVILLE, NC • STADIUM: BAGWELL FIELD AT DOWDY-FICKLEN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

O -130 / U +110

PLAY
OVER

Coach Mike Houston came to East Carolina with championship pedigree, having won the FCS title at James Madison in 2016. Houston is 7-14 over two seasons at ECU, but 10 starters return on each side of the ball. Last year, East Carolina had the most starts by underclassmen in the FBS and it now returns the most production of any team in the conference. Junior QB Holton Ahlers is in his fourth year in the program, making 17 starts and leading an offense that averaged a tad over 30 PPG and 400 YPG. Leading receiver Blake Proehl left early for the NFL, but everyone else is back.

Defensively, ECU allowed 447 YPG, 35 PPG and particularly struggled against the run; with 14 of its top 15 tacklers returning, the production should increase. East Carolina opens the season with Appalachian State on neutral territory in Charlotte. South Carolina comes to Greenville the next week before ECU travels to Marshall. It's not an easy start, but the Pirates need to win at least one of the three. The road schedule in league

play is tough, with trips to UCF, Houston and Memphis. While the Pirates had their sixth straight losing season, they did finish strong with wins at Temple and against SMU, so they showed character by still bringing an effort after a 1-6 start. This looks like the year when East Carolina makes the jump back to respectability. - Wes Reynolds



35.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#97 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		24.5	-5.5	-0.2	9.8	5	24.7	5.46	18.33	7-DC	30.2	5.66	13.42
2017		24	-7.5	-0.62	16.4	6-QB	29.3	6.24	16.68	6	36.8	6.86	13.09

NOTEWORTHY...

- EAST CAROLINA IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. MEMPHIS
- EAST CAROLINA IS 4-11 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE
- EAST CAROLINA IS 10-0 OVER (L10G) AFTER PLAYING TULANE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 vs. Appalachian St (+15.5)

9/11 SOUTH CAROLINA (+2.5)

9/18 at Marshall (+9)

9/25 CHARLESTON SOUT (-26)

10/2 TULANE (+4.5)

10/9 at UCF (+16)

10/23 at Houston (+12)

10/28 SOUTH FLORIDA (-6.5)

11/6 TEMPLE (-10)

11/13 at Memphis (+17)

11/20 at Navy (+1)

11/27 CINCINNATI (+16)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

36.52
(#76 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.2 / -0.9
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 30.2 48 35.4 101

Yards Per Point 13.3 40 12.6 99

Plays Per Game 75.2 36

Time of Possession 31:04 40

3rd Down Conv. % 33.3% 107 37.2% 36

Total Yards Per Game 403.3 57 447.3 99

Yards Per Play 5.4 73 6.1 96

Rush Attempts Per Game 40.2 42

Rush Yards Per Game 173.8 56 201.3 95

Yards Per Rush Attempt 4.3 66 5.2 103

Pass Attempts Per Game 32.6 57

Completion % 60.1% 71 65.3% 104

Passing Yards Per Game 229.6 64 246 83

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.1 74 7.5 66

Turnovers 2.3 121 2 24

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	UCF	28-51	L	28	W	78 0
10/3	at Georgia St	29-49	L	-1.5	L	70.5 0
10/10	at South Florida	44-24	W	5.5	W	58.5 0
10/17	NAVY	23-27	L	3.5	L	55.5 U
10/30	at Tulsa	30-34	L	17	W	59 0
11/7	TULANE	21-38	L	3.5	L	64 U
11/13	at Cincinnati	17-55	L	27	L	56.5 0
11/21	at Temple	28-3	W	-7	W	53 U
11/28	SMU	52-38	W	13.5	W	72 0

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

HOUSTON COUGARS

HEAD COACH: DANA HOLGORSSEN (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHANNON DAWSON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DOUG BELK
LOCATION: HOUSTON, TX • STADIUM: JOHN O'QUINN FIELD AT TDECU STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

O +100 / U -120

PLAY
OVER

Fans are getting restless in Houston, nearly six years removed from the 13-1 season when former coach Tom Herman led the Cougars to a New Year's Six win over Florida State in the Peach Bowl. Dana Holgorsen has gone 7-13 in his first two years, but this looks like the season for Houston to jump toward being a winner again. The Cougars return 80% of their production from 2020, with nine starters back on each side of the ball.

Junior QB Clayton Tune was thrown into the fire in 2019 after D'Eriq King decided to redshirt after four games before transferring to Miami. Last season was disjointed, as the Cougars had three games postponed before playing six straight weeks, then had another four-week break before losing the regular-season finale at Memphis. Then a depleted Houston team lost to Hawaii in the New Mexico Bowl. This year Houston will have some stability, which has been in short supply during Holgorsen's first two seasons.

The Cougars had one of the more talented rosters in the AAC and then added several high-impact transfers on offense. Three receivers are coming in: KeSean Carter from Texas Tech, Seth Green from Minnesota and Jaylen Erwin from UCLA. Ta'Zhawn Henry, a Texas Tech transfer, should give Houston's running game a boost. While the opener against Texas Tech is a toss-up, the Cougars should win their next three games (at Rice and vs. Grambling and Navy). Houston avoids playing Cincinnati and UCF this season and draws Memphis and SMU at home. All four conference road games -- at Tulsa, Tulane, USF and Temple -- are very winnable. - *Wes Reynolds*

43

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#68 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		42.5	15.2	1.4	-2.8	5-QB, OC	45.2	6.96	12.03	5	30.1	5.56	15.79
2017	Yes	44	14.7	1.8	-2.4	8-QB, OC	28.4	6.72	16.87	7-DC	13.7	4.92	27.96

NOTEWORTHY...

- HOUSTON IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5
- HOUSTON IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING TULANE
- HOUSTON IS 19-7 UNDER (L10Y) ON GRASS FIELD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Texas Tech (+1.5)

9/11 at Rice (-9.5)

9/18 GRAMBLING (-44.5)

9/25 NAVY (-15)

10/1 at Tulsa (+4.5)

10/7 at Tulane (+4.5)

10/23 EAST CAROLINA (-12)

10/30 SMU (-4)

11/6 at South Florida (-7.5)

11/13 at Temple (-11.5)

11/19 MEMPHIS (+0.5)

11/27 at Connecticut (-21.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

29.84
(#119 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / -0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	30	51	32	78
Yards Per Point	13.6	52	12.5	105
Plays Per Game	76	26		
Time of Possession	31:17	37		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.0%	63	37.9%	42
Total Yards Per Game	408.9	51	398.5	54
Yards Per Play	5.4	72	5.5	64
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.6	82		
Rush Yards Per Game	143.1	82	167.5	64
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	84	4.3	60
Pass Attempts Per Game	37.1	21		
Completion %	58.9%	79	58.8%	41
Passing Yards Per Game	265.8	33	231	65
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.2	68	7.8	86
Turnovers	2	109	0.8	117

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/8	TULANE	49-31	W	-6.5	W	58.5 O
10/16	BYU	26-43	L	3	L	62 O
10/24	at Navy	37-21	W	-14.5	W	57 O
10/31	UCF	21-44	L	3	L	81.5 U
11/7	at Cincinnati	10-38	L	12.5	L	51.5 U
11/14	SOUTH FLORIDA	56-21	W	-14.5	W	58.5 O
12/12	at Memphis	27-30	L	-6.5	L	65.5 U
12/24	vs. Hawaii	14-28	L	-7	L	61 U

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

MEMPHIS TIGERS

HEAD COACH: RYAN SILVERFIELD (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN JOHNS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE MACINTYRE

LOCATION: MEMPHIS, TN • STADIUM: LIBERTY BOWL MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Brady White leaves Memphis as its all-time leading passer, and the Tigers did score 31 PPG and average 453 YPG last season, but something was missing -- RB Kenneth Gainwell, who opted out after losing multiple relatives to COVID-19 complications. The RB-by-committee approach could not replace Gainwell's production, but the entire committee is back this season, so the Tigers should be able to run the ball better.

Replacing White at QB is another challenge for second-year coach Ryan Silverfield. Arizona transfer Grant Gunnell seems to have the inside track, but is competing with LSU transfer Peter Parrish and freshman Keilon Brown for the job. Whoever starts has the responsibility of getting the ball to small but speedy junior Calvin Austin, who's just 5-foot-9 and 162 pounds but caught 63 passes for 1,053 yards and 11 TDs. The defense had some growing pains last year as new coordinator Mike MacIntyre switched the scheme from a 4-3 to a 3-4, but he has eight starters back to match the eight starters back on offense.

Last year was solid at 8-3, but naturally a comedown from a New Year's Six bid and three straight AAC title game appearances. The Tigers avoid Cincinnati on the schedule. Navy, SMU and Tulane are good home games, but having to travel to UCF, Houston, Tulsa and Temple should be just enough to keep them from getting back to the AAC title game. Mississippi State should provide a good early test on Sept. 18. - Wes Reynolds

47.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#42 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47	17.2	2.34	-5.2	7-OC	42.2	7.68	13.24	8	25	5.34	16.08
2017		50.5	21.7	2.57	-7.4	9	43.8	8.04	13.5	6	22.1	5.47	20.07

NOTEWORTHY...

- MEMPHIS IS 27-7 ATS (L34G) ON ROAD IN NOVEMBER
- MEMPHIS IS 13-34-1 ATS (S2000) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD
- MEMPHIS IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 NICHOLLS ST (-29.5)

9/11 at Arkansas St (-8)

9/18 MISSISSIPPI ST (-2.5)

9/25 TX-SAN ANTONIO (-15.5)

10/2 at Temple (-16.5)

10/9 at Tulsa (-0.5)

10/14 NAVY (-19.5)

10/22 at UCF (+3.5)

11/6 SMU (-8.5)

11/13 EAST CAROLINA (-17)

11/19 at Houston (-0.5)

11/27 TULANE (-8)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

33.87
(#90 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

4.1 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	28.5	60	29.3	63
Yards Per Point	15.5	100	15.5	35
Plays Per Game	75.7	31		
Time of Possession	29:01	80		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.3%	27	36.8%	32
Total Yards Per Game	441.8	28	455.3	105
Yards Per Play	5.8	43	5.7	77
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.8	99		
Rush Yards Per Game	130	95	154.1	47
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	94	4	41
Pass Attempts Per Game	39	14		
Completion %	60.8%	65	64.6%	98
Passing Yards Per Game	311.8	15	301.2	121
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	39	7.8	87
Turnovers	1.8	96	1.8	36

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	ARKANSAS ST	37-24	W	-18.5	L	71 U
10/3	at SMU	27-30	L	1.5	L	75 U
10/17	UCF	50-49	W	2.5	W	77.5 O
10/24	TEMPLE	41-29	W	-14	L	70.5 U
10/31	at Cincinnati	10-49	L	6.5	L	58 O
11/7	SOUTH FLORIDA	34-33	W	-17	L	67.5 U
11/21	STEPH F AUSTIN	56-14	W	-31	W	61.5 O
11/28	at Navy	10-7	W	-11.5	L	63.5 U
12/5	at Tulane	21-35	L	3.5	L	65 U
12/12	HOUSTON	30-27	W	6.5	W	65.5 U
12/23	vs. Fla Atlantic	25-10	W	-8.5	W	52.5 U

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

NAVY MIDSHIPMEN

HEAD COACH: KEN NIUMATALOLO (15TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: IVIN JASPER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN NEWBERRY
LOCATION: ANNAPOLIS, MD • STADIUM: NAVY-MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3.5

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
UNDER

Navy's opening 55-3 loss to BYU last season was a sign of things to come. The 3-7 record was just the third losing season in Annapolis in 18 years. Navy used three starting QBs in its first three games. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the Midshipmen did not hit in practice, and it showed. Navy wins games by being physical at the point of attack, and its lack of physicality and precision was evident. Add to that the lack of experience, with 25 first-time starters, and you get these results. With its triple option, Navy usually is among the national leaders in rushing. But the Midshipmen averaged only 178 rushing yards per game -- just 42nd in the country -- the offense averaged just 16.6 PPG and the team was 124th in the nation in total offense.

A 5-foot-9, 165-pound sophomore, Xavier Arline, will get the first crack at the starting QB job but will receive competition from sophomore Tai Lavatai and junior Maasai Maynor. The Midshipmen return nine starters on defense but are undersized up front and were dead last in the AAC in red zone defense. Navy should be improved because Ken Niumatalolo has

always found a way to rebound from down seasons in his 14 years in Annapolis.

The win total is set at 3.5, but the schedule is daunting. Navy opens at home against Marshall and Air Force before conference play. Road games include trips to Houston, Memphis, Tulsa and Temple. UCF, SMU, Cincinnati and East Carolina come to visit. The Midshipmen also have their usual rivalry tilts at Notre Dame and against Army. It is difficult to find four wins on that list. - Wes Reynolds

32

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#106 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
5

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		35	2.1	-0.09	5.7	4-QB	29.5	5.96	13.59	5	27.3	6.05	14.59
2017		44	14.4	1.17	-3.5	4-QB	32.4	6.93	15.55	8	18	5.76	19.66

NOTEWORTHY...

- NAVY IS 12-2-1 ATS (L15G) WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE
- NAVY IS 1-4 ATS (L2Y) -AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- NAVY IS 15-0 UNDER (L15G) HTH VS. ARMY

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+40000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MARSHALL (+5)

9/11 AIR FORCE (+3)

9/25 at Houston (+15)

10/2 UCF (+11.5)

10/9 SMU (+7.5)

10/14 at Memphis (+19.5)

10/23 CINCINNATI (+19.5)

10/29 at Tulsa (+15)

11/6 at Notre Dame (+29.5)

11/20 EAST CAROLINA (-1)

11/27 at Temple (-1)

12/11 vs. Army (+8.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.04
(#57 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.5 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	16.6	121	30.3	70
Yards Per Point	16.6	112	12.7	94
Plays Per Game	62.8	121		
Time of Possession	30:25	55		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.8%	104	38.1%	44
Total Yards Per Game	275.1	124	385.5	47
Yards Per Play	4.4	120	5.9	91
Rush Attempts Per Game	48.2	5		
Rush Yards Per Game	177.7	52	204.7	97
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	96	4.9	97
Pass Attempts Per Game	12.4	125		
Completion %	46.0%	124	60.9%	59
Passing Yards Per Game	97.4	125	180.8	9
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	46	7.9	93
Turnovers	1.1	29	0.9	111

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/7	BYU	3-55	L	1	L	48.5 O
9/19	at Tulane	27-24	W	5.5	W	45 O
10/3	at Air Force	7-40	L	-6.5	L	46.5 O
10/10	TEMPLE	31-29	W	3.5	W	51 O
10/17	at East Carolina	27-23	W	-3.5	W	55.5 U
10/24	HOUSTON	21-37	L	14.5	L	57 O
10/31	at SMU	37-51	L	13	L	58.5 O
11/28	MEMPHIS	7-10	L	11.5	W	63.5 U
12/5	TULSA	6-19	L	12	L	45.5 U
12/12	at Army	0-15	L	7.5	L	36 U

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

SMU MUSTANGS

HEAD COACH: SONNY DYKES (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GARRETT RILEY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JIM LEAVITT

LOCATION: UNIVERSITY PARK, TX • STADIUM: GERALD J. FORD STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

Sonny Dykes' Air Raid offense should be as potent as ever despite the graduation of QB Shane Buechele. Dykes and second-year coordinator Garrett Riley called the plays for an offense that averaged over 500 YPG and 39 PPG. Sophomore Tanner Mordecai, a highly touted Oklahoma transfer, and big-time true freshman recruit Preston Stone will battle for the QB job. The Mustangs return six of their top eight receivers and add TE Grant Calcaterra, an Oklahoma transfer who caught 41 passes and scored nine TDs during three seasons in Norman. Ulysses Bentley ran for just under 1,000 yards as a freshman, and North Texas transfer Tre Siggers comes into the fold to create a 1-2 punch. All five starters also return up front. Jim Leavitt, the head coach at USF from 1997-2009, takes over as defensive coordinator of a unit that returns nine starters but needs more consistency.

SMU has been right on the verge of being very good. The offense has posted stellar numbers, and the program has become stable with 17 wins over the last two seasons. However, the Mustangs have never been able to come up with that big victory to cement themselves as true contenders in the AAC. SMU has four road games in which it will likely be an underdog -- TCU, Houston, Memphis and Cincinnati -- but has five likely wins at home and a couple of toss-ups against UCF and at Louisiana Tech. The Mustangs won seven games last year and rose to No. 16 after a 5-0 start. If they can just beat the teams they should, SMU should clear its season win total. - Wes Reynolds

43

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#68 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	35.5	4.2	0.71	7.7	6-QB, OC	31.9	5.83	13.23	8-DC	27.7	5.12	14.35
2017		35.5	13.3	1.06	3	9	39.7	7.22	13.6	5	26.3	6.15	17.02

NOTEWORTHY...

- SMU IS 13-4 ATS (L5Y) IN SEPTEMBER
- SMU IS 3-17 ATS (L20G) BEFORE PLAYING TULSA
- SMU IS 17-4-1 OVER (L22G) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 ABILENE CHRISTIAN (-32.5)

9/11 NORTH TEXAS (-16)

9/18 at Louisiana Tech (-9)

9/25 at TCU (+12.5)

10/2 SOUTH FLORIDA (-14.5)

10/9 at Navy (-7.5)

10/21 TULANE (-3.5)

10/30 at Houston (+4)

11/6 at Memphis (+8.5)

11/13 UCF (+0.5)

11/20 at Cincinnati (+14.5)

11/27 TULSA (-3.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

35.61
(#80 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.7 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS **RECORD: 7-3**

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	at Texas St Univ	31-24	W	-24.5	L	70 U
9/19	at North Texas	65-35	W	-15	W	71.5 O
9/26	STEPH F AUSTIN	50-7	W	-36.5	W	63.5 U
10/3	MEMPHIS	30-27	W	-1.5	W	75 U
10/16	at Tulane	37-34	W	-6.5	L	65.5 O
10/24	CINCINNATI	13-42	L	-1	L	57.5 U
10/31	NAVY	51-37	W	-13	W	58.5 O
11/7	at Temple	47-23	W	-17	W	63 O
11/14	at Tulsa	24-28	L	-2.5	L	64.5 U
11/28	at East Carolina	38-52	L	-13.5	L	72 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	37.3	15	33.6	89
Yards Per Point	13.4	45	13.3	84
Plays Per Game	78.6	14		
Time of Possession	30:02	62		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.8%	30	44.5%	97
Total Yards Per Game	501.4	10	445.1	95
Yards Per Play	6.4	21	5.7	79
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.7	67		
Rush Yards Per Game	167.2	61	194.7	92
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	62	4.5	74
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.8	16		
Completion %	65.9%	21	58.0%	33
Passing Yards Per Game	334.2	9	250.4	88
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.6	17	7.7	80
Turnovers	1.3	53	1.8	39

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

SOUTH FLORIDA BULLS

HEAD COACH: JEFF SCOTT (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHARLIE WEIS JR. • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GLENN SPENCER
LOCATION: TAMPA, FL • STADIUM: RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3.5

0 + 105 / U - 125

PLAY
UNDER

Jeff Scott won two national championships as Clemson's co-offensive coordinator. He is widely respected as a recruiter and has already upgraded the talent in this second season at USF. Scott stepped into a tough situation last year, leading a group that had just one spring practice. Even against a manageable schedule, it would have been a herculean task to be competitive. But USF did not have a manageable schedule, with early trips to Notre Dame and Cincinnati. The Bulls were down to only 60 players at the end of a 1-8 season.

Nine starters are back on offense and on defense, and the QB position will be upgraded with North Carolina transfer Cade Fortin and Miami transfer Jarren Williams. USF has more young talent than a year ago, and Scott will get it turned around. However, the schedule is a challenge. The Bulls will beat Florida A&M, but that game is sandwiched among a road opener at NC State, a home game against Florida and back-to-back trips to BYU and SMU. They also have road games at East Carolina, Tulane and the War on I-4 with UCF. The Bulls also have to play Cincinnati. USF looks like it is a year from being competitive. - Wes Reynolds

32

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#106 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		33	4.2	1.01	6.4	6	29.5	6.42	16.01	5	25.3	5.41	16.48
2017	Yes	49	18.5	1.66	-10.8	7-OC	37.3	6.25	14.01	9-DC	18.8	4.6	17.79

NOTEWORTHY...

- SOUTH FLORIDA IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD WHEN TRAVELING 1,000 OR MORE MILES
- SOUTH FLORIDA IS 4-11 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- SOUTH FLORIDA IS 11-1 UNDER (L12G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 at NC State (+19.5)

9/11 FLORIDA (+23)

9/18 FLORIDA AM (-31.5)

9/25 at BYU (+16)

10/2 at SMU (+14.5)

10/16 TULSA (+8.5)

10/23 TEMPLE (-6.5)

10/28 at East Carolina (+6.5)

11/6 HOUSTON (+7.5)

11/12 CINCINNATI (+20)

11/20 at Tulane (+14.5)

11/26 at UCF (+18.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

37.97
(#69 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.1 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 1-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	THE CITADEL	27-6	W	-16.5	W	51.5 U
9/19	at Notre Dame	0-52	L	23.5	L	49.5 O
10/3	at Cincinnati	7-28	L	22	W	44.5 U
10/10	EAST CAROLINA	24-44	L	-5.5	L	58.5 O
10/17	at Temple	37-39	L	14	W	52.5 O
10/23	TULSA	13-42	L	12.5	L	52 O
11/7	at Memphis	33-34	L	17	W	67.5 U
11/14	at Houston	21-56	L	14.5	L	58.5 O
11/27	UCF	46-58	L	25	W	71.5 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	22.6	103	44.1	125
Yards Per Point	15.9	103	10.4	125
Plays Per Game	76.6	23		
Time of Possession	28:33	97		
3rd Down Conv. %	29.5%	119	51.2%	121
Total Yards Per Game	360.5	94	461	109
Yards Per Play	4.7	106	6.3	100
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.2	71		
Rush Yards Per Game	129.6	96	213.9	106
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	100	5.2	102
Pass Attempts Per Game	36	30		
Completion %	58.7%	80	63.5%	88
Passing Yards Per Game	230.9	61	247.1	84
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	96	7.8	91
Turnovers	2.1	114	1.2	79

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

TEMPLE OWLS

HEAD COACH: ROD CAREY (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE UREMOVICH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF KNOWLES

LOCATION: PHILADELPHIA, PA • STADIUM: LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3

O +100 / U -120

PLAY
PASS

It was a rough go for Temple in 2020. Rod Carey's Owls were not even allowed to scrimmage until October due to COVID-19 protocols and did not play their opener until Oct. 10. Only 45 scholarship players were available, and Temple went 1-6. The Owls were down to their fifth-string QB in the season finale against East Carolina. Nine offensive linemen took 70 or more snaps, and the offense averaged a paltry 20 PPG and 348 YPG. The top two QBs have transferred, Anthony Russo to Michigan State and Trad Beatty to Georgia Tech. Transfer D'Wan Mathis was highly recruited and started for Georgia at Arkansas last year, but he looked overwhelmed. Perhaps the drop in class will benefit him. The Owls might go with a two-QB system as Re-al Mitchell is a dynamic athlete and runner.

The lack of offense put the defense in jail a lot, and the unit struggled to get off the field, allowing 37 PPG and 433 YPG. The defense gave up 9.2 yards per pass, and every team except option-heavy Navy threw two at least TD passes against Temple. The season win total is three, and Temple should have one guaranteed win over Wagner. Rutgers and Boston College probably have too much for them, so the game at Akron will likely determine whether the Owls have a shot at this total. Navy and USF will join them at the bottom of the AAC, so those are win opportunities, and three wins looks about right. - Wes Reynolds



28

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#119 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46.5	17.9	2.02	-4	6-QB	37.2	6.25	12.07	6-DC	19.3	4.22	17.38
2017	Yes	40.5	5.9	0.9	2.6	6-QB, OC	26.9	6.02	15.79	4-DC	20.9	5.12	17.25

NOTEWORTHY...

- TEMPLE IS 30-13 ATS (L10Y) ON ROAD VS. UNRANKED TEAM
- TEMPLE IS 2-5 ATS (L2Y) IN ALL GAMES
- TEMPLE IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS



**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 at Rutgers (+11.5)

9/11 at Akron (-4)

9/18 BOSTON COLLEGE (+16.5)

9/25 WAGNER (-28.5)

10/2 MEMPHIS (+16.5)

10/8 at Cincinnati (+29)

10/23 at South Florida (+6.5)

10/30 UCF (+16)

11/6 at East Carolina (+10)

11/13 HOUSTON (+11.5)

11/20 at Tulsa (+18.5)

11/27 NAVY (+1)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

33.88
(#89 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.1 / 0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 19.9 113 37.1 109

Yards Per Point 17.5 118 11.7 116

Plays Per Game 76.6 24

Time of Possession 31:43 26

3rd Down Conv. % 38.3% 77 43.5% 92

Total Yards Per Game 348.3 101 433 86

Yards Per Play 4.5 113 6.2 99

Rush Attempts Per Game 40.6 39

Rush Yards Per Game 140.3 85 208.6 101

Yards Per Rush Attempt 3.5 101 4.8 92

Pass Attempts Per Game 34.3 42

Completion % 60.8% 64 56.5% 23

Passing Yards Per Game 208 82 224.4 53

Yards Per Pass Attempt 6.1 107 9.2 121

Turnovers 2 107 1.7 41

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 1-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/10	at Navy	29-31	L	-3.5	L	51 O
10/17	SOUTH FLORIDA	39-37	W	-14	L	52.5 O
10/24	at Memphis	29-41	L	14	W	70.5 U
10/31	at Tulane	3-38	L	7	L	55.5 U
11/7	SMU	23-47	L	17	L	63 O
11/14	at UCF	13-38	L	28.5	W	71.5 U
11/21	EAST CAROLINA	3-28	L	7	L	53 U

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

TULANE GREEN WAVE

HEAD COACH: WILLIE FRITZ (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHIP LONG • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHRIS HAMPTON
LOCATION: NEW ORLEANS, LA • STADIUM: BENSON FIELD AT YULMAN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 +100 / U -120

PLAY
UNDER

The Green Wave were one of only 19 FBS programs to play 11 games or more last season. They started slowly at 2-4, including a blown 24-0 halftime lead against Navy, but went 4-1 down the stretch before losing to Nevada in the Idaho Potato Bowl. Under Willie Fritz, Tulane likes to run the ball and led the AAC in rushing last season. But former Notre Dame offensive coordinator Chip Long was brought in to diversify the unit.

QB Michael Pratt returns after making nine starts last season. His entire receiving corps is back, so Tulane should be able to spread the ball more frequently if the line can hold up. The group struggled to protect the passer, allowing 35 sacks in 2020. Tulane is also replacing its defensive coordinator. Jack Curtis was fired and Chris Hampton, who was on the staff as the DB coach from 2016-19, was brought back. The defense gave up 8.5 YPP last year, which was way up from 6.8 in 2019. The Green Wave have made three consecutive trips to bowl games and Fritz has

gotten them to respectability, but they have yet to take the next step up the AAC pecking order. They open with Oklahoma coming to 30,000-seat Yulman Stadium. After Morgan State visits, Tulane goes to Ole Miss before UAB comes to New Orleans. With two new coordinators, this season might be a small step back for Tulane. - Wes Reynolds

43.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#63 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		38.5	8.4	1.27	5.1	9-QB	28.7	6.41	15.25	5	20.2	5.14	18.94
2017		35	8.2	0.31	7.8	8	28.4	6.4	15.33	8	20.2	6.1	19.66

NOTEWORTHY...

- TULANE IS 10-1 ATS (L3Y) AT HOME
- TULANE IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5
- TULANE IS 11-4 UNDER (L5Y) IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 OKLAHOMA (+20)

9/11 MORGAN ST (-46)

9/18 at Ole Miss (+11)

9/25 UAB (-2.5)

10/2 at East Carolina (-4.5)

10/7 HOUSTON (-4.5)

10/21 at SMU (+3.5)

10/30 CINCINNATI (+8)

11/6 at UCF (+7.5)

11/13 TULSA (-3.5)

11/20 SOUTH FLORIDA (-14.5)

11/27 at Memphis (+8)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

39.04
(#62 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.3 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE
STAT RANK** **DEFENSE
STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	34.7	21	28.1	56
Yards Per Point	11.4	6	15	39
Plays Per Game	71.8	66		
Time of Possession	28:38	95		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.0%	102	40.0%	57
Total Yards Per Game	394.2	60	422.6	78
Yards Per Play	5.5	64	5.4	60
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.8	26		
Rush Yards Per Game	217.6	16	143.9	42
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	23	3.4	19
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.1	107		
Completion %	52.7%	116	60.5%	52
Passing Yards Per Game	176.7	109	278.7	115
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	85	8.5	111
Turnovers	1.2	38	1.6	53

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 6-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at S Alabama	27-24	W	-11.5	L	51.5 U
9/19	NAVY	24-27	L	-5.5	L	45 O
9/26	at Southern Miss	66-24	W	-3.5	W	54.5 O
10/8	at Houston	31-49	L	6.5	L	58.5 O
10/16	SMU	34-37	L	6.5	W	65.5 O
10/24	at UCF	34-51	L	21.5	W	71 O
10/31	TEMPLE	38-3	W	-7	W	55.5 U
11/7	at East Carolina	38-21	W	-3.5	W	64 U
11/14	ARMY	38-12	W	-3.5	W	45.5 O
11/19	at Tulsa	24-30	L	4.5	L	56.5 U
12/5	MEMPHIS	35-21	W	-3.5	W	65 U
12/22	vs. Nevada	27-38	L	1	L	56.5 O

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

TULSA GOLDEN HURRICANE

HEAD COACH: PHILIP MONTGOMERY (7TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHILIP MONTGOMERY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOSEPH GILLESPIE
LOCATION: TULSA, OK • STADIUM: SKELLY FIELD AT H. A. CHAPMAN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
UNDER

Defense did not exclusively carry the Golden Hurricane to the AAC Championship Game last season, but it did shoulder much of the weight. This unit limited teams to 4.7 yards per play and 21.6 PPG. Eight starters are back on D, though Tulsa will have to replace linebacker Zaven Collins, who won several national awards and was drafted in the first round by the Arizona Cardinals.

On offense, all five starters on the line are back. The running game should get a boost with the return of senior Shamari Brooks, as the two-year starter missed last season with a torn ACL. The offense will be led by a new QB. Zach Smith has graduated, and junior Davis Brin or senior Seth Boomer will lead a unit that returns its entire receiving corps. But Tulsa must cut down on turnovers, amassing 18 in nine games last season. Tulsa finally caught some breaks in close games last year but still has 12 one-possession losses in the last three seasons.

After a home opener against UC Davis, the Golden Hurricane travel to Oklahoma State and Ohio State in consecutive weeks. Three straight home games follow, but three of Tulsa's last four are on the road at Cincinnati, Tulane and SMU. The last time Tulsa had a breakthrough season was going 10-3 in 2016, followed by 2-10 the next year. A similar thing happened in 2012, with an 11-3 season followed by 3-9. The drop might not be as precipitous this time, but Tulsa's schedule is much tougher in 2021. - Wes Reynolds



43.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#63 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		33	1.8	0.13	10.4	8-QB	24.9	5.41	16.23	7	23.1	5.28	16.52
2017		30	2.4	-0.26	10.3	7-QB	29.6	6.37	15.84	6	27.2	6.63	17.59

NOTEWORTHY...

- TULSA IS 10-1 ATS (L3Y) ON ROAD
- TULSA IS 3-11-1 ATS (L15G) AT HOME IN SEPTEMBER
- TULSA IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) IN SEPTEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 CAL DAVIS (-16.5)

9/11 at Oklahoma St (+15.5)

9/18 at Ohio St (+24)

9/25 ARKANSAS ST (-13.5)

10/1 HOUSTON (-4.5)

10/9 MEMPHIS (+0.5)

10/16 at South Florida (-8.5)

10/29 NAVY (-15)

11/6 at Cincinnati (+14)

11/13 at Tulane (+3.5)

11/20 TEMPLE (-18.5)

11/27 at SMU (+3.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

38.75
(#63 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	27.1	70	21.6	24
Yards Per Point	15.3	96	15.4	37
Plays Per Game	75.8	30		
Time of Possession	28:42	92		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.0%	56	32.9%	15
Total Yards Per Game	414.2	45	332.2	18
Yards Per Play	5.5	65	4.5	5
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.4	47		
Rush Yards Per Game	161.3	68	143.2	41
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.1	76	3.6	25
Pass Attempts Per Game	34	44		
Completion %	56.5%	98	60.7%	56
Passing Yards Per Game	252.9	40	189	15
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	61	6.1	8
Turnovers	2	110	1.8	38

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	at Oklahoma St	7-16	L	23.5	W	66 U
10/3	at UCF	34-26	W	19.5	W	69.5 U
10/23	at South Florida	42-13	W	-12.5	W	52 O
10/30	EAST CAROLINA	34-30	W	-17	L	59 O
11/14	SMU	28-24	W	2.5	W	64.5 U
11/19	TULANE	30-24	W	-4.5	W	56.5 U
12/5	at Navy	19-6	W	-12	W	45.5 U
12/19	at Cincinnati	24-27	L	13.5	W	44.5 O
12/31	vs. Mississippi St	26-28	L	-1	L	44.5 O

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

UCF GOLDEN KNIGHTS

HEAD COACH: GUS MALZAHN (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM HARRIS JR. / G.J. KINNE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID GIBBS / TRAVIS WILLIAMS
LOCATION: ORLANDO, FL • STADIUM: BOUNCE HOUSE

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9.5

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

Gus Malzahn takes over an offense that finished second in the nation in YPG (568) and eighth in PPG (42). That offense should be as strong as ever with eight starters back, including one of the nation's best quarterbacks in sophomore Dillon Gabriel. It will be interesting to see how much Malzahn and new coordinators Tim Harris and G.J. Kinne tinker with an already productive unit. Malzahn has historically relied more on a read-option system, but did have Jarrett Stidham at Auburn, so he might let Gabriel do what he does best (throw the ball down the field).

UCF lost some talent in the transfer portal but gained more when Nate Craig-Myers went from Auburn to Colorado State before rejoining Malzahn at UCF. He's a deep threat to go along with Brandon Johnson from Tennessee and former big-time Notre Dame recruit Jordan Johnson. The Knights also return five starters on the offensive line, so Malzahn will mix in more of a power running game to go along with Gabriel's big arm.

A trio of transfers will attempt to bolster a UCF backfield that lost its top two rushers. Coming in are Virginia transfer RJ Harvey, Auburn's Mark-Antony Richards and Northwestern's Isaiah Bowser, who has battled injuries but has 1,300 career rushing yards.

With nine starters back, the defense must improve. It struggled to get off the field last season, allowing almost 500 YPG and 33 PPG. Malzahn will win big like every coach before him at UCF, but 9.5 wins looks high with new systems and coaches on both sides of the ball. - Wes Reynolds

46.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#48 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	54.5	27.6	2.26	-11.8	6-QB, OC	44	7.41	12.98	6-DC	16.4	5.15	24.76
2017		58	31.4	2.7	-16.9	9	47.5	8.16	12.2	4	16.1	5.46	24.89

NOTEWORTHY...

- UCF IS 8-1-1 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING MEMPHIS
- UCF IS 0-5 ATS (L2Y) AS FAVORITE OF 10 OR MORE POINTS
- UCF IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) ON NON-GRASS FIELD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 BOISE ST (-3)

9/11 BETHUNE-COOKMAN (-46)

9/17 at Louisville (+1.5)

10/2 at Navy (-11.5)

10/9 EAST CAROLINA (-16)

10/16 at Cincinnati (+10.5)

10/22 MEMPHIS (-3.5)

10/30 at Temple (-16)

11/6 TULANE (-7.5)

11/13 at SMU (-0.5)

11/20 CONNECTICUT (-33)

11/26 SOUTH FLORIDA (-18.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

31.62
(#106 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

4.3 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	42.2	7	33.2	87
Yards Per Point	13.5	48	14.8	42
Plays Per Game	88	1		
Time of Possession	27:30	110		
3rd Down Conv. %	48.8%	11	43.2%	90
Total Yards Per Game	568.1	2	491.8	123
Yards Per Play	6.5	16	6	93
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.4	14		
Rush Yards Per Game	210.7	25	192.6	90
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	43	4.3	64
Pass Attempts Per Game	41.5	8		
Completion %	60.0%	73	59.7%	49
Passing Yards Per Game	357.4	5	299.2	120
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.6	18	8.5	112
Turnovers	1	22	2.2	9

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	at Georgia Tech	49-21	W	-9.5	W	63.5 O
9/26	at East Carolina	51-28	W	-28	L	78 O
10/3	TULSA	26-34	L	-19.5	L	69.5 U
10/17	at Memphis	49-50	L	-2.5	L	77.5 O
10/24	TULANE	51-34	W	-21.5	L	71 O
10/31	at Houston	44-21	W	-3	W	81.5 U
11/14	TEMPLE	38-13	W	-28.5	L	71.5 U
11/21	CINCINNATI	33-36	L	4	W	65.5 O
11/27	at South Florida	58-46	W	-25	L	71.5 O
12/22	vs. BYU	23-49	L	4.5	L	81 U

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

PREVIEW

BY
WES REYNOLDS



Sam Howell,
North Carolina

THE FAVORITES

CLEMSON and NORTH CAROLINA

Trevor Lawrence, Travis Etienne and Amari Rodgers are gone to the NFL, but there is no panic in Death Valley. Clemson is -900 to win the ACC for the seventh consecutive year (-2000 to win the Atlantic Division). Sophomore D.J. Uiagalelei was the nation's top quarterback out of high school in the Class of 2020. Like Mac Jones at Alabama the season before, Uiagalelei started two games in place of an injured star QB. While Clemson did lose his start at Notre Dame, the offense looks to be in very capable hands, and he more than showed his star potential. The defense could potentially be the team's strength early as nine starters return.

The Tigers will need to be ready immediately as they face Georgia in the season opener in Charlotte. After the opener, the schedule gets substantially easier as Clemson avoids the top three teams in the Coastal Division (North Carolina, Miami and Virginia Tech). In fact, the

Tigers face just one team that had a winning conference record in 2020, NC State.

North Carolina (+850 to win ACC; +130 Coastal Division) scored 41.7 PPG last year, but its top two running backs and wide receivers departed to the NFL. However, sophomore QB Sam Howell is a legitimate Heisman Trophy candidate, and the entire offensive line returns. Mack Brown should have the best defense he has had in Chapel Hill, with 10 starters returning. North Carolina avoids Clemson in the regular season and gets its closest Coastal Division competitor, Miami, at home. Nevertheless, going to Blacksburg is never an easy game, and the Tar Heels must face Virginia Tech on the road in the opener. North Carolina also has a trip to South Bend in a revenge spot at Notre Dame.

LIVE DOG

MIAMI

The Hurricanes (9-1 to win ACC; +130 Coastal Division) are neck-and-neck with North Carolina to win the Coastal Division for the right to face Clemson in the ACC title game. Last season, the Tar Heels went to Miami and cruised 62-26. Then senior QB D'Eriq King tore his ACL in the Cheez-It Bowl against Oklahoma State. King declared himself 100% and good to go for the opener against Alabama in Atlanta. Behind King and offensive coordinator Rhett Lashlee, Miami's offense improved by 8.3 PPG and 73 YPG last season. Assuming King is truthful about his health, this offense should show even more improvement with every skill-position player of note and all five starters on the offensive line returning. However, the defense slipped by 6.8 PPG and 98 YPG, and head coach Manny Diaz takes over the defensive play-calling duties for a unit that returns nine starters.

"The U" is not backing down from tough competition, as it hosts Appalachian State and Michigan State after the opener. The big game for its ACC title hopes is a revenge trip to North Carolina.

DEAD MONEY

SYRACUSE and DUKE

Syracuse is coming off a 1-10 season, the worst in Dino Babers' five years as coach. The Orange have plummeted from 10 wins to one in just three years. In fact, Babers (24-36) has only one winning season at Syracuse (10-3 in 2018). The Orange were outgained by almost 200 yards in conference play last season. Syracuse couldn't score points (17.8 PPG) or move the ball (265 YPG) largely because the offensive line couldn't block or protect the QB, allowing 88 sacks over the last two seasons. The nonconference schedule is not all that daunting (three of the first four games at home) and the Orange bring back 19 starters, but almost every team in the conference brings back substantial experience -- and Syracuse will be a likely underdog in at least seven of its eight conference games.

Duke is coming off a 2-9 season, the worst in David Cutcliffe's 20 seasons as a head coach. The Blue Devils have only 12 returning starters (six offense, six defense), the lowest for any team in the conference. They can only regress to the positive as far as turnovers are concerned because they were -19 in turnover margin in 2020. Duke committed the second-most turnovers of any FBS team in a decade with 39 giveaways. Cutcliffe has turned over the play calling to new co-offensive coordinator Jeff Faris. Former Clemson transfer Chase Brice has left for Appalachian State, so Duke will have a new QB. The Blue Devils should start 3-1, thanks to this nonconference slate: at Charlotte, vs. NC A&T, vs. Northwestern and vs. Kansas. However, they could be underdogs in all eight conference games.

NORTH CAROLINA AT VIRGINIA TECH SEPT. 3

Virginia Tech has had two losing seasons in three years, and the heat is on coach Justin Fuente. Meanwhile, North Carolina opens with an ACC road game for the first time since 2005. The last time the Tar Heels visited Blacksburg, the Hokies prevailed 43-41 in six overtimes.

CLEMSON VS. GEORGIA IN CHARLOTTE N.C. SEPT. 4

These teams kick off the season with a game that has immediate College Football Playoff implications. Clemson has been to the CFP in six consecutive seasons, while Georgia is seeking a return trip for the first time since the 2017-18 season. It's a big-time pressure test for D.J. Uiagalelei, who takes over at QB for Clemson, replacing Trevor Lawrence.

MIAMI VS. ALABAMA IN ATLANTA SEPT. 4

Former Miami coach Mark Richt apologized to successor Manny Diaz on air during ACC media days for scheduling this game several years ago. Hurricanes QB D'Eriq King is coming back from an ACL injury to lead Miami against the defending national champions.

MIAMI AT NORTH CAROLINA OCT. 16

With an Orange Bowl berth on the line last year, the Hurricanes were mauled at home by North Carolina 62-26. Miami allowed a school-record 778 yards, and UNC's Michael Carter and Javonte Williams combined to rush for an FBS-record 544 yards.

CLEMSON AT PITTSBURGH OCT. 23

The Tigers make their first trip to Pittsburgh. Clemson had the top defense in the ACC in 2020. The second-best defense in the conference? Pitt. Clemson has only three true conference road games, and the Panthers likely will provide the toughest test among them.

NORTH CAROLINA AT NOTRE DAME OCT. 30

Last year in Chapel Hill, Notre Dame held North Carolina to 78 yards in the second half. The victory gave the Fighting Irish a spot in the ACC title game.

**BIG
GAMES
ON THE
BOARD**

**2021
PROJECTED
STANDINGS**

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength and Rank	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.		PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
ATLANTIC DIVISION								
CLEMSON	67	3.9	0.8	36.99 (72)	11.2	0.8	7.6	0.4
BOSTON COLLEGE	47	2.5	0.4	37.85 (71)	7.4	4.6	4.1	3.9
WAKE FOREST	47	3.2	0.6	38.12 (68)	7.1	4.9	3.7	4.3
LOUISVILLE	45.5	3	-0.6	42.6 (31)	6.0	6.0	3.6	4.4
NC STATE	48	3.8	0	40.63 (52)	6.9	5.1	3.6	4.4
FLORIDA ST	44.5	3	-0.3	44.34 (10)	5.1	6.9	2.9	5.1
SYRACUSE	36.5	2.6	0	42.22 (35)	3.6	8.4	1.4	6.6
COASTAL DIVISION								
NORTH CAROLINA	56.5	3.3	0.1	41.51 (44)	9.1	2.9	6.0	2.0
MIAMI FL	56.5	3.6	-0.1	42.8 (29)	8.8	3.2	6.0	2.0
VIRGINIA TECH	50	2.7	0.1	42.12 (38)	7.3	4.7	4.6	3.4
PITTSBURGH	48	3.6	0.1	39.91 (58)	7.2	4.8	3.9	4.1
VIRGINIA	48	2.5	0	42.94 (27)	6.5	5.5	3.9	4.1
GEORGIA TECH	41.5	3.6	-0.1	45.08 (4)	4.3	7.7	2.3	5.7
DUKE	37.5	2.2	0.6	40.9 (51)	4.4	7.6	1.7	6.3

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
CLEMSON	67
MIAMI FL	56.5
NORTH CAROLINA	56.5
VIRGINIA TECH	50
NC STATE	48
PITTSBURGH	48
VIRGINIA	48
BOSTON COLLEGE	47
WAKE FOREST	47
LOUISVILLE	45.5
FLORIDA ST	44.5
GEORGIA TECH	41.5
DUKE	37.5
SYRACUSE	36.5

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
CLEMSON	-3.9
NC STATE	-3.8
GEORGIA TECH	-3.6
MIAMI FL	-3.6
PITTSBURGH	-3.6
NORTH CAROLINA	-3.3
WAKE FOREST	-3.2
FLORIDA ST	-3
LOUISVILLE	-3
VIRGINIA TECH	-2.7
SYRACUSE	-2.6
BOSTON COLLEGE	-2.5
VIRGINIA	-2.5
DUKE	-2.2

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
CLEMSON	0.8
DUKE	0.6
WAKE FOREST	0.6
BOSTON COLLEGE	0.4
NORTH CAROLINA	0.1
PITTSBURGH	0.1
VIRGINIA TECH	0.1
NC STATE	0
SYRACUSE	0
VIRGINIA	0
GEORGIA TECH	-0.1
MIAMI FL	-0.1
FLORIDA ST	-0.3
LOUISVILLE	-0.6

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
MIAMI FL	19
WAKE FOREST	19
NC STATE	18
SYRACUSE	18
BOSTON COLLEGE	17
NORTH CAROLINA	17
FLORIDA ST	16
GEORGIA TECH	16
CLEMSON	15
VIRGINIA	15
PITTSBURGH	14
VIRGINIA TECH	13
DUKE	12
LOUISVILLE	12

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
WAKE FOREST	11
FLORIDA ST	10
MIAMI FL	10
BOSTON COLLEGE	9
SYRACUSE	9
NC STATE	8
NORTH CAROLINA	8
PITTSBURGH	8
VIRGINIA	8
GEORGIA TECH	7
VIRGINIA TECH	7
DUKE	6
LOUISVILLE	6
CLEMSON	5

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
CLEMSON	10
NC STATE	10
GEORGIA TECH	9
MIAMI FL	9
NORTH CAROLINA	9
SYRACUSE	9
BOSTON COLLEGE	8
WAKE FOREST	8
VIRGINIA	7
DUKE	6
FLORIDA ST	6
LOUISVILLE	6
PITTSBURGH	6
VIRGINIA TECH	6

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

BOSTON COLLEGE EAGLES

HEAD COACH: JEFF HAFLEY (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: FRANK CIGNETTI JR. • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TEM LUKABU

LOCATION: CHESTNUT HILL, MA • STADIUM: ALUMNI STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

0 -130 / U +110

PLAY
OVER

Last season was not ideal for a new coach with two new coordinators to install new schemes. Boston College had only five spring practices, but Jeff Hafley and the Eagles put together a respectable 6-5 season. Four losses were to ranked teams, and BC was competitive against Clemson and North Carolina. Nevertheless, the Eagles suffered one-sided losses at Virginia Tech and Virginia. Though BC had zero positive COVID-19 tests last season, the Eagles opted out of postseason play.

Hafley has changed the tenor of the program: The Eagles ran the ball much less in 2020, and Notre Dame transfer QB Phil Jurkovec showed glimpses of what made him a top-five QB out of high school. Leading rusher David Bailey transferred to reunite with former BC coach Steve Addazio at Colorado State. A new starter will need to be discovered, but the OL returns five starters, so the running game should be more productive than last year's 3.1 YPC. Junior WR Zay Flowers was first-team all-ACC last year and is the star of the offense. Flowers and sophomore Jaelen Gill, who followed Hafley from Ohio State, should be one of the best WR duos in the conference. FCS All-American tight end Trae Berry comes in from Jacksonville State. BC also brings back eight

starters on defense for a unit that will likely look to blitz a bit more under second-year DC Tem Lukabu.

The Eagles ease into the season with an FCS opponent in Colgate, a UMass team that was one of the worst in the FBS a year ago and a visit to Temple. Then BC gets Missouri at home and a trip to Death Valley to face Clemson. BC closes with seven games in seven weeks, including a few ACC opponents amid major rebuilds or coming off disappointing seasons. There could be a real opportunity to string together wins late. Hafley is building a culture in Chestnut Hill, and this is a sleeper team in the ACC. - Wes Reynolds

47

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#45 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		48	20.6	1.76	-10.3	10-QB	37.5	6.27	12.48	6	16.9	4.5	20.75
2017		49.5	22.4	1.59	-5.2	8-QB	35.1	6.22	13.52	7	12.6	4.63	26.62

NOTEWORTHY...

- BOSTON COLLEGE IS 13-2 ATS (L15G) IN OCTOBER
- BOSTON COLLEGE IS 4-11 ATS (L15G) NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5
- BOSTON COLLEGE IS 11-1-1 UNDER (L13G) BEFORE PLAYING WAKE FOREST

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 COLGATE (-41)

9/11 at Massachusetts (-26)

9/18 at Temple (-16.5)

9/25 MISSOURI (-0.5)

10/2 at Clemson (+23.5)

10/16 NC STATE (-1.5)

10/23 at Louisville (+1)

10/30 at Syracuse (-8.5)

11/5 VIRGINIA TECH (+0.5)

11/13 at Georgia Tech (-2.5)

11/20 FLORIDA ST (-5.5)

11/27 WAKE FOREST (-2)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

37.85
(#71 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.5 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	27.8	65	28.4	59
Yards Per Point	13.9	56	14.7	44
Plays Per Game	70.8	73		
Time of Possession	31:00	42		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.2%	35	40.4%	63
Total Yards Per Game	385.9	70	417.3	71
Yards Per Play	5.4	67	5.9	88
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.8	109		
Rush Yards Per Game	101.7	117	172	70
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.1	117	4.7	87
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.5	34		
Completion %	62.1%	48	61.7%	68
Passing Yards Per Game	284.2	23	245.3	79
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	37	7.7	81
Turnovers	1.3	47	1.9	25

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	at Duke	26-6	W	3.5	W	51 U
9/26	TEXAS ST UNIV	24-21	W	-21.5	L	58 U
10/3	NORTH CAROLINA	22-26	L	14.5	W	52.5 U
10/10	PITTSBURGH	31-30	W	5.5	W	42.5 O
10/17	at Virginia Tech	14-40	L	13.5	L	61.5 U
10/24	GEORGIA TECH	48-27	W	-3	W	57.5 O
10/31	at Clemson	28-34	L	26.5	W	56 O
11/7	at Syracuse	16-13	W	-14.5	L	54.5 U
11/14	NOTRE DAME	31-45	L	13	L	51.5 O
11/28	LOUISVILLE	34-27	W	1	W	58 O
12/5	at Virginia	32-43	L	6.5	L	54.5 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

CLEMSON TIGERS

HEAD COACH: DABO SWINNEY (14TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TONY ELLIOTT • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRENT VENABLES

LOCATION: CLEMSON, SC • STADIUM: FRANK HOWARD FIELD AT CLEMSON MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

11.5

0 + 100 / U - 120

PLAY
UNDER

The Tigers have been to the College Football Playoff for six consecutive seasons with two national championships to show for it. Now Clemson must begin life without the winningest quarterback in program history (Trevor Lawrence), the ACC's all-time leading rusher (Travis Etienne) and two of the Tigers' top three 2020 wide receivers (Amari Rodgers and Cornell Powell). The defense returns nine starters but must reconcile consecutive poor performances in playoff losses to Ohio State and LSU in which the Tigers fell by an average of 19 points.

The march to a likely seventh straight year in the CFP starts with QB D.J. Uiagalelei, who made two starts as a true freshman, against Boston College and at Notre Dame. He threw for an opposing-quarterback record of 439 yards in the double-overtime loss to the Irish when Lawrence was out with COVID-19. Just five starters return on offense, so the Tigers could start slowly on that side of the ball. The defense gets its top 10 tacklers back plus 97% of its sack production. When you can coach this kind of talent, there's a reason DC Brent Venables signed a contract extension through 2026 at \$2.5 million per year. Clemson is not likely to be challenged in the ACC regular season, though North Carolina or

Miami could give the Tigers a run in the ACC title game.

Clemson's biggest challenge will be the main event of the Week 1 slate against Georgia. Even if the favored Tigers lose, they would be far from finished in the CFP. After Georgia, other nonconference opponents are South Carolina State, UConn and South Carolina. The toughest game on the ACC schedule is probably NC State on the road. The Tigers face only one team in conference play that had a winning ACC record last season, but Georgia is a tough opener and Clemson has at least a decent chance to lose, so it is difficult to take the Over. - Wes Reynolds

67

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#2 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
5

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		77.5	45.7	4.81	-34.4	7-QB	51.1	8.42	11.88	8	5.3	3.62	45.87
2017		67	41.1	3.62	-22.5	5-QB	45.3	7.25	12.05	7	4.1	3.63	56.95

NOTEWORTHY...

- CLEMSON IS 11-4 ATS (L5Y) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF 10 OR MORE POINTS
- CLEMSON IS 8-18-1 ATS (S2000) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- CLEMSON IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING MIAMI

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+380**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Georgia (-5)

9/11 S CAROLINA ST (-63)

9/18 GEORGIA TECH (-29.5)

9/25 at NC State (-16)

10/2 BOSTON COLLEGE (-23.5)

10/15 at Syracuse (-28.5)

10/23 at Pittsburgh (-16)

10/30 FLORIDA ST (-26.5)

11/6 at Louisville (-19.5)

11/13 CONNECTICUT (-53)

11/20 WAKE FOREST (-23.5)

11/27 at South Carolina (-23)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

36.99
(#72 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.9 / 0.8
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	43	4	22	29
Yards Per Point	11.9	11	15.5	36
Plays Per Game	78.2	15		
Time of Possession	30:54	45		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.5%	25	32.5%	14
Total Yards Per Game	511.2	8	341.8	22
Yards Per Play	6.5	14	4.9	22
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.4	100		
Rush Yards Per Game	153.1	73	115.1	18
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	61	3.2	9
Pass Attempts Per Game	42.1	6		
Completion %	66.3%	19	56.3%	21
Passing Yards Per Game	358.1	4	226.7	59
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.5	22	7.5	71
Turnovers	1.3	45	2	19

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 10-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Wake Forest	37-13	W	-34.5	L	58.5 U
9/19	THE CITADEL	49-0	W	-50.5	L	55.5 U
10/3	VIRGINIA	41-23	W	-28	L	55.5 O
10/10	MIAMI FL	42-17	W	-14	W	60.5 U
10/17	at Georgia Tech	73-7	W	-26	W	65.5 O
10/24	SYRACUSE	47-21	W	-46.5	L	64.5 O
10/31	BOSTON COLLEGE	34-28	W	-26.5	L	56 O
11/7	at Notre Dame	40-47	L	-5	L	51 O
11/28	PITTSBURGH	52-17	W	-23.5	W	59 O
12/5	at Virginia Tech	45-10	W	-21.5	W	66.5 U
12/19	vs. Notre Dame	34-10	W	-11	W	57 U
1/1	vs. Ohio St	28-49	L	-7	L	69 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

DUKE BLUE DEVILS

HEAD COACH: DAVID CUTCLIFFE (14TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RE'QUAN BOYETTE / JEFF FARIS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BEN ALBERT / MATT GUERRIERI
LOCATION: DURHAM, NC • STADIUM: BROOKS FIELD AT WALLACE WADE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4

O +100 / U -120

PLAY
PASS

David Cutcliffe comes off his worst season in 20 years as a head coach. The 2-9 mark encouraged Cutcliffe, 66 and with two years left on his contract, to delegate more. So he's turning over play-calling duties to Jeff Faris, 31, who has spent seven seasons on staff as the WR/TE coach and now becomes the co-OC and QB coach. The first order of business is to get the offense to stop giving the ball away. Duke committed 39 turnovers last season and ended up minus-19 in turnover margin. The Blue Devils have given the ball away two or more times in 14 of the last 17 games and 20 of the last 25.

Sophomore Gunnar Holmberg takes over at QB for former Clemson transfer Chase Brice, who left for Appalachian State. Duke will look to run more play-action and zone-read to take advantage of Holmberg's speed. The Blue Devils also want to get the ball more to senior RB Mataeo Durant, the leading returning rusher in the ACC. But Duke finished last in the ACC with 11 pass plays of more than 30 yards. It would help the passing game if the line could protect the QB. The Blue Devils gave up 3.36 sacks per game (114th nationally) and 7.46 tackles for loss per game (110th). Duke

allowed 445 yards and 38 points per game, was awful against the run and struggled to get off the field. The Blue Devils also have the fewest returning starters in the ACC with 12, six on both sides of the ball.

Duke, which will leave the state of North Carolina just twice, could be 3-1 coming out of the gate but will need to pick up a conference win to surpass the season win total. They should be able to win one in league play, and Georgia Tech or Wake Forest look like the most likely candidates. Four wins looks like the exact right number. - Wes Reynolds

37.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#90 OF 130)

12

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47.5	15.4	1.34	-6.8	7-QB	35.1	6.3	13.05	8	19.7	4.95	18.59
2017		49	18.6	1.07	-7.1	7	33.7	5.68	12.99	5	15.1	4.61	19.62

NOTEWORTHY...

- DUKE IS 21-4 ATS (L25G) ON NON-GRASS FIELD
- DUKE IS 3-11-2 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- DUKE IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) VS. AP TOP 25

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 at Charlotte (-5)

9/10 N CAROLINA A&T (-24)

9/18 NORTHWESTERN (+8.5)

9/25 KANSAS (-9)

10/2 at North Carolina (+21.5)

10/9 GEORGIA TECH (+1.5)

10/16 at Virginia (+12.5)

10/30 at Wake Forest (+12)

11/6 PITTSBURGH (+8.5)

11/13 at Virginia Tech (+14.5)

11/18 LOUISVILLE (+5)

11/27 MIAMI FL (+16.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.9
(#51 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.2 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	24.8	88	38.1	114
Yards Per Point	15.3	97	11.7	113
Plays Per Game	78.7	13		
Time of Possession	28:34	96		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.7%	76	41.3%	73
Total Yards Per Game	379.7	78	446.5	96
Yards Per Play	4.8	100	6	95
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.8	43		
Rush Yards Per Game	157.1	70	215.9	108
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	80	5.2	104
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.5	32		
Completion %	56.3%	99	57.0%	25
Passing Yards Per Game	222.6	72	230.6	64
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	105	7.9	96
Turnovers	3.5	127	1.8	31

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 2-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Notre Dame	13-27	L	21	W	50.5 U
9/19	BOSTON COLLEGE	6-26	L	-3.5	L	51 U
9/26	at Virginia	20-38	L	4	L	45.5 O
10/3	VIRGINIA TECH	31-38	L	11.5	W	53.5 O
10/10	at Syracuse	38-24	W	-2.5	W	53.5 O
10/17	at NC State	20-31	L	3.5	L	59.5 U
10/31	CHARLOTTE	53-19	W	-10.5	W	55 O
11/7	NORTH CAROLINA	24-56	L	11	L	64 O
11/28	at Georgia Tech	33-56	L	-2.5	L	58 O
12/5	MIAMI FL	0-48	L	13.5	L	63 U
12/12	at Florida St	35-56	L	3	L	56.5 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

FLORIDA STATE SEMINOLES

HEAD COACH: MIKE NORVELL (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KENNY DILLINGHAM • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ADAM FULLER

LOCATION: TALLAHASSEE, FL • STADIUM: BOBBY BOWDEN FIELD AT DOAK S. CAMPBELL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

Mike Norvell is in Year 2 of trying to get Florida State back to powerhouse status. The Seminoles posted their third straight losing season in 2020 with a 3-6 record, though they were down to 50 scholarship players by the end of the season due to opt-outs, injuries and transfers. Norvell must find a starting QB to provide a spark for one of the nation's worst passing attacks, which averaged only 197 yards in 2020.

Sophomore Jordan Travis started six games last season, and he was also FSU's leading rusher. But Travis still has competition for the gig as he will have to hold off UCF graduate transfer McKenzie Milton. Milton led UCF to an undefeated season in 2017, and the Knights were 10-0 and headed for win No. 11 when he suffered a gruesome injury against USF that nearly cost him his leg. Despite what have become annual woes on the OL, Florida State's running game improved dramatically last season. The OL returns all five starters and hopes for continuity. This group has had four position coaches in four years. Sophomore Jashaun Corbin and freshman Lawrance Toafli can provide a solid 1-2 punch at RB, and Auburn transfer D.J. Williams also arrives.

The defense finished No. 87 in the nation in tackles for loss per game and No. 119 in sacks per game in 2020. Georgia transfer Jermaine Johnson should help in this area, having provided five sacks in just seven games for the Bulldogs last season.

However, Johnson was just a rotation guy at Georgia and now he becomes FSU's best defensive player.

Florida State opens with Notre Dame. The confidence-builder comes the next week with Jacksonville State, but then the Seminoles must go to Wake Forest to face one of the best-coached teams in the ACC. Then Louisville and Syracuse come to Tallahassee. Next FSU travels to face a North Carolina team looking for revenge. UMass will kick off the second half of the season. The closing stretch — at Clemson, NC State, Miami, at Boston College and at Florida — is one of the toughest any team will face this year. A .500 season is attainable if the Seminoles can win at Wake Forest or pull an upset in the final half of the season. — Wes Reynolds

44.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#55 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	42.5	9.7	1.76	-5	8-QB, OC	31	6.21	14.15	4-DC	21.3	4.45	16.59
2017		57	22.3	2.72	-13.2	6	34.8	6.78	11.91	9	12.5	4.06	22.99

NOTEWORTHY...

- FLORIDA ST IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AT HOME AFTER PLAYING NC STATE
- FLORIDA ST IS 4-16-1 ATS (L21G) HTH VS. NC STATE
- FLORIDA ST IS 12-3 OVER (L5Y) IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/5 NOTRE DAME (+10.5)

9/11 JACKSONVILLE ST (-18.5)

9/18 at Wake Forest (+6)

9/25 LOUISVILLE (-2.5)

10/2 SYRACUSE (-11)

10/9 at North Carolina (+15.5)

10/23 MASSACHUSETTS (-30)

10/30 at Clemson (+26.5)

11/6 NC STATE (+0.5)

11/13 MIAMI FL (+9)

11/20 at Boston College (+5.5)

11/27 at Florida (+17.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

44.34
(#10 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	23.9	93	37.5	111
Yards Per Point	16	106	12.7	96
Plays Per Game	73.2	47		
Time of Possession	30:01	64		
3rd Down Conv. %	31.9%	116	49.5%	118
Total Yards Per Game	382.2	75	475	115
Yards Per Play	5.2	86	6.4	111
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	74		
Rush Yards Per Game	194.4	39	216.2	109
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	19	5.3	109
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.9	53		
Completion %	52.9%	115	65.4%	105
Passing Yards Per Game	187.9	104	258.8	99
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	112	8.1	104
Turnovers	2	111	1.6	52

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	GEORGIA TECH	13-16	L	-13	L	49 U
9/26	at Miami FL	10-52	L	11.5	L	54 O
10/3	JACKSONVILLE ST	41-24	W	-28	L	52 O
10/10	at Notre Dame	26-42	L	20.5	W	52.5 O
10/17	NORTH CAROLINA	31-28	W	13.5	W	65 U
10/24	at Louisville	16-48	L	5	L	62 O
11/7	PITTSBURGH	17-41	L	1.5	L	53 O
11/14	at NC State	22-38	L	13	L	61.5 U
12/12	DUKE	56-35	W	-3	W	56.5 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

GEORGIA TECH YELLOW JACKETS

HEAD COACH: GEOFF COLLINS (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVE PATENAUE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NATHAN BURTON / ANDREW THACKER
LOCATION: ATLANTA, GA • STADIUM: BOBBY DODD STADIUM AT HISTORIC GRANT FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Geoff Collins is in the third year of transitioning Georgia Tech from the triple option it ran for years under Paul Johnson. The Yellow Jackets showed improvement last year, especially on offense, as scoring increased by seven points per game and generated over 100 yards more per game than in 2019. However, 2020 featured humbling experiences, like being Syracuse's only victory during a 1-10 season and allowing 73 points to Clemson. The offensive numbers would have been a lot better had Georgia Tech not had 25 turnovers, second most in the nation. In addition, penalties really held this group back.

QB Jeff Sims appears to be a keeper, though he looked every bit the freshman at times in 2020 with only a 54.9% completion rate and as many interceptions as touchdowns (13). The receivers are not overwhelmingly talented, and it will take a while to upgrade after years of the triple option, but they did show big-play capability with 13 YPC. RB Jahmyr Gibbs (5.2 YPC) is back and could be a 1,000-yard back if he can stay healthy, having missed almost four games last season. The defense is more of a concern, having allowed 36.8 PPG and 459 YPG. The Yellow Jackets were 12th against the run in the ACC and dead last in sacks per game, while also allowing the second-most TD passes.

Georgia Tech's schedule is arduous, with four likely Top 10 teams (at Clemson, vs. North Carolina, at Notre Dame, vs. Georgia). Northern Illinois and Kennesaw State should be two early wins to get some confidence, but then the Jackets get Clemson and North Carolina back to back. Bowl eligibility probably hinges on winning at least three games in the middle of the schedule (against Pittsburgh, Duke, Virginia and Virginia Tech), because three of the final four games will be at Miami, at Notre Dame and home against Georgia. - Wes Reynolds

41.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#73 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		48.5	19.9	1.78	-9.5	8-QB	41.8	7.04	11.44	5-DC	21.9	5.25	14.97
2017		48	21.3	2.49	-12.5	8-QB	40.2	7.12	12.08	8	18.9	4.62	15.74

NOTEWORTHY...

- GEORGIA TECH IS 10-1-1 ATS (L12G) AFTER PLAYING DUKE
- GEORGIA TECH IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) AT HOME HTH VS. GEORGIA
- GEORGIA TECH IS 22-8 OVER (L10Y) ON ROAD VS. UNRANKED TEAM

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 N ILLINOIS (-15)

9/11 KENNESAW ST (-24)

9/18 at Clemson (+29.5)

9/25 NORTH CAROLINA (+11.5)

10/2 PITTSBURGH (+3)

10/9 at Duke (-1.5)

10/23 at Virginia (+9)

10/30 VIRGINIA TECH (+5)

11/6 at Miami Fl (+18.5)

11/13 BOSTON COLLEGE (+2.5)

11/20 at Notre Dame (+20)

11/27 GEORGIA (+17.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

45.08
(#4 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	23.9	92	36.8	106
Yards Per Point	16.3	108	12.5	104
Plays Per Game	71.4	69		
Time of Possession	27:05	114		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.1%	55	46.7%	108
Total Yards Per Game	389.9	67	459.3	107
Yards Per Play	5.5	66	5.7	78
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.8	36		
Rush Yards Per Game	190.8	43	189.2	86
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	47	4.4	67
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.3	95		
Completion %	53.7%	113	58.7%	40
Passing Yards Per Game	199.1	90	270.1	111
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7	75	7.6	77
Turnovers	2.5	124	1.8	37

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Florida St	16-13	W	13	W	49 U
9/19	UCF	21-49	L	9.5	L	63.5 O
9/26	at Syracuse	20-37	L	-7.5	L	52.5 O
10/9	LOUISVILLE	46-27	W	4	W	62 O
10/17	CLEMSON	7-73	L	26	L	65.5 O
10/24	at Boston College	27-48	L	3	L	57.5 O
10/31	NOTRE DAME	13-31	L	20.5	W	58.5 U
11/28	DUKE	56-33	W	2.5	W	58 O
12/5	at NC State	13-23	L	6.5	L	62 U
12/10	PITTSBURGH	20-34	L	7.5	L	56.5 U

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

LOUISVILLE CARDINALS

HEAD COACH: SCOTT SATTERFIELD (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: VACANT • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRYAN BROWN / CORT DENNISON

LOCATION: LOUISVILLE, KY • STADIUM: CARDINAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

Scott Satterfield inherited a program in disarray from Bobby Petrino. In his first year coming from Appalachian State, Satterfield and the Cardinals were a surprise at 8-5; last season, the Cardinals took a step back at 4-7. Arguably the main reason was a minus-12 turnover margin that ranked second worst in the FBS. Louisville tossed 12 interceptions, lost 12 of 18 fumbles and forced just 12 takeaways over 11 games. Satterfield also flirted with the South Carolina job in the offseason, and that has called his commitment into question.

Junior QB Malik Cunningham has put up 5,773 total yards and 55 touchdowns in two seasons. He ranked No. 2 among FBS QBs in rushes of 10-plus yards (37) and throws a great deep ball, but he threw 12 interceptions, lost three fumbles and tried to force the big play way too often. Louisville finished 18th nationally in yards per rush but ranked No. 3 in rushes of 20-plus yards. The Cardinals have enough depth to make up for the loss of Javian Hawkins to the NFL, but the returning receivers have only three career starts. Shai Werts, a four-year starting option QB at Georgia Southern, comes in to play receiver. Louisville returns 13 starters — seven on offense, six on defense — and is one of the least experienced teams in the ACC.

The schedule is not easy with an opener in Atlanta vs. Ole Miss and its explosive offense. After a date with Eastern Kentucky, UCF comes to town. Satterfield will see what he has defensively by facing QBs Matt Corral of Ole Miss and Dillon Gabriel of UCF in the first three weeks. The conference slate is not bad: The Cardinals will play seven home games and stay home for five of their last seven. They get crossover games against Virginia and Duke, and they don't have to play Notre Dame. They do, however, get Kentucky back on the schedule after the Governor's Cup was canceled last fall. Louisville probably got lucky in 2019 and got very unlucky in 2020, so the Cardinals are probably right in between, about .500 or a game above. — Wes Reynolds

45.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#52 OF 130)

12

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		23.5	-4.9	0.63	6	7	28.9	6.47	14.86	4-DC	33.8	5.84	12.12
2017		55	24.8	3.64	-13.8	4	46.5	8.65	13.76	7-DC	21.8	5.01	15.79

NOTEWORTHY...

- LOUISVILLE IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- LOUISVILLE IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) AT HOME IN OCTOBER
- LOUISVILLE IS 29-11 OVER (\$2000) ON ROAD IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/6 vs. Ole Miss (+6)

9/11 E KENTUCKY (-30.5)

9/17 UCF (-1.5)

9/25 at Florida St (+2.5)

10/2 at Wake Forest (+5.5)

10/9 VIRGINIA (-0.5)

10/23 BOSTON COLLEGE (-1)

10/30 at NC State (+7)

11/6 CLEMSON (+19.5)

11/13 SYRACUSE (-12)

11/18 at Duke (-5)

11/27 KENTUCKY (+1)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.6
(#31 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / -0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	29.5	53	26.6	46
Yards Per Point	15	89	13.9	65
Plays Per Game	69.4	90		
Time of Possession	31:30	32		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.8%	31	39.6%	55
Total Yards Per Game	444	26	369.1	38
Yards Per Play	6.4	20	5.6	69
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.2	58		
Rush Yards Per Game	200	29	179.9	80
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.2	21	4.8	89
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.5	90		
Completion %	64.3%	28	53.6%	10
Passing Yards Per Game	244	48	189.2	16
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.5	20	7.2	53
Turnovers	2.2	116	1.1	96

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 4-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	W KENTUCKY	35-21	W	-13	W	54.5 O
9/19	MIAMI FL	34-47	L	2	L	66 O
9/26	at Pittsburgh	20-23	L	3	T	53 U
10/9	at Georgia Tech	27-46	L	-4	L	62 O
10/17	at Notre Dame	7-12	L	15.5	W	62 U
10/24	FLORIDA ST	48-16	W	-5	W	62 O
10/31	VIRGINIA TECH	35-42	L	5	L	68 O
11/14	at Virginia	17-31	L	5.5	L	63.5 U
11/20	SYRACUSE	30-0	W	-20	W	55.5 U
11/28	at Boston College	27-34	L	-1	L	58 O
12/12	WAKE FOREST	45-21	W	2	W	62 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

MIAMI HURRICANES

HEAD COACH: MANNY DIAZ (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RHETT LASHLEE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MANNY DIAZ

LOCATION: MIAMI GARDENS, FL • STADIUM: HARD ROCK STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9

0 -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

It was a bounce-back season in Coral Gables last year, but being smacked around in the home finale by North Carolina with an Orange Bowl berth on the line and then losing to Oklahoma State in the Cheez-It Bowl should leave a sour taste for the Hurricanes. The 42-17 defeat at Clemson also showed a talent gap that Miami must overcome to be among the elite programs again.

Miami showed some glimpses of an explosive offense behind QB D'Eriq King and OC Rhett Lashlee, averaging 440 YPG and 34 PPG. However, the run game disappointed. The top four runners (including King) return, but the RBs and the OL, which returns five starters, must step up because Lashlee and Manny Diaz may not want their QB to run as much as he comes back from a torn ACL. All but one receiver returns, and the best of the lot looks to be from outside the program as Charleston Rambo comes aboard from Oklahoma. Rambo started 24 games in three seasons at Oklahoma and led the Hurricanes in receptions during the spring game. Defensively, Miami brings back nine starters but must find new pass rushers after losing three to the NFL. The defense has a lot of talent but still has much to prove, considering it

gave up 554 yards on the ground to North Carolina in the season finale. After seeing so many of his back seven out of position in the final two games, Diaz decided to call the defensive plays.

After the opener in Atlanta against Alabama, it really becomes all about Miami getting back to the ACC Championship Game for the first time since 2017. The Tar Heels are the only other opponent on Miami's schedule that will be favored against the Hurricanes. The Hurricanes beat the teams they were supposed to last season, but can they take that next step? - Wes Reynolds

56.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#10 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		53.5	24.3	2.57	-12.7	7-QB	36.7	6.33	11.43	7	12.4	3.76	19.59
2017		54.5	26	3.31	-16.7	7-QB	38.4	7.39	12.61	8	12.4	4.08	25.08

NOTEWORTHY...

- MIAMI FL IS 22-10-1 ATS (L10Y) IN SEPTEMBER
- MIAMI FL IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) ON NEUTRAL FIELD
- MIAMI FL IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING DUKE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+6000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Alabama (+14.5)

9/11 APPALACHIAN ST (-10)

9/18 MICHIGAN ST (-17.5)

9/25 C CONN ST (-45)

9/30 VIRGINIA (-12)

10/16 at North Carolina (+3.5)

10/23 NC STATE (-12)

10/30 at Pittsburgh (-5)

11/6 GEORGIA TECH (-18.5)

11/13 at Florida St (-9)

11/20 VIRGINIA TECH (-10)

11/27 at Duke (-16.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.8
(#29 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	34	24	27	50
Yards Per Point	12.9	30	15.1	38
Plays Per Game	75.6	33		
Time of Possession	27:48	106		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.6%	59	38.3%	46
Total Yards Per Game	439.5	31	408.4	64
Yards Per Play	5.8	45	5.4	58
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.4	56		
Rush Yards Per Game	162.5	66	174.5	75
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	73	4.5	77
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.5	39		
Completion %	62.6%	41	63.3%	85
Passing Yards Per Game	277	27	233.9	67
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	36	6.8	30
Turnovers	1.1	27	1.5	61

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/10	UAB	31-14	W	-15.5	W	55 U
9/19	at Louisville	47-34	W	-2	W	66 O
9/26	FLORIDA ST	52-10	W	-11.5	W	54 O
10/10	at Clemson	17-42	L	14	L	60.5 U
10/17	PITTSBURGH	31-19	W	-12	T	47.5 O
10/24	VIRGINIA	19-14	W	-13.5	L	54.5 U
11/6	at NC State	44-41	W	-10.5	L	58 O
11/14	at Virginia Tech	25-24	W	2	W	67 U
12/5	at Duke	48-0	W	-13.5	W	63 U
12/12	NORTH CAROLINA	26-62	L	-3	L	72.5 O
12/29	vs. Oklahoma St	34-37	L	2	L	63 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

NORTH CAROLINA TAR HEELS

HEAD COACH: MACK BROWN (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHIL LONGO • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAY BATEMAN / TOMMY THIGPEN

LOCATION: CHAPEL HILL, NC • STADIUM: KENAN MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Mack Brown is about to turn 70, but he has infused energy into the North Carolina program. The Tar Heels have gone to bowl games in consecutive seasons and earned statement wins last year over Miami and Virginia Tech. However, UNC is looking to take that next step and defeat the elite programs. The ACC Coastal Division has had a different winner each year since 2013, but the Tar Heels are the favorites along with Miami.

Heisman candidate Sam Howell has thrown 68 touchdown passes (two more than Trevor Lawrence at Clemson) against 14 interceptions in his first two seasons. Howell's top two RBs and WRs are gone to the NFL, but enough talent remains to take this offense to the next level. Tennessee transfer Ty Chandler rushed for over 2,000 yards in four years in Knoxville and will need to contribute immediately. Receivers Beau Corrales, Josh Downs and Khafre Brown look primed for breakout seasons. All five OL starters return, so OC Phil Longo's up-tempo offense should be right there with the 41.7 PPG it put up in 2020. The Tar Heels should have the best defense they have had in Brown's second act at UNC with 10 starters back. LB Tomon Fox came

back for his "super senior" year and has 33 TFLs and 21 sacks.

North Carolina gets an early test, visiting Virginia Tech opening week. Five of the next six are at home. The month to watch is October, when North Carolina hosts rival Duke, Florida State and Miami. A week off is next and will be greatly appreciated, considering a trip to Notre Dame -- likely UNC's toughest regular-season game -- rounds out the month. North Carolina avoids Clemson during the regular season but will be hoping to face the Tigers for the ACC championship after taking them to the limit in 2019. - Wes Reynolds

56.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#10 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		40	6.9	1.54	1.6	5-QB	33.8	6.84	15.04	8	26.9	5.3	14.76
2017		40.5	11	1.28	4.7	5-QB	34.2	6.32	12.82	7-DC	23.3	5.05	16.19

NOTEWORTHY...

- NORTH CAROLINA IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING CLEMSON
- NORTH CAROLINA IS 3-11-1 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD IN SEPTEMBER
- NORTH CAROLINA IS 12-4 OVER (L5Y) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+4000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 at Virginia Tech (-4)

9/11 GEORGIA ST (-21.5)

9/18 VIRGINIA (-12)

9/25 at Georgia Tech (-11.5)

10/2 DUKE (-21.5)

10/9 FLORIDA ST (-15.5)

10/16 MIAMI FL (-3.5)

10/30 at Notre Dame (+5)

11/6 WAKE FOREST (-12)

11/11 at Pittsburgh (-5)

11/20 WOFFORD (-40.5)

11/26 at NC State (-5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.51
(#44 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	SYRACUSE	31-6	W	-24	W	67 U
10/3	at Boston College	26-22	W	-14.5	L	52.5 U
10/10	VIRGINIA TECH	56-45	W	-3.5	W	59 O
10/17	at Florida St	28-31	L	-13.5	L	65 U
10/24	NC STATE	48-21	W	-16	W	61.5 O
10/31	at Virginia	41-44	L	-8	L	61 O
11/7	at Duke	56-24	W	-11	W	64 O
11/14	WAKE FOREST	59-53	W	-12.5	L	70.5 O
11/27	NOTRE DAME	17-31	L	4.5	L	71 U
12/5	W CAROLINA	49-9	W	-50	L	71 U
12/12	at Miami Fl	62-26	W	3	W	72.5 O
1/2	vs. Texas A&M	27-41	L	10	L	66 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	41	11	31.3	74
Yards Per Point	13.1	33	13.2	86
Plays Per Game	74.1	42		
Time of Possession	31:05	39		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.6%	21	38.2%	45
Total Yards Per Game	537	5	414.4	68
Yards Per Play	7.2	5	5.7	75
Rush Attempts Per Game	41.3	33		
Rush Yards Per Game	236.3	11	155.8	52
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.7	6	4.4	65
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.8	81		
Completion %	67.1%	13	58.2%	37
Passing Yards Per Game	300.7	17	258.5	98
Yards Per Pass Attempt	10.1	6	7.6	75
Turnovers	0.9	13	0.9	109

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

NORTH CAROLINA STATE WOLFPACK

HEAD COACH: DAVE DOEREN (9TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM BECK • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TONY GIBSON

LOCATION: RALEIGH, NC • STADIUM: WAYNE DAY FAMILY FIELD AT CARTER-FINLEY STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

0 + 100 / U - 120

PLAY
OVER

Dave Doeren, recently extended through 2025, and the Wolfpack returned to stability last season after a down 2019. NC State's 8-4 mark in 2020 was its sixth winning season in seven years. The Wolfpack found consistency last season despite not having sophomore starting QB Devin Leary for most of it due to COVID-19. Bailey Hockman took over before Leary came back to start three games, but then Leary broke his leg. Hockman started the final seven games but has transferred to Middle Tennessee, so the job is finally Leary's.

After a rough 2019, Leary showed improvement across the board in his shortened 2020 season, raising his completion percentage nearly 12 points from 48.1 to 60.0. He threw for the same number of touchdowns, eight, in four fewer games plus cut his interceptions from five to two. Turnovers have been a problem the last two seasons as the Wolfpack have given up the ball 40 times in their last 21 games, and that must be rectified. The offense returns nine starters, including its entire RB corps led by the 1-2 punch of sophomore Zonovan "Bam" Knight and junior Ricky Person, who combined for 1,400 yards and 14 TDs. Six of the top seven pass-catchers are also back. Coordinator Tim Beck improved the offense by over 8 PPG in his first season last year, and this group should improve even more.

The defense returns 10 starters, led by sophomore LB Payton Wilson. He finished fourth nationally with 108 tackles while leading the team with 11.5 TFLs and two picks but did have two offseason shoulder surgeries and missed spring ball. Other than Clemson, Miami and North Carolina, NC State is more talented than every team on its schedule.

The Wolfpack won three conference road games last year and will likely have to win at least one (and maybe two) from a group of Boston College, Miami, Florida State and Wake Forest to eclipse its win total. Talent and stability should win out. - Wes Reynolds

48

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#38 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		49.5	24.5	1.77	-6.4	6-QB	40.4	6.94	13.02	3	15.9	5.17	21.6
2017		54.5	24.3	2.6	-14.5	9	39.9	7.23	13.72	8	15.7	4.63	20.39

NOTEWORTHY...

- NC STATE IS 16-4-1 ATS (L21G) HTH VS. FLORIDA STATE
- NC STATE IS 2-8 ATS (L3Y) ON ROAD
- NC STATE IS 22-6 UNDER (L28G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 SOUTH FLORIDA (-19.5)

9/11 at Mississippi St (+5)

9/18 FURMAN (-33)

9/25 CLEMSON (+16)

10/2 LOUISIANA TECH (-20.5)

10/16 at Boston College (+1.5)

10/23 at Miami Fl (+12)

10/30 LOUISVILLE (-7)

11/6 at Florida St (-0.5)

11/13 at Wake Forest (+2)

11/20 SYRACUSE (-15.5)

11/26 NORTH CAROLINA (+5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.63
(#52 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 30.2 47 29.2 61

Yards Per Point 12.7 24 14.2 54

Plays Per Game 72.2 60

Time of Possession 28:41 94

3rd Down Conv. % 44.1% 36 36.6% 31

Total Yards Per Game 385.3 71 415 69

Yards Per Play 5.3 76 5.3 43

Rush Attempts Per Game 36.2 88

Rush Yards Per Game 123.4 104 173.3 72

Yards Per Rush Attempt 3.4 105 4.3 58

Pass Attempts Per Game 33.3 49

Completion % 62.8% 40 58.6% 39

Passing Yards Per Game 261.9 36 241.7 76

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.9 44 6.9 39

Turnovers 1.6 82 1.1 97

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	WAKE FOREST	45-42	W	2	W	54.5 O
9/26	at Virginia Tech	24-45	L	6	L	55.5 O
10/3	at Pittsburgh	30-29	W	14	W	45.5 O
10/10	at Virginia	38-21	W	7	W	59 T
10/17	DUKE	31-20	W	-3.5	W	59.5 U
10/24	at North Carolina	21-48	L	16	L	61.5 O
11/6	MIAMI FL	41-44	L	10.5	W	58 O
11/14	FLORIDA ST	38-22	W	-13	W	61.5 U
11/21	LIBERTY	15-14	W	-4	L	66.5 U
11/28	at Syracuse	36-29	W	-17	L	49.5 O
12/5	GEORGIA TECH	23-13	W	-6.5	W	62 U
1/2	vs. Kentucky	21-23	L	3	W	49.5 U

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

PITTSBURGH PANTHERS

HEAD COACH: PAT NARDUZZI (7TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MARK WHIPPLE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RANDY BATES

LOCATION: PITTSBURGH, PA • STADIUM: HEINZ FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

0 +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

Pat Narduzzi is always a defensive-minded coach. However, his offense has just not reached the level needed for the Panthers to take the next step. Pitt's offense ranked third to last in the ACC with just 379.6 YPG, ahead of only Duke and Syracuse. The Panthers ranked 111th in the FBS in rushing offense (111.9 YPC), converted just 36.4% of their third downs (No. 98 in the FBS) and finished 90th in red zone touchdown rate, scoring from inside the opponent's 20-yard line just 57.5% of the time.

Senior QB Kenny Pickett is back and has made 36 starts in four seasons. Pickett is tough and steady, but Panthers fans have always been left wanting more. He has also thrown too many interceptions (25 in 39 games), and he could improve his accuracy. Eight of the nine top pass-catchers are back, including Jordan Addison (60 receptions as a freshman). So is 95% of the rushing yards, but the running game needs a lift. The defense lost 16.5 sacks from a group that has led the nation in sacks for two straight seasons. The 14 returning starters -- eight on offense, six on defense -- is one of the lower marks in the conference.

Pitt has three easy nonconference home games with UMass, Western Michigan and New Hampshire. The Panthers then visit rebuilding Tennessee and play their ACC opener at Georgia Tech; Pitt has a very good chance to start 5-0. The Panthers' three toughest ACC games -- against Clemson, Miami and UNC -- are at home. Pitt might also be favored in three of its four conference road games -- at Georgia Tech, at Duke and at Syracuse. With the toughest games at home, Pitt will likely have to win at least five of six games on the road to eclipse the season win total. - Wes Reynolds

48

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#38 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		51	18.6	2.33	-9.8	4	36.3	7.32	12.65	9-DC	17.7	4.99	19.07
2017		48.5	15.2	1.4	-4.4	6-QB, OC	32.6	6.48	13.6	4	17.4	5.08	19.39

NOTEWORTHY...

- PITTSBURGH IS 11-2 ATS (L13G) HTH VS. VIRGINIA TECH
- PITTSBURGH IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- PITTSBURGH IS 7-0 OVER (L2Y) AVENGING A LOSS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+15000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MASSACHUSETTS (-34)

9/11 at Tennessee (+0.5)

9/18 W MICHIGAN (-12.5)

9/25 NEW HAMPSHIRE (-27)

10/2 at Georgia Tech (-3)

10/16 at Virginia Tech (+4.5)

10/23 CLEMSON (+16)

10/30 MIAMI FL (+5)

11/6 at Duke (-8.5)

11/11 NORTH CAROLINA (+5)

11/20 VIRGINIA (-3.5)

11/27 at Syracuse (-9)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

39.91
(#58 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.6 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	26.4	78	27	49
Yards Per Point	14.1	60	13.3	82
Plays Per Game	77.6	18		
Time of Possession	30:47	48		
3rd Down Conv. %	35.0%	98	36.4%	30
Total Yards Per Game	372.7	83	359.8	33
Yards Per Play	4.8	101	4.8	14
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.4	94		
Rush Yards Per Game	117.9	110	102.8	7
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	109	2.8	4
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.7	12		
Completion %	56.9%	93	56.7%	24
Passing Yards Per Game	254.8	38	257	95
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	95	7.5	68
Turnovers	1.6	83	1.7	42

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	AUSTIN PEAY	55-0	W	-30	W	48.5 O
9/19	SYRACUSE	21-10	W	-21.5	L	47 U
9/26	LOUISVILLE	23-20	W	-3	T	53 U
10/3	NC STATE	29-30	L	-14	L	45.5 O
10/10	at Boston College	30-31	L	-5.5	L	42.5 O
10/17	at Miami FL	19-31	L	12	T	47.5 O
10/24	NOTRE DAME	3-45	L	10.5	L	43.5 O
11/7	at Florida St	41-17	W	-1.5	W	53 O
11/21	VIRGINIA TECH	47-14	W	6	W	52.5 O
11/28	at Clemson	17-52	L	23.5	L	59 O
12/10	at Georgia Tech	34-20	W	-7.5	W	56.5 U

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

SYRACUSE ORANGE

HEAD COACH: DINO BABERS (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: STERLIN GILBERT • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TONY WHITE

LOCATION: SYRACUSE, NY • STADIUM: CARRIER DOME

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

The Orange are 38-59 since joining the ACC in 2013, but last season was their worst at 1-10. Syracuse's offense averaged a paltry 18 PPG and 265 YPG in 2020. Tommy DeVito was supposed to be the blue-chip QB recruit who would take the Orange to the next level, but DeVito has been exposed by a poor unit up front. He is still there, but Mississippi State transfer Garrett Shrader seems the likely starter. Shrader was one of only three FBS freshman quarterbacks to account for 1,000 yards passing and 500 yards rushing in 2019.

Nine starters are back for an offense that rated No. 123 in the country for third-down conversions, largely due to facing third-and-longs after allowing 38 sacks, third worst in FBS. Syracuse allowed 50 sacks the year before. Since Dino Babers took over at Syracuse, the Orange have allowed 195 sacks, an average of 39 per year. Ten starters are also back on defense, and 11 of the top 12 tacklers return. But the unit has averaged 460 YPG for the last five years and started six true freshmen in the last two games.

Syracuse's first four games are winnable. Rutgers comes in early September for an old Big East rematch. The most challenging games will be at Florida State, home against Clemson and at Virginia Tech. The Orange open their season with nine consecutive games without a week off, which is concerning for a young team that has not had much success. With a 24-36 record in five seasons, this is a crucial year for Babers. The Orange have an opportunity to earn a couple of nonconference wins, but they might be underdogs in every ACC game. - Wes Reynolds

36.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#93 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		54.5	23.8	0.95	-10	8-QB	43.6	6.28	11.87	6	19.8	5.32	19.65
2017		40.5	13.9	1.11	-5.9	9	37.3	6.52	14.98	10	23.4	5.42	16.06

NOTEWORTHY...

- SYRACUSE IS 15-3 ATS (L18G) VS. MAC
- SYRACUSE IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) IN OCTOBER
- SYRACUSE IS 13-4 UNDER (L5Y) AS UNDERDOG OF 10 OR MORE POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Ohio U (+4)

9/11 RUTGERS (-1.5)

9/18 ALBANY (-20.5)

9/24 LIBERTY (+7)

10/2 at Florida St (+11)

10/9 WAKE FOREST (+8.5)

10/15 CLEMSON (+28.5)

10/23 at Virginia Tech (+16)

10/30 BOSTON COLLEGE (+8.5)

11/13 at Louisville (+12)

11/20 at NC State (+15.5)

11/27 PITTSBURGH (+9)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.22
(#35 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.6 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	17.8	117	32.7	86
Yards Per Point	14.9	87	14.2	56
Plays Per Game	63.1	119		
Time of Possession	24:17	127		
3rd Down Conv. %	26.1%	123	47.4%	111
Total Yards Per Game	265.3	125	464	111
Yards Per Play	4.2	124	5.7	73
Rush Attempts Per Game	29.1	120		
Rush Yards Per Game	92	120	209.2	102
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	116	4.6	79
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.5	75		
Completion %	51.5%	119	65.4%	106
Passing Yards Per Game	173.3	110	254.8	92
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	115	7.5	72
Turnovers	1.9	103	2.2	12

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 1-10

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at North Carolina	6-31	L	24	L	67 U
9/19	at Pittsburgh	10-21	L	21.5	W	47 U
9/26	GEORGIA TECH	37-20	W	7.5	W	52.5 O
10/10	DUKE	24-38	L	2.5	L	53.5 O
10/17	LIBERTY	21-38	L	3	L	54.5 O
10/24	at Clemson	21-47	L	46.5	W	64.5 O
10/31	WAKE FOREST	14-38	L	14	L	59.5 U
11/7	BOSTON COLLEGE	13-16	L	14.5	W	54.5 U
11/20	at Louisville	0-30	L	20	L	55.5 U
11/28	NC STATE	29-36	L	17	W	49.5 O
12/5	at Notre Dame	21-45	L	34	W	51 O

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

VIRGINIA CAVALIERS

HEAD COACH: BRONCO MENDENHALL (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROBERT ANAE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NICK HOWELL / KELLY POPPINGA

LOCATION: CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA • STADIUM: SCOTT STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

O + 105 / U - 125

PLAY
UNDER

Fourth-year coach Bronco Mendenhall admitted that his Cavaliers were not as ready to play as they should have been in 2020. However, Virginia closed the season 4-1 after a 1-4 start, beginning life without QB Bryce Perkins. Brennan Armstrong led an offense that averaged the most yards in the Mendenhall era with 423, as well as 30.7 PPG. Junior WR/QB Keytaon Thompson will be used a bit like Taysom Hill, whom Mendenhall coached at BYU. Freshman TE Lavel Davis led the ACC with 25.8 YPC but tore his ACL in the spring, and November might be the earliest he can return. On the OL, the top six returners have combined for 122 career starts. But on defense, four of the top six tacklers have departed. The Cavaliers need immediate improvement in the secondary as well, as they allowed an ACC-worst 304.4 passing yards per game last season, 123rd of 127 FBS teams. Opponents averaged 9.4 yards per attempt and had 29 passing plays of 30 or more yards against the Cavs, the third most nationally.

Three of the Cavaliers' first four games are in Scott Stadium, where they went 5-1 last season. The lone road game is a tough one at North Carolina, though Virginia has won four in a row against the Tar Heels. However, the Cavaliers were 0-4 on the road last season, making midseason trips to Miami and

Louisville uphill battles. The schedule ramps up considerably with a closing stretch against BYU, Notre Dame, Pitt and Virginia Tech. Mendenhall returns to BYU, where he coached for 13 years, on Oct. 30. The Cavaliers play nine straight games before having a week off, so there is concern of being burned out before the closing stretch. The Panthers also play three games in 12 days: Sept. 18 at North Carolina, Sept. 24 vs. Wake Forest and Sept. 30 at Miami.

Mendenhall is building a strong culture in Charlottesville, but this schedule might be too daunting. - *Wes Reynolds*

48

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#38 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		51	18.2	1.74	-9.3	5	33	6.59	12.94	8	14.8	4.84	20.66
2017		41	12.3	1.2	0.6	6	32.2	5.87	12.97	8	20	4.68	15.66

NOTEWORTHY...

- VIRGINIA IS 18-3 ATS (L21G) BEFORE PLAYING VIRGINIA TECH
- VIRGINIA IS 3-11-1 ATS (L15G) AS AP TOP 25
- VIRGINIA IS 17-4 OVER (L21G) NONCONFERENCE VS. NON-POWER 5

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+30000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 WILLIAM & MARY (-30)

9/11 ILLINOIS (-13)

9/18 at North Carolina (+12)

9/24 WAKE FOREST (-3)

9/30 at Miami Fl (+12)

10/9 at Louisville (+0.5)

10/16 DUKE (-12.5)

10/23 GEORGIA TECH (-9)

10/30 at BYU (+0.5)

11/13 NOTRE DAME (+7.5)

11/20 at Pittsburgh (+3.5)

11/27 VIRGINIA TECH (-0.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.94
(#27 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.5 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	DUKE	38-20	W	-4	W	45.5 O
10/3	at Clemson	23-41	L	28	W	55.5 O
10/10	NC STATE	21-38	L	-7	L	59 T
10/17	at Wake Forest	23-40	L	2.5	L	57.5 O
10/24	at Miami Fl	14-19	L	13.5	W	54.5 U
10/31	NORTH CAROLINA	44-41	W	8	W	61 O
11/14	LOUISVILLE	31-17	W	-5.5	W	63.5 U
11/21	ABILENE CHRISTIAN	55-15	W	-37	W	60.5 O
12/5	BOSTON COLLEGE	43-32	W	-6.5	W	54.5 O
12/12	at Virginia Tech	15-33	L	3	L	65 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	28	64	31.2	73
Yards Per Point	14.7	84	14.6	48
Plays Per Game	78	17		
Time of Possession	31:27	33		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.9%	99	41.9%	82
Total Yards Per Game	412.8	48	454.3	104
Yards Per Play	5.3	80	6.3	105
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	72		
Rush Yards Per Game	168	59	147	45
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	55	3.9	37
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.9	15		
Completion %	56.9%	94	63.0%	80
Passing Yards Per Game	244.8	47	307.3	124
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	102	9.9	126
Turnovers	2.1	113	1.9	28

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

VIRGINIA TECH HOKIES

HEAD COACH: JUSTIN FUENTE (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRAD CORNELSEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JUSTIN HAMILTON

LOCATION: BLACKSBURG, VA • STADIUM: LANE STADIUM/WORSHAM FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O + 120 / U - 140

PLAY
UNDER

Justin Fuente has two losing seasons in his last three years at Virginia Tech, and in 2020 the nation's longest streak of bowl appearances ended at 27. The seat has certainly warmed in Blacksburg.

A logjam at QB has developed over the last couple of seasons, but the transfer portal has cleared that out as Quincy Patterson is now at North Dakota State and Hendon Hooker at Tennessee. Junior Braxton Burmeister is now officially the guy. He has a strong arm and is an elusive runner, but can he stay healthy? He had three injuries last season that forced him to miss time. Eight starters return for an offense that averaged 441 YPG and 31.1 PPG and led the ACC in rushing. A strong stable of running backs is led by juniors Raheem Blackshear and Jalen Holston. Six of the seven top pass catchers are also back. The OL must replace first-rounder Christian Darrishaw, but four returners combine for 92 career starts. The defense, which returns seven starters, allowed 447 YPG (266 passing) and 32.1 PPG.

Drawing North Carolina is a tough opener, but that may be the best time to play the Tar Heels, who are replacing their top skill-position players. The schedule is tough but very front-loaded, with six of the first seven at home. Virginia Tech has a road date with West Virginia and Notre Dame comes to Lane Stadium, but there is still an opportunity for at least a solid start. Four of the last five are on the road, with trips to Georgia Tech, Boston College, Miami and Virginia. At 7, this would be an Over play; at 7.5, it looks like a big ask. - Wes Reynolds

50

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#29 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47.5	11.9	0.94	-4.8	7-QB	37.3	6.64	12.94	5	25.5	5.7	15.37
2017		53.5	28.9	1.92	-13.3	5-QB	35.9	6.19	13	7	7	4.27	38.39

NOTEWORTHY...

- VIRGINIA TECH IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AVENGING A LOSS VS. MIAMI
- VIRGINIA TECH IS 1-14 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- VIRGINIA TECH IS 34-11 UNDER (L45G) AT HOME AS AP TOP 25

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 NORTH CAROLINA (+4)

9/11 MIDDLE TENN ST (-22)

9/18 at West Virginia (+3.5)

9/25 RICHMOND (-26)

10/9 NOTRE DAME (+5.5)

10/16 PITTSBURGH (-4.5)

10/23 SYRACUSE (-16)

10/30 at Georgia Tech (-5)

11/5 at Boston College (-0.5)

11/13 DUKE (-14.5)

11/20 at Miami FL (+10)

11/27 at Virginia (+0.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

42.12
(#38 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.7 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	31.1	43	32.1	80
Yards Per Point	14.2	64	13.9	61
Plays Per Game	68.2	95		
Time of Possession	30:31	53		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.1%	79	40.5%	65
Total Yards Per Game	440.7	30	447.5	100
Yards Per Play	6.5	15	5.9	89
Rush Attempts Per Game	43	25		
Rush Yards Per Game	240.1	10	181.5	83
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.6	9	4.9	96
Pass Attempts Per Game	23.2	118		
Completion %	62.0%	50	61.7%	67
Passing Yards Per Game	200.6	87	266	108
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.7	14	7.5	73
Turnovers	1.3	46	1.5	58

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	NC STATE	45-24	W	-6	W	55.5 O
10/3	at Duke	38-31	W	-11.5	L	53.5 O
10/10	at North Carolina	45-56	L	3.5	L	59 O
10/17	BOSTON COLLEGE	40-14	W	-13.5	W	61.5 U
10/24	at Wake Forest	16-23	L	-11	L	69 U
10/31	at Louisville	42-35	W	-5	W	68 O
11/7	LIBERTY	35-38	L	-17	L	66.5 O
11/14	MIAMI FL	24-25	L	-2	L	67 U
11/21	at Pittsburgh	14-47	L	-6	L	52.5 O
12/5	CLEMSON	10-45	L	21.5	L	66.5 U
12/12	VIRGINIA	33-15	W	-3	W	65 U

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

WAKE FOREST DEMON DEACONS

HEAD COACH: DAVE CLAWSON (8TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WARREN RUGGIERO • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LYLE HEMPHILL

LOCATION: WINSTON-SALEM, NC • STADIUM: TRUIST FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
UNDER

Dave Clawson's streak of winning seasons ended at four in 2020 with a 4-5 campaign that was full of early departures, opt-outs and injuries. Wake Forest had only nine returning starters in 2020 but still made a bowl game. This year 18 starters return — nine each on offense and defense — including QB Sam Hartman, in his third season as the starter and leading an offense that scored a school-record 36 PPG. Hartman threw a school-record 258 consecutive passes without an interception.

Wake Forest lost Kenneth Walker III to Michigan State via the transfer portal after he rushed for a team-high 13 touchdowns, but the Demon Deacons' top rusher Christian Beal-Smith is back after rushing for 732 yards and five touchdowns last year. Michigan transfer Christian Turner also should help fill the void left by Walker's departure. Seven of the top eight tacklers return for a unit that needs to put more pressure on the passer.

Wake Forest gets four of its first five games at home, and the first six are winnable. The Demon Deacons also avoid playing Miami, Virginia Tech and Pittsburgh and get the bottom teams in the Coastal. The game vs. North Carolina, in a schedule oddity, is a nonconference game that will not count in the ACC standings. The schedule is tougher in the second half of the season, and Wake Forest tends to wear down late in the season due to a lack of depth. So a good start is paramount because a November stretch at North Carolina, vs. NC State, at Clemson and at Boston College could be brutal. — *Wes Reynolds*

47

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#45 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46	13.3	0.96	-3.7	8	38.9	6.26	13.12	6	25.6	5.3	16.11
2017		52	24.1	2.77	-9	9	42.1	7.47	12.81	5-DC	18	4.7	21.26

NOTEWORTHY...

- WAKE FOREST IS 9-2 ATS (L3Y) AT HOME
- WAKE FOREST IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- WAKE FOREST IS 10-0 OVER (L10G) ON ROAD BEFORE PLAYING NC STATE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 OLD DOMINION (-29)

9/11 NORFOLK ST (-47.5)

9/18 FLORIDA ST (-6)

9/24 at Virginia (+3)

10/2 LOUISVILLE (-5.5)

10/9 at Syracuse (-8.5)

10/23 at Army (-4.5)

10/30 DUKE (-12)

11/6 at North Carolina (+12)

11/13 NC STATE (-2)

11/20 at Clemson (+23.5)

11/27 at Boston College (+2)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

38.12
(#68 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.2 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 32.2 35 35.1 97

Yards Per Point 13.3 37 12.7 97

Plays Per Game 81.2 6

Time of Possession 27:46 108

3rd Down Conv. % 38.9% 72 39.5% 53

Total Yards Per Game 428.4 37 444.9 94

Yards Per Play 5.3 82 5.9 87

Rush Attempts Per Game 41.9 29

Rush Yards Per Game 146.1 78 191.2 87

Yards Per Rush Attempt 3.5 99 4.7 83

Pass Attempts Per Game 36.1 28

Completion % 55.0% 107 64.5% 96

Passing Yards Per Game 282.2 25 253.6 90

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.8 47 7.7 83

Turnovers 0.9 10 1.6 51

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	CLEMSON	13-37	L	34.5	W	58.5 U
9/19	at NC State	42-45	L	-2	L	54.5 O
10/2	CAMPBELL	66-14	W	-34	W	70 O
10/17	VIRGINIA	40-23	W	-2.5	W	57.5 O
10/24	VIRGINIA TECH	23-16	W	11	W	69 U
10/31	at Syracuse	38-14	W	-14	W	59.5 U
11/14	at North Carolina	53-59	L	12.5	W	70.5 O
12/12	at Louisville	21-45	L	-2	L	62 O
12/30	vs. Wisconsin	28-42	L	10.5	L	51.5 O

BIG TEN

CONFERENCE

PREFVIEW

BY
WES REYNOLDS



Graham Mertz,
Wisconsin

THE FAVORITES

OHIO STATE and WISCONSIN

The Buckeyes have won four straight Big Ten titles but once again lost many players to the NFL — 10, tied with Alabama. However, Ohio State lost nine players to the NFL before last season and made it to the national championship game. While loaded with their usual supply of talent, the Buckeyes must replace Justin Fields at QB with a freshman and lose their entire linebacker unit from a defense that was down by recent standards, especially against the pass. Ohio State is still odds-on to win the East Division and the Big Ten (-200) but is not the overwhelming favorite it usually is. Literally every other team in the conference returns more experience except Northwestern, OSU's opponent in last year's Big Ten championship game. The Buckeyes get tested immediately by opening on the road at Minnesota, which brings back 10 starters on each side of the ball, and then facing Oregon at the Horseshoe in Week 2.

Wisconsin (7-1) once again leads the pack in the West off a disappointing 4-3 season. The Badgers have Graham Mertz, the most talented QB in their program since Russell Wilson. But Mertz will need help from a running game that compiled only 165 ypg last year. Wisconsin's defense was up to its usual standard, though, allowing 300 yards and 17.4 points per game. The Badgers do not play a true road game until Oct. 9 but get Notre Dame on Sept. 25 at Soldier Field in Chicago. Nevertheless, a Penn State team off a terrible season and hungry for redemption is not an easy home opener.

LIVE DOGS

PENN STATE and MINNESOTA

The Nittany Lions started last season 0-5, opening with a controversial overtime loss at Indiana, and did not recover until it was too late. Ohio State easily dispatched them in Week 2, and then they lost inexplicably to Maryland and at Nebraska. The Nittany Lions have QB Sean Clifford back as well as a loaded group of running backs and seven of their top eight receivers. Penn State must travel to Wisconsin and Iowa but gets four of its first five games at home, including Auburn and Indiana. The Lions have to go to Ohio State on Halloween weekend but bring back more experience than the Buckeyes and are certainly a program with a chip on its shoulder after last year's disaster.

Minnesota went 11-2 in 2019 and was a trendy pick to win the Big Ten West last season, but those lofty expectations disintegrated when the Gophers were drubbed by Michigan in the home opener 49-24. Now the expectations have drastically lessened, and they are back under the radar. Minnesota lost receiver Rashod Bateman to Baltimore in the first round of the draft, but he played only five games last season before opting out. However, 10 starters are back on both sides of the ball, including a third-year starter at QB in junior Tanner Morgan and 15 of the top 16 tacklers. The Gophers draw Ohio State in the opener, but they have a couple of winnable conference games at Purdue and Northwestern and avoid Penn State and Michigan.

DEAD MONEY

RUTGERS and NORTHWESTERN

The best thing Rutgers did was to give Greg Schiano a second act as coach. Schiano opened his first tenure at Rutgers by going 12-34 in his first four years and then 56-33 in his last seven years with six bowl appearances. However, that was in the Big East, and this is a different level in the Big Ten. Nevertheless, he is making progress on the recruiting trail, and the Scarlet Knights won three of their four road games last season. Rutgers is progressing, and the nonconference schedule — vs. Temple, at Syracuse, vs. Delaware — is manageable. But facing the league slate in the tougher division plus playing Wisconsin and having Maryland and Michigan State seeking revenge from last year looks daunting.

Northwestern went 7-2 last season, including upsets at Iowa and against Wisconsin. The Wildcats won the West Division, gave Ohio State a competitive game in the Big Ten championship game and defeated Auburn in the Citrus Bowl. However, the Wildcats have only four starters back on each side of the ball, by far the fewest in the conference. Northwestern also must make up for the loss of two first-round draft picks, LT Rashawn Slater and CB Greg Newsome, for the first time in program history. A good start is possible — Michigan State, Indiana State, at Duke, Ohio — and the Wildcats avoid the top three teams in the Big Ten East — Ohio State, Penn State, Indiana. But NU has road games at Michigan and Wisconsin and must replace stalwart defensive coordinator Mike Hankwitz. While the schedule is relatively manageable, the regression monster looms.

PENN STATE AT WISCONSIN SEPT. 4

Penn State was the most disappointing team in the Big Ten last season, and Wisconsin was a close second. Both get the opportunity to prove their 2020 seasons were anomalies right out of the gate.

INDIANA AT IOWA SEPT. 4

Both had better-than-expected 2020 seasons and are out to prove they can build on them. Former Indiana AD Fred Glass once said he wanted to get the program to “an Iowa level.” Here is the Hoosiers’ chance to prove they have taken the next step by going on the road and defeating one of the conference’s most consistent programs.

OREGON AT OHIO STATE SEPT. 11

Oregon is a dark-horse CFP contender. Ohio State is one of the favorites to return to the playoff. But this could be when the Buckeyes are most gettable, with 11 new starters and a freshman QB making his home debut against a top-end program.

WISCONSIN VS. NOTRE DAME IN CHICAGO SEPT. 25

Wisconsin and Notre Dame are next-tier threats to make the CFP. These schools have not met on the field since 1964. Irish QB Jack Coan, who made 18 starts at Wisconsin in 2018-19, gets a crack at his old mates in Soldier Field.

INDIANA AT PENN STATE OCT. 2

Penn State will get its chance for revenge after losing in gut-wrenching fashion last season in Bloomington. The Nittany Lions outgained Indiana by almost 300 yards but had to rally to take a late fourth-quarter lead before Indiana tied it. Indiana went for two in overtime, and QB Michael Penix Jr.’s dive to the pylon was ruled in before the knee was down — still a point of controversy in Happy Valley — and the Hoosiers pulled a 36-35 upset.

PENN STATE AT OHIO STATE OCT. 30

Penn State will get its chance for revenge after losing in gut-wrenching fashion last season in Bloomington. The Nittany Lions outgained Indiana by almost 300 yards but had to rally to take a late fourth-quarter lead before Indiana tied it. Indiana went for two in overtime, and QB Michael Penix Jr.’s dive to the pylon was ruled in before the knee was down — still a point of controversy in Happy Valley — and the Hoosiers pulled a 36-35 upset.

**BIG
GAMES
ON THE
BOARD**

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength and Rank	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.		PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
EAST DIVISION								
OHIO ST	64	3.6	0.3	41.61 (42)	10.7	1.3	7.9	1.1
PENN ST	54.5	3.6	0.4	43.49 (23)	8.2	3.8	5.7	3.3
INDIANA	53	2.5	0.3	43.61 (18)	7.7	4.3	5.3	3.7
MICHIGAN	51.5	3.3	-0.4	43.87 (14)	7.3	4.7	4.9	4.1
MARYLAND	44.5	2.5	-0.2	41.3 (46)	5.6	6.4	3.4	5.6
MICHIGAN ST	42.5	2.3	-0.1	44.17 (11)	4.8	7.2	2.9	6.1
RUTGERS	38	2.1	-0.6	43.5 (22)	3.9	8.1	1.8	7.2
WEST DIVISION								
WISCONSIN	55	2.8	0.8	43.73 (16)	8.9	3.1	6.6	2.4
IOWA	54.5	3.4	0.3	43.53 (19)	8.3	3.7	6.2	2.8
NORTHWESTERN	47.5	2.6	0.7	40.42 (56)	7.4	4.6	4.9	4.1
MINNESOTA	47.5	2.9	0.2	42.86 (28)	6.4	5.6	4.1	5.0
NEBRASKA	46.5	2	-0.3	45.88 (2)	5.5	6.5	3.8	5.2
PURDUE	44.5	2.5	0.1	44.71 (8)	5.1	6.9	3.4	5.6
ILLINOIS	38	2	-0.3	43.66 (17)	3.8	8.2	2.2	6.8

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
OHIO ST	64
WISCONSIN	55
IOWA	54.5
PENN ST	54.5
INDIANA	53
MICHIGAN	51.5
MINNESOTA	47.5
NORTHWESTERN	47.5
NEBRASKA	46.5
MARYLAND	44.5
PURDUE	44.5
MICHIGAN ST	42.5
ILLINOIS	38
RUTGERS	38

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
OHIO ST	-3.6
PENN ST	-3.6
IOWA	-3.4
MICHIGAN	-3.3
MINNESOTA	-2.9
WISCONSIN	-2.8
NORTHWESTERN	-2.6
INDIANA	-2.5
MARYLAND	-2.5
PURDUE	-2.5
MICHIGAN ST	-2.3
RUTGERS	-2.1
ILLINOIS	-2
NEBRASKA	-2

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
WISCONSIN	0.8
NORTHWESTERN	0.7
PENN ST	0.4
INDIANA	0.3
IOWA	0.3
OHIO ST	0.3
MINNESOTA	0.2
PURDUE	0.1
MICHIGAN ST	-0.1
MARYLAND	-0.2
ILLINOIS	-0.3
NEBRASKA	-0.3
MICHIGAN	-0.4
RUTGERS	-0.6

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
MINNESOTA	20
RUTGERS	20
ILLINOIS	18
INDIANA	17
MARYLAND	17
MICHIGAN ST	17
NEBRASKA	17
PURDUE	17
MICHIGAN	16
PENN ST	15
WISCONSIN	15
IOWA	13
OHIO ST	12
NORTHWESTERN	9

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
RUTGERS	11
MICHIGAN ST	10
MINNESOTA	10
ILLINOIS	9
PURDUE	9
INDIANA	8
MARYLAND	8
MICHIGAN	8
PENN ST	8
NEBRASKA	7
OHIO ST	7
WISCONSIN	7
IOWA	6
NORTHWESTERN	4

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
MINNESOTA	10
NEBRASKA	10
ILLINOIS	9
INDIANA	9
MARYLAND	9
RUTGERS	9
MICHIGAN	8
PURDUE	8
WISCONSIN	8
IOWA	7
MICHIGAN ST	7
PENN ST	7
NORTHWESTERN	5
OHIO ST	5

BIG TEN
CONFERENCE

ILLINOIS
FIGHTING ILLINI

HEAD COACH: BRET BIELEMA (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TONY PETERSEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RYAN WALTERS
LOCATION: CHAMPAIGN, IL • STADIUM: MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL
3.5
0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

The Lovie-hate relationship at Illinois is history. Lovie Smith, a former Super Bowl coach of the Chicago Bears, was fired in 2020 after a five-year run with no winning seasons for the Fighting Illini. In 2019, Illinois did reach a bowl game and finished 6-7. That year produced the highlight of the Smith era when the Illini stunned Wisconsin 24-23 as 30-point home underdogs. Now the program is run by former Wisconsin coach Bret Bielema, who led the Badgers to three Big Ten titles before he left for Arkansas. Smith did recruit well the last few years, and Bielema will benefit this year with 18 returning starters.

Brandon Peters, who started his career at Michigan, comes back as the quarterback. Peters' backup last year, Isaiah Williams, has switched to wide receiver. The Illini went 2-6 last year with both wins coming on the road against Nebraska and Rutgers. Bielema's system and the team's experience should prevent an ugly rebuilding year. Illinois is a slight favorite to win two of its three nonconference games (Charlotte, UTSA, Virginia), and four

of its home conference games (Nebraska, Maryland, Rutgers, Northwestern) are winnable. If Peters plays well, the Illini will be much more competitive and Bielema should pop for four or five wins in his debut season in Champaign. - Matt Youmans

38 STEVE MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#86 OF 130)

18 NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		36	0.2	0.58	6.2	8-OC	34.2	6.84	13.7	8	34.1	6.26	13.27
2017		30.5	-0.7	0.55	7.5	5-QB	23.7	5.46	13.94	6	24.4	4.92	14.91

NOTEWORTHY...

- ILLINOIS IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) VS. AP TOP 5
- ILLINOIS IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AFTER PLAYING WISCONSIN
- ILLINOIS IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 NEBRASKA (+6)

9/4 TX-SAN ANTONIO (-4)

9/11 at Virginia (+13)

9/17 MARYLAND (+4.5)

9/25 at Purdue (+9.5)

10/2 CHARLOTTE (-10)

10/9 WISCONSIN (+16)

10/23 at Penn St (+20.5)

10/30 RUTGERS (-2.5)

11/6 at Minnesota (+12.5)

11/20 at Iowa (+20)

11/27 NORTHWESTERN (+8)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.66
(#17 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS **RECORD: 2-6**

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/23	at Wisconsin	7-45	L	20.5	L	51.5 O
10/31	PURDUE	24-31	L	10	W	56.5 U
11/7	MINNESOTA	14-41	L	8	L	65 U
11/14	at Rutgers	23-20	W	4.5	W	51.5 U
11/21	at Nebraska	41-23	W	17	W	61.5 O
12/5	IOWA	21-35	L	12	L	53 O
12/12	at Northwestern	10-28	L	11.5	L	42 U
12/19	at Penn St	21-56	L	16.5	L	54 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	20.1	111	34.9	94
Yards Per Point	17.3	117	13.4	79
Plays Per Game	66.9	103		
Time of Possession	27:25	111		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.7%	84	43.0%	89
Total Yards Per Game	349	100	467.2	113
Yards Per Play	5.2	85	6.3	104
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.8	37		
Rush Yards Per Game	196.1	32	230.1	117
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	40	5.1	101
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.2	117		
Completion %	46.9%	122	69.6%	126
Passing Yards Per Game	152.9	114	237.1	69
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	101	8.9	117
Turnovers	1.1	31	1.9	29

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

INDIANA HOOSIERS

HEAD COACH: TOM ALLEN (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GRANT HEARD / NICK SHERIDAN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHARLTON WARREN
LOCATION: BLOOMINGTON, IN • STADIUM: MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8

O +110 / U -130

PLAY
UNDER

After going 8-5 in 2019 and following that with a 6-2 record and a second-place finish in the Big Ten East in 2020, Indiana now has actual expectations. In 2020, the Hoosiers finally got that signature win over No. 8 Penn State in the opener. They went on to defeat three ranked teams, the first time that had happened since 1945. Indiana has taken positive steps, and it is a different program than it was before Tom Allen arrived. The LEO (Love Each Other) culture has become more than just a Twitter hashtag. However, Indiana is still looking to take the next steps. That includes not only reaching bowl games each year but winning them (the Hoosiers' last bowl win was in 1991).

Indiana was carried by its defense in 2020. Only two opponents, Penn State and Ohio State, exceeded their season average against Indiana. The Hoosiers ranked No. 12 nationally in turnover margin at plus-8 and No. 19 in scoring defense at 20.3 PPG. The offense had its moments but ended up only No. 99 in the nation at 5.1 yards per play. This was largely due to the injury to sophomore QB Michael Penix Jr. late in the season. Penix has torn the same ACL twice and broken his collarbone. He is 12-2 as the starter and is the best QB Indiana has had in many years. However, health will always be a concern. The rushing attack looks to be a committee effort, with former Ohio State commit Sampson James and USC graduate transfer Stephen Carr leading the way. RBs coach Deland McCullough is back at Indiana after stints at USC and with the Kansas

City Chiefs. Three of the top four receivers are back, and Florida State graduate transfer D.J. Matthews enters the fray. Indiana's back seven is the strength of the team and senior LB Marcelino McCrary-Ball is back after missing last year.

Indiana will get a good idea of how much the program has improved with a road opener at Iowa and Cincinnati coming to Bloomington. The Hoosiers have trips to Penn State and Michigan, and both will be seeking revenge. They draw Ohio State at home after nearly pulling the upset last year in Columbus. Eight wins would be a major leap, and one that Indiana may be a year from achieving. - Wes Reynolds

53

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#22 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		44	14.5	1.41	-1.9	7	36.8	6.56	13.48	3	22.4	5.15	16.27
2017	Yes	46.5	17.4	1.67	-4.9	6-OC	36.9	5.93	12.74	9-DC	19.5	4.26	15.11

NOTEWORTHY...

- INDIANA IS 6-0 ATS (L2Y) ON NON-GRASS FIELD
- INDIANA IS 15-37 ATS (L52G) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD
- INDIANA IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Iowa (+4.5)

9/11 IDAHO (-32)

9/18 CINCINNATI (-0.5)

9/25 at W Kentucky (-16.5)

10/2 at Penn St (+5)

10/16 MICHIGAN ST (-13)

10/23 OHIO ST (+9)

10/30 at Maryland (-6.5)

11/6 at Michigan (+1.5)

11/13 RUTGERS (-18)

11/20 MINNESOTA (-8)

11/27 at Purdue (-6.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.61
(#18 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.5 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	28.9	55	20.2	20
Yards Per Point	12.6	19	18.7	10
Plays Per Game	71.8	65		
Time of Possession	31:15	38		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.9%	82	37.5%	39
Total Yards Per Game	362.6	92	378.1	43
Yards Per Play	5.1	90	5.3	42
Rush Attempts Per Game	34	104		
Rush Yards Per Game	111.8	113	137.1	30
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	111	4	45
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.5	25		
Completion %	57.5%	90	59.1%	43
Passing Yards Per Game	250.9	41	241	75
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	79	7	45
Turnovers	1.5	74	2.5	4

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	PENN ST	36-35	W	6.5	W	62 O
10/31	at Rutgers	37-21	W	-11.5	W	54 O
11/7	MICHIGAN	38-21	W	4	W	55 O
11/14	at Michigan St	24-0	W	-7.5	W	52.5 U
11/21	at Ohio St	35-42	L	20.5	W	67 O
11/28	MARYLAND	27-11	W	-10.5	W	65.5 U
12/5	at Wisconsin	14-6	W	11.5	W	44.5 U
1/2	vs. Ole Miss	20-26	L	-7.5	L	68 U

BIG TEN
CONFERENCE

IOWA
HAWKEYES

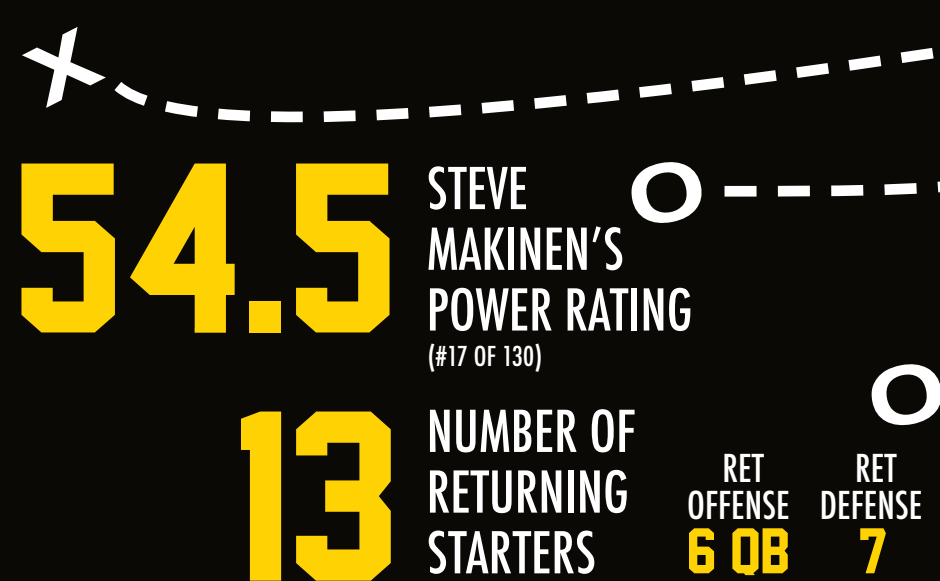
HEAD COACH: KIRK FERENTZ (23RD)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN FERENTZ • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHIL PARKER
LOCATION: IOWA CITY, IA • STADIUM: KINNICK STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL
8.5
O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

If he ever retires from coaching football, Kirk Ferentz could probably launch a second career as a magician. Ferentz has been fooling prognosticators for a long time. Entering his 23rd year with the Hawkeyes, Ferentz is the longest-tenured FBS head coach in the nation, and his staying power has a lot to do with a trend of overachieving and proving doubters wrong. A year ago, when off-the-field turmoil threatened his job, Ferentz faced what many thought could be one of his worst seasons and possibly his last. It was ugly when Iowa opened the season 0-2 with losses to Purdue and Northwestern. The Hawkeyes rallied to finish 6-2. So, with only 14 starters returning and few big-time playmakers, is this finally the year Ferentz falls short?

In this case, the expectation bar for Iowa is set at 8.5 wins. It's still a high bar for the Hawkeyes, who open the hard way by hosting Indiana and playing at Iowa State. Iowa should be favored in its next five games before playing at Wisconsin on Oct. 30. The Hawkeyes' offense is in decent shape with sophomore quarterback Spencer Petras and running back Tyler Goodson returning. The defense will be typically solid. The team's fate has much to do with Petras' improvement or lack of it. Roll the dice on 7-5 or 8-4. - Matt Youmans



STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		58	28.9	2.37	-14.4	7-QB	40	6.4	11.25	6	11.2	4.03	22.97
2017		51.5	27.3	2.14	-7.2	7-QB	38.7	6.4	10.78	8	11.5	4.27	26.18

NOTEWORTHY...

- IOWA IS 24-10 ATS (S2000) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- IOWA IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- IOWA IS 9-1 OVER (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING MINNESOTA

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 INDIANA (-4.5)

9/11 at Iowa St (+10.5)

9/18 KENT ST (-22)

9/25 COLORADO ST (-24.5)

10/1 at Maryland (-8)

10/9 PENN ST (-3)

10/16 PURDUE (-13.5)

10/30 at Wisconsin (+3)

11/6 at Northwestern (-4.5)

11/13 MINNESOTA (-10)

11/20 ILLINOIS (-20)

11/26 at Nebraska (-6.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

43.53
(#19 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.4 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	31.8	39	16	6
Yards Per Point	11.6	10	19.6	8
Plays Per Game	69.4	89		
Time of Possession	29:20	74		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.6%	105	40.3%	61
Total Yards Per Game	368.6	86	313.8	7
Yards Per Play	5.3	78	4.2	1
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	75		
Rush Yards Per Game	171	57	107.6	9
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	48	2.8	5
Pass Attempts Per Game	31	69		
Completion %	56.9%	95	57.8%	31
Passing Yards Per Game	197.6	96	206.1	33
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	98	6	6
Turnovers	1.1	34	2.2	7

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Purdue	20-24	L	-3	L	52.5 U
10/31	NORTHWESTERN	20-21	L	1.5	W	43.5 U
11/7	MICHIGAN ST	49-7	W	-5.5	W	45 O
11/13	at Minnesota	35-7	W	-3	W	58 U
11/21	at Penn St	41-21	W	1	W	45 O
11/27	NEBRASKA	26-20	W	-11.5	L	52.5 U
12/5	at Illinois	35-21	W	-12	W	53 O
12/12	WISCONSIN	28-7	W	1.5	W	39 U

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

MARYLAND TERRAPINS

HEAD COACH: MIKE LOCKSLEY (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAN ENOS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN STEWART / BRIAN WILLIAMS
LOCATION: COLLEGE PARK, MD • STADIUM: CAPITAL ONE FIELD AT MARYLAND STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

O -135 / U +115

PLAY
UNDER

Mike Locksley has had more success on the recruiting trail than on the field. The Terrapins' incoming class rated No. 18 nationally, per 247 Sports. After Maryland got blown out 43-3 at Northwestern to open last season, sophomore Alabama transfer Taulia Tagovailoa showed some consistency at QB and went 2-2 as the starter. He now has a lock on the job. But the Terps do not have a returning RB who gained over 100 yards. The receiving corps is the deepest position on the team with everyone back, including five-star wideout Rakim Jarrett. Four of the five starters return on the OL, which should be the team's most improved unit. Former Cincinnati associate head coach Dan Enos replaces Scottie Montgomery as the new OC. Enos also served on Nick Saban's staff with Locksley at Alabama in 2018, where Locksley was the OC and Enos was the QBs coach for Tua Tagovailoa. Enos is not the only new coordinator on the staff, as Brian Stewart replaces Jon Hoke as the DC. He inherits nine starters.

After the opener vs. West Virginia, Maryland plays Howard, at Illinois and Kent State, and all should be victories. Then things get interesting.

Maryland hosts a tough crossover game against Iowa on Oct. 1, then hits the road for games at Ohio State and Minnesota. Maryland's last five games are brutal. Matchups with Penn State, Michigan State and Michigan are sandwiched between improved Indiana and a game at Rutgers to end the regular season. The Terps will likely be underdogs in at least seven of their nine conference games. Recruiting puts you in position to be in position, but it does not guarantee results. Plus, with two new coordinators, Maryland might be just another year away. - Wes Reynolds

44.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#55 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		44.5	18.5	2.64	-6.8	8-QB, OC	38.2	7.38	11.72	5	19.8	4.75	16.88
2017		40.5	7.9	1.82	-1.9	6-QB	36.1	6.48	11.28	7	28.2	4.66	12.35

NOTEWORTHY...

- MARYLAND IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AS FAVORITE OF 10 OR MORE POINTS
- MARYLAND IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER
- MARYLAND IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+40000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 WEST VIRGINIA (+3)

9/11 HOWARD (-51)

9/17 at Illinois (-4.5)

9/25 KENT ST (-11)

10/1 IOWA (+8)

10/9 at Ohio St (+23.5)

10/23 at Minnesota (+6)

10/30 INDIANA (+6.5)

11/6 PENN ST (+8)

11/13 at Michigan St (+0.5)

11/20 MICHIGAN (+4)

11/27 at Rutgers (-4)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

41.3
(#46 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.5 / -0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	23.6	96	32	79
Yards Per Point	17.3	116	13.4	78
Plays Per Game	65	113		
Time of Possession	25:19	125		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.9%	83	41.7%	77
Total Yards Per Game	408.4	53	429.2	84
Yards Per Play	6.3	24	5.2	35
Rush Attempts Per Game	30	117		
Rush Yards Per Game	144.4	80	229.2	116
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	39	4.8	93
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.8	60		
Completion %	61.6%	56	56.4%	22
Passing Yards Per Game	264	34	200	25
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	26	6.1	7
Turnovers	2.2	118	0.8	116

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Northwestern	3-43	L	13.5	L	52.5 U
10/30	MINNESOTA	45-44	W	17.5	W	61 O
11/7	at Penn St	35-19	W	27.5	W	64 U
11/28	at Indiana	11-27	L	10.5	L	65.5 U
12/12	RUTGERS	24-27	L	-3.5	L	55.5 U

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

HEAD COACH: JIM HARBAUGH (7TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOSH GATTIS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE MACDONALD

LOCATION: ANN ARBOR, MI • STADIUM: MICHIGAN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

Jim Harbaugh suffered his first losing season in Ann Arbor last year. He responded by gutting his coaching staff and replacing six coaches with a much younger staff. The most notable departure is longtime defensive coordinator Don Brown. Mike Macdonald, 33, succeeds him after spending three seasons as LBs coach with Jim's brother John on the Baltimore Ravens' staff. Harbaugh agreed to a new deal with less money and a low buyout by major program standards. He knows he needs to produce better results.

One thing Harbaugh has yet to deliver on is QB development. Redshirt freshman Cade McNamara showed promise last year and is in the mix for the QB job along with Texas Tech transfer Alan Bowman and five-star freshman J.J. McCarthy, the highest-rated high school quarterback to sign with Michigan since Ryan Mallett in the Class of 2007. The Wolverines' top rusher, sophomore Hassan Haskins, and top two receivers, junior Ronnie Bell and sophomore Cornelius Johnson, return to an offense with 10 starters back, including all five linemen. Michigan returns seven starters on defense but is switching from a 4-3 to 3-4 alignment under Macdonald. Expect less blitzing in this new scheme after Michigan blitzed on 43.8% of snaps but rarely

seemed to get home and too often left the defensive backs on an island. The recruiting has seemed to rebound, and Harbaugh brought in former Michigan players Mike Hart and Ron Bellamy to lock down the state. The new coaches and the QB will determine how far Michigan can go.

The schedule sets up for a solid start with the first four games at the Big House. It is very much front-loaded. Nebraska, Northwestern, Michigan State and Maryland should certainly be winnable. However, the Wolverines face Indiana and Ohio State at home and visit Penn State, all in November. Nevertheless, an early 4-0 start, including a win over a good Washington club, could give this squad some confidence it has lost over the last couple of years. - Wes Reynolds

51.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#24 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		61	36.5	3.55	-25.2	8-QB	46.2	7.34	10.99	9	9.7	3.79	23.42
2017		54.5	23.9	2.51	-13.2	4	34.7	6.36	12.18	1	10.8	3.85	21.44

NOTEWORTHY...

- MICHIGAN IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING MICHIGAN STATE
- MICHIGAN IS 7-21-2 ATS (L30G) NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5
- MICHIGAN IS 14-3 OVER (L17G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+8000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 W MICHIGAN (-15.5)

9/11 WASHINGTON (-4.5)

9/18 N ILLINOIS (-25)

9/25 RUTGERS (-17.5)

10/2 at Wisconsin (+6.5)

10/9 at Nebraska (-2.5)

10/23 NORTHWESTERN (-6.5)

10/30 at Michigan St (-6.5)

11/6 INDIANA (-1.5)

11/13 at Penn St (+7)

11/20 at Maryland (-4)

11/27 OHIO ST (+9.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

43.87
(#14 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.3 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 2-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Minnesota	49-24	W	-3	W	54.5 O
10/31	MICHIGAN ST	24-27	L	-21.5	L	52 U
11/7	at Indiana	21-38	L	-4	L	55 O
11/14	WISCONSIN	11-49	L	7	L	51 O
11/21	at Rutgers	48-42	W	-11.5	L	52 O
11/28	PENN ST	17-27	L	-1	L	56.5 U

OFFENSE
STAT RANK

DEFENSE
STAT RANK

Points Per Game	28.3	63	34.5	93
Yards Per Point	13.5	47	12.6	101
Plays Per Game	65.5	112		
Time of Possession	25:37	124		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.0%	96	46.2%	103
Total Yards Per Game	381.3	77	434.3	87
Yards Per Play	5.8	44	5.5	62
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.7	121		
Rush Yards Per Game	131	94	178.8	79
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	51	4.2	51
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.5	33		
Completion %	57.8%	89	59.1%	45
Passing Yards Per Game	250.3	42	255.5	93
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	73	7.4	63
Turnovers	1	19	0.5	123

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

MICHIGAN STATE SPARTANS

HEAD COACH: MEL TUCKER (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAY JOHNSON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTTIE HAZELTON
LOCATION: EAST LANSING, MI • STADIUM: SPARTAN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

O +100 / U -120

PLAY
OVER

Mel Tucker was already behind schedule when he was hired from Colorado in February 2020 after the abrupt retirement of Mark Dantonio. National signing day had already passed, so Tucker could not add many prospects. And the coaching carousel had largely stopped, so he had to scramble to hire a staff. Then COVID-19 hit. Michigan State did pull off two upsets of ranked teams at Michigan and against Northwestern, but the Spartans still went 2-5 and looked overwhelmed at times. But the roster looks better for 2021, starting with QB.

Temple graduate transfer Anthony Russo has arrived, and redshirt freshman Payton Thorne got the starting job late last season and looks to have potential. Most of the offensive production is back as the Spartans return their top three RBs and add transfers Kenneth Walker from Wake Forest and Harold Joiner from Auburn. Seven of the top eight pass catchers are also back, and the OL returns all five starters. The defense must generate more pressure on opposing passers, as the Spartans ranked just 106th nationally in sack rate. The secondary is even more of a concern, as Michigan State had to be aggressive in the transfer portal since only one scholarship CB was

returning. The Spartans have lost 22 scholarship prospects to the transfer portal since October, second most in the Power 5 behind Tennessee. However, Michigan State brought in 15 scholarship transfers, 12 from Power 5 programs.

The schedule doesn't appear to have a daunting three-game stretch. MSU will face Rutgers, Indiana, Michigan, Purdue and Maryland in October and early November. The Spartans open at Northwestern and must travel to Miami and close with games at Ohio State and against Penn State. A .500 season and a return to a bowl game is realistic. - Wes Reynolds

42.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#72 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		50.5	20.6	1.74	-10.5	10-QB	29.4	5.68	14.12	9	8.7	3.94	30.35
2017		52.5	20.7	1.98	-8.8	4-QB	31.8	6.11	14.41	5	11.1	4.13	22.78

NOTEWORTHY...

- MICHIGAN ST IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING PENN STATE
- MICHIGAN ST IS 2-9 ATS (L3Y) AT HOME
- MICHIGAN ST IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 at Northwestern (+7.5)

9/11 YOUNGSTOWN ST (-21.5)

9/18 at Miami Fl (+17.5)

9/25 NEBRASKA (+1.5)

10/2 W KENTUCKY (-11.5)

10/9 at Rutgers (-2.5)

10/16 at Indiana (+13)

10/30 MICHIGAN (+6.5)

11/6 at Purdue (+4.5)

11/13 MARYLAND (-0.5)

11/20 at Ohio St (+25)

11/27 PENN ST (+10)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

44.17
(#11 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.3 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	RUTGERS	27-38	L	-9.5	L	45 0
10/31	at Michigan	27-24	W	21.5	W	52 U
11/7	at Iowa	7-49	L	5.5	L	45 0
11/14	INDIANA	0-24	L	7.5	L	52.5 U
11/28	NORTHWESTERN	29-20	W	13.5	W	41 0
12/5	OHIO ST	12-52	L	22.5	L	59.5 0
12/12	at Penn St	24-39	L	14	L	46.5 0

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	18	116	35.1	98
Yards Per Point	18.3	121	11.3	119
Plays Per Game	71	72		
Time of Possession	27:10	113		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.7%	114	38.3%	47
Total Yards Per Game	329.6	110	396.7	53
Yards Per Play	4.6	109	5.2	34
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.1	102		
Rush Yards Per Game	90.7	121	157.3	54
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.7	124	3.9	40
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.6	37		
Completion %	54.6%	110	61.1%	61
Passing Yards Per Game	238.9	54	239.4	73
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	77	6.8	35
Turnovers	2.9	126	1.6	55

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS

HEAD COACH: P. J. FLECK (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE SANFORD JR. / MATT SIMON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE HARASYMIK / JOE ROSSI
LOCATION: MINNEAPOLIS, MN • STADIUM: TCF BANK STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

The team with the most potential to rise up and surprise favored Wisconsin in the West is Minnesota. The Gophers' 20 returning starters include Tanner Morgan, one of the Big Ten's elite quarterbacks. Morgan passed for 30 touchdowns in 2019 before his play declined during the COVID-19-shortened 2020 season in which the Gophers finished in a 3-4 hole. Morgan is supported by Mohamed Ibrahim, who rushed for 1,076 yards and 15 touchdowns last season and is arguably the top running back in the conference. Minnesota also has a mammoth offensive line featuring 6-foot-9, 400-pound sophomore Daniel Faalele. The defense should be improved but remains a concern until proven otherwise.

The Gophers, 11-2 in 2019, had high hopes last year that were crushed in the opener, a 49-24 loss to Michigan. For the second year in a row, Minnesota opens in Minneapolis against a Big Ten power, this time Ohio State. DraftKings lists the Buckeyes as 13.5-point favorites. Gophers coach P.J. Fleck has been a moneymaker for bettors with a 19-11-2 ATS

record the last three seasons. Fleck set up a relatively soft nonconference schedule with Miami (Ohio), Colorado and Bowling Green. In league play, Minnesota should be favored at home against Nebraska, Maryland and Illinois before the finale against the Badgers, who are 16-1 in the rivals' last 17 meetings. Most signs point to the Gophers winning at least seven games. - Matt Youmans

47.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#42 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47	16.6	1.3	-1.5	7	36.2	6.54	12.25	7	19.6	5.23	17.51
2017	Yes	41.5	12.7	0.75	-1.3	7-QB, OC	30	5.63	11.85	6-DC	17.3	4.87	17.75

NOTEWORTHY...

- MINNESOTA IS 21-4 ATS (L25G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- MINNESOTA IS 3-10-2 ATS (L15G) AVENGING A LOSS VS. IOWA
- MINNESOTA IS 21-7 OVER (L28G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 OHIO ST (+14)

9/11 MIAMI OHIO (-15.5)

9/18 at Colorado (-0.5)

9/25 BOWLING GREEN (-30)

10/2 at Purdue (-0.5)

10/16 NEBRASKA (-4)

10/23 MARYLAND (-6)

10/30 at Northwestern (+2.5)

11/6 ILLINOIS (-12.5)

11/13 at Iowa (+10)

11/20 at Indiana (+8)

11/27 WISCONSIN (+5.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

42.86
(#28 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.9 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	27.3	67	30.1	68
Yards Per Point	14.3	70	13.8	71
Plays Per Game	70.7	77		
Time of Possession	34:08	7		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.7%	16	40.3%	60
Total Yards Per Game	391	65	415.4	70
Yards Per Play	5.5	58	6.8	122
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.6	27		
Rush Yards Per Game	191.9	42	206.7	99
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	58	6.3	124
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.3	105		
Completion %	58.2%	87	64.1%	92
Passing Yards Per Game	199.1	89	208.7	34
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	54	7.6	79
Turnovers	1	18	1	107

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	MICHIGAN	24-49	L	3	L	54.5 O
10/30	at Maryland	44-45	L	-17.5	L	61 O
11/7	at Illinois	41-14	W	-8	W	65 U
11/13	IOWA	7-35	L	3	L	58 U
11/20	PURDUE	34-31	W	2.5	W	61 O
12/12	at Nebraska	24-17	W	8	W	63 U
12/19	at Wisconsin	17-20	L	10	W	46.5 U

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

HEAD COACH: SCOTT FROST (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT LUBICK • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ERIK CHINANDER
LOCATION: LINCOLN, NE • STADIUM: MEMORIAL STADIUM, TOM OSBORNE FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

O +110 / U -130

PLAY
UNDER

This is not what Nebraska fans envisioned when Scott Frost returned home and took over as coach in 2018. The Cornhuskers are 12-20 in Frost's three years and face more middle-of-the-pack predictions in the West Division. But there are at least three pieces of good news — junior dual-threat quarterback Adrian Martinez returns, 10 starters are coming back on defense, and Nebraska should start the season 3-0 with games against Illinois, Fordham and Buffalo.

Now the bad news — the Cornhuskers are likely to get crushed at Oklahoma on Sept. 18, and there are no gimme wins on a tough Big Ten schedule that includes Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio State, Wisconsin and Iowa. The Hawkeyes have won six straight in that rivalry. The game against the Sooners is the former conference rivals' first meeting since 2010. Frost was a huge success at UCF for a reason and has not forgotten how to coach. His main task will be coaching up Martinez, who was attracting Heisman Trophy hype in the summer of 2019. It was misplaced

hype. Martinez has regressed the last two seasons, but he still has the talent to help the Cornhuskers get to a bowl after 4-8, 5-7 and 3-5 finishes under Frost. This will probably be a 6-6 team unless Frost finally gets a signature win against Michigan or Iowa. — Matt Youmans

46.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#48 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	52	14.9	2.34	-8.8	7-OC	39.3	7.4	13.61	8-DC	24.4	5.06	15.47
2017		38.5	8.3	1.55	-4	4-QB	36.3	6.88	13.08	6-DC	27.9	5.34	13.15

NOTEWORTHY...

- NEBRASKA IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- NEBRASKA IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) AT HOME AS AP TOP 10
- NEBRASKA IS 5-0 UNDER (L2Y) ON ROAD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 at Illinois (-6)

9/4 FORDHAM (-30.5)

9/11 BUFFALO (-5.5)

9/18 at Oklahoma (+24.5)

9/25 at Michigan St (-1.5)

10/2 NORTHWESTERN (-0.5)

10/9 MICHIGAN (+2.5)

10/16 at Minnesota (+4)

10/30 PURDUE (-4)

11/6 OHIO ST (+16)

11/20 at Wisconsin (+11.5)

11/26 IOWA (+6.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

45.88
(#2 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 23.1 101 29.4 64

Yards Per Point 16.9 114 13.2 87

Plays Per Game 72.4 58

Time of Possession 28:42 93

3rd Down Conv. % 35.9% 97 40.5% 64

Total Yards Per Game 391.5 63 386.5 48

Yards Per Play 5.4 69 5.3 49

Rush Attempts Per Game 41.8 31

Rush Yards Per Game 201.4 28 169.5 66

Yards Per Rush Attempt 4.8 38 4.2 52

Pass Attempts Per Game 28.6 88

Completion % 68.1% 7 63.1% 82

Passing Yards Per Game 190.1 103 217 46

Yards Per Pass Attempt 6.6 89 7.2 54

Turnovers 2.2 119 0.9 113

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Ohio St	17-52	L	27.5	L	70.5 U
11/7	at Northwestern	0-21	L	3.5	L	53.5 U
11/14	PENN ST	30-23	W	2.5	W	57 U
11/21	ILLINOIS	23-41	L	-17	L	61.5 O
11/27	at Iowa	20-26	L	11.5	W	52.5 U
12/5	at Purdue	37-27	W	1	W	65 U
12/12	MINNESOTA	17-24	L	-8	L	63 U
12/18	at Rutgers	28-21	W	-6.5	W	51.5 U

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

NORTHWESTERN WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: PAT FITZGERALD (16TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE BAJAKIAN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JIM O'NEIL

LOCATION: EVANSTON, IL • STADIUM: RYAN FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

The coach always returns in Evanston, as Pat Fitzgerald enters his 16th year with the Wildcats. The starters are a different story. Northwestern returns a total of eight starters, the fewest in the Big Ten. The Wildcats were an experienced team in 2020 and the results were a 7-2 record, a West Division title and a Citrus Bowl win. Fitzgerald is replacing quarterback Peyton Ramsey, a highly productive transfer from Indiana, with South Carolina transfer Ryan Hilinski. Cam Porter, who rushed for 333 yards and five touchdowns as a freshman, will again be the go-to running back. This team does not boast a roster of superstars. Fitzgerald is rebuilding.

In 2019, Northwestern slipped to 3-9, its first losing season since 2014, before rebounding in a big way. The Wildcats will win more than three games this year, yet seven is a lot to ask. The schedule is encouraging. Northwestern avoids Ohio State, Indiana and Penn State from the East and plays Indiana State, Duke and Ohio outside the league. All the

conference home games — Michigan State, Rutgers, Minnesota, Iowa and Purdue — are games the Wildcats can win. Northwestern is far from impressive on paper, but Fitzgerald produces blue-collar teams that should not be underestimated. A hospitable schedule will help the purple Cats make a run at .500. — *Matt Youmans*

47.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#42 OF 130)

9

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
4

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		50	18.5	0.9	-8	7-QB	33.9	5.7	12.62	7	15.5	4.8	21.62
2017		51.5	24.4	1.79	-8.5	8	37.5	6.16	12.58	8	13.2	4.36	23.84

NOTEWORTHY...

- NORTHWESTERN IS 13-2 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG
- NORTHWESTERN IS 2-13 ATS (L15G) AT HOME VS. MAC
- NORTHWESTERN IS 33-10 UNDER (L43G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 MICHIGAN ST (-7.5)

9/11 INDIANA ST (-27.5)

9/18 at Duke (-8.5)

9/25 OHIO U (-12)

10/2 at Nebraska (+0.5)

10/16 RUTGERS (-12.5)

10/23 at Michigan (+6.5)

10/30 MINNESOTA (-2.5)

11/6 IOWA (+4.5)

11/13 at Wisconsin (+9.5)

11/20 PURDUE (-5.5)

11/27 at Illinois (-8)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.42
(#56 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.6 / 0.7
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	24.7	89	15.9	4
Yards Per Point	14.6	81	21.5	2
Plays Per Game	76.8	22		
Time of Possession	31:25	35		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.6%	68	29.9%	7
Total Yards Per Game	360.7	93	341.2	19
Yards Per Play	4.7	107	4.8	12
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.8	19		
Rush Yards Per Game	162.8	65	145.9	44
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	95	4.5	70
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.6	62		
Completion %	61.3%	60	51.9%	5
Passing Yards Per Game	197.9	95	195.3	19
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	104	5.2	1
Turnovers	1.7	86	2.1	15

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 7-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	MARYLAND	43-3	W	-13.5	W	52.5 U
10/31	at Iowa	21-20	W	-1.5	L	43.5 U
11/7	NEBRASKA	21-0	W	-3.5	W	53.5 U
11/14	at Purdue	27-20	W	-3.5	W	48 U
11/21	WISCONSIN	17-7	W	7.5	W	44.5 U
11/28	at Michigan St	20-29	L	-13.5	L	41 O
12/12	ILLINOIS	28-10	W	-11.5	W	42 U
12/19	vs. Ohio St	10-22	L	16.5	W	57.5 U
1/1	vs. Auburn	35-19	W	-3.5	W	45 O

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

OHIO STATE BUCKEYES

HEAD COACH: RYAN DAY (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN WILSON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KERRY COOMBS

LOCATION: COLUMBUS, OH • STADIUM: OHIO STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

11

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

Ohio State was clearly the best team in the Big Ten last season but probably was fortunate to make the CFP. The conference changed its rules to allow the Buckeyes to compete in the Big Ten Championship Game despite playing only five games, one short of the minimum. Ohio State ran it all the way to the national championship game before getting routed by Alabama 52-24.

The Buckeyes lost 10 NFL draftees from last year's team, which averaged 519 YPG and 41 PPG and kept turnovers to a minimum. They must try to duplicate those numbers without Justin Fields at QB. Enter freshman C.J. Stroud. He'll have plenty of weapons at WR, with junior Chris Olave and sophomore Garrett Wilson back. Sophomore Master Teague and the top RB in this class, TreVeyon Henderson, should improve on last year's running game. Last season's offense was so good that it masked a mediocre defense by Ohio State standards. The Buckeyes gave up 304 YPG through the air, worst in the Big Ten. Aside from the unanswered questions at QB, Ohio State must replace its entire linebacking corps, which is why defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs likely will go to a 4-2-5 look to get an extra safety on the field. Against the run, the Buckeyes will continue to be stingy with the addition of

transfer DL Antwuan Jackson and freshman DE Jack Sawyer. The secondary must be better with three starters returning. OSU allowed teams to complete 66% of their passes at 7.7 YPA.

In his first two seasons, Ryan Day has led Ohio State to back-to-back undefeated regular seasons, which Urban Meyer never did. The path to three in a row will not be easy, with a tricky opener at Minnesota and a home game against Oregon in the first two weeks. The Buckeyes also travel to Indiana and Michigan. They could notch 11 wins, but this young team has a couple of potential land mines on the schedule. - Wes Reynolds

64

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#4 OF 130)

12

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		64	32.8	2.65	-22.1	7	52.6	7.8	12.1	5	19.8	5.15	17.74
2017		69	40	4.62	-26.3	8-OC	51.8	8.37	12.11	7	11.8	3.75	21.25

NOTEWORTHY...

- OHIO ST IS 20-4-1 ATS (L25G) ON ROAD VS. AP TOP 25
- OHIO ST IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) AT HOME BEFORE PLAYING MICHIGAN
- OHIO ST IS 12-2-1 OVER (L15G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+550

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 at Minnesota (-14)

9/11 OREGON (-12.5)

9/18 TULSA (-24)

9/25 AKRON (-45.5)

10/2 at Rutgers (-24)

10/9 MARYLAND (-23.5)

10/23 at Indiana (-9)

10/30 PENN ST (-12.5)

11/6 at Nebraska (-16)

11/13 PURDUE (-23)

11/20 MICHIGAN ST (-25)

11/27 at Michigan (-9.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

41.61
(#42 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.6 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	41	10	25.8	40
Yards Per Point	12.7	21	15.6	34
Plays Per Game	73.9	43		
Time of Possession	32:19	19		
3rd Down Conv. %	49.1%	10	37.5%	40
Total Yards Per Game	519.4	7	401.2	57
Yards Per Play	7	9	5.6	72
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.1	24		
Rush Yards Per Game	256.9	7	97.6	5
Yards Per Rush Attempt	6	3	3.4	15
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.1	97		
Completion %	70.2%	5	66.0%	112
Passing Yards Per Game	262.5	35	303.6	122
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.3	8	7.7	82
Turnovers	1.1	30	2.4	6

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 7-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	NEBRASKA	52-17	W	-27.5	W	70.5 U
10/31	at Penn St	38-25	W	-9.5	W	63 T
11/7	RUTGERS	49-27	W	-37.5	L	63 O
11/21	INDIANA	42-35	W	-20.5	L	67 O
12/5	at Michigan St	52-12	W	-22.5	W	59.5 O
12/19	vs. Northwestern	22-10	W	-16.5	L	57.5 U
1/1	vs. Clemson	49-28	W	7	W	69 O
1/11	vs. Alabama	24-52	L	9	L	76 T

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

HEAD COACH: JAMES FRANKLIN (8TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE YURCICH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANTHONY POINDEXTER / BRENT PRY
LOCATION: UNIVERSITY PARK, PA • STADIUM: BEAVER STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

Penn State's 2020 season was one to forget. Beset by problems, the Nittany Lions started 0-5, the worst in program history. After rallying to finish 4-5, many players were emotionally drained, and Penn State opted out of a bowl game. James Franklin spent almost an entire year separated from his family due to COVID-19 because daughter Addison has sickle-cell disease. So this season's prospects can only look up.

But Franklin took a lot of heat for the poor season, and he fired offensive coordinator Kirk Giarrocca after one season. Replacement Mike Yurcich, in from Texas, is the third OC in three seasons. Yurcich is installing a more up-tempo offense to be led by junior QB Sean Clifford, who regressed last season. The Nittany Lions are loaded in the backfield with the returning Noah Cain, Keyvone Lee, Devyn Ford and Baylor graduate transfer John Lovett. TE Pat Freiermuth is now in the NFL, but every other receiving target returns, including star Jahan Dotson. Defensive coordinator Brent Pry had his worst unit in eight years here, allowing 27.7 PPG. Seven starters are back, but the line has three new starters.

After the opener at Wisconsin, the Nittany Lions have a four-game homestand that ends with a chance for revenge against Indiana. Penn State also draws Iowa on the road and Illinois at home from the Big Ten West, with a trip to Ohio State set for Oct. 30 and Michigan visiting Happy Valley on Nov. 13. Michigan State and the Land-Grant Trophy return to the Saturday after Thanksgiving. The Nittany Lions look to be prime candidates for a rebound season but will go only as far as Clifford can take them. More than likely, Penn State will fall short of eclipsing the Buckeyes but will return to normalcy. - Wes Reynolds

54.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#17 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		58	29.7	3.07	-13.4	7-QB, OC	43	7.19	11.47	3	13.3	4.12	23.45
2017		66.5	41.1	3.55	-22.6	9	50.5	7.65	10.46	7	9.5	4.09	30.39

NOTEWORTHY...

- PENN ST IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- PENN ST IS 3-14 ATS (L17G) VS. AP TOP 5
- PENN ST IS 23-5-2 OVER (L10Y) VS. AP TOP 25

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+5000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Wisconsin (+3)

9/11 BALL ST (-14)

9/18 AUBURN (-4)

9/25 VILLANOVA (-32.5)

10/2 INDIANA (-5)

10/9 at Iowa (+3)

10/23 ILLINOIS (-20.5)

10/30 at Ohio St (+12.5)

11/6 at Maryland (-8)

11/13 MICHIGAN (-7)

11/20 RUTGERS (-20.5)

11/27 at Michigan St (-10)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.49
(#23 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	29.8	52	27.7	55
Yards Per Point	14.5	75	11.9	111
Plays Per Game	81.9	3		
Time of Possession	33:41	10		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.1%	51	37.0%	34
Total Yards Per Game	430.3	36	328.2	15
Yards Per Play	5.3	83	4.9	18
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.7	13		
Rush Yards Per Game	174.3	54	129.7	26
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	85	3.7	29
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.1	43		
Completion %	60.3%	69	59.0%	42
Passing Yards Per Game	256	37	198.6	24
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.5	57	6.7	25
Turnovers	1.9	101	1	108

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Indiana	35-36	L	-6.5	L	62 O
10/31	OHIO ST	25-38	L	9.5	L	63 T
11/7	MARYLAND	19-35	L	-27.5	L	64 U
11/14	at Nebraska	23-30	L	-2.5	L	57 U
11/21	IOWA	21-41	L	-1	L	45 O
11/28	at Michigan	27-17	W	1	W	56.5 U
12/5	at Rutgers	23-7	W	-13	W	51.5 U
12/12	MICHIGAN ST	39-24	W	-14	W	46.5 O
12/19	ILLINOIS	56-21	W	-16.5	W	54 O

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

PURDUE BOILERMAKERS

HEAD COACH: JEFF BROHM (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN BROHM / JAMARCUS SHEPHARD • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRAD LAMBERT
LOCATION: WEST LAFAYETTE, IN • STADIUM: ROSS-ADE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

Remember when Jeff Brohm threatened to take the Big Ten by storm? It was an empty threat. Since the Boilermakers' blowout victory over No. 2 Ohio State in 2018, Brohm's record is 8-16. The honeymoon is over entering his fifth year as Purdue coach. To be fair, his last two teams were plagued by injuries to several stars, but football is a game of attrition, and excuses eventually wear thin. This has the look of Brohm's best team since his first one finished 7-6 with a bowl victory over Arizona in 2017.

After last year's defense allowed 37 points in each of the final two games, Brohm made big changes to his defensive coaching staff. The Boilermakers return nine starters on each side of the ball, with defensive end George Karlaftis and wide receiver David Bell ranking among the Big Ten's best players. Brohm is an aggressive offensive coach, and sophomore quarterback Jack Plummer has the experience and talent to trigger a high-scoring attack — assuming Plummer beats

out Aidan O'Connell and UCLA transfer Austin Burton for the starting job. Purdue opens as a 7-point home favorite against Oregon State and a 27-point favorite at Connecticut before going to Notre Dame.

It's realistic for the Boilermakers to start 4-1 after hosting Illinois and Minnesota in league play. This is a buy-low spot on Brohm, who should produce a 6-6 season. - Matt Youmans

44.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#55 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47.5	23.3	2.83	-8.1	9-QB	41.9	7.86	13.21	4	18.6	5.04	20.43
2017	Yes	47	22.2	2.25	-4.8	5-OC	32.9	6.69	14.31	8-DC	10.7	4.44	29.73

NOTEWORTHY...

- PURDUE IS 14-1 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- PURDUE IS 0-8 ATS (L8G) ON ROAD AFTER PLAYING OHIO STATE
- PURDUE IS 11-4 UNDER (L5Y) ON ROAD IN CONFERENCE GAMES

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 OREGON ST (-7)

9/11 at Connecticut (-23.5)

9/18 at Notre Dame (+17)

9/25 ILLINOIS (-9.5)

10/2 MINNESOTA (+0.5)

10/16 at Iowa (+13.5)

10/23 WISCONSIN (+9)

10/30 at Nebraska (+4)

11/6 MICHIGAN ST (-4.5)

11/13 at Ohio St (+23)

11/20 at Northwestern (+5.5)

11/27 INDIANA (+6.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

44.71
(#8 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.5 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	27.2	69	29.8	65
Yards Per Point	14.4	74	13.4	80
Plays Per Game	70.5	82		
Time of Possession	27:35	109		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.5%	87	43.2%	91
Total Yards Per Game	390.5	66	399	55
Yards Per Play	5.5	57	5.3	47
Rush Attempts Per Game	25	125		
Rush Yards Per Game	81.5	124	144.8	43
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	112	3.4	20
Pass Attempts Per Game	43.5	3		
Completion %	67.4%	10	65.6%	108
Passing Yards Per Game	309	16	254.2	91
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	69	7.9	98
Turnovers	1.2	37	1.2	89

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	IOWA	24-20	W	3	W	52.5 U
10/31	at Illinois	31-24	W	-10	L	56.5 U
11/14	NORTHWESTERN	20-27	L	3.5	L	48 U
11/20	at Minnesota	31-34	L	-2.5	L	61 O
11/28	RUTGERS	30-37	L	-13	L	60.5 O
12/5	NEBRASKA	27-37	L	-1	L	65 U

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

RUTGERS SCARLET KNIGHTS

HEAD COACH: GREG SCHIANO (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SEAN GLEESON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROBB SMITH

LOCATION: PISCATAWAY, NJ • STADIUM: SHI STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

Despite going 3-6, the first year of Greg Schiano's second act at Rutgers was a success. The Scarlet Knights snapped a 21-game Big Ten losing streak and recorded their most conference wins since 2017. Three defeats were one-score games, including a triple-overtime loss to Michigan. They increased their scoring output by more than 13 PPG and showed modest statistical improvement. They had a plus-5 turnover margin, the first time that number has been positive since 2012. Rutgers was one of only two Big Ten teams to play its full allotment of conference games.

The Scarlet Knights return the most starters in the conference — 11 on offense and 10 on defense — and have been aggressive in the transfer portal. Nebraska transfer QB Noah Vedral's numbers did not leap off the page, and growing pains were apparent in coordinator Sean Gleeson's new up-tempo offense. The Scarlet Knights return 96% of their receiving yards and 89% of their rushing yards. Defensively, Rutgers led the Big Ten in tackles for loss at 71, and senior LB Olakunle Fatukasi led the conference with 101 tackles and 11.2 tackles per game. Still, the team's talent must be upgraded just to be consistently competitive in the Big Ten. Schiano's first recruiting class received the highest ranking for the program since 2012.

The first three games against Temple, Syracuse and Delaware are winnable. A Big Ten West crossover with Illinois could be a win. Home wins against Michigan State and Maryland — two teams Rutgers beat last year — could get the Scarlet Knights bowling for the first time since 2014. However, they have trips to Michigan, Indiana and Penn State in which they will be sizable underdogs. Michigan State also comes in looking for revenge, and Ohio State and Wisconsin visit Piscataway. Schiano will continue to "chop wood" with a program that is showing progress, but Rutgers might have sneaked up on a couple of teams in a topsy-turvy 2020. — Wes Reynolds

38

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#86 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		33.5	-1	-0.03	14.4	7-QB, OC	23.1	4.91	13.66	8	24.1	4.94	14.4
2017		31.5	5.2	0.25	5.3	6-OC	26.3	5.22	11.77	8	21.1	4.97	16.42

NOTEWORTHY...

- RUTGERS IS 11-5 ATS (L5Y) IN NOVEMBER
- RUTGERS IS 2-8 ATS (L3Y) AT HOME AVENGING A LOSS
- RUTGERS IS 11-4 UNDER (L5Y) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 10 OR MORE POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 TEMPLE (-11.5)

9/11 at Syracuse (+1.5)

9/18 DELAWARE (-10)

9/25 at Michigan (+17.5)

10/2 OHIO ST (+24)

10/9 MICHIGAN ST (+2.5)

10/16 at Northwestern (+12.5)

10/30 at Illinois (+2.5)

11/6 WISCONSIN (+15.5)

11/13 at Indiana (+18)

11/20 at Penn St (+20.5)

11/27 MARYLAND (+4)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.5
(#22 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.1/-0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	26.7	75	32.1	81
Yards Per Point	12.7	22	14.1	59
Plays Per Game	75.4	34		
Time of Possession	28:09	101		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.0%	101	38.0%	43
Total Yards Per Game	338.3	106	451.6	102
Yards Per Play	4.5	116	5.8	80
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.1	60		
Rush Yards Per Game	139.9	87	206.1	98
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.7	97	4.6	82
Pass Attempts Per Game	35	35		
Completion %	62.5%	44	67.3%	118
Passing Yards Per Game	198.4	91	245.4	81
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	116	7.9	94
Turnovers	1.6	78	2.1	16

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Michigan St	38-27	W	9.5	W	45 0
10/31	INDIANA	21-37	L	11.5	L	54 0
11/7	at Ohio St	27-49	L	37.5	W	63 0
11/14	ILLINOIS	20-23	L	-4.5	L	51.5 U
11/21	MICHIGAN	42-48	L	11.5	W	52 0
11/28	at Purdue	37-30	W	13	W	60.5 0
12/5	PENN ST	7-23	L	13	L	51.5 U
12/12	at Maryland	27-24	W	3.5	W	55.5 U
12/18	NEBRASKA	21-28	L	6.5	L	51.5 U

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

WISCONSIN BADGERS

HEAD COACH: PAUL CHRYST (7TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE RUDOLPH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JIM LEONHARD

LOCATION: MADISON, WI • STADIUM: CAMP RANDALL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9.5

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
OVER

It's time to find out whether Graham Mertz can be Wisconsin's next Russell Wilson. The Badgers' quarterback tradition is not storied. For the most part, the program develops solid college QBs who make decent NFL backups. Think of Jim Sorgi, John Stocco, Scott Tolzien, Darrell Bevell, Brooks Bollinger and others. Wilson is an exception. Mertz, a former five-star recruit, completed 20 of 21 passes with five touchdowns in his debut against Illinois. He threw for only four touchdown passes the rest of the season as Wisconsin finished 4-3. After blowouts of Illinois and Michigan, the offense hit the skids in losses to Northwestern (17-7), Indiana (14-6) and Iowa (28-7). So Mertz, one of nine returning starters on offense, has something to prove. The defense brings back eight starters. It appears Wisconsin has just enough skill-position talent and an abundance of strength up front to play Wisconsin football again.

The schedule could not set up much better as the Badgers get a majority of their toughest opponents — Penn State, Michigan, Iowa and Northwestern — at Camp Randall Stadium. The marquee nonconference matchup is against Notre Dame, led by Wisconsin transfer quarterback Jack Coan, at Soldier Field in Chicago on Sept. 25. Mertz is not on Wilson's level, but if he plays up to the hype, Wisconsin should win a weakened West Division and finish 10-2. — Matt Youmans

55

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#15 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		53	19.8	2.63	-12.5	9-QB	37.7	7.52	13.39	4	18	4.89	17.6
2017		64	36.9	3.72	-22.4	8	42.6	7.37	11.67	7-DC	5.7	3.66	38.54

NOTEWORTHY...

- WISCONSIN IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) VS. MAC
- WISCONSIN IS 1-7 ATS (L8G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS
- WISCONSIN IS 16-5 OVER (L21G) HTH VS. MINNESOTA

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+5000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 PENN ST (-3)

9/11 E MICHIGAN (-22.5)

9/25 vs. Notre Dame (+2.5)

10/2 MICHIGAN (-6.5)

10/9 at Illinois (-16)

10/16 ARMY (-17.5)

10/23 at Purdue (-9)

10/30 IOWA (-3)

11/6 at Rutgers (-15.5)

11/13 NORTHWESTERN (-9.5)

11/20 NEBRASKA (-11.5)

11/27 at Minnesota (-5.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.73
(#16 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.8 / 0.8
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS **RECORD: 4-3**

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/23	ILLINOIS	45-7	W	-20.5	W	51.5 O
11/14	at Michigan	49-11	W	-7	W	51 O
11/21	at Northwestern	7-17	L	-7.5	L	44.5 U
12/5	INDIANA	6-14	L	-11.5	L	44.5 U
12/12	at Iowa	7-28	L	-1.5	L	39 U
12/19	MINNESOTA	20-17	W	-10	L	46.5 U
12/30	vs. Wake Forest	42-28	W	-10.5	W	51.5 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	25.1	84	17.4	9
Yards Per Point	13.7	54	17.2	17
Plays Per Game	72.4	57		
Time of Possession	36:20	1		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.0%	81	28.7%	5
Total Yards Per Game	345.6	103	299.9	4
Yards Per Play	4.8	102	4.9	19
Rush Attempts Per Game	41.9	30		
Rush Yards Per Game	164.6	64	96.1	3
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	81	3.3	14
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.9	85		
Completion %	61.4%	59	50.5%	2
Passing Yards Per Game	181	108	203.7	31
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	103	6.5	19
Turnovers	1.7	92	1.7	40

BIG 12

CONFERENCE

PREFVIEW

BY
BRUCE MARSHALL



Brock Purdy,
Iowa State

THE FAVORITES

OKLAHOMA and IOWA STATE

If we get a rematch of last year's conference title game between the Sooners and the Cyclones, it would come as no surprise. Oklahoma certainly belongs. By the end of last season, the Sooners arguably were performing at a playoff-caliber level, finishing with an eight-game winning streak after destroying Florida in the Cotton Bowl. Along the way, Spencer Rattler established himself as the next in Lincoln Riley's recent assembly line of quarterbacks, after NFL starters Baker Mayfield, Kyler Murray and Jalen Hurts. The return of slashing RB Kennedy Brooks after last fall's opt-out should provide the necessary balance.

Matt Campbell's team in Ames earns the vote to make the strongest run at the Sooners, especially with QB Brock Purdy resisting the temptation to jump into the NFL draft and most of the Big 12's best defense returning. Now, how soon might the NFL come calling for Riley and Campbell?

LIVE DOG

TEXAS TECH

Feeling a bit of heat at Texas Tech, third-year coach Matt Wells needs a fast upgrade after a pair of sub-.500 seasons. Mindful of his plight, Wells shook the jar in the offseason, bringing back respected offensive coordinator Sonny Cumbie for another tour of duty in Lubbock and tasking him to reignite an offense that has lost some of its zip since the Kliff Kingsbury era. Transfer Tyler Shough, who won a Pac-12 title with Oregon a year ago, offers the promise of an upgrade at QB. But the transfer theme is really playing out on the defensive side, where several potential starters have arrived via the portal. With the entire front seven back, Tech should continue its progress under defensive coordinator Keith Patterson from the road-kill status of the Kingsbury years. Having hit the portal hard and expecting a QB upgrade from Shough, Wells will give it a go this fall and not worry about building for 2022, knowing that a bowl bid might be needed to save his job.

DEAD MONEY

BAYLOR

While Kansas might seem the obvious choice, we suspect the Jayhawks might be so discounted that they could provide some value. Rather, we suspect Baylor has yet to hit bottom after dropping hard and fast following Matt Rhule's departure to the NFL. Rhule knew when to get out of Waco. Replacement Dave Aranda, over from Ed Orgeron's LSU staff, struggled mightily in a debut season disrupted by COVID-19. The drop from 2019 was precipitous, and now multiyear starting QB Charlie Brewer, the soul of the offense, has transferred to Utah. As with many career assistants, the jury remains very much out on Aranda, who wouldn't be the first high-profile coordinator to fail in the jump to the No. 1 role.

IOWA AT IOWA STATE SEPT. 11

It's not a conference game, but we'll get a pretty good idea whether this is to be a truly special autumn in Ames if Iowa State can reclaim the Cy-Hawk Trophy. Matt Campbell has never beaten a Kirk Ferentz-coached Iowa team, as the Cyclones' losing streak against their in-state enemy had grown to five before last year's rivalry game was nixed due to the pandemic. The caution here is Iowa State's opponent the previous week is Northern Iowa, which will surely be up for the game while the Cyclones might have their eyes on the following Saturday's matchup against the Hawkeyes.

TEXAS AT ARKANSAS SEPT. 11

Though the Longhorns and the Razorbacks have met as recently as the 2014 Texas Bowl, this will be only their fourth regular-season meeting since Arkansas bolted the old Southwest Conference for the SEC after the 1991 season. This recalls some college football history with Texas in Fayetteville in one of the "Games of the Century" on Dec. 6, 1969, an epic 15-14 win for No. 1 Texas over No. 2 Arkansas with President Richard M. Nixon in the stands. This figures to be an early marker for any progress coach Steve Sarkisian might be making in his debut season with the Horns.

BIG GAMES ON THE BOARD

(continued on next page)

NEBRASKA AT OKLAHOMA SEPT. 18

This is another nonconference tilt but one that nostalgia buffs will love as much as Arkansas-Texas, as it rekindles what was arguably the nation's most intense rivalry for much of the 1970s and '80s in the days of the old Big Eight. This will mark the 50-year anniversary of the great 1971 Thanksgiving shootout between the two highest-ranked teams in the country. They're already complaining about the TV-influenced early kickoff time of 11 a.m. CDT, as the history of this once-torrid rivalry demands a larger national stage than late Saturday morning.

OKLAHOMA AT KANSAS STATE OCT. 2

Sure, Oklahoma has the annual Texas game on deck, but we suspect there will be no way that Lincoln Riley and the Sooners will overlook K-State after getting dumped by the big underdog Wildcats in each of the last two seasons. If Chris Klieman can make it a hat trick in Manhattan, they might consider adding his name to Bill Snyder's at the KSU stadium.

OKLAHOMA VS. TEXAS IN DALLAS OCT. 9

This has always been a highlight matchup, even better in recent years with a succession of heart-stoppers, including the Sooners' four-overtime win last October. This will also be a big stage for Oklahoma QB Spencer Rattler to impress Heisman Trophy voters while providing new Texas coach Steve Sarkisian a chance to win over those who never quite warmed to predecessor Tom Herman (or, for that matter, predecessor Charlie Strong, or practically any coach in Austin since Darrell Royal). This one will be even more interesting if Sarkisian has the Longhorns 5-0 entering Dallas, not too far-fetched considering the early schedule.

IOWA STATE AT OKLAHOMA NOV. 20

There's a good chance this will be Round 1, with a rematch coming a couple of weeks later in the conference title game in Arlington, Texas. The Cyclones and Sooners split their games last season, and Matt Campbell has scored a couple of the biggest wins of his Iowa State tenure at OU's expense, including a shocking upset at Norman in 2017. It would not be an upset of that magnitude in 2021, as this could very well be a Top 10 matchup in late November.



Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
OKLAHOMA	66.5	4	0.3	41.15 (49)	10.8	1.2	7.9	1.1
IOWA ST	61	4.1	0.2	42.51 (32)	9.5	2.5	6.7	2.3
TEXAS	58	3.4	0.3	44.98 (5)	8.5	3.5	6.0	3.0
OKLAHOMA ST	55.5	3.6	0.3	43.9 (13)	8.1	3.9	5.5	3.5
TCU	52.5	2.9	0.2	43.16 (25)	7.3	4.7	4.7	4.3
WEST VIRGINIA	50	3.8	-0.1	42.28 (34)	6.4	5.6	4.3	4.7
KANSAS ST	45.5	3.8	0.2	44.74 (7)	5.5	6.5	3.4	5.6
TEXAS TECH	44.5	3.8	0	42.39 (33)	5.4	6.6	2.9	6.1
BAYLOR	44	2.8	0	42.01 (40)	5.1	6.9	2.8	6.2
KANSAS	31	3.4	-0.4	45.83 (3)	2.0	10.0	0.9	8.1

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
OKLAHOMA	66.5
IOWA ST	61
TEXAS	58
OKLAHOMA ST	55.5
TCU	52.5
WEST VIRGINIA	50
KANSAS ST	45.5
TEXAS TECH	44.5
BAYLOR	44
KANSAS	31

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
IOWA ST	-4.1
OKLAHOMA	-4
KANSAS ST	-3.8
TEXAS TECH	-3.8
WEST VIRGINIA	-3.8
OKLAHOMA ST	-3.6
KANSAS	-3.4
TEXAS	-3.4
TCU	-2.9
BAYLOR	-2.8

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
OKLAHOMA	0.3
OKLAHOMA ST	0.3
TEXAS	0.3
IOWA ST	0.2
KANSAS ST	0.2
TCU	0.2
BAYLOR	0
TEXAS TECH	0
WEST VIRGINIA	-0.1
KANSAS	-0.4

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
IOWA ST	19
BAYLOR	17
KANSAS	17
TCU	17
KANSAS ST	16
WEST VIRGINIA	16
OKLAHOMA	15
TEXAS TECH	15
TEXAS	14
OKLAHOMA ST	13

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
IOWA ST	10
KANSAS ST	10
TCU	9
WEST VIRGINIA	9
KANSAS	8
TEXAS	8
BAYLOR	7
OKLAHOMA	7
TEXAS TECH	7
OKLAHOMA ST	5

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
BAYLOR	10
IOWA ST	9
KANSAS	9
OKLAHOMA	8
OKLAHOMA ST	8
TCU	8
TEXAS TECH	8
WEST VIRGINIA	7
KANSAS ST	6
TEXAS	6

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

BAYLOR BEARS

HEAD COACH: DAVE ARANDA (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF GRIMES • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RON ROBERTS

LOCATION: WACO, TX • STADIUM: MCLANE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

Though tempted to give then-new coach Dave Aranda a mulligan after last season's oddities -- which hit Baylor harder than most after an early-season COVID-19 pause that never allowed the Waco bunch to get on track -- our instincts say no. Not out of any malice; rather, last year's Bears never remotely resembled the Matt Rhule powerhouse of 2019, which really shouldn't have surprised since much of the roster plus the coaching staff departed afterward. Now Baylor moves forward minus multiyear starting QB Charlie Brewer, who took his guile and savvy to Utah, leaving a mostly untested collection of successors that includes Jacob Zeno, who did briefly shine in relief during the 2019 Big 12 title game against Oklahoma but otherwise has little experience. Even with Brewer, the offense struggled last year, and it was not the same hard-hitting defense as at the end of the Rhule era.

The truth is that the Bears are into a rebuilding stage with Aranda, who still needs to establish his head-coaching chops. Our only cause for pause on the Under is the chance the Bears will break 3-0 from the gate with a forgiving early slate, but they might not be favored in any game thereafter. - *Bruce Marshall*

44

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#61 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		44.5	12.3	1.28	1.2	9-QB	34.8	6.79	14.74	8	22.6	5.51	16.07
2017	Yes	39.5	6.5	1.25	3.1	6-QB, OC	30.8	6.74	16	7-DC	24.3	5.49	16

NOTEWORTHY...

- BAYLOR IS 11-4 ATS (L5Y) IN NOVEMBER
- BAYLOR IS 6-14 ATS (L5Y) AT VS. UNRANKED TEAMS
- BAYLOR IS 17-4 OVER (L21G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Texas St Univ (-10)

9/11 TEXAS SOUTHERN (-51)

9/18 at Kansas (-9.5)

9/25 IOWA ST (+14.5)

10/2 at Oklahoma St (+15)

10/9 WEST VIRGINIA (+3)

10/16 BYU (-1)

10/30 TEXAS (+11.5)

11/6 at TCU (+11.5)

11/13 OKLAHOMA (+20)

11/20 at Kansas St (+5.5)

11/27 TEXAS TECH (-3)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

42.01
(#40 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.8 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	23.3	99	29.2	62
Yards Per Point	13.3	38	13.1	88
Plays Per Game	73.3	46		
Time of Possession	29:19	75		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.1%	110	39.2%	51
Total Yards Per Game	310.2	117	383.4	46
Yards Per Play	4.2	122	5.4	52
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.1	107		
Rush Yards Per Game	90.3	122	180.4	81
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.7	122	4.4	69
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.8	24		
Completion %	61.9%	51	63.7%	89
Passing Yards Per Game	219.9	75	203	30
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6	109	7.1	48
Turnovers	1	16	1.9	26

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	KANSAS	47-14	W	-17	W	61 T
10/3	at West Virginia	21-27	L	-1.5	L	54.5 U
10/24	at Texas	16-27	L	11	T	61 U
10/31	TCU	23-33	L	2.5	L	47.5 O
11/7	at Iowa St	31-38	L	14	W	47.5 O
11/14	at Texas Tech	23-24	L	2	W	54 U
11/28	KANSAS ST	32-31	W	-5.5	L	45.5 O
12/5	at Oklahoma	14-27	L	23.5	W	61 U
12/12	OKLAHOMA ST	3-42	L	6.5	L	49.5 U

BIG 12
CONFERENCE

IOWA STATE
CYCLONES

HEAD COACH: MATT CAMPBELL (6TH)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TOM MANNING • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JON HEACOCK
LOCATION: AMES, IA • STADIUM: JACK TRICE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9

0 -130 / U +110

PLAY
OVER

The cross-state grudge match against Iowa on Sept. 11 will provide an indicator of the height of the trajectory for this season's Cyclones. The shot of adrenaline from beating the Hawkeyes could fuel Iowa State into November, when showdowns against Texas and Oklahoma appear on the schedule. At the moment, Matt Campbell's team projects to be an underdog only against the Sooners. Short of a rash of injuries, this is shaping up as a big season in Ames, with 19 starters back from last season's Fiesta Bowl winners. That includes senior quarterback Brock Purdy and junior running back Breece Hall, who led the nation in rushing a year ago with 1,572 yards.

The throwback-style offense, featuring unbalanced sets, is a change of pace from the many spread-type attacks that populate the conference, and the defense has many established playmakers such as Mike Rose, who made more tackles than any college linebacker a year ago, while safety Greg Eisworth II is a three-time All-Big 12 performer. It should be

an Over in Ames, but we'll feel a lot better about the recommendation if ISU can reclaim the Cy-Hawk Trophy against Iowa. - Bruce Marshall

61

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#6 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		51	19	2.06	-10.6	6-QB, OC	33.5	6.52	12.37	6	14.5	4.46	21.33
2017		54.5	26.8	2.31	-11.4	6	36.4	6.88	12.99	6	9.6	4.57	32.77

NOTEWORTHY...

- IOWA ST IS 13-2 ATS (L15G) IN OCTOBER
- IOWA ST IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) AFTER PLAYING TEXAS TECH
- IOWA ST IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+3000

LAFAYETTE

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 N IOWA (-33.5)

9/11 IOWA (-10.5)

9/18 at UNLV (-34.5)

9/25 at Baylor (-14.5)

10/2 KANSAS (-34.5)

10/16 at Kansas St (-12)

10/23 OKLAHOMA ST (-9.5)

10/30 at West Virginia (-7.5)

11/6 TEXAS (-7)

11/13 at Texas Tech (-13.5)

11/20 at Oklahoma (+9.5)

11/26 TCU (-12.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

42.51
(#32 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

4.1 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game 32.9 31 21.4 23

Yards Per Point 13.3 36 15.9 29

Plays Per Game 70.2 85

Time of Possession 33:04 14

3rd Down Conv. % 45.3% 26 33.1% 17

Total Yards Per Game 436.3 33 341.6 20

Yards Per Play 6.2 30 5.2 36

Rush Attempts Per Game 37.9 63

Rush Yards Per Game 195 38 104.2 8

Yards Per Rush Attempt 5.1 22 3.3 11

Pass Attempts Per Game 31.1 68

Completion % 66.8% 16 62.7% 78

Passing Yards Per Game 241.3 50 237.3 70

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.8 49 7.5 74

Turnovers 1.2 36 1.4 65

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	LA LAFAYETTE	14-31	L	-13	L	56.5 U
9/26	at TCU	37-34	W	-4.5	L	43.5 O
10/3	OKLAHOMA	37-30	W	7.5	W	63 O
10/10	TEXAS TECH	31-15	W	-9.5	W	63.5 U
10/24	at Oklahoma St	21-24	L	2.5	L	53 U
10/31	at Kansas	52-22	W	-27	W	49.5 O
11/7	BAYLOR	38-31	W	-14	L	47.5 O
11/21	KANSAS ST	45-0	W	-13.5	W	48.5 U
11/27	at Texas	23-20	W	-1.5	W	58.5 U
12/5	WEST VIRGINIA	42-6	W	-6	W	48 T
12/19	vs. Oklahoma	21-27	L	5	L	60 U
1/2	vs. Oregon	34-17	W	-4.5	W	57.5 U

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

KANSAS JAYHAWKS

HEAD COACH: LANCE LEIPOLD (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANDY KOTELNICKI • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN BORLAND
LOCATION: LAWRENCE, KS • STADIUM: DAVID BOOTH KANSAS MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

1

0 -160 / U +140

PLAY
OVER

The bar can't sink any lower in Lawrence after Les Miles plumbed new depths in his two seasons before getting run out of town. New coach Lance Leipold arrives from Buffalo as an established winner with the Bulls after notching a Geno Auriemma-like winning percentage of .948 at Wisconsin-Whitewater, where he also won six Division III titles. Leipold, hired April 30, is getting a late start, but Miles actually left behind a couple of well-regarded recruiting classes, and North Texas transfer QB Jason Bean could spark the offense.

Let's not get too excited, as KU was outscored by an average of 46-16 last season and featured one of the nation's worst offenses and defenses. But we suspect Leipold will be a major upgrade on the sidelines, and he has a chance to at least push the win total if he can get past FCS South Dakota in the opener. Then it's a matter of finding just one more win, which a better-organized Kansas is in position to locate with the coaching upgrade. - Bruce Marshall

31

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#109 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9



STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
2020		24.5	-8.8	-2.19	16.2	6, 0C	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, 0C	30.8	6.94	14.5	5, DC	26.4	5.36	15.66
2018		39	10.2	0.81	6.5	9-QB	31.3	6.07	13.18	10	21.1	5.26	17.24
2017		24	-6.9	0.17	15.2	8-0C	24.6	5.65	16.26	5	31.6	5.48	12.63

NOTEWORTHY...

- KANSAS IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING TEXAS
- KANSAS IS 2-13 ATS (L15G) AT HOME NONCONFERENCE VS. NON-POWER 5
- KANSAS IS 9-0-1 OVER (L10G) AVENGING A LOSS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 S DAKOTA (-11)

9/10 at Coastal Carolina (+22.5)

9/18 BAYLOR (+9.5)

9/25 at Duke (+9)

10/2 at Iowa St (+34.5)

10/16 TEXAS TECH (+9.5)

10/23 OKLAHOMA (+32.5)

10/30 at Oklahoma St (+28.5)

11/6 KANSAS ST (+11.5)

11/13 at Texas (+31)

11/20 at TCU (+25)

11/27 WEST VIRGINIA (+15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

45.83
(#3 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.4 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 15.8 123 46 127

Yards Per Point 16.4 110 10 127

Plays Per Game 75.9 28

Time of Possession 30:46 49

3rd Down Conv. % 23.2% 126 41.8% 79

Total Yards Per Game 259.2 126 459.2 106

Yards Per Play 3.4 126 6.5 116

Rush Attempts Per Game 39.3 49

Rush Yards Per Game 104.9 116 236.2 118

Yards Per Rush Attempt 2.7 123 5.8 118

Pass Attempts Per Game 31.4 64

Completion % 54.8% 108 61.9% 69

Passing Yards Per Game 154.3 112 223 49

Yards Per Pass Attempt 4.9 124 7.8 90

Turnovers 1.6 80 1.1 92

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 0-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	COASTAL CAROLINA	23-38	L	-4	L	55 0
9/26	at Baylor	14-47	L	17	L	61 T
10/3	OKLAHOMA ST	7-47	L	21.5	L	53 0
10/17	at West Virginia	17-38	L	21	T	49 0
10/24	at Kansas St	14-55	L	18.5	L	46 0
10/31	IOWA ST	22-52	L	27	L	49.5 0
11/7	at Oklahoma	9-62	L	38.5	L	62.5 0
11/28	TCU	23-59	L	22	L	51 0
12/5	at Texas Tech	13-16	L	26.5	W	62.5 U

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

KANSAS STATE WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: CHRIS KLIEMAN (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: COURTNEY MESSINGHAM • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE KLANDERMAN
LOCATION: MANHATTAN, KS • STADIUM: BILL SNYDER FAMILY FOOTBALL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

Chris Klieman won big at FCS North Dakota State and got Kansas State to a bowl in his first spin with the Wildcats in 2019, but the wheels fell off late last season in some of the worst efforts seen in Manhattan since before Bill Snyder. Keep in mind that Klieman would not be the first coach to benefit from a shrewd predecessor (Snyder) whose leftover troops were so fundamentally sound that the new regime enjoyed a positive carryover. It's Klieman's program now, however, and losing by scores of 37-10, 45-0 and 69-31 down the stretch looked more like K-State circa 1985.

COVID-19 and injuries can shoulder part of the blame, especially as the season began to really unravel after starting QB Skylar Thompson went down. He's back for a sixth season, which should be welcome news, but this remains a run-first offense that will lean heavily on sophomore Deuce Vaughn. And if Thompson goes down again, would Klieman go back to Will Howard, who eventually looked shell-shocked in relief last

year? The defense also lost some key playmakers, including defensive end Wyatt Hubert to the NFL. We'll have an idea of the direction things are headed by time conference play rolls around, as an inability to beat Stanford or Nevada in nonconference play would suggest a quick recovery might not be in order. - Bruce Marshall

45.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#52 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47.5	14.1	1	0	8-QB, OC	30.1	6.15	13.57	5-DC	16	5.15	21.81
2017		52.5	21.3	2.1	-9.7	8	36.8	7.16	11.7	6	15.6	5.06	24.21

NOTEWORTHY...

- KANSAS ST IS 13-2 ATS (L15G) AT HOME AS AP TOP 25
- KANSAS ST IS 4-11 ATS (L15G) ON NEUTRAL FIELD NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5
- KANSAS ST IS 17-4 OVER (L21G) BEFORE PLAYING KANSAS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+30000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Stanford (-2)

9/11 S ILLINOIS (-20)

9/18 NEVADA (-6.5)

9/25 at Oklahoma St (+13.5)

10/2 OKLAHOMA (+17.5)

10/16 IOWA ST (+12)

10/23 at Texas Tech (+2)

10/30 TCU (+3.5)

11/6 at Kansas (-11.5)

11/13 WEST VIRGINIA (+0.5)

11/20 BAYLOR (-5.5)

11/26 at Texas (+15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

44.74
(#7 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	26.6	76	32.2	82
Yards Per Point	12.7	23	13.8	69
Plays Per Game	61.4	125		
Time of Possession	29:00	83		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.1%	111	40.1%	59
Total Yards Per Game	338.4	105	444.7	93
Yards Per Play	5.5	62	5.9	86
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.4	93		
Rush Yards Per Game	152.7	74	177.2	77
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	67	4.7	86
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.7	114		
Completion %	55.5%	104	67.7%	120
Passing Yards Per Game	185.7	107	267.5	109
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.5	56	7.6	76
Turnovers	1.5	73	1.2	86

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	ARKANSAS ST	31-35	L	-15	L	56.5 O
9/26	at Oklahoma	38-35	W	28	W	61.5 O
10/3	TEXAS TECH	31-21	W	1.5	W	61.5 U
10/10	at TCU	21-14	W	11	W	49.5 U
10/24	KANSAS	55-14	W	-18.5	W	46 O
10/31	at West Virginia	10-37	L	5	L	45.5 O
11/7	OKLAHOMA ST	18-20	L	14	W	49 U
11/21	at Iowa St	0-45	L	13.5	L	48.5 U
11/28	at Baylor	31-32	L	5.5	W	45.5 O
12/5	TEXAS	31-69	L	7	L	54 O

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

OKLAHOMA SOONERS

HEAD COACH: LINCOLN RILEY (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BILL BEDENBAUGH / CALE GUNDY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ALEX GRINCH
LOCATION: NORMAN, OK • STADIUM: GAYLORD FAMILY - OKLAHOMA MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

11

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
PASS

Running the table in the Big 12 is pretty tough, and even the three Lincoln Riley playoff teams since 2017 suffered losses in league play -- Iowa State in 2017, Texas in '18 and Kansas State in '19 -- and the Sooners slipped twice in the conference a year ago, falling to K-State and Iowa State. So we're not going too far out on a limb by failing to project an Over. We know OU will be very good and that, if healthy, QB Spencer Rattler (28 TD passes a year ago) should be in the Heisman Trophy mix. Getting back RB Kennedy Brooks, who already has rushed for 2,067 career yards, after he opted out a year ago might be the final piece to a spectacular offense.

The Alex Grinch-coached defense also made significant strides last season and welcomes back seven starters plus other contributors. The front six has considerable depth and experience, with senior nose guard Perrion Winfrey especially disruptive. Make no mistake, this is a definite playoff contender. But the Sooners cannot slip if

they are to exceed 11 wins, and even some spectacular Riley teams have been unable to do that. - Bruce Marshall

66.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#3 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		65	34.3	5.13	-25	6	57.4	10.35	11.91	6	23.1	5.22	16.77
2017	Yes	67	38	5.43	-23.9	9	51.4	10.23	13.76	7	13.3	4.81	24.52

NOTEWORTHY...

- OKLAHOMA IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) AFTER PLAYING TEXAS TECH
- OKLAHOMA IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- OKLAHOMA IS 13-2 OVER (L15G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+750**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Tulane (-20)

9/11 W CAROLINA (-64.5)

9/18 NEBRASKA (-24.5)

9/25 WEST VIRGINIA (-20.5)

10/2 at Kansas St (-17.5)

10/9 vs. Texas (-8.5)

10/16 TCU (-18)

10/23 at Kansas (-32.5)

10/30 TEXAS TECH (-26.5)

11/13 at Baylor (-20)

11/20 IOWA ST (-9.5)

11/27 at Oklahoma St (-7.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.15
(#49 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

4 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS **RECORD: 9-2**

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	MISSOURI ST	48-0	W	-48.5	L	72 U
9/26	KANSAS ST	35-38	L	-28	L	61.5 O
10/3	at Iowa St	30-37	L	-7.5	L	63 O
10/10	vs. Texas	53-45	W	-3	W	74.5 O
10/24	at TCU	33-14	W	-6.5	W	58.5 U
10/31	at Texas Tech	62-28	W	-16	W	65 O
11/7	KANSAS	62-9	W	-38.5	W	62.5 O
11/21	OKLAHOMA ST	41-13	W	-7	W	60.5 U
12/5	BAYLOR	27-14	W	-23.5	L	61 U
12/19	vs. Iowa St	27-21	W	-5	W	60 U
12/30	vs. Florida	55-20	W	-7.5	W	65 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	42.5	6	23.9	34
Yards Per Point	11.4	7	15.6	33
Plays Per Game	73	52		
Time of Possession	31:48	25		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.8%	66	30.1%	8
Total Yards Per Game	483.4	13	373.2	40
Yards Per Play	6.6	11	5.1	29
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.4	55		
Rush Yards Per Game	185.3	45	111.2	13
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	37	3.6	22
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.6	56		
Completion %	67.2%	11	56.0%	18
Passing Yards Per Game	298.1	19	262	103
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.1	10	6.8	36
Turnovers	1.3	50	1.8	32

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

OKLAHOMA STATE COWBOYS

HEAD COACH: MIKE GUNDY (17TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KASEY DUNN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JIM KNOWLES

LOCATION: STILLWATER, OK • STADIUM: BOONE PICKENS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
PASS

Mike Gundy has won more than two-thirds of his games as coach in Stillwater, so it's hardly a stretch for the Cowboys to get to eight wins. It might not be easy, however, mostly because of a league schedule that takes Oklahoma State to Texas, Iowa State and West Virginia ... not to mention Bedlam vs. the Sooners, this fall in Stillwater. Getting to eight wins also might require keeping QB Spencer Sanders in one piece, which a banged-up offensive line couldn't do a year ago (at least the line now has considerable experience). The departure of RB Chuba Hubbard might not be as disruptive to the offense as replacing big-play wideout Tylan Wallace, a Ravens draftee, because others such as Dezmon Jackson (5.5 YPG) ran with some flair last autumn.

Meanwhile, crafty defensive coordinator Jim Knowles continues to get his unit punching above its weight thanks to his creative schemes. A key to an Over will likely be a spotless 3-0 nonconference mark, which means the Sept. 18 game at Boise State looms as a must-win, considering

the tough road assignments that await in conference. If the number is eight wins, however, "push" seems the likeliest path. - Bruce Marshall

55.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#13 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
5 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		53	20.8	2.3	-10.3	5	44.1	7.47	13.11	7-DC	23.3	5.17	16.51
2017		60.5	32.5	3.96	-22.5	7	51.5	8.7	13.3	5	18.9	4.74	18.25

NOTEWORTHY...

- OKLAHOMA ST IS 10-0 ATS (L10G) AT HOME BEFORE PLAYING OKLAHOMA
- OKLAHOMA ST IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. KANSAS STATE
- OKLAHOMA ST IS 45-13 OVER (L58G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MISSOURI ST (-33.5)

9/11 TULSA (-15.5)

9/18 at Boise St (-6.5)

9/25 KANSAS ST (-13.5)

10/2 BAYLOR (-15)

10/16 at Texas (+5.5)

10/23 at Iowa St (+9.5)

10/30 KANSAS (-28.5)

11/6 at West Virginia (-2)

11/13 TCU (-6.5)

11/20 at Texas Tech (-8)

11/27 OKLAHOMA (+7.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.9
(#13 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 30.2 50 23.5 33

Yards Per Point 14.1 61 16.2 23

Plays Per Game 79.5 10

Time of Possession 29:57 66

3rd Down Conv. % 42.2% 50 26.7% 1

Total Yards Per Game 426.2 38 379.1 44

Yards Per Play 5.4 74 5.1 31

Rush Attempts Per Game 46.2 7

Rush Yards Per Game 187.1 44 160.1 57

Yards Per Rush Attempt 4.1 77 4.1 48

Pass Attempts Per Game 31 71

Completion % 60.7% 66 57.8% 32

Passing Yards Per Game 239.1 53 219 48

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.7 52 6.7 28

Turnovers 1.5 64 1.5 62

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	TULSA	16-7	W	-23.5	L	66 U
9/26	WEST VIRGINIA	27-13	W	-5.5	W	49 U
10/3	at Kansas	47-7	W	-21.5	W	53 O
10/24	IOWA ST	24-21	W	-2.5	W	53 U
10/31	TEXAS	34-41	L	-3.5	L	58.5 O
11/7	at Kansas St	20-18	W	-14	L	49 U
11/21	at Oklahoma	13-41	L	7	L	60.5 U
11/28	TEXAS TECH	50-44	W	-12.5	L	57 O
12/5	at TCU	22-29	L	-2.5	L	52 U
12/12	at Baylor	42-3	W	-6.5	W	49.5 U
12/29	vs. Miami Fl	37-34	W	-2	W	63 O

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

TCU HORNED FROGS

HEAD COACH: GARY PATTERSON - (22ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DOUG MEACHAM • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHAD GLASGOW

LOCATION: FORT WORTH, TX • STADIUM: AMON G. CARTER STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

Shame on the Frogs, not for opening against FCS opposition -- standard operating procedure at lots of places these days -- but for doing so against Duquesne. That might have made sense in the 1930s or '40s, but not in 2021. That's one of three home nonconference games, and if the Frogs can also beat Cal and SMU in Fort Worth, they might exceed seven wins. But Gary Patterson's teams have been bumping their heads on lower ceilings as recent TCU defenses have not been as dominant as they were since respected defensive coordinator Dick Bumpas retired in 2015. In fact, last season the Frogs failed to lead the Big 12 in defense for the first time since 2016.

A surge might require rough-hewn junior QB Max Duggan, a bruising runner, to take the next step as a passer after flashing occasional upside with his arm the last two seasons. Duggan proved he can run by leading the Frogs with 526 rushing yards a year ago. Patterson should get above .500 and back to a bowl after being denied the postseason last year due

to COVID-19, as its Texas Bowl date against Arkansas was canceled. Seven wins looks about right; if the proposition is any higher, we'd look "under" in Fort Worth. - Bruce Marshall

52.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#23 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		47.5	17.9	2.29	-7.3	5	31.3	6.51	14.28	6	13.4	4.22	22.14
2017		59.5	30.1	2.65	-19.7	10	37	7.02	13.08	7	6.9	4.37	41.85

NOTEWORTHY...

- TCU IS 11-3-1 ATS (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF 10 OR MORE POINTS
- TCU IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) -AFTER PLAYING TEXAS
- TCU IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 DUQUESNE (-43.5)

9/11 CALIFORNIA (-14)

9/25 SMU (-12.5)

10/2 TEXAS (+3)

10/9 at Texas Tech (-5)

10/16 at Oklahoma (+18)

10/23 WEST VIRGINIA (-5.5)

10/30 at Kansas St (-3.5)

11/6 BAYLOR (-11.5)

11/13 at Oklahoma St (+6.5)

11/20 KANSAS (-25)

11/26 at Iowa St (+12.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.16
(#25 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 30.8 44 24.2 35

Yards Per Point 13.4 42 14.5 49

Plays Per Game 70.6 80

Time of Possession 30:08 59

3rd Down Conv. % 37.5% 89 32.9% 16

Total Yards Per Game 412.3 49 350.9 27

Yards Per Play 5.8 42 5.1 32

Rush Attempts Per Game 41 35

Rush Yards Per Game 216 18 127.5 24

Yards Per Rush Attempt 5.3 18 3.6 26

Pass Attempts Per Game 27.3 102

Completion % 60.1% 70 54.2% 11

Passing Yards Per Game 196.3 97 223.4 50

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.2 66 7.3 56

Turnovers 1.4 62 1.2 87

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	IOWA ST	34-37	L	4.5	W	43.5 O
10/3	at Texas	33-31	W	10.5	W	61.5 O
10/10	KANSAS ST	14-21	L	-11	L	49.5 U
10/24	OKLAHOMA	14-33	L	6.5	L	58.5 U
10/31	at Baylor	33-23	W	-2.5	W	47.5 O
11/7	TEXAS TECH	34-18	W	-9.5	W	59.5 U
11/14	at West Virginia	6-24	L	3	L	44.5 U
11/28	at Kansas	59-23	W	-22	W	51 O
12/5	OKLAHOMA ST	29-22	W	2.5	W	52 U
12/12	LOUISIANA TECH	52-10	W	-21.5	W	51 O

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

TEXAS LONGHORNS

HEAD COACH: STEVE SARKISIAN (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KYLE FLOOD • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF CHOATE / PETE KWIATKOWSKI
LOCATION: AUSTIN, TX • STADIUM: DARRELL K ROYAL-TEXAS MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
OVER

For some reason, it became almost obligatory for sports analysts to degrade the Longhorns in the Tom Herman era, and many are doing it again even as Steve Sarkisian takes control after a successful stint as Nick Saban's offensive coordinator with title-winning Alabama. Sarkisian inherits a program that was a handful of plays from playoff consideration a year ago after narrow losses by two and three points and another in OT against Oklahoma. We also saw enough of sophomore QB Casey Thompson in the blowout of Colorado in the Alamo Bowl to suggest he could be a worthy successor to four-year starter Sam Ehlinger, though sophomore Hudson Card has some support.

Whichever QB takes snaps will spend time handing off to sophomore RB Bijan Robinson, perhaps the highest-touted back from the 2020 recruiting class and posed for a breakout after gaining 8.2 ypc last fall. An experienced secondary and plenty of potential within the front seven suggests the defense should be at least functional. Meanwhile, Sarkisian

will embrace this second chance as a head coach after the USC adventure went off the rails and he was fired in 2015. The combination of his Pac-12 experience plus the rehabilitation of his reputation under Saban suggests Sarkisian should hardly be over his head in the Big 12. The Over really comes into focus if Sarkisian comes into league play 3-0, which means getting past Arkansas in mid-September. - Bruce Marshall

58

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#8 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		57	24.5	1.96	-14	7-QB	39	6.78	12.96	7	14.5	4.82	23.55
2017	Yes	53.5	25.6	1.99	-11.8	7-OC	34.9	6.36	14.23	10-DC	9.3	4.37	33.26

NOTEWORTHY...

- TEXAS IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) BEFORE PLAYING IOWA STATE
- TEXAS IS 8-20 ATS (S2000) VS. HIGHER-RANKED TEAM
- TEXAS IS 20-5 UNDER (L25G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+5000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 LA LAFAYETTE (-12.5)

9/11 at Arkansas (-7.5)

9/18 RICE (-30.5)

9/25 TEXAS TECH (-17.5)

10/2 at TCU (-3)

10/9 vs. Oklahoma (+8.5)

10/16 OKLAHOMA ST (-5.5)

10/30 at Baylor (-11.5)

11/6 at Iowa St (+7)

11/13 KANSAS (-31)

11/20 at West Virginia (-4.5)

11/26 KANSAS ST (-15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

44.98
(#5 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.4 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS **RECORD: 7-3**

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	UTEP	59-3	W	-45	W	55 0
9/26	at Texas Tech	63-56	W	-17	L	71 0
10/3	TCU	31-33	L	-10.5	L	61.5 0
10/10	vs. Oklahoma	45-53	L	3	L	74.5 0
10/24	BAYLOR	27-16	W	-11	T	61 U
10/31	at Oklahoma St	41-34	W	3.5	W	58.5 0
11/7	WEST VIRGINIA	17-13	W	-6.5	L	55.5 U
11/27	IOWA ST	20-23	L	1.5	L	58.5 U
12/5	at Kansas St	69-31	W	-7	W	54 0
12/29	vs. Colorado	55-23	W	-8	W	67.5 0

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	42.7	5	28.5	60
Yards Per Point	11.1	4	14.3	53
Plays Per Game	73.8	44		
Time of Possession	27:47	107		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.3%	90	35.1%	25
Total Yards Per Game	475.4	19	406.5	61
Yards Per Play	6.4	17	5.1	30
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	77		
Rush Yards Per Game	195.3	37	140.7	36
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	16	3.7	27
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.5	41		
Completion %	60.3%	68	62.6%	74
Passing Yards Per Game	280.1	26	265.8	106
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	32	6.8	32
Turnovers	0.9	11	1.8	35

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

TEXAS TECH RED RAIDERS

HEAD COACH: MATT WELLS (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SONNY CUMBIE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEITH PATTERSON

LOCATION: LUBBOCK, TX • STADIUM: JONES AT&T STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 +125 / U -145

PLAY
OVER

We'll cut right to the quick with this Over projection, as we suspect the Red Raiders will go 3-0 out of conference with recently disappointing Houston the only apparent serious challenge, plus two Big 12 teams in Kansas and Baylor that we expect Tech to beat. That leaves coach Matt Wells to find one win among the seven other games on the schedule, which becomes much more likely if Oregon transfer QB Tyler Shough is as comfortable with offensive coordinator Sonny Cumbie's progressive schemes as he looked in the spring. Cumbie has been tasked with enlivening an offense that has slowed a bit since Kliff Kingsbury left, so the progress of Shough and the availability of top returning receiver Erik Ezukanma (broken arm in spring) is critical.

Better news is that the defense has progressed at least a bit from the Kingsbury era and is loaded with experienced grad transfers ready to play immediately. We also like the Over because Wells is definitely feeling some heat after bowl misses in his first two years on the job, and having worked

the portal hard in the offseason suggests he is concerned with immediate results and not worrying about laying a foundation for 2022 or later. Wells needs to win now, and there look to be six wins on this slate. - Bruce Marshall

44.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#55 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		49.5	22.4	1.86	-12.1	6-OC	42.4	7.03	13.44	10	19.9	5.17	19.56
2017		48	20.9	2.74	-6.2	8-QB	39.6	7.56	14.41	6	18.7	4.82	19.69

NOTEWORTHY...

- TEXAS TECH IS 21-9-2 ATS (L10Y) IN SEPTEMBER
- TEXAS TECH IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) AT HOME AS AP TOP 25
- TEXAS TECH IS 10-0 OVER (L10G) ON ROAD AS AP TOP 25

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Houston (-1.5)

9/11 STEPH F AUSTIN (-31)

9/18 FLA INTERNATIONAL (-22)

9/25 at Texas (+17.5)

10/2 at West Virginia (+10)

10/9 TCU (+5)

10/16 at Kansas (-9.5)

10/23 KANSAS ST (-2)

10/30 at Oklahoma (+26.5)

11/13 IOWA ST (+13.5)

11/20 OKLAHOMA ST (+8)

11/27 at Baylor (+3)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.39
(#33 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	28.4	62	37.1	108
Yards Per Point	14.3	71	11.5	117
Plays Per Game	72.9	55		
Time of Possession	26:23	118		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.6%	106	40.9%	68
Total Yards Per Game	407.9	55	427.7	81
Yards Per Play	5.6	52	5.4	54
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.7	110		
Rush Yards Per Game	160	69	204	96
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	35	4.6	80
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.4	17		
Completion %	63.9%	29	64.0%	91
Passing Yards Per Game	247.9	44	223.7	51
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	93	6.6	22
Turnovers	2	112	1	104

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	HOUSTON BAPTIST	35-33	W	-39.5	L	82.5 U
9/26	TEXAS	56-63	L	17	W	71 O
10/3	at Kansas St	21-31	L	-1.5	L	61.5 U
10/10	at Iowa St	15-31	L	9.5	L	63.5 U
10/24	WEST VIRGINIA	34-27	W	2	W	54 O
10/31	OKLAHOMA	28-62	L	16	L	65 O
11/7	at TCU	18-34	L	9.5	L	59.5 U
11/14	BAYLOR	24-23	W	-2	L	54 U
11/28	at Oklahoma St	44-50	L	12.5	W	57 O
12/5	KANSAS	16-13	W	-26.5	L	62.5 U

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

WEST VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEERS

HEAD COACH: NEAL BROWN (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GERAD PARKER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHADON BROWN / JORDAN LESLEY
LOCATION: MORGANTOWN, WV • STADIUM: MOUNTAINEER FIELD AT MILAN PUSKAR STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

0 + 105 / U - 125

PLAY
UNDER

After living on offense during the Dana Holgorsen years, the Mountaineers did it with defense last season. They made it to the Liberty Bowl, surviving an awkward assignment against Army. But the best defense since the Don Nehlen era in Morgantown has a lot of holes to fill, especially in a secondary that ranked tops nationally in pass defense. And we're not sure coach Neal Brown is completely comfortable with senior QB Jarret Doege, the former Bowling Green transfer who tossed for nearly 2,600 yards last fall but was also pulled in the Liberty Bowl due to ineffectiveness. In short, we're not sure the Mountaineers can rely as much on their defense in 2021 and will need the offense to shift into higher gear, but is Doege capable?

The schedule is also tricky, with Virginia Tech's visit in nonconference play looming as a key swing game to get past 6.5 wins and only Kansas in the finale a comfortably projected conference win. The Mountaineers get Oklahoma State, Texas and Iowa State at home

but probably will need to beat at least one of those to have a chance to get above .500. We suspect WVU will land at 6-6 -- probably good enough for another minor bowl bid, but just below this total. - *Bruce Marshall*

50

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#29 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		57	32.7	3.42	-14	7-QB	50.1	8.48	12.24	5	17.4	5.06	20.18
2017		47	18.4	2	-9.2	5-QB, OC	39.9	7.54	14.03	3	21.6	5.55	18.52

NOTEWORTHY...

- WEST VIRGINIA IS 10-3-2 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME AS FAVORITE
- WEST VIRGINIA IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AVENGING A LOSS
- WEST VIRGINIA IS 15-5 OVER (L5Y) WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Maryland (-3)

9/11 LIU POST (-54.5)

9/18 VIRGINIA TECH (-3.5)

9/25 at Oklahoma (+20.5)

10/2 TEXAS TECH (-10)

10/9 at Baylor (-3)

10/23 at TCU (+5.5)

10/30 IOWA ST (+7.5)

11/6 OKLAHOMA ST (+2)

11/13 at Kansas St (-0.5)

11/20 TEXAS (+4.5)

11/27 at Kansas (-15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.28
(#34 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	23.2	100	21.7	25
Yards Per Point	16.8	113	13.9	62
Plays Per Game	77.1	20		
Time of Possession	31:35	29		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.9%	64	41.9%	81
Total Yards Per Game	389.1	69	300.9	5
Yards Per Play	5	91	4.6	6
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.1	103		
Rush Yards Per Game	113.6	111	138.1	32
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	110	3.7	28
Pass Attempts Per Game	40.7	10		
Completion %	62.3%	47	62.5%	73
Passing Yards Per Game	275.6	29	162.8	3
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	84	6.2	10
Turnovers	1.2	42	1.3	69

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	E KENTUCKY	56-10	W	-40.5	W	60.5 O
9/26	at Oklahoma St	13-27	L	5.5	L	49 U
10/3	BAYLOR	27-21	W	1.5	W	54.5 U
10/17	KANSAS	38-17	W	-21	T	49 O
10/24	at Texas Tech	27-34	L	-2	L	54 O
10/31	KANSAS ST	37-10	W	-5	W	45.5 O
11/7	at Texas	13-17	L	6.5	W	55.5 U
11/14	TCU	24-6	W	-3	W	44.5 U
12/5	at Iowa St	6-42	L	6	L	48 T
12/31	vs. Army	24-21	W	-10	L	41 O

CONFERENCE USA PREVIEW



Sincere McCormick,
UTSA

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength and Rank	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.		PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
EAST DIVISION								
MARSHALL	40.5	2.9	0.1	27.73 (128)	8.3	3.7	5.7	2.3
FLA ATLANTIC	36	3.3	0	29.99 (117)	6.8	5.2	5.0	3.1
W KENTUCKY	33.5	3.5	-0.1	30.25 (116)	6.0	6.0	4.6	3.4
CHARLOTTE	30	3.3	-0.2	27.78 (126)	5.5	6.5	3.7	4.3
MIDDLE TENN ST	31	2.9	-0.4	29.92 (118)	5.3	6.7	3.7	4.3
FLA INTERNATIONAL	26	2.7	0	27.76 (127)	4.4	7.6	2.8	5.2
OLD DOMINION	21.5	3.4	-0.2	28.93 (124)	3.1	8.9	2.1	5.9
WEST DIVISION								
UAB	44	4.5	0.1	32.45 (100)	8.2	3.8	6.3	1.7
TX-SAN ANTONIO	36.5	3.3	-0.3	27.58 (129)	7.4	4.6	5.0	3.0
LOUISIANA TECH	31	2.9	0.4	31.22 (110)	5.3	6.7	4.2	3.8
SOUTHERN MISS	30.5	3.4	0	29.48 (121)	5.6	6.4	3.8	4.2
NORTH TEXAS	31	3.9	-0.3	30.5 (114)	5.0	7.0	3.7	4.3
RICE	31	2.1	-0.2	31.37 (108)	4.9	7.1	3.6	4.4
UTEP	22	2.6	-0.3	27.19 (130)	3.8	8.2	1.9	6.1

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
UAB	44
MARSHALL	40.5
TX-SAN ANTONIO	36.5
FLA ATLANTIC	36
W KENTUCKY	33.5
LOUISIANA TECH	31
MIDDLE TENN ST	31
NORTH TEXAS	31
RICE	31
SOUTHERN MISS	30.5
CHARLOTTE	30
FLA INTERNATIONAL	26
UTEP	22
OLD DOMINION	21.5

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
UAB	-4.5
NORTH TEXAS	-3.9
W KENTUCKY	-3.5
OLD DOMINION	-3.4
SOUTHERN MISS	-3.4
CHARLOTTE	-3.3
FLA ATLANTIC	-3.3
TX-SAN ANTONIO	-3.3
LOUISIANA TECH	-2.9
MARSHALL	-2.9
MIDDLE TENN ST	-2.9
FLA INTERNATIONAL	-2.7
UTEP	-2.6
RICE	-2.1

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
LOUISIANA TECH	0.4
MARSHALL	0.1
UAB	0.1
FLA ATLANTIC	0
FLA INTERNATIONAL	0
SOUTHERN MISS	0
W KENTUCKY	-0.1
CHARLOTTE	-0.2
OLD DOMINION	-0.2
RICE	-0.2
NORTH TEXAS	-0.3
TX-SAN ANTONIO	-0.3
UTEP	-0.3
MIDDLE TENN ST	-0.4

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
TX-SAN ANTONIO	21
FLA ATLANTIC	20
MIDDLE TENN ST	19
RICE	19
UTEP	19
SOUTHERN MISS	18
FLA INTERNATIONAL	17
NORTH TEXAS	17
UAB	17
LOUISIANA TECH	16
MARSHALL	16
CHARLOTTE	14
W KENTUCKY	11
OLD DOMINION	9

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
UTEP	11
FLA ATLANTIC	10
TX-SAN ANTONIO	10
CHARLOTTE	9
MARSHALL	9
MIDDLE TENN ST	9
RICE	9
FLA INTERNATIONAL	8
SOUTHERN MISS	8
UAB	8
NORTH TEXAS	7
LOUISIANA TECH	6
OLD DOMINION	6
W KENTUCKY	6

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
TX-SAN ANTONIO	11
FLA ATLANTIC	10
LOUISIANA TECH	10
MIDDLE TENN ST	10
NORTH TEXAS	10
RICE	10
SOUTHERN MISS	10
FLA INTERNATIONAL	9
UAB	9
UTEP	8
MARSHALL	7
CHARLOTTE	5
W KENTUCKY	5
OLD DOMINION	3

CHARLOTTE 49ERS

HEAD COACH: WILL HEALY (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MARK CARNEY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRANDON COOPER / MARCUS WEST
LOCATION: CHARLOTTE, NC • STADIUM: MCCOLL-RICHARDSON FIELD AT JERRY RICHARDSON STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

0 + 105 / U - 125

PLAY
OVER

Like many programs, Charlotte is probably due a mulligan for 2020. It endured a couple of COVID-19 pauses in a disjointed season that included a five-week break before the season finale against Western Kentucky and a staggering nine games that were called off or rescheduled. Expectations were rather high after the school's first bowl in 2019 under infectious young coach Will Healy. Moreover, senior QB Chris Reynolds hurt his shoulder on the first series of the season and never shook the injury.

A healthy Reynolds and Texas A&M transfer James Foster promise viable and potentially exciting leadership on offense, and plenty of established receiving targets return, led by senior Victor Tucker. Among the high-profile transfers who might help immediately are RB Shadrick Byrd from Iowa, DE Kofi Wardlow from Notre Dame, DT Joshua Bailey from Iowa State and S Jon Alexander from Kansas State.

If the 49ers can pick up where they left off in 2019 and the transfers make a positive impact, a bowl bid is possible. - *Bruce Marshall*

30

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#115 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		29.5	-0.2	-0.42	15.5	8-QB, OC	24.9	5.12	14.24	10-DC	25.1	5.54	12.88
2017		16.5	-14.2	-0.73	22.6	6	17.3	5.16	18.37	6	31.5	5.88	13.79

NOTEWORTHY...

- CHARLOTTE IS 14-6 ATS (L5Y) AVENGING A LOSS
- CHARLOTTE IS 7-15 ATS (L22G) IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- CHARLOTTE IS 10-5 OVER (L5Y) IN SEPTEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 DUKE (+5)

9/11 GARDNER WEBB (-25)

9/18 at Georgia St (+11.5)

9/24 MIDDLE TENN ST (-2.5)

10/2 at Illinois (+10)

10/8 at Fla International (-1)

10/21 FLA ATLANTIC (+2.5)

10/30 at W Kentucky (+7)

11/6 RICE (-2.5)

11/13 at Louisiana Tech (+4)

11/20 MARSHALL (+7.5)

11/27 at Old Dominion (-5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

27.78
(#126 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.3 / -0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 27 71 32.5 84

Yards Per Point 14 57 12.9 93

Plays Per Game 72 62

Time of Possession 34:17 6

3rd Down Conv. % 40.6% 60 46.4% 105

Total Yards Per Game 377.7 79 419.5 76

Yards Per Play 5.2 84 6.5 113

Rush Attempts Per Game 39.5 46

Rush Yards Per Game 154.8 72 214 107

Yards Per Rush Attempt 3.9 83 5.9 119

Pass Attempts Per Game 29.8 80

Completion % 54.8% 109 57.6% 28

Passing Yards Per Game 222.8 71 205.5 32

Yards Per Pass Attempt 7.5 60 7.5 69

Turnovers 1 21 1.3 74

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Appalachian St	20-35	L	17	W	59 U
10/3	at Fla Atlantic	17-21	L	5	W	63 U
10/10	at North Texas	49-21	W	-3.5	W	66 O
10/24	UTEP	38-28	W	-17.5	L	50.5 O
10/31	at Duke	19-53	L	10.5	L	55 O
12/6	W KENTUCKY	19-37	L	-3	L	47.5 O

FLORIDA ATLANTIC OWLS

HEAD COACH: WILLIE TAGGART (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE JOHNSON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE STOOPS

LOCATION: BOCA RATON, FL • STADIUM: HOWARD SCHNELLENBERGER FIELD AT FAU STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

0 +115 / U -135

PLAY
UNDER

Among the many oddities of the 2020 COVID-19 season was FAU reaching a bowl game despite fielding one of the nation's worst offenses — 18.9 PPG, ranking 115th in scoring and having no discernible passing attack. With five wins in eight games, the Owls were awarded a Montgomery Bowl berth almost by default and were promptly noncompetitive in a loss to Memphis. FAU's five victims won a combined 14 games, so the Owls' "success" was a bit misleading.

Well-traveled coach Willie Taggart, now into his second year in Boca Raton, read the tea leaves and knew the strike force needed an immediate upgrade. So he landed Penn State transfer QB Michael Johnson Jr., whose dad comes along as the new offensive coordinator. Taggart had hinted in the spring that Johnson could be a nice upgrade from limited holdover Nick Tronti, who tossed all of six TD passes last fall. The stingy defense ranked 10th in the nation, allowing only 17.4 PPG. But again, the weak schedule had something to do with that, and

we'll find out more in the fall about this platoon with 10 returning starters.

Trips to Florida and Air Force and a home date against a Georgia Southern team that swamped the Owls last year present a rocky nonconference landscape. Taggart might be able to squeeze out another bowl bid with six wins, but not sure FAU's ceiling is any higher. — *Bruce Marshall*

36

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#96 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
2020	Yes	33	3.2	-1.05	1.5	4, 0C	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
2018		37.5	6	1.07	1.4	5-0C	33.8	6.58	15.1	10	27.8	5.51	14.25
2017	Yes	48.5	19.2	1.86	-5.2	9-0C	41.4	7.03	12.27	8-DC	22.2	5.17	17.79

NOTEWORTHY...

- FLA ATLANTIC IS 22-8-2 ATS (L10Y) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG
- FLA ATLANTIC IS 9-22 ATS (S2000) ON ROAD NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5
- FLA ATLANTIC IS 9-2 UNDER (L3Y) AT HOME

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Florida (+26)

9/11 GA SOUTHERN (-1.5)

9/18 FORDHAM (-21.5)

9/25 at Air Force (+5.5)

10/2 FLA INTERNATIONAL (-13.5)

10/9 at UAB (+12.5)

10/21 at Charlotte (-2.5)

10/30 UTEP (-17.5)

11/6 MARSHALL (+1.5)

11/13 at Old Dominion (-11)

11/20 at W Kentucky (+1)

11/27 MIDDLE TENN ST (-8.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

29.99
(#117 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.3 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	18.9	115	17.4	10
Yards Per Point	17.2	115	19.6	7
Plays Per Game	68.3	94		
Time of Possession	29:01	81		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.8%	74	40.0%	58
Total Yards Per Game	324.6	112	342.2	23
Yards Per Play	4.7	103	4.9	21
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.3	41		
Rush Yards Per Game	180.1	50	154.6	49
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	60	4.2	50
Pass Attempts Per Game	25.8	109		
Completion %	52.6%	117	54.9%	13
Passing Yards Per Game	144.4	117	187.7	13
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	120	6.3	13
Turnovers	1.2	41	1.2	84

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/3	CHARLOTTE	21-17	W	-5	L	63 U
10/24	at Marshall	9-20	L	19	W	51 U
10/31	TX-SAN ANTONIO	24-3	W	-5.5	W	46.5 U
11/7	W KENTUCKY	10-6	W	-7	L	37.5 U
11/13	at Fla International	38-19	W	-10	W	41.5 O
11/20	MASSACHUSETTS	24-2	W	-33.5	L	51 U
12/5	at GA Southern	3-20	L	-2.5	L	40.5 U
12/10	at Southern Miss	31-45	L	-9.5	L	44 O
12/23	vs. Memphis	10-25	L	8.5	L	52.5 U

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL GOLDEN PANTHERS

HEAD COACH: BUTCH DAVIS (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANDREW BREINER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: EVERETT WITHERS

LOCATION: MIAMI, FL • STADIUM: RICCARDO SILVA STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

O +110 / U -130

PLAY
UNDER

We're almost willing to give the Golden Panthers a complete pass for 2020, as multiple COVID-19 disruptions and other distractions meant FIU didn't play games in back-to-back weeks until late November. The Golden Panthers went winless in the five games they managed to play, not all that surprising as FIU couldn't practice for weeks at a time. But in propping up the program after his return to the sideline, we wonder if veteran coach Butch Davis might be overstaying his welcome, much as Bob Davie did in a similar scenario at New Mexico. Davis has been through a pair of offensive coordinators since last season, with Andrew Breiner moving in from Mississippi State's staff in the spring, but the passing game was one of the nation's worst last year.

Neither Kaylan Wiggins nor former Maryland transfer Max Bortenschlager completed better than 50% of his passes last season.

Davis also has a new defensive coordinator, former Texas State head coach Everett Withers, whose first task is to improve a rushing defense that opponents attacked at will — FIU was trampled for 236 ypg on the ground, ranking 117th nationally.

Aside from an opening game against Long Island U and perhaps Week 2 against Texas State, we are not sure FIU projects to be favored in any game. Come December, the 69-year-old Davis might decide the golf course or fishing boat are more attractive endeavors. — *Bruce Marshall*

26

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#121 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		37	9.3	0.55	5	7	34.2	6.26	12.15	4	24.9	5.72	15.64
2017	Yes	30.5	0.1	0.02	13.6	7-OC	27.8	6	14.67	8-DC	27.7	5.98	14.87

NOTEWORTHY...

- FLA INTERNATIONAL IS 8-1-1 ATS (L10G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- FLA INTERNATIONAL IS 2-9 ATS (L3Y) IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- FLA INTERNATIONAL IS 11-4 OVER (L5Y) ON ROAD ON NON-GRASS FIELD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 LIU POST (-29)

9/11 TEXAS ST UNIV (+2.5)

9/18 at Texas Tech (+22)

9/25 at C Michigan (+14)

10/2 at Fla Atlantic (+13.5)

10/8 CHARLOTTE (+1)

10/23 W KENTUCKY (+4.5)

10/30 at Marshall (+17.5)

11/6 OLD DOMINION (-7.5)

11/13 at Middle Tenn St (+8)

11/20 NORTH TEXAS (+2)

11/27 at Southern Miss (+8)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

27.76
(#127 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.7 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	25.5	82	35.8	102
Yards Per Point	12.4	15	11.7	115
Plays Per Game	70	86		
Time of Possession	28:19	99		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.8%	75	41.4%	74
Total Yards Per Game	315.8	116	417.5	72
Yards Per Play	4.5	115	5.7	74
Rush Attempts Per Game	38	62		
Rush Yards Per Game	182.5	49	223.2	113
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	41	5.2	107
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.8	101		
Completion %	46.0%	125	62.6%	76
Passing Yards Per Game	133.2	121	194.2	18
Yards Per Pass Attempt	4.8	126	6.8	31
Turnovers	0.8	4	0.8	118

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at Liberty	34-36	L	10	W	61 0
10/10	MIDDLE TENN ST	28-31	L	-6.5	L	56.5 0
10/23	JACKSONVILLE ST	10-19	L	-9.5	L	56.5 U
11/13	FLA ATLANTIC	19-38	L	10	L	41.5 0
11/21	at W Kentucky	21-38	L	7	L	41.5 0

LOUISIANA TECH BULLDOGS

HEAD COACH: SKIP HOLTZ (9TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE SLOAN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID BLACKWELL

LOCATION: RUSTON, LA • STADIUM: JOE AILLET STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

Though coach Skip Holtz was reportedly looking at vacancies in the offseason, he has found a comfortable landing spot in Ruston, winning 61 games in eight seasons and experiencing plenty of bowl success until getting drubbed by Georgia Southern in the New Orleans Bowl last December. Last season might have been Holtz's worst at Louisiana Tech, but the Bulldogs still got to a bowl despite offensive problems.

The QB platoon system involving Luke Anthony and Aaron Allen didn't operate all that smoothly, but both return and at least provide experience at the position. A key for the offense will be RB Marcus Williams Jr., an Appalachian State transfer who has run for better than 2,200 yards in his career and could provide a needed diversion. Regional onlookers are also expecting improvement from a defense that was in rebuild mode last season but returns 10 starters, and coordinator David Blackwell didn't suddenly forget how to coach after his 2019 unit ranked in the top 30 nationally. Even a slight defensive upgrade should help

Holtz re-establish his considerable previous success in an underdog role.

While the nonleague slate looks challenging with road games at Mississippi State and NC State and a home date with SMU, the best Holtz teams have pulled the occasional upset. We would rather bet on Holtz getting to .500 and into another bowl than falling short of 4.5 wins. - *Bruce Marshall*

31 STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#109 OF 130)

16 NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		33.5	3.9	0.46	8.2	8-QB	28.1	5.47	13.72	7	24.2	5.01	14.07
2017		37.5	3.6	0.14	4.4	5-QB	29.9	5.83	13.79	6	26.3	5.69	14.8

NOTEWORTHY...

- LOUISIANA TECH IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- LOUISIANA TECH IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) AS UNDERDOG OF 10 OR MORE POINTS
- LOUISIANA TECH IS 20-5 OVER (L25G) AT HOME WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Mississippi St (+21.5)

9/11 SE LOUISIANA (-9.5)

9/18 SMU (+9)

9/25 NORTH TEXAS (-3)

10/2 at NC State (+20.5)

10/16 at UTEP (-7)

10/23 TX-SAN ANTONIO (+2.5)

10/30 at Old Dominion (-6.5)

11/6 at UAB (+17)

11/13 CHARLOTTE (-4)

11/19 SOUTHERN MISS (-3.5)

11/27 at Rice (+1.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

31.22
(#110 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	22.3	105	34.3	91
Yards Per Point	13	31	12.2	107
Plays Per Game	73	53		
Time of Possession	30:10	58		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.9%	73	45.5%	100
Total Yards Per Game	290.7	121	419.1	75
Yards Per Play	4	125	6	94
Rush Attempts Per Game	34.2	101		
Rush Yards Per Game	90	123	209.8	103
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.6	125	5	98
Pass Attempts Per Game	35.7	31		
Completion %	61.7%	54	64.1%	95
Passing Yards Per Game	200.7	86	209.3	37
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	119	8.1	99
Turnovers	1.7	88	1.3	73

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 5-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	at Southern Miss	31-30	W	7.5	W	59 O
9/26	HOUSTON BAPTIST	66-38	W	-23	W	73.5 O
10/2	at BYU	14-45	L	24	L	62 U
10/10	UTEP	21-17	W	-15	L	56 U
10/17	MARSHALL	17-35	L	11.5	L	48.5 O
10/24	at TX-San Antonio	26-27	L	-2.5	L	54.5 U
10/31	UAB	37-34	W	13	W	47.5 O
12/3	at North Texas	42-31	W	-1	W	65.5 O
12/12	at TCU	10-52	L	21.5	L	51 O
12/23	vs. GA Southern	3-38	L	7	L	48 U

MARSHALL
THUNDERING HERD

HEAD COACH: CHARLES HUFF (1ST)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM CRAMSEY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LANCE GUIDRY
LOCATION: HUNTINGTON, WV • STADIUM: JOAN C. EDWARDS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL
8.5
O -110 / U -110

PLAY
UNDER

Uh-uh, that’s not how it is done. We’re talking about the removal of the highly successful Doc Holliday as coach after last season. The year admittedly ended on a bit of a downer with three straight losses after the Thundering Herd had opened the season with seven straight wins and surged to a No. 15 ranking. Without getting too far into the weeds, some forces above former athletic director Mike Hambrick wanted Holliday out despite his 85-54 record. Nick Saban disciple Charles Huff has taken the baton and has an almost brand-new staff, with offensive coordinator Tim Cramsey the only holdover. But Huff has never been a head coach, and we have seen this scenario blow up in schools’ faces before.

Plenty of experience returns with 17 starters back, but QB Grant Wells ran aground in the stretch of his freshman season as the offense scored less than 8 points per game in the season-ending slump, and chop-busting RB Brenden Knox might be hard to replace. But we are intrigued by the high-pressure style Huff wants to employ with a unit that ranked tops

nationally in scoring defense against a limited slate.

Meanwhile, Navy, East Carolina and Appalachian State form a tricky trio of nonleague foes. Mostly, however, did the Herd really need to move on from Holliday, whose formula was working? - *Bruce Marshall*



40.5
16

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#77 OF 130)

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		41	9.8	1.17	-1.5	9-OC	30.4	5.74	13.19	9-DC	20.6	4.56	15.69
2017		35	9.6	0.6	3.8	6	28.4	5.46	13.34	7	18.9	4.86	17.48

NOTEWORTHY...

- MARSHALL IS 11-5 ATS (L5Y) AS UNDERDOG
- MARSHALL IS 7-22-1 ATS (L30G) ON ROAD AVENGING A LOSS
- MARSHALL IS 14-5 OVER (L5Y) IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Navy (-5)

9/11 NC CENTRAL (-44.5)

9/18 EAST CAROLINA (-9)

9/23 at Appalachian St (+12.5)

10/2 at Middle Tenn St (-6.5)

10/9 OLD DOMINION (-22)

10/15 at North Texas (-5.5)

10/30 FLA INTERNATIONAL (-17.5)

11/6 at Fla Atlantic (-1.5)

11/13 UAB (+0.5)

11/20 at Charlotte (-7.5)

11/27 W KENTUCKY (-10)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

27.73
(#128 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	25.1	85	14.4	1
Yards Per Point	14.5	78	20.2	5
Plays Per Game	66.1	107		
Time of Possession	29:20	73		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.2%	42	35.4%	26
Total Yards Per Game	365.1	90	292	3
Yards Per Play	5.5	60	4.3	3
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	76		
Rush Yards Per Game	166.9	62	96.6	4
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	57	2.8	3
Pass Attempts Per Game	28	99		
Completion %	59.1%	78	62.3%	72
Passing Yards Per Game	198.2	93	195.4	21
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	70	6.4	15
Turnovers	1.3	57	1.6	56

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 7-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	E KENTUCKY	59-0	W	-24	W	54.5 O
9/19	APPALACHIAN ST	17-7	W	6	W	60.5 U
10/10	at W Kentucky	38-14	W	-6.5	W	43 O
10/17	at Louisiana Tech	35-17	W	-11.5	W	48.5 O
10/24	FLA ATLANTIC	20-9	W	-19	L	51 U
11/7	MASSACHUSETTS	51-10	W	-44.5	L	56 O
11/14	MIDDLE TENN ST	42-14	W	-23.5	W	55.5 O
12/5	RICE	0-20	L	-24	L	42.5 U
12/18	UAB	13-22	L	-4.5	L	45 U
12/25	vs. Buffalo	10-17	L	4.5	L	52.5 U

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE BLUE RAIDERS

HEAD COACH: RICK STOCKSTILL (16TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRENT DEARMON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT SHAFER
LOCATION: MURFREESBORO, TN • STADIUM: JOHNNY "RED" FLOYD STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

The MTSU fan base is wondering how long coach Rick Stockstill might stick around. Now into his 16th season, the chances that Stockstill, a former QB for some of Bobby Bowden's best early teams at Florida State, can squeeze much more out of the Blue Raiders is an issue for fans who are a bit exasperated after back-to-back losing seasons. Ten bowl visits in 13 seasons preceded the current slump, but Stockstill knows the pressure is on and has hit the transfer portal hard in hopes of providing a quick pickup that he might need to stick into 2022.

Stockstill shook up the offense in the offseason after it coughed and wheezed last fall, ranking 104th in scoring at a mere 22.9 PPG. He landed NC State transfer QB Bailey Hockman and enlisted a new offensive coordinator, Brent Dearmon, who most recently worked for Les Miles at Kansas. Two additions from the portal, RBs Martell Pettaway from West Virginia and Amir Rasul from Florida State, will try to ignite the running game, though neither has played much since

2018. The defense mostly failed a year ago, but 10 starters return for veteran coordinator Scott Shafer.

With Monmouth and UConn providing likely nonleague wins and Hockman a likely upgrade at QB, we trust Stockstill to find four more wins on the schedule and perhaps get the Blue Raiders bowling once more. - *Bruce Marshall*



31

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#109 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		39	11.1	0.94	5.1	8-QB	34.5	5.92	12.08	9	23.3	4.99	14.99
2017		35.5	2.7	0.96	8.1	6	25.8	5.82	15.69	6-DC	23.1	4.86	14.74

NOTEWORTHY...

- MIDDLE TENN ST IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) AVENGING A LOSS
- MIDDLE TENN ST IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
- MIDDLE TENN ST IS 9-0 OVER (L9G) AFTER PLAYING FLORIDA ATLANTIC

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MONMOUTH NJ (-7.5)

9/11 at Virginia Tech (+22)

9/18 at TX-San Antonio (+9)

9/24 at Charlotte (+2.5)

10/2 MARSHALL (+6.5)

10/9 at Liberty (+19)

10/22 at Connecticut (-9.5)

10/30 SOUTHERN MISS (-3.5)

11/6 at W Kentucky (+6.5)

11/13 FLA INTERNATIONAL (-8)

11/20 OLD DOMINION (-12.5)

11/27 at Fla Atlantic (+8.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

29.92
(#118 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.9 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	22.9	102	35.4	100
Yards Per Point	16	104	12.6	100
Plays Per Game	73.2	48		
Time of Possession	29:32	68		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.6%	48	53.6%	126
Total Yards Per Game	365.9	88	446.9	97
Yards Per Play	5	96	5.9	90
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.1	89		
Rush Yards Per Game	135.4	88	222.8	112
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	93	5.3	110
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.6	38		
Completion %	65.9%	20	59.4%	46
Passing Yards Per Game	230.4	62	224.1	52
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	88	7.2	52
Turnovers	1.8	94	1.6	57

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	at Army	0-42	L	3.5	L	53 U
9/19	TROY	14-47	L	6.5	L	70.5 U
10/3	W KENTUCKY	17-20	L	7	W	52 U
10/10	at Fla International	31-28	W	6.5	W	56.5 O
10/17	NORTH TEXAS	35-52	L	-3.5	L	70.5 O
10/24	at Rice	40-34	W	3.5	W	48 O
11/14	at Marshall	14-42	L	23.5	L	55.5 O
11/21	at Troy	20-17	W	11	W	61 U

NORTH TEXAS EAGLES

HEAD COACH: SETH LITRELL (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE BLOESCH / TOMMY MAINORD • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PHIL BENNETT
LOCATION: DENTON, TX • STADIUM: APOGEE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4

O -125 / U +105

PLAY
PASS

For a short while a few years ago, Seth Littrell looked like a coach du jour. He was apparently ticketed for a Power 5 job — Texas Tech was a rumored destination — after the Mean Green won big at Arkansas amid a fast start in 2018. With a progressive Air Raid offense, UNT was briefly the rage of college football. But the Mean Green has regressed since, with last year's 4-6 mark encapsulating the direction of the program under Littrell. He boasted C-USA's best offense in 2020 but its worst defense, and the wheels continue to spin in Denton. The defense hit its nadir in the Myrtle Beach Bowl loss to Appalachian State, when the Mountaineers rushed for 500 yards.

Enter veteran defensive coordinator Phil Bennett, whose resume is long and distinguished, dating to Bill Snyder's glory days at Kansas State and including a stint as head coach at SMU. Bennett immediately went to work in the spring, installing a four-man front after last year's 3-3-5 alignment obviously didn't work. We're not sure getting nine starters

back on defense is a good thing, but we trust Bennett can boost it from its recent road-kill status. Littrell might have a harder time keeping the offense productive with several key wideouts having departed, though sophomore QB Austin Aune showed promise with 13 TD passes and four picks. He will be pushed by North Carolina transfer Jace Ruder.

Any improvement on the defensive side gives UNT a chance to compete in the West Division, but a difficult slate suggests a run at .500 might be asking a bit much. — Bruce Marshall



31

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#109 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		39	13.7	1.07	-2.6	9-QB	36.1	6.31	12.97	8	22.4	5.24	16.18
2017		35.5	5.1	0.77	4.8	6	36.5	6.53	13.2	5	31.4	5.76	13.34

NOTEWORTHY...

- NORTH TEXAS IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) VS. POWER 5
- NORTH TEXAS IS 2-9 ATS (L3Y) AS UNDERDOG
- NORTH TEXAS IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) ON ROAD IN NOVEMBER

**NORTH
TEXAS**

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 NORTHWESTERN ST (-21.5)

9/11 at SMU (+16)

9/18 UAB (+9)

9/25 at Louisiana Tech (+3)

10/9 at Missouri (+23)

10/15 MARSHALL (+5.5)

10/23 LIBERTY (+11)

10/30 at Rice (+2.5)

11/6 at Southern Miss (+3)

11/13 UTEP (-13)

11/20 at Fla International (-2)

11/27 TX-SAN ANTONIO (+1.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

30.5
(#114 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.9 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	31.9	38	44.1	124
Yards Per Point	15.4	98	11.7	112
Plays Per Game	78.9	12		
Time of Possession	25:41	123		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.4%	32	47.6%	113
Total Yards Per Game	490.1	12	517.6	126
Yards Per Play	6.2	31	6.8	123
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.4	20		
Rush Yards Per Game	215.8	19	289.9	126
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	31	6.3	123
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.6	46		
Completion %	54.3%	111	62.7%	77
Passing Yards Per Game	274.3	30	227.7	61
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	29	8.2	106
Turnovers	1.6	79	1	103

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	HOUSTON BAPTIST	57-31	W	-22	W	75 0
9/19	SMU	35-65	L	15	L	71.5 0
10/3	SOUTHERN MISS	31-41	L	-1	L	74.5 U
10/10	CHARLOTTE	21-49	L	3.5	L	66 0
10/17	at Middle Tenn St	52-35	W	3.5	W	70.5 0
11/21	RICE	27-17	W	-2.5	W	65 U
11/28	at TX-San Antonio	17-49	L	1	L	67.5 U
12/3	LOUISIANA TECH	31-42	L	1	L	65.5 0
12/11	UTEP	45-43	W	-10	L	67.5 0
12/21	vs. Appalachian St	28-56	L	22	L	68 0

OLD DOMINION MONARCHS

HEAD COACH: RICKY RAHNE (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KIRK CAMPBELL • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BLAKE SEILER
LOCATION: NORFOLK, VA • STADIUM: KOMBLAU FIELD AT S. B. BALLARD STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
UNDER

The last time we saw ODU on the gridiron, the Washington Nationals had just won the World Series and COVID-19 was still months in the future. That was November 2019, before the Monarchs opted out of 2020. Now Old Dominion is back, and the last memory is of the 1-11 disaster two years ago that forced program architect and coach Bobby Wilder to resign. Former Penn State aide Ricky Rahne, cooling his jets since being hired 19 months ago, will likely try to employ the same no-huddle spread that worked so well for him as James Franklin's offensive coordinator in Happy Valley, but this time he's not working with the Nittany Lions' roster.

Neither QB who has seen action for ODU, Stone Smartt or Hayden Wolff, has performed with much flair, though Rahne hopes UCF transfer D.J. Mack Jr. can infuse some spark under center. But this was one of the nation's worst offenses in 2019, so Rahne has his hands full. The defense wasn't quite as helpless two autumns ago and returns some of its top

playmakers, but all ODU has done for a year and a half is practice and scrimmage against itself.

After one win in 2019 and no football in 2020, getting to four wins should gain Rahne some coach-of-the-year consideration. - Bruce Marshall



21.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#126 OF 130)

9

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
3

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		26.5	-4.3	-0.49	13.9	9-QB	30.1	5.71	14.31	7	34.4	6.2	13.59
2017		22.5	-6.2	-0.39	15.9	8-QB	23.5	5.16	14.82	6	29.8	5.55	13.73

NOTEWORTHY...

- OLD DOMINION IS 6-4 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD
- OLD DOMINION IS 3-14 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME VS. UNRANKED TEAM
- OLD DOMINION IS 22-10-1 OVER (L10Y) ON ROAD VS. UNRANKED TEAM



**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 at Wake Forest (+29)

9/11 HAMPTON (-23)

9/18 at Liberty (+28.5)

9/25 BUFFALO (+18.5)

10/2 at UTEP (+3.5)

10/9 at Marshall (+22)

10/16 W KENTUCKY (+8.5)

10/30 LOUISIANA TECH (+6.5)

11/6 at Fla International (+7.5)

11/13 FLA ATLANTIC (+11)

11/20 at Middle Tenn St (+12.5)

11/27 CHARLOTTE (+5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

28.93
(#124 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.4 / -0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-0

**DATE OPPONENT SCORE SU FL ATS TOTAL
DID NOT PLAY LAST SEASON**

CONFERENCE USA

RICE OWLS

HEAD COACH: MIKE BLOOMGREN (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MARQUES TUIASOSOPO • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN SMITH
LOCATION: HOUSTON, TX • STADIUM: RICE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

For the first time in years, genuine excitement abounds at Rice, where what once seemed a stubborn resolve to install a Stanford-type power offense by David Shaw disciple Mike Bloomgren is starting to pay dividends. The Owls impressed in their compressed 2020 slate, in position to win all five games, and return eight starters from the stingiest Rice defense since the Jess Neely era in the middle of the last century, ranking 12th nationally in scoring defense. With depth on the OL and a big WR target in 6-5 Bradley Rozner (55 catches in 2019 before opting out in 2020) all Bloomgren needed was a QB. And the transfer market provided options with former Nebraska prospect Luke McCaffrey (Christian's brother) and ex-Weber State starter Jake Constantine, who already has 33 career TD passes.

True, the schedule opens like an old Southwest Conference slate with Arkansas, Houston and Texas. But even if the Owls swallow the big doughnut against that trio, plenty of wins await in watered-down C-USA,

and they also face crosstown rival Texas Southern of the FCS. Bloomgren can get Rice to a bowl and start to get mentioned as the heir apparent at Stanford whenever Shaw decides it's time to move to the NFL. - Bruce Marshall

31 STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#109 OF 130)

19 NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	21.5	-12.6	-1.56	27.2	6-QB, OC	20.8	5.04	15.96	5-DC	33.4	6.6	12.8
2017		19.5	-12.8	-0.14	19.1	8-QB	20.1	5.86	17.78	8-DC	32.9	6	12.09

NOTEWORTHY...

- RICE IS 27-11-1 ATS (\$2000) AT HOME IN NOVEMBER
- RICE IS 1-8-1 ATS (L10G) AT HOME IN OCTOBER
- RICE IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) AT HOME AVENGING A LOSS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Arkansas (+20)

9/11 HOUSTON (+9.5)

9/18 at Texas (+30.5)

9/25 TEXAS SOUTHERN (-37.5)

10/2 SOUTHERN MISS (-2.5)

10/16 at TX-San Antonio (+9)

10/23 at UAB (+17.5)

10/30 NORTH TEXAS (-2.5)

11/6 at Charlotte (+2.5)

11/13 W KENTUCKY (+0.5)

11/20 at UTEP (-6)

11/27 LOUISIANA TECH (-1.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

31.37
(#108 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.1/-0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	MIDDLE TENN ST	34-40	L	-3.5	L	48 0
10/31	at Southern Miss	30-6	W	-1.5	W	58.5 U
11/21	at North Texas	17-27	L	2.5	L	65 U
12/5	at Marshall	20-0	W	24	W	42.5 U
12/12	UAB	16-21	L	7.5	W	41.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	23.4	98	18.8	12
Yards Per Point	14.4	73	18.2	12
Plays Per Game	73.2	50		
Time of Possession	35:59	2		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.2%	78	40.9%	69
Total Yards Per Game	336	107	341.6	21
Yards Per Play	4.6	110	5.6	67
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.2	22		
Rush Yards Per Game	120.8	108	140.8	37
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.8	121	4.1	46
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.6	104		
Completion %	61.7%	55	59.7%	48
Passing Yards Per Game	215.2	77	200.8	26
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	34	7.8	88
Turnovers	1.6	84	1.8	33

CONFERENCE USA

SOUTHERN MISS GOLDEN EAGLES

HEAD COACH: WILL HALL (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CAYDEN COCHRAN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: AUSTIN ARMSTRONG
LOCATION: HATTIESBURG, MS • STADIUM: CARLISLE-FAULKNER FIELD AT M.M. ROBERTS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

As the lone remaining school from C-USA's inaugural football campaign in 1996, Southern Mississippi has at least offered some continuity in a league that has often resembled a bus depot for programs that happen to be passing through. But of all the oddities associated with college football in 2020, USM was among the most bizarre, with coach Jay Hopson bailing out after a humbling opening-week loss to South Alabama and the season looking like it might have to be canceled in mid-September. When the dust settled, the 3-7 mark was just the fourth losing record in 25 seasons since C-USA was founded and preceded the hiring of coach Will Hall from Willie Fritz's staff at Tulane.

Hall got to work immediately and landed QB Ty Keyes, a touted regional recruit thought to be ticketed for the Green Wave, who will battle little-used holdover Trey Lowe and Louisville transfer Tee Webb for snaps. But with the QB situation still a bit of an unknown, we're not sure the Golden Eagles will fly back into contention, even with some established skill-position weaponry, including RB Frank Gore Jr., who lived up to his name by rushing for more

than 700 yards as a freshman. Meanwhile, the defense had some excuses for its subpar efforts, as it featured 10 different starting lineups in as many games due to COVID-19 and injuries and will look to transfers for help.

Hall is also no head coaching newbie, having won 56 games in six Division II seasons at West Alabama and West Georgia, but unless he finds some answers right away at QB, his Hattiesburg debut might land below .500. - Bruce Marshall

SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI
GOLDEN EAGLES

30.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#114 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		38	5.4	0.45	8.8	5-QB	28.9	5.08	12.61	4-DC	23.5	4.63	12.05
2017		34.5	6.2	0.86	6.9	6-QB	29.7	5.88	14.57	6	23.5	5.02	13.89

NOTEWORTHY...

- SOUTHERN MISS IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD IN SEPTEMBER
- SOUTHERN MISS IS 1-8-1 ATS (L10G) AS AP TOP 25
- SOUTHERN MISS IS 12-3 UNDER (L15G) AFTER PLAYING UAB

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at S Alabama (+1)

9/11 GRAMBLING (-31.5)

9/18 TROY (+8)

9/25 at Alabama (+44)

10/2 at Rice (+2.5)

10/9 UTEP (-12)

10/16 UAB (+10)

10/30 at Middle Tenn St (+3.5)

11/6 NORTH TEXAS (-3)

11/13 at TX-San Antonio (+9.5)

11/19 at Louisiana Tech (+3.5)

11/27 FLA INTERNATIONAL (-8)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

29.48
(#121 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.4 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	25.4	83	34.4	92
Yards Per Point	14.7	83	12.4	106
Plays Per Game	67.2	99		
Time of Possession	28:54	85		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.4%	49	50.0%	119
Total Yards Per Game	375	80	427.2	80
Yards Per Play	5.6	54	5.8	83
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.3	87		
Rush Yards Per Game	149.4	77	198.8	94
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.1	75	4.7	85
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.2	96		
Completion %	62.6%	43	61.5%	64
Passing Yards Per Game	225.6	69	228.4	62
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	40	7.8	84
Turnovers	1.3	54	1.2	85

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/3	S ALABAMA	21-32	L	-12	L	54.5 U
9/19	LOUISIANA TECH	30-31	L	-7.5	L	59 O
9/26	TULANE	24-66	L	3.5	L	54.5 O
10/3	at North Texas	41-31	W	1	W	74.5 U
10/24	at Liberty	35-56	L	14	L	59.5 O
10/31	RICE	6-30	L	1.5	L	58.5 U
11/7	N ALABAMA	24-13	W	-17	L	54.5 U
11/14	at W Kentucky	7-10	L	8	W	45 U
11/21	TX-SAN ANTONIO	20-23	L	8.5	W	53.5 U
12/10	FLA ATLANTIC	45-31	W	9.5	W	44 O

CONFERENCE USA

UTSA ROADRUNNERS

HEAD COACH: JEFF TRAYLOR (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BARRY LUNNEY JR. • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JESS LOEPP / ROD WRIGHT
LOCATION: SAN ANTONIO, TX • STADIUM: ALAMODOME

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8

0 +100 / U -120

PLAY
PASS

Perhaps ready to live up to its promise as C-USA's flagship program, UTSA seemed to turn the corner last season under coach Jeff Traylor, formerly a decorated Texas high school coach before stints on staffs at Texas, SMU and Arkansas. The upgrade was immediate, as the Roadrunners ran the ball with authority behind slashing, all-name RB Sincere McCormick (1,467 yards rushing) and kept southpaw QB Frank Harris healthy enough to account for 21 TDs.

Almost everyone returns on offense, including the entire line and Harris' top two receiving targets in Joshua Cephus and Zakhari Franklin, who combined for 107 catches last year. Believe it or not, even more experience returns on a defense that brings back all 11 starters after lowering its points allowed by more than eight per game last year when it found stars in S Rashad Wisdom (team-best 95 tackles) and Ole Miss transfer OLB Charles Wiley. If that's not enough, punter Lucas Dean and kicker Hunter Duplessis return.

Expect the Roadrunners to continue making progress, though we're pumping the brakes just a bit because nine wins would put UTSA into some uncharted waters. With a couple of tricky nonleague road games at Illinois and Memphis, landing on eight wins seems about right. - Bruce Marshall

36.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#93 OF 130)

21

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		19	-11.8	-2.01	24.1	4-OC	19	4.11	13.64	6-DC	30.9	6.12	13.46
2017		34.5	5.6	0.58	3.5	7	22.7	5.6	16.88	7	17.1	5.02	17

NOTEWORTHY...

- TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) IN NOVEMBER
- TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) IN SEPTEMBER
- TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Illinois (+4)

9/11 LAMAR (-33)

9/18 MIDDLE TENN ST (-9)

9/25 at Memphis (+15.5)

10/2 UNLV (-14.5)

10/9 at W Kentucky (+1)

10/16 RICE (-9)

10/23 at Louisiana Tech (-2.5)

11/6 at UTEP (-11.5)

11/13 SOUTHERN MISS (-9.5)

11/20 UAB (+4.5)

11/27 at North Texas (-1.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

27.58
(#129 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	28.6	58	27.1	51
Yards Per Point	14.3	68	14.3	52
Plays Per Game	73.1	51		
Time of Possession	29:26	70		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.6%	61	41.8%	80
Total Yards Per Game	408.4	54	387.9	49
Yards Per Play	5.6	53	5.5	63
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.7	38		
Rush Yards Per Game	214.7	20	172.5	71
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	17	4.5	72
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.4	76		
Completion %	59.6%	75	60.6%	53
Passing Yards Per Game	193.6	99	215.5	43
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.4	97	7.2	55
Turnovers	0.9	12	1.6	48

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 6-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Texas St Univ	51-48	W	5.5	W	56.5 O
9/19	STEPH F AUSTIN	24-10	W	-20	L	54.5 U
10/3	at Uab	13-21	L	21.5	W	55.5 U
10/10	at BYU	20-27	L	34	W	63.5 U
10/17	ARMY	16-28	L	8.5	L	46.5 U
10/24	LOUISIANA TECH	27-26	W	2.5	W	54.5 U
10/31	at Fla Atlantic	3-24	L	5.5	L	46.5 U
11/14	UTEP	52-21	W	-6	W	45.5 O
11/21	at Southern Miss	23-20	W	-8.5	L	53.5 U
11/28	NORTH TEXAS	49-17	W	-1	W	67.5 U
12/26	vs. LA Lafayette	24-31	L	14.5	W	55 T

UAB BLAZERS

HEAD COACH: BILL CLARK (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRYANT VINCENT • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID REEVES

LOCATION: BIRMINGHAM, AL • STADIUM: LEGION FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

0 -130 / U +110

PLAY
OVER

The best bargain in college football has to be Bill Clark, who kept the lights on at UAB through the two-season hiatus in the middle of the last decade and has authored one of college football's most unlikely success stories the last few seasons. While various schools have filled coaching openings with lesser candidates, Clark seems fully content in Birmingham and will be rewarded with a new downtown stadium this fall after the Blazers had toiled at historic but decrepit Legion Field.

After winning C-USA again last fall, Clark gives it another shot with the help of 12 "super seniors" who have taken advantage of the extra year of eligibility due to COVID-19. One of those sixth-year seniors, QB Tyler Johnston III, returns after an injury-marred 2020 to fight it out with sophomore Bryson Lucero, who provided some spark last fall and gives Clark some uncommon experience and depth at the position. Moreover, sophomore RB DeWayne McBride adds some lightning to the attack after gaining an eye-opening 9.3 YPC in 2020, and seven linemen who started at

least three games last season are back. Meanwhile, the nation's ninth-ranked defense returns nine starters and has been augmented by reinforcements from the transfer portal led by LBs Justin Thomas from LSU and Charlie Benton from West Virginia.

Three early road games, including a trip to Georgia, pose a challenge, but that shouldn't bother Clark. After all, he didn't blink when the program shut down in 2015. - Bruce Marshall

44

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#61 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		44	12.4	0.97	-5.1	9-QB, OC	31.7	5.82	12.64	7	19.3	4.85	15.5
2017		28.5	0.2	-0.25	12.6	0-QB, OC	27.8	5.2	12.49	4-DC	27.6	5.46	13.64

NOTEWORTHY...

- UAB IS 25-10-1 ATS (\$2000) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG
- UAB IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) ON GRASS FIELD
- UAB IS 12-3 OVER (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/1 vs. Jacksonville St (-15)

9/11 at Georgia (+21.5)

9/18 at North Texas (-9)

9/25 at Tulane (+2.5)

10/2 LIBERTY (-2.5)

10/9 FLA ATLANTIC (-12.5)

10/16 at Southern Miss (-10)

10/23 RICE (-17.5)

11/6 LOUISIANA TECH (-17)

11/13 at Marshall (-0.5)

11/20 at TX-San Antonio (-4.5)

11/27 UTEP (-27)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

32.45
(#100 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

4.5 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	26.4	79	19.8	15
Yards Per Point	14.9	88	16	28
Plays Per Game	66.4	105		
Time of Possession	31:51	22		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.9%	57	28.0%	4
Total Yards Per Game	394.1	61	315.8	9
Yards Per Play	5.9	38	4.6	8
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.6	45		
Rush Yards Per Game	195.9	34	142.6	39
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	32	3.9	38
Pass Attempts Per Game	26.2	106		
Completion %	53.3%	114	52.1%	6
Passing Yards Per Game	198.2	92	173.1	7
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	55	5.8	4
Turnovers	1.6	85	1.4	68

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/3	C ARKANSAS	45-35	W	-20.5	L	50.5 O
9/10	at Miami Fl	14-31	L	15.5	L	55 U
9/24	at S Alabama	42-10	W	-8	W	47.5 O
10/3	TX-SAN ANTONIO	21-13	W	-21.5	L	55.5 U
10/17	W KENTUCKY	37-14	W	-12	W	44 O
10/23	LA LAFAYETTE	20-24	L	2.5	L	50.5 U
10/31	at Louisiana Tech	34-37	L	-13	L	47.5 O
12/12	at Rice	21-16	W	-7.5	L	41.5 U
12/18	at Marshall	22-13	W	4.5	W	45 U

CONFERENCE USA

UTEP MINERS

HEAD COACH: DANA DIMEL (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVE WARNER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRADLEY DALE PEVETO
LOCATION: EL PASO, TX • STADIUM: SUN BOWL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
OVER

The Miners weren't as bad as usual last year, actually sitting 3-1 before COVID-19 disruptions sidetracked the season. Some regional observers expect another step up the ladder this fall from veteran coach Dana Dimel, who was regarded as an up-and-comer a generation ago at Wyoming and Houston and has patiently patched together a more competitive product at the Sun Bowl. The seeds have been planted for an upgraded offense if junior QB Gavin Hardison can smooth out some of the rough edges after flashing some upside last fall, and punishing north-south RB Deion Hankins scored nine TDs in seven games. Meanwhile, wideouts Justin Garrett and Jacob Cowing have proved they can stretch the field.

Mostly, however, UTEP progressed enough on defense last fall to stay competitive, with Dimel finally hitting the jackpot on a handful of juco recruits, including DTs Kelton Moss and Keenan Stewart. New defensive coordinator Bradley Dale Peveto has been around the block after spending most of the last 15 years in the SEC, and he'll be aligning UTEP in 4-2-5 looks he hopes can unleash the line and minimize some

depth concerns at linebacker.

In the big picture, if Dimel could win three in the truncated COVID-19 season, he can take the next step to four wins and maybe five with a schedule that could easily begin 2-0 with nearby New Mexico State and Bethune-Cookman out of the chute and a very winnable game at the Sun Bowl against New Mexico later in September before tackling the C-USA slate. - Bruce Marshall

22

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#125 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8



STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	16.5	-13.9	-0.88	16.5	6-QB, OC	19.7	4.98	15.82	6-DC	33.6	5.86	11.6
2017		13	-16.2	-1.25	25.1	5	14.8	4.5	17.14	7	31	5.75	13.27

NOTEWORTHY...

- UTEP IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING LOUISIANA TECH
- UTEP IS 2-13 ATS (L15G) AT HOME AVENGING A LOSS
- UTEP IS 9-1 OVER (L10G) IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 at New Mexico St (-3)

9/4 BETHUNE-COOKMAN (-20)

9/10 at Boise St (+27.5)

9/25 NEW MEXICO (+4.5)

10/2 OLD DOMINION (-3.5)

10/9 at Southern Miss (+12)

10/16 LOUISIANA TECH (+7)

10/30 at Fla Atlantic (+17.5)

11/6 TX-SAN ANTONIO (+11.5)

11/13 at North Texas (+13)

11/20 RICE (+6)

11/27 at UAB (+27)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

27.19
(#130 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.6 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	23.8	95	36.8	107
Yards Per Point	14.9	86	11.4	118
Plays Per Game	70.7	78		
Time of Possession	32:27	18		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.9%	45	42.7%	85
Total Yards Per Game	354.7	97	418.7	73
Yards Per Play	5	95	6.2	97
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.2	59		
Rush Yards Per Game	143.5	81	154.5	48
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	92	4.3	62
Pass Attempts Per Game	31	70		
Completion %	50.5%	121	63.0%	81
Passing Yards Per Game	211.2	80	264.2	105
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	82	8.8	114
Turnovers	2.2	115	0.7	120

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	STEPH F AUSTIN	24-14	W	-3.5	W	54 U
9/12	at Texas	3-59	L	45	L	55 O
9/19	ABILENE CHRISTIAN	17-13	W	-8.5	L	47 U
9/26	at LA Monroe	31-6	W	9.5	W	49 U
10/10	at Louisiana Tech	17-21	L	15	W	56 U
10/24	at Charlotte	28-38	L	17.5	W	50.5 O
11/14	at TX-San Antonio	21-52	L	6	L	45.5 O
12/11	at North Texas	43-45	L	10	W	67.5 O

WESTERN KENTUCKY HILLTOPPERS

HEAD COACH: TYSON HELTON (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ZACH KITTLEY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MAURICE CRUM JR.
LOCATION: BOWLING GREEN, KY • STADIUM: HOUCHES INDUSTRIES - L. T. SMITH STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

It wasn't a complete shock when QB Tyrrell Pigrome announced in June that he wasn't returning. But that might not be a mortal blow for the Hilltoppers, as Houston Baptist transfer Bailey Zappe had already transferred in. The 2020 Southland Conference Player of the Year passed for 1,833 yards and 15 TDs in just four games last fall for Houston Baptist, three against FBS competition. Moreover, he'll have familiar targets, as receivers Jerreth Sterns, Josh Sterns and Ben Ratzlaff followed from HBU, as did offensive coordinator Zach Kittley, whose prolific offense gained 548 ypg in 2020. So after his offense often misfired last fall, coach Tyson Helton thinks he might have the answers in 2021.

Some key playmakers return on defense after the Hilltoppers ranked eighth nationally in pass defense, though coordinator Clayton White has moved to South Carolina to join Shane Beamer's new staff. Watch senior DE DeAngelo Malone, the conference defensive player of the year in 2019.

The nonleague schedule is challenging, with a pair of Big Ten opponents — Indiana at home and Michigan State on the road — plus Army. But as usual, there should be plenty of wins to be found in C-USA, especially if the Houston Baptist connection clicks on offense. - Bruce Marshall

33.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#103 OF 130)

11

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		32	-4.7	-0.66	8.8	3	22.8	5.1	16.28	7	27.5	5.76	15.07
2017	Yes	30.5	-2.8	-0.42	9.5	4-OC	25.8	5.19	15.2	6-DC	28.6	5.61	13.34

NOTEWORTHY...

- W KENTUCKY IS 12-2-1 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- W KENTUCKY IS 0-5 ATS (L2Y) IN OCTOBER
- W KENTUCKY IS 12-5 UNDER (L5Y) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 TENN-MARTIN (-19.5)

9/11 at Army (+9.5)

9/25 INDIANA (+16.5)

10/2 at Michigan St (+11.5)

10/9 TX-SAN ANTONIO (-1)

10/16 at Old Dominion (-8.5)

10/23 at Fla International (-4.5)

10/30 CHARLOTTE (-7)

11/6 MIDDLE TENN ST (-6.5)

11/13 at Rice (-0.5)

11/20 FLA ATLANTIC (-1)

11/27 at Marshall (+10)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

30.25
(#116 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.5 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game 19.5 114 26.7 48

Yards Per Point 15.1 91 13.4 77

Plays Per Game 65.7 109

Time of Possession 29:08 79

3rd Down Conv. % 32.9% 113 42.9% 87

Total Yards Per Game 294.4 120 359.5 32

Yards Per Play 4.5 117 5 26

Rush Attempts Per Game 32.1 112

Rush Yards Per Game 126 101 174.2 74

Yards Per Rush Attempt 3.9 82 4.3 59

Pass Attempts Per Game 31.3 66

Completion % 55.8% 101 53.2% 9

Passing Yards Per Game 168.4 111 185.3 12

Yards Per Pass Attempt 5.4 123 6.5 18

Turnovers 1.2 39 0.9 110

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Louisville	21-35	L	13	L	54.5 O
9/19	LIBERTY	24-30	L	-15	L	52 O
10/3	at Middle Tenn St	20-17	W	-7	L	52 U
10/10	MARSHALL	14-38	L	6.5	L	43 O
10/17	at Uab	14-37	L	12	L	44 O
10/24	CHATTANOOGA	13-10	W	-13.5	L	54 U
10/31	at BYU	10-41	L	30.5	L	52 U
11/7	at Fla Atlantic	6-10	L	7	W	37.5 U
11/14	SOUTHERN MISS	10-7	W	-8	L	45 U
11/21	FLA INTERNATIONAL	38-21	W	-7	W	41.5 O
12/6	at Charlotte	37-19	W	3	W	47.5 O
12/26	vs. Georgia St	21-39	L	3.5	L	49.5 O

INDEPENDENTS PREVIEW



Kyren Williams,
Notre Dame

2021 PROJECTED RECORDS

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
NOTRE DAME	58	3.6	0.1	44.04 (12)	9.3	2.7	-	-
LIBERTY	46	3.6	-0.1	29.24 (122)	8.8	3.2	-	-
BYU	45.5	2.9	0.3	38.19 (67)	7.3	4.7	-	-
ARMY	39.5	3.4	0.8	31.36 (109)	7.2	4.8	-	-
MASSACHUSETTS	18	3.3	-0.4	32.52 (97)	2.4	9.6	-	-
NEW MEXICO ST	15.5	3.4	-0.5	31.5 (107)	2.3	9.7	-	-
CONNECTICUT	18.5	2.4	-0.7	35 (82)	2.0	10.0	-	-

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
NOTRE DAME	58
LIBERTY	46
BYU	45.5
ARMY	39.5
CONNECTICUT	18.5
MASSACHUSETTS	18
NEW MEXICO ST	15.5

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
LIBERTY	-3.6
NOTRE DAME	-3.6
ARMY	-3.4
NEW MEXICO ST	-3.4
MASSACHUSETTS	-3.3
BYU	-2.9
CONNECTICUT	-2.4

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
ARMY	0.8
BYU	0.3
NOTRE DAME	0.1
LIBERTY	-0.1
MASSACHUSETTS	-0.4
NEW MEXICO ST	-0.5
CONNECTICUT	-0.7

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
LIBERTY	20
CONNECTICUT	15
ARMY	14
MASSACHUSETTS	14
BYU	10
NOTRE DAME	9
NEW MEXICO ST	2

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
LIBERTY	11
BYU	7
CONNECTICUT	7
ARMY	6
MASSACHUSETTS	6
NOTRE DAME	3
NEW MEXICO ST	1

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
LIBERTY	9
CONNECTICUT	8
ARMY	8
MASSACHUSETTS	8
BYU	3
NOTRE DAME	6
NEW MEXICO ST	1

INDEPENDENTS

ARMY BLACK KNIGHTS

HEAD COACH: JEFF MONKEN (8TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRENT DAVIS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NATE WOODY

LOCATION: WEST POINT, NY • STADIUM: BLAICK FIELD AT MICHIE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

You know what you'll get with Army: A ground attack led by a "dual-threat" QB who goes with the run 90% of the time in the run-pass option, plus a tough defense. The offense was fourth in the nation last year at 273 rushing yards per game, and QB Tyhier Tyler led the way with 578 yards and five TDs. Tyler appears to be the favorite to run the offense, though the Cadets have four QBs who got wins as starters last season. The defense returns seven starters from a unit that led the nation in total defense at 275.3 YPG. Army, which was 9-3 last season and has won nine or more games in three of the last four years under coach Jeff Monken, should be competitive in just about every game. But we're not sure the Cadets will get eight wins to go Over.

Army has tough road games at Georgia State, MAC champion Ball State, Wisconsin and Liberty, plus neutral-site games against Air Force and Navy. Army should be favored against the other service academies and claim another Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, but that still might not be

enough with rough home games against Wake Forest and Western Kentucky. Even if Army is better than recent years, it could be hard to avoid five losses. - Dave Tuley

39.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#79 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46	16.8	-0.15	-4.3	3	32.9	5.51	12.22	8	16	5.66	18.01
2017		42	13.5	0.53	-0.9	9	32.3	6.43	12.85	7	18.8	5.9	18.51

NOTEWORTHY...

- ARMY IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AT HOME ALL GAMES
- ARMY IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD BEFORE PLAYING NAVY
- ARMY IS 15-0 UNDER (L15G) HTH VS. NAVY

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Georgia St (+1)

9/11 W KENTUCKY (-9.5)

9/18 CONNECTICUT (-25)

9/25 MIAMI OHIO (-8)

10/2 at Ball St (+6)

10/16 at Wisconsin (+17.5)

10/23 WAKE FOREST (+4.5)

11/6 vs. Air Force (-2)

11/13 BUCKNELL (-37)

11/20 MASSACHUSETTS (-25.5)

11/27 at Liberty (+9.5)

12/11 vs. Navy (-8.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

31.36
(#109 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.4 / 0.8
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	22.6	104	15.9	5
Yards Per Point	13.4	46	17.3	16
Plays Per Game	67.1	100		
Time of Possession	34:50	3		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.7%	15	39.6%	56
Total Yards Per Game	303.2	119	275.2	1
Yards Per Play	4.5	114	5	23
Rush Attempts Per Game	60.3	1		
Rush Yards Per Game	264.7	5	114.2	17
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	63	3.9	36
Pass Attempts Per Game	6.2	127		
Completion %	44.6%	126	57.1%	26
Passing Yards Per Game	38.6	127	161	1
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.2	106	6.5	17
Turnovers	1.3	56	1.7	45

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	MIDDLE TENN ST	42-0	W	-3.5	W	53 U
9/12	LA MONROE	37-7	W	-24	W	53.5 U
9/26	at Cincinnati	10-24	L	12.5	L	44 U
10/3	ABILENE CHRISTIAN	55-23	W	-31.5	W	51.5 O
10/10	THE CITADEL	14-9	W	-31	L	49 U
10/17	at TX-San Antonio	28-16	W	-8.5	W	46.5 U
10/24	MERCER	49-3	W	-30	W	47.5 O
11/14	at Tulane	12-38	L	3.5	L	45.5 O
11/21	GA SOUTHERN	28-27	W	-3	L	38.5 O
12/12	NAVY	15-0	W	-7.5	W	36 U
12/19	AIR FORCE	10-7	W	2.5	W	37.5 U
12/31	vs. West Virginia	21-24	L	10	W	41 O

BYU COUGARS

HEAD COACH: KALANI SITAKE (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: AARON RODERICK • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ILAISA TUIAKI

LOCATION: PROVO, UT • STADIUM: LAVELL EDWARDS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

BYU is coming off an epic 11-1 season in which it was led by Heisman Trophy candidate (and No. 2 overall NFL draft pick) Zach Wilson and came from nowhere to enter the College Football Playoff conversation. A year after getting criticized for not playing any Power 5 teams -- which was nearly impossible during the pandemic -- BYU has seven Power 5 teams on a much tougher schedule in 2021. It's unlikely that the Cougars will repeat their No. 3 national rank in scoring after the loss of Wilson plus offensive tackle Brady Christensen, wide receiver Dax Milne and their offensive coordinator and offensive line coach. However, we think the win total has been set a little too low because the cupboard isn't completely bare.

Baylor Romney and Jaren Hall both started games in 2019 (Romney beat a ranked Boise State team), and will battle to succeed Wilson, with plenty of skill players returning. BYU also ranked No. 4 in scoring defense last year, so that should help the Cougars stay in a lot of games.

This doesn't look like a .500 team, which is what it would take to stay Under the total of 7 wins; even with seven Power 5 teams on the schedule, most aren't the top schools in those leagues. If the Cougars are still short of seven wins late in the season, they have November games against Idaho State and Georgia Southern to help get them Over the number -- or at least get the push. - Dave Tuley

45.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#52 OF 130)

10

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
3

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46.5	14.9	1.53	-3.9	7-QB, OC	31.1	5.88	12.68	7	16.2	4.36	18.23
2017		32.5	1.1	0.69	7.4	6	20.5	5.62	17.34	6	19.4	4.93	17.69

NOTEWORTHY...

- BYU IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD IN NOVEMBER
- BYU IS 5-12 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME AS UNRANKED TEAM
- BYU IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Arizona (-12.5)

9/11 UTAH (+2.5)

9/18 ARIZONA ST (+3)

9/25 SOUTH FLORIDA (-16)

10/1 at Utah St (-14.5)

10/9 BOISE ST (-1)

10/16 at Baylor (+1)

10/23 at Washington St (-3)

10/30 VIRGINIA (-0.5)

11/6 IDAHO ST (-23.5)

11/20 at Ga Southern (-4)

11/27 at USC (+11.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

38.19
(#67 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	41.5	9	15.5	3
Yards Per Point	12.6	20	20.3	3
Plays Per Game	67.9	96		
Time of Possession	30:13	57		
3rd Down Conv. %	49.2%	8	38.9%	49
Total Yards Per Game	521.4	6	314.2	8
Yards Per Play	7.7	1	4.6	10
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.1	97		
Rush Yards Per Game	184.3	46	126.5	23
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.3	20	3.6	23
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.8	59		
Completion %	72.9%	2	60.8%	58
Passing Yards Per Game	337.1	8	187.7	14
Yards Per Pass Attempt	10.6	3	6.2	11
Turnovers	0.8	6	1.1	95

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 11-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/7	at Navy	55-3	W	-1	W	48.5 O
9/26	TROY	48-7	W	-14	W	60.5 U
10/2	LOUISIANA TECH	45-14	W	-24	W	62 U
10/10	TX-SAN ANTONIO	27-20	W	-34	L	63.5 U
10/16	at Houston	43-26	W	-3	W	62 O
10/24	TEXAS ST UNIV	52-14	W	-30	W	61.5 O
10/31	W KENTUCKY	41-10	W	-30.5	W	52 U
11/6	at Boise St	51-17	W	-5.5	W	63 O
11/21	N ALABAMA	66-14	W	-50	W	61 O
12/5	at Coastal Carolina	17-22	L	-8.5	L	63 U
12/12	SAN DIEGO ST	28-14	W	-16	L	47 U
12/22	vs. UCF	49-23	W	-4.5	W	81 U
11/4	OHIO U	30-27	W	2.5	W	53.5 O

INDEPENDENTS

CONNECTICUT HUSKIES

HEAD COACH: RANDY EDSALL (15TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: FRANK GIUFRE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LOU SPANOS

LOCATION: EAST HARTFORD, CT • STADIUM: PRATT & WHITNEY STADIUM AT RENTSCHLER FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

2

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
PASS

The Huskies return to the field after not playing a game in 2020. UConn has won just one game against an FBS opponent dating to 2018, having beaten UMass 56-35 in 2019. The Huskies did practice last fall and had a normal spring preparing for the 2021 season. RB Kevin Mensah is the most skilled offensive player, and the former walk-on rushed for over 1,000 yards in 2018 and '19. Coach Randy Edsall hasn't named a starting quarterback, but returning starter Jack Zergiotis would seem to have the inside track.

It's hard to know what to expect from UConn after the Huskies didn't play last year and combined to go 3-21 in 2018-19, with wins over Rhode Island, Wagner and UMass. However, the early schedule is quite manageable: They play a pair of FCS teams in Holy Cross and Yale, visit UMass and have home dates against Wyoming and Middle Tennessee. After back-to-back weeks off, UConn will visit Clemson on Nov. 13. The Huskies could prepare all season and still lose to the Tigers by 40.

Three or four wins is likely the ceiling for UConn. - Tim Murray

18.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#128 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8



STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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, 0C	21.1	5.43	17.34	10, DC	36.2	6.61	12.15
2018		13.5	-17.3	-2.09	26.9	7-0C	24.7	5.91	16.99	2	41.9	7.99	13.37
2017	Yes	26	-4.4	-0.06	16.6	7-0C	23.9	6.1	19.28	7-DC	28.3	6.16	16.67

NOTEWORTHY...

- CONNECTICUT IS 21-9-1 ATS (S2000) AT HOME IN NOVEMBER
- CONNECTICUT IS 21-57-3 ATS (L10Y) VS. UNRANKED TEAMS
- CONNECTICUT IS 20-6 UNDER (S2000) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS



**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 at Fresno St (+23)

9/4 HOLY CROSS (-2)

9/11 PURDUE (+23.5)

9/18 at Army (+25)

9/25 WYOMING (+18)

10/2 at Vanderbilt (+19)

10/9 at Massachusetts (+3.5)

10/16 YALE (+1)

10/22 MIDDLE TENN ST (+9.5)

11/13 at Clemson (+53)

11/20 at UCF (+33)

11/27 HOUSTON (+21.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

35
(#82 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.4 / -0.7
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-0

DATE OPPONENT SCORE SU FL ATS TOTAL

DID NOT PLAY LAST SEASON

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-

INDEPENDENTS

LIBERTY FLAMES

HEAD COACH: HUGH FREEZE (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KENT AUSTIN / MAURICE HARRIS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT SYMONS
LOCATION: LYNCHBURG, VA • STADIUM: ARTHUR L. WILLIAMS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Hugh Freeze's squad went 10-1 last season and finished with an impressive 37-34 overtime win against Coastal Carolina in the Cure Bowl. The Flames' lone loss was by one point at NC State. Liberty returns 20 starters, including a Heisman Trophy long shot in QB Malik Willis, who's a dynamic playmaker and will likely be a first-round pick in the 2022 NFL draft. Last season Willis rushed for 944 yards, passed for 2,260 yards and combined for 34 touchdowns (20 passing, 14 rushing). With every offensive starter returning, Liberty should put up some gaudy numbers. Last season the Flames averaged 482 yards and 38 points per game. Defensively, Liberty returns nine starters. If the Flames can beat Syracuse on the road for a second straight year after last season's 38-21 decision, Liberty should be undefeated heading into a showdown Nov. 6 at Mississippi, where Freeze was the head coach from 2012-16. After a week off, Liberty hosts Louisiana in one of the season's top Group of 5 games. The Ragin' Cajuns return 20 starters from a team that went 10-1 in 2020 and finished nationally ranked. Liberty will be

one of the most explosive offensive teams in the country and should win double-digit games for the second straight year. - Tim Murray

46

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#50 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		24	-3.6	-0.91	16.7	9-QB	31.7	5.42	13.35	7	35.3	6.33	13.75
2017		20.5	-11	-2.19	30	N/A	28.3	5.24	14.07	N/A	39.3	7.42	13.11

NOTEWORTHY...

- LIBERTY IS 16-4 ATS (L20G) ON ROAD IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- LIBERTY IS 5-0 ATS (L2Y) AFTER BLOWOUT SU WIN OF 20 POINTS OR MORE
- LIBERTY IS 7-3 OVER (L3Y) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 CAMPBELL (-42)

9/11 at Troy (-2)

9/18 OLD DOMINION (-28.5)

9/24 at Syracuse (-7)

10/2 at UAB (+2.5)

10/9 MIDDLE TENN ST (-19)

10/16 at LA Monroe (-19)

10/23 at North Texas (-11)

10/30 MASSACHUSETTS (-32)

11/6 at Ole Miss (+8.5)

11/20 LA LAFAYETTE (-1)

11/27 ARMY (-9.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

29.24
(#122 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	37.1	16	22.8	30
Yards Per Point	12.9	29	14.6	47
Plays Per Game	75.7	32		
Time of Possession	33:56	8		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.4%	22	30.1%	9
Total Yards Per Game	478.9	17	331.8	17
Yards Per Play	6.3	23	5.3	45
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.8	12		
Rush Yards Per Game	252.4	9	140.4	35
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.6	8	4.4	66
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.7	86		
Completion %	62.0%	49	56.3%	20
Passing Yards Per Game	226.4	68	191.3	17
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	42	6.7	27
Turnovers	1.4	63	1.1	93

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 10-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	at W Kentucky	30-24	W	15	W	52 O
9/26	FLA INTERNATIONAL	36-34	W	-10	L	61 O
10/3	N ALABAMA	28-7	W	-33	L	62.5 U
10/10	LA MONROE	40-7	W	-17	W	63.5 U
10/17	at Syracuse	38-21	W	-3	W	54.5 O
10/24	SOUTHERN MISS	56-35	W	-14	W	59.5 O
11/7	at Virginia Tech	38-35	W	17	W	66.5 O
11/14	W CAROLINA	58-14	W	-35.5	W	61 O
11/21	at NC State	14-15	L	4	W	66.5 U
11/27	MASSACHUSETTS	45-0	W	-35.5	W	58 U
12/26	vs. Coastal Carolina	37-34	W	6.5	W	59.5 O

MASSACHUSETTS MINUTEMEN

HEAD COACH: WALT BELL (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANGELO MIRANDO • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TOMMY RESTIVO
LOCATION: HADLEY, MA • STADIUM: WARREN MCGUIRK ALUMNI STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

1.5

0 -160 / U +140

PLAY
OVER

No team had a more bizarre 2020 season than UMass. The Minutemen were not expected to have a season but eventually played four games, all on the road. All four opponents were quality Group of 5 programs — Georgia Southern, Marshall, Florida Atlantic and Liberty — and UMass was outscored 161-12 and outgained by an average of 295 yards. The Minutemen had only a handful of practices last fall, but entering Year 3 of the Walt Bell era, UMass should improve. The Minutemen expect Colorado transfer Tyler Lytle to be their starting quarterback. The backfield added Rutgers transfer Kay'Ron Adams and junior college transfer Jonathan White. Leading rusher Ellis Merriweather is also back. The strength of the offense will be at running back. The schedule is tough out of the gate, with games against Pittsburgh, Boston College, Coastal Carolina and Toledo. UMass also plays back-to-back road games against Florida State on Oct. 23 and Liberty on Oct. 30. But with two November games against FCS opponents Rhode Island and Maine, a home date against UConn on Oct. 9 and the season finale at New Mexico State on Nov. 27, UMass could win as many as four games in 2021. — Tim Murray

18

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#129 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		29.5	-5.1	0.11	13.2	9-QB	33.7	6.71	13.63	6	38.7	6.6	12.01
2017		33.5	2.2	0.65	6.9	6	32.5	6.21	13.79	9-DC	30.3	5.56	12.9

NOTEWORTHY...

- MASSACHUSETTS IS 7-3 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD
- MASSACHUSETTS IS 2-13 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD VS. UNRANKED TEAM
- MASSACHUSETTS IS 13-4 OVER (L5Y) AT HOME

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Pittsburgh (+34)

9/11 BOSTON COLLEGE (+26)

9/18 E MICHIGAN (+14)

9/25 at Coastal Carolina (+35.5)

10/2 TOLEDO (+22)

10/9 CONNECTICUT (-3.5)

10/23 at Florida St (+30)

10/30 at Liberty (+32)

11/6 RHODE ISLAND (+0)

11/13 MAINE (-1.5)

11/20 at Army (+25.5)

11/27 at New Mexico St (+1.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

32.52
(#97 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.3 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	3	127	40.2	121
Yards Per Point	62.5	127	12	109
Plays Per Game	56.8	127		
Time of Possession	26:45	116		
3rd Down Conv. %	25.5%	125	51.9%	124
Total Yards Per Game	187.5	127	482.2	119
Yards Per Play	3.3	127	6.7	119
Rush Attempts Per Game	29.2	119		
Rush Yards Per Game	67.2	126	273.5	125
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.3	127	6.5	127
Pass Attempts Per Game	25	113		
Completion %	54.0%	112	59.1%	44
Passing Yards Per Game	120.2	123	208.8	35
Yards Per Pass Attempt	4.8	125	7.6	78
Turnovers	1.8	93	0.5	125

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/17	at GA Southern	0-41	L	31	L	62 U
11/7	at Marshall	10-51	L	44.5	W	56 O
11/20	at Fla Atlantic	2-24	L	33.5	W	51 U
11/27	at Liberty	0-45	L	35.5	L	58 U

NEW MEXICO STATE

AGGIES

HEAD COACH: DOUG MARTIN (9TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DOUG MARTIN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: FRANK SPAZIANI

LOCATION: LAS CRUCES, NM • STADIUM: AGGIE MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

1.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
UNDER

There's not much optimism when a team is ranked dead last in Steve Makinen's Power Ratings. That's the status for New Mexico State, which is rated 2.5 points worse than the next-worst team, Massachusetts. (The Aggies host UMass in the season finale Nov. 27, two weeks after facing No. 1 Alabama with a rating differential of 55 points, so we'll see how high oddsmakers set that line.)

On the bright side, after the Aggies went 2-10 in 2019 and then sat out 2020 due to COVID-19, they played two games last spring and split, losing to Tarleton State 43-17 but beating Dixie State 36-29 to gain at least some game experience. Dual-threat QB Jonah Johnson leads the offense, and we'll see if the extra work with his receiving corps pays dividends. The bad news is the defense, which ranked 129th in the nation in rushing in 2019 at 259.2 yards per game, then lost two key players via the transfer portal.

Oddsmakers have some optimism as the Aggies' season win total opened at 2, though it's been bet down to 1.5. We guess they have winnable games against in-state rival New Mexico, South Carolina State (though the Bulldogs look like the top team in the MEAC, so don't count on it) and UMass, but that's if everything goes right. Otherwise, the best-case scenario is the Aggies get to the previously posted total of two wins for a push for early bettors, but it's more likely they stay Under with one or zero. - Dave Tuley



15.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#130 OF 130)

2

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
1 QB

RET
DEFENSE
1

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		20	-13.8	-0.73	19.9	6	26.4	5.11	14.39	9	40.1	5.84	11.64
2017		32	0.3	0.7	9.6	7	29.4	6.02	15.61	9	29.1	5.33	13.48

NOTEWORTHY...

- NEW MEXICO ST IS 21-13-3 ATS (\$2000) AT HOME WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE
- NEW MEXICO ST IS 4-11 ATS (L5Y) AS UNDERDOG OF 10 OR MORE POINTS
- NEW MEXICO ST IS 20-6 OVER (L10Y) ON ROAD AVENGING A LOSS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 UTEP (+3)

9/4 at San Diego St (+26)

9/11 at New Mexico (+16)

9/18 S CAROLINA ST (-11)

9/25 HAWAII (+15.5)

10/2 at San Jose St (+30.5)

10/9 at Nevada (+31)

10/23 at Hawaii (+22)

11/6 UTAH ST (+9)

11/13 at Alabama (+59.5)

11/20 at Kentucky (+38)

11/27 MASSACHUSETTS (-1.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

31.5
(#107 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.4 / -0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	-

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 1-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
2/20	TARLETON ST	17-43	L	-1	L	58 0
3/7	DIXIE STATE	36-29	W	-3.5	W	56 0

NOTRE DAME

FIGHTING IRISH

HEAD COACH: BRIAN KELLY (12TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TOMMY REES • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MARCUS FREEMAN

LOCATION: NOTRE DAME, IN • STADIUM: NOTRE DAME STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

Unlike most teams in college football this season, Notre Dame doesn't bring back the bulk of its starters. Nine players were selected in the NFL draft, including the school's all-time wins leader, QB Ian Book. The Irish must also replace four starters on the offensive line. According to ESPN's Bill Connelly, Notre Dame returns only 55% of its production, 124th in the FBS. Notre Dame added a pair of grad transfers who are expected to start in OL Cain Madden from Marshall and QB Jack Coan from Wisconsin.

The Irish's strengths offensively in 2021 will be in the backfield and at tight end. RB Kyren Williams rushed for 1,125 yards and 13 touchdowns, while RB Chris Tyree is a home run threat, averaging 6.8 yards per carry in 2020. With unproven commodities at wide receiver, Michael Mayer has a chance to contend for the Mackey Award as the nation's top tight end. The former five-star recruit tied for the team lead in receptions as a freshman last season. If Notre Dame wants to reach double-digit wins for the fifth consecutive year, WR Kevin Austin will have to emerge as a legitimate target. The senior has dealt with injuries throughout his career.

Notre Dame lost defensive coordinator Clark Lea after he took the head coaching job at Vanderbilt, but the Irish grabbed Cincinnati DC Marcus Freeman to fill the vacancy. Freeman was highly sought after, and Notre Dame beat out LSU for his services. Despite having a future top-10 draft pick at safety in Kyle Hamilton, the

strength of the Irish defense will be the line and its depth. Isaiah Foskey and Jordan Botelho are names to keep an eye on as potential disruptors in the backfield.

The schedule is challenging but not daunting. The opener at Florida State could indicate how the season will play out. If the Irish cover in Tallahassee as 9.5-point favorites, Notre Dame could be headed toward another 10-win season. The Irish are slight underdogs in a Sept. 25 meeting against Wisconsin in Chicago and short favorites against Cincinnati on Oct. 2, USC on Oct. 23 and North Carolina on Oct. 30. Notre Dame has won 24 straight games at home, but that streak will be in serious jeopardy in October. Ten wins is achievable, but nine wins seems like the most likely outcome to the season. The market has ticked down a bit on the Irish. - Tim Murray

58

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#8 OF 130)

9

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
3

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		62.5	33	3.34	-19.1	6-QB	42	7.27	12.77	9-DC	9	3.93	32.13
2017		59.5	33.6	3.78	-17.8	8-QB, OC	45.8	7.98	12.33	7-DC	12.2	4.2	25.11

NOTEWORTHY...

- NOTRE DAME IS 19-4 ATS (L23G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER
- NOTRE DAME IS 3-10-2 ATS (L15G) AFTER PLAYING NAVY
- NOTRE DAME IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) BEFORE PLAYING NAVY

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+5000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/5 at Florida St (-10.5)

9/11 TOLEDO (-18)

9/18 PURDUE (-17)

9/25 vs. Wisconsin (-2.5)

10/2 CINCINNATI (-6.5)

10/9 at Virginia Tech (-5.5)

10/23 USC (-8)

10/30 NORTH CAROLINA (-5)

11/6 NAVY (-29.5)

11/13 at Virginia (-7.5)

11/20 GEORGIA TECH (-20)

11/27 at Stanford (-11.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

44.04
(#12 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	33.4	27	19.7	14
Yards Per Point	13.4	43	17.5	14
Plays Per Game	74.3	38		
Time of Possession	33:55	9		
3rd Down Conv. %	49.1%	9	31.4%	12
Total Yards Per Game	448.4	23	344.1	24
Yards Per Play	6	34	5.4	51
Rush Attempts Per Game	42.1	28		
Rush Yards Per Game	211.1	23	113.5	16
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	28	3.9	33
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.2	78		
Completion %	63.8%	30	58.1%	36
Passing Yards Per Game	237.3	58	230.6	63
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	43	7.1	51
Turnovers	0.9	14	1.4	64

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 10-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	DUKE	27-13	W	-21	L	50.5 U
9/19	SOUTH FLORIDA	52-0	W	-23.5	W	49.5 O
10/10	FLORIDA ST	42-26	W	-20.5	L	52.5 O
10/17	LOUISVILLE	12-7	W	-15.5	L	62 U
10/24	at Pittsburgh	45-3	W	-10.5	W	43.5 O
10/31	at Georgia Tech	31-13	W	-20.5	L	58.5 U
11/7	CLEMSON	47-40	W	5	W	51 O
11/14	at Boston College	45-31	W	-13	W	51.5 O
11/27	at North Carolina	31-17	W	-4.5	W	71 U
12/5	SYRACUSE	45-21	W	-34	L	51 O
12/19	vs. Clemson	10-34	L	11	L	57 U
1/1	vs. Alabama	14-31	L	18	W	65.5 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

PREFVIEW



Dustin Crum,
Kent State

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
Team	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
EAST DIVISION								
BUFFALO	43.5	3.1	-0.3	29.03 (123)	8.6	3.4	5.9	2.1
OHIO U	37.5	3.1	0.4	31.81 (104)	6.7	5.3	4.8	3.2
KENT ST	36.5	2.5	-0.6	34.58 (86)	5.7	6.3	4.5	3.5
MIAMI (OHIO)	34.5	2.5	0.2	32.49 (99)	5.3	6.7	3.8	4.2
BOWLING GREEN	21	1.6	-0.4	33.58 (93)	2.3	9.7	1.3	6.7
AKRON	22.5	1.8	-0.2	35.77 (79)	2.6	9.4	1.2	6.8
WEST DIVISION								
TOLEDO	43.5	3.1	0	28.51 (125)	8.8	3.2	5.9	2.1
BALL ST	44.5	2	-0.2	34.61 (85)	8.1	3.9	5.7	2.3
W MICHIGAN	39	3	0.2	35.51 (81)	6.1	5.9	4.4	3.6
C MICHIGAN	38	2.2	-0.1	34.03 (88)	6.1	5.9	4.1	3.9
E MICHIGAN	35	2.6	0.4	31.12 (111)	6.4	5.6	3.8	4.2
N ILLINOIS	30	2.8	-0.1	34.83 (83)	3.8	8.2	2.4	5.6

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
BALL ST	44.5
BUFFALO	43.5
TOLEDO	43.5
W MICHIGAN	39
C MICHIGAN	38
OHIO U	37.5
KENT ST	36.5
E MICHIGAN	35
MIAMI (OHIO)	34.5
N ILLINOIS	30
AKRON	22.5
BOWLING GREEN	21

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
BUFFALO	-3.1
OHIO U	-3.1
TOLEDO	-3.1
W MICHIGAN	-3
N ILLINOIS	-2.8
E MICHIGAN	-2.6
KENT ST	-2.5
MIAMI (OHIO)	-2.5
C MICHIGAN	-2.2
BALL ST	-2
AKRON	-1.8
BOWLING GREEN	-1.6

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
E MICHIGAN	0.4
OHIO U	0.4
MIAMI (OHIO)	0.2
W MICHIGAN	0.2
TOLEDO	0
C MICHIGAN	-0.1
N ILLINOIS	-0.1
AKRON	-0.2
BALL ST	-0.2
BUFFALO	-0.3
BOWLING GREEN	-0.4
KENT ST	-0.6

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
TOLEDO	22
C MICHIGAN	21
AKRON	20
BALL ST	20
E MICHIGAN	20
KENT ST	19
W MICHIGAN	19
MIAMI (OHIO)	18
N ILLINOIS	18
OHIO U	17
BUFFALO	15
BOWLING GREEN	13

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
C MICHIGAN	11
TOLEDO	11
AKRON	10
BALL ST	10
E MICHIGAN	10
KENT ST	10
OHIO U	9
W MICHIGAN	9
MIAMI (OHIO)	8
N ILLINOIS	8
BUFFALO	7
BOWLING GREEN	5

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
TOLEDO	11
AKRON	10
BALL ST	10
C MICHIGAN	10
E MICHIGAN	10
MIAMI (OHIO)	10
N ILLINOIS	10
W MICHIGAN	10
KENT ST	9
BOWLING GREEN	8
BUFFALO	8
OHIO U	8

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

AKRON ZIPS

HEAD COACH: TOM ARTH (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TOMMY ZAGORSKI • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT FEENEY

LOCATION: AKRON, OH • STADIUM: INFOCISION STADIUM-SUMMA FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

2

0 + 100 / U - 120

PLAY
PASS

After flirting with the possibility of joining Brandon Staley's Los Angeles Chargers staff, Akron coach Tom Arth decided to stay with the Zips. Staley was Arth's defensive coordinator when he was the head coach at Division III John Carroll. Akron was the worst team in the country in 2019, Arth's first season. The Zips got on the board last season with a 31-3 victory over Bowling Green. QB Kato Nelson returns after missing all of last season due to offseason shoulder surgery. Zach Gibson started a pair of games last year, but Nelson will likely have the job. Leading rusher Teon Dollard (666 rushing yards and six touchdowns) was suspended this spring, but if available, the Zips could have an exciting backfield. The Zips return 18 starters and could give some teams in the MAC a tough time as the program continues to improve under Arth. If the Zips can beat FCS Bryant and Bowling Green, they'll need just one more win to top their total. - *Tim Murray*



22.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#124 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		26.5	-2.3	-0.07	14.4	5	23.3	4.89	13.35	9	25.6	4.96	14.47
2017		28	2	-0.4	14.2	8	24.6	5.3	14.08	7	22.6	5.7	18.32

NOTEWORTHY...

- AKRON IS 16-10 ATS (L10Y) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- AKRON IS 4-21 ATS (L25G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- AKRON IS 17-2 UNDER (L19G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Auburn (+36)

9/11 TEMPLE (+4)

9/18 BRYANT (-20)

9/25 at Ohio St (+45.5)

10/2 OHIO U (+13.5)

10/9 at Bowling Green (+0.5)

10/16 at Miami Ohio (+14.5)

10/23 BUFFALO (+19)

11/2 BALL ST (+20)

11/9 at W Michigan (+19.5)

11/20 KENT ST (+11.5)

11/27 at Toledo (+24.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

35.77
(#79 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

1.8 / -0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 1-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	W MICHIGAN	13-58	L	20.5	L	52.5 O
11/10	at Ohio U	10-24	L	27	W	58.5 U
11/17	at Kent St	35-69	L	25.5	L	60 O
11/28	MIAMI OHIO	7-38	L	14	L	55 U
12/5	BOWLING GREEN	31-3	W	-2.5	W	54.5 U
12/12	at Buffalo	7-56	L	33	L	59 O

OFFENSE
STAT RANK

DEFENSE
STAT RANK

Points Per Game	17.2	120	41.3	122
Yards Per Point	16.4	109	11.1	121
Plays Per Game	64.3	116		
Time of Possession	30:34	51		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.3%	108	53.4%	125
Total Yards Per Game	281.2	122	459.8	108
Yards Per Play	4.4	121	7.4	127
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.3	95		
Rush Yards Per Game	141.5	84	248.2	120
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	79	6.3	122
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.7	115		
Completion %	56.1%	100	66.9%	117
Passing Yards Per Game	139.7	119	211.7	40
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	117	10	127
Turnovers	1.5	66	1	100

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

BALL STATE CARDINALS

HEAD COACH: MIKE NEU (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN LYNCH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TYLER STOCKTON

LOCATION: MUNCIE, IN • STADIUM: SCHEUMANN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
OVER

In last year's VSiN College Football Betting Guide, we touted Ball State as the Mid-American Conference champ at 10-1. The Cardinals came through, and they return 18 starters and look like the class of the West Division to earn a trip back to the MAC championship game. Quarterback Drew Plitt (66%, 2,164 yards, 17 TDs) returns along with almost all of his top receiving targets, including undersized but dangerous slot receiver Justin Hall (49 receptions, 665 yards, 4 TDs). The defense wasn't great last year, as BSU won most of its games in shootouts, but it really stepped up in the MAC title game against Buffalo and in the 34-13 Arizona Bowl rout of San Jose State. If the defense plays like that this season, the Cardinals will easily go Over their win total of 8. But if the defense plays like it did most of the regular season, some of those narrow wins could go against them. Regardless, the Cardinals should go at least 6-3 in MAC play, in part because their toughest games, against Toledo and Buffalo, are at home and they avoid Ohio on their interdivision slate. They should beat Western Illinois in the season opener, and they'll

probably be double-digit underdogs at Penn State, though an upset of the Nittany Lions would catapult Ball State to another epic season. Assuming a loss at Penn State, going Over the total might come down to nonconference games at Wyoming and home against Army, both of which should have low point spreads. If the Cardinals split those, they'll probably go Over 7.5 as long as they take care of business in the MAC. - Dave Tuley

44.5
20

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#55 OF 130)

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		28.5	-1	0.15	10.1	9-QB	28.3	5.69	15.47	7	29.3	5.54	14.4
2017		13	-18.8	-1.7	25.6	8	20.5	4.66	17.1	4-DC	39.3	6.36	10.29

NOTEWORTHY...

- BALL ST IS 21-6 ATS (L27G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- BALL ST IS 2-12-1 ATS (L15G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- BALL ST IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) VS. BIG TEN

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 W ILLINOIS (-27.5)

9/11 at Penn St (+14)

9/18 at Wyoming (-1)

9/25 TOLEDO (-3)

10/2 ARMY (-6)

10/9 at W Michigan (-2.5)

10/16 at E Michigan (-6.5)

10/23 MIAMI OHIO (-12)

11/2 at Akron (-20)

11/10 at N Illinois (-11.5)

11/17 C MICHIGAN (-8.5)

11/23 BUFFALO (-3.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

34.61
(#85 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2 / -0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	34.2	23	25.8	41
Yards Per Point	13.1	32	16.9	18
Plays Per Game	80.6	8		
Time of Possession	30:01	63		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.7%	19	35.6%	27
Total Yards Per Game	448.5	22	434.4	88
Yards Per Play	5.6	56	5.9	84
Rush Attempts Per Game	45.8	10		
Rush Yards Per Game	178	51	140.1	34
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	86	4	43
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.4	65		
Completion %	65.3%	22	65.1%	102
Passing Yards Per Game	270.5	31	294.2	117
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.6	15	7.9	95
Turnovers	1.1	33	2.1	14

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 7-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	at Miami Ohio	31-38	L	1.5	L	57 O
11/11	E MICHIGAN	38-31	W	-8.5	L	61.5 O
11/18	N ILLINOIS	31-25	W	-14.5	L	59 U
11/28	at Toledo	27-24	W	9.5	W	68.5 U
12/5	at C Michigan	45-20	W	-2	W	63.5 O
12/12	W MICHIGAN	30-27	W	2	W	67.5 U
12/18	vs. Buffalo	38-28	W	12	W	70.5 U
12/31	vs. San Jose St	34-13	W	7.5	W	65.5 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

BOWLING GREEN FALCONS

HEAD COACH: SCOT LOEFFLER (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TERRY MALONE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ERIC LEWIS

LOCATION: BOWLING GREEN, OH • STADIUM: DOYT L. PERRY STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

1.5

0 +110 / U -130

PLAY
UNDER

In sports, there is always a team that finishes in last place. In the MAC East, that is Bowling Green. Last year the Falcons went 0-5 and were outscored 225-57, including a 28-point loss to Akron. Defensive coordinator Brian VanGorder retired, and the Falcons promoted cornerbacks coach Eric Lewis. That could help energize a defense that allowed 6.6 yards per play and 45 points per game. The only game in which Bowling Green will likely be a favorite is Sept. 18 against FCS Murray State. The Falcons are 34-point underdogs at Tennessee to open the season. Bowling Green's best chance for a conference win will come at home against Akron on Oct. 9. It's hard to imagine Bowling Green winning multiple conference games, but the game against Murray State makes it tricky for the season win total, though the Racers are a solid FCS program. The Falcons do host Akron, but the Zips seem the superior program at this point. - *Tim Murray*

21

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#127 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
5 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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, 0C	19.2	4.8	17.46	5, DC	36.7	6.7	12.16
2018		21.5	-9	-0.58	20.8	6-QB	26.5	5.53	14.29	7-DC	35.5	6.1	11.96
2017		25	-4	-0.09	15.3	6	30.1	6	14.06	6	34.1	6.09	13.67

NOTEWORTHY...

- BOWLING GREEN IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS
- BOWLING GREEN IS 0-15 ATS (L15G) IN SEPTEMBER
- BOWLING GREEN IS 12-2 UNDER (L14G) AFTER PLAYING AKRON

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 at Tennessee (+28)

9/11 S ALABAMA (+5.5)

9/18 MURRAY ST (-4.5)

9/25 at Minnesota (+30)

10/2 at Kent St (+18.5)

10/9 AKRON (-0.5)

10/16 at N Illinois (+12)

10/23 E MICHIGAN (+13)

10/30 at Buffalo (+26)

11/10 TOLEDO (+21)

11/16 at Miami Ohio (+16.5)

11/26 OHIO U (+15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

33.58
(#93 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

1.6 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	11.4	126	45	126
Yards Per Point	28.6	126	10.6	124
Plays Per Game	64.8	114		
Time of Possession	26:24	117		
3rd Down Conv. %	26.2%	122	51.4%	123
Total Yards Per Game	326.4	111	475.8	116
Yards Per Play	5	92	6.6	117
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.8	64		
Rush Yards Per Game	184	47	310.2	127
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	36	6.3	125
Pass Attempts Per Game	25	112		
Completion %	43.2%	127	64.9%	100
Passing Yards Per Game	142.4	118	165.6	4
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	113	7.5	67
Turnovers	2.2	117	0.2	127

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 0-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	at Toledo	3-38	L	23.5	L	64.5 U
11/10	KENT ST	24-62	L	20.5	L	55.5 O
11/17	BUFFALO	17-42	L	31.5	W	58.5 O
11/28	at Ohio U	10-52	L	22	L	55 O
12/5	at Akron	3-31	L	2.5	L	54.5 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

BUFFALO BULLS

HEAD COACH: MAURICE LINGUIST (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SHANE MONTGOMERY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE CAUTHEN

LOCATION: AMHERST, NY • STADIUM: UB STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

The Bulls were stunned as double-digit favorites in the MAC championship game last December, falling to Ball State 38-28. Perhaps more stunning was the departure of coach Lance Leipold in late April when he took the job at Kansas. Leipold's staff all departed as well, triggering a roster exodus. Seven players followed Leipold to Kansas, and starting safety Tyrone Hill transferred to Washington State. Additionally, the Bulls lost All-America RB Jaret Patterson and DE Malcolm Koonce to the NFL. It's not all doom and gloom for Buffalo. The Bulls hired Maurice Linguist to replace Leipold. He was the defensive backs coach at Buffalo in 2012-13 and spent last year as the defensive backs coach for the Dallas Cowboys. Earlier this year, he was hired as Michigan's co-defensive coordinator before getting the Buffalo job. QB Kyle Vantrease and RB Kevin Marks return for the Bulls. Despite Patterson's All-America season, Marks is not a massive drop-off. Marks rushed for 741 yards last season and 1,035 yards in 2019. Defensively, linebacker James Patterson, the Bulls' leading tackler, is back. The MAC

schedule is not ideal for the Bulls. They end the regular season at Ball State and host one of the MAC West favorites in Western Michigan. Buffalo also visits Kent State and Miami. Due to their performance last season, the Bulls are priced too high in the market. South Point's +350 price to win the MAC is too short for a team with the rough offseason the Bulls had. The Bulls' nonconference schedule isn't that daunting, with trips to Nebraska and Old Dominion. Buffalo will also host Coastal Carolina and Wagner. However, because of all of the upheaval, Buffalo could be in for a bumpy season. - *Tim Murray*

43.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#63 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		40.5	12.8	0.86	0.5	8-QB	37.7	5.93	11.34	6	24.9	5.08	13.7
2017		33.5	6.5	1.08	8.8	6	29.5	6.44	15.07	8	23	5.36	16.88

NOTEWORTHY...

- BUFFALO IS 15-0 ATS (L15G) AT HOME IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- BUFFALO IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING BOWLING GREEN
- BUFFALO IS 12-3 OVER (L5Y) IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 WAGNER (-44)

9/11 at Nebraska (+5.5)

9/18 COASTAL CAROLINA (+4)

9/25 at Old Dominion (-18.5)

10/2 W MICHIGAN (-7.5)

10/9 at Kent St (-4)

10/16 OHIO U (-8.5)

10/23 at Akron (-19)

10/30 BOWLING GREEN (-26)

11/9 at Miami Ohio (-6)

11/17 N ILLINOIS (-16.5)

11/23 at Ball St (+3.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

29.03
(#123 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.1/-0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	43.4	3	21.9	27
Yards Per Point	11	3	16.5	20
Plays Per Game	65.7	110		
Time of Possession	30:49	46		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.6%	17	31.3%	11
Total Yards Per Game	478.1	18	360.4	34
Yards Per Play	7.3	4	5	24
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.1	23		
Rush Yards Per Game	287.1	2	157.4	56
Yards Per Rush Attempt	6.7	1	3.9	39
Pass Attempts Per Game	22.4	119		
Completion %	62.4%	45	55.0%	15
Passing Yards Per Game	191	102	203	29
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.5	21	7	47
Turnovers	0.9	9	1.4	63

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	at N Illinois	49-30	W	-15	W	53.5 O
11/10	MIAMI OHIO	42-10	W	-7	W	56.5 U
11/17	at Bowling Green	42-17	W	-31.5	L	58.5 O
11/28	KENT ST	70-41	W	-8	W	71 O
12/12	AKRON	56-7	W	-33	W	59 O
12/18	vs. Ball St	28-38	L	-12	L	70.5 U
12/25	vs. Marshall	17-10	W	-4.5	W	52.5 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL MICHIGAN CHIPPEWAS

HEAD COACH: JIM MCELWAIN (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN BARBAY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROBB AKEY

LOCATION: MOUNT PLEASANT, MI • STADIUM: KELLY/SHORTS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
UNDER

Like many conferences, the MAC has several teams that are clear title contenders and several teams that have virtually no shot. However, Central Michigan is one of the few that could go either way. The defense is the main concern after allowing a MAC-worst 297.2 passing yards per game last year. The rushing defense is better, though that's probably because teams didn't have to run on the Chippewas, and several key players return.

Redshirt freshman QB Daniel Richardson had a decent season before suffering a leg injury, and he now has competition from Washington transfer Jacob Sirmon. If a top QB emerges, CMU has all five starting offensive linemen back and enough returning weapons, led by WR Kalil Pimpleton and RBs Lew Nichols and Kobe Lewis, to be a decent MAC offense. However, even if everything comes together, it will be a tough road to get above .500.

The Chippewas have road games at Missouri and LSU, and it doesn't get much easier with key road conference games at Miami (Ohio), Ohio, Western Michigan and Ball State. In addition, CMU doesn't get to face East Division bottom-feeders Akron and Bowling Green. This looks like a middle-of-the-road team, so take the Under 6 as it looks like the worst-case scenario should be a push. - Dave Tuley

38

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#86 OF 130)

21

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		23	-5.1	-0.6	15.7	4	19.9	4.05	13.74	6	25	4.65	13.33
2017		33.5	6.5	0.8	10.2	9-QB, OC	30.6	5.73	13.3	6	24	4.92	15.32

NOTEWORTHY...

- C MICHIGAN IS 11-3-1 ATS (L5Y) ON ROAD IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- C MICHIGAN IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) AVENGING A LOSS VS. TOLEDO
- C MICHIGAN IS 13-2 OVER (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Missouri (+15.5)

9/11 ROBERT MORRIS (-35.5)

9/18 at LSU (+20)

9/25 FLA INTERNATIONAL (-14)

10/2 at Miami Ohio (-1)

10/9 at Ohio U (+2.5)

10/16 TOLEDO (+3.5)

10/23 N ILLINOIS (-10.5)

11/3 at W Michigan (+4)

11/10 KENT ST (-4.5)

11/17 at Ball St (+8.5)

11/26 E MICHIGAN (-5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

34.03
(#88 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.2 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	31.3	40	30.2	69
Yards Per Point	13.4	44	14.2	57
Plays Per Game	74.2	40		
Time of Possession	28:55	84		
3rd Down Conv. %	28.2%	121	44.4%	96
Total Yards Per Game	420.5	42	427.7	82
Yards Per Play	5.7	49	5.6	71
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.3	21		
Rush Yards Per Game	218.2	15	130.5	27
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	27	3.1	7
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.7	87		
Completion %	61.6%	57	57.7%	30
Passing Yards Per Game	202.3	84	297.2	119
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	72	9.4	123
Turnovers	1.5	72	2.5	5

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/11	at N Illinois	40-10	W	-6	W	57.5 U
11/18	W MICHIGAN	44-52	L	1	L	59.5 O
11/27	at E Michigan	31-23	W	-6.5	W	58 U
12/5	BALL ST	20-45	L	2	L	63.5 O
12/12	at Toledo	23-24	L	10	W	55.5 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLES

HEAD COACH: CHRIS CREIGHTON (8TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHRIS CREIGHTON • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NEAL NEATHERY
LOCATION: YPSILANTI, MI • STADIUM: RYNEARSON STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
UNDER

Like most MAC teams, Eastern Michigan should have a decent offense, having averaged 400 yards and 33 points per game last season. But it falls short on defense. The Eagles had only nine sacks in six games last year, as they allowed 36 points per game and never seemed to get a key stop when they needed it. Preston Hutchinson (64%, 1,657 yards, 12 TDs, 8 rushing TDs) is reportedly getting challenged by Cincinnati transfer Ben Bryant for the starting QB job, but it won't matter if the defense doesn't show vast improvement. Eastern Michigan should get off to a nice start with nonconference games against St. Francis (Pa.), Wisconsin, Massachusetts and Texas State. The Eagles will likely be more than 20-point underdogs at Wisconsin, but the other three games are winnable. They should be able to get at least three conference wins — at Northern Illinois, at Bowling Green and a split against the other Michigan directional schools. That would give them six wins, but it will take a major upset to find that seventh victory to go Over the total of 6.5. — Dave Tuley

35

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#98 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
2020		32	5	-1.22	13.4	5, 0C	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
2018		37	9.7	0.92	6	6	30.3	5.68	12.94	7	20.6	4.76	16.52
2017		35.5	7	0.53	5.3	8-0C	27.2	5.66	14.84	8	20.2	5.14	17.35

NOTEWORTHY...

- E MICHIGAN IS 13-2 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AVENGING A LOSS
- E MICHIGAN IS 11-24 ATS (L10Y) AT HOME IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- E MICHIGAN IS 12-2 OVER (L14G) BEFORE PLAYING TOLEDO

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 ST FRANCIS PA (-25.5)

9/11 at Wisconsin (+22.5)

9/18 at Massachusetts (-14)

9/25 TEXAS ST UNIV (-6.5)

10/2 at N Illinois (-2.5)

10/9 MIAMI OHIO (-3)

10/16 BALL ST (+6.5)

10/23 at Bowling Green (-13)

11/2 at Toledo (+11)

11/9 OHIO U (+0.5)

11/16 W MICHIGAN (+1.5)

11/26 at C Michigan (+5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

31.12
(#111 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.6 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	33.2	30	36	105
Yards Per Point	12.3	14	13.6	74
Plays Per Game	72.5	56		
Time of Possession	29:12	77		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.0%	52	37.3%	38
Total Yards Per Game	406.3	56	490.3	122
Yards Per Play	5.6	51	6.3	101
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.5	86		
Rush Yards Per Game	129.3	97	241.5	119
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.5	98	5.3	108
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.2	51		
Completion %	63.3%	36	66.9%	116
Passing Yards Per Game	277	28	248.8	86
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.4	25	8.1	102
Turnovers	2	105	2	23

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	at Kent St	23-27	L	5.5	W	66 U
11/11	at Ball St	31-38	L	8.5	W	61.5 O
11/18	TOLEDO	28-45	L	6.5	L	62.5 O
11/27	C MICHIGAN	23-31	L	6.5	L	58 U
12/5	at W Michigan	53-42	W	13.5	W	67 O
12/12	N ILLINOIS	41-33	W	-6.5	W	55.5 O

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

KENT STATE GOLDEN FLASHES

HEAD COACH: SEAN LEWIS (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANDREW SOWDER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TOM KAUFMAN

LOCATION: KENT, OH • STADIUM: DIX STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 +115 / U -135

PLAY
OVER

The theme in the MAC this year is returning starters. No team benefits more from one returning player than Kent State. First-team All-MAC QB Dustin Crum is back for another season. Crum is an electric playmaker in coach Sean Lewis' "Flash Fast" offense. Kent State scored 62 and 69 points in back-to-back games last season. Crum accounted for 16 touchdowns (12 passing and four rushing) in just four games. The Golden Flashes return 10 starters to an offense that averaged 607 yards per game. The lone loss was first-team All-MAC WR Isaiah McKoy. Defense was Kent State's problem last year. Buffalo's Jaret Patterson rushed for 409 yards and eight touchdowns against the Golden Flashes. Kent State does return eight starters on defense and added a pair of Power 5 transfers to the secondary. Road games at Central Michigan, Western Michigan and Ohio make the conference schedule challenging, but with the best QB in the conference on its side, a +1200 (South Point) flyer to win the MAC isn't that bad a bet. The nonconference schedule is rough with trips to Texas A&M, Iowa and Maryland. But the Golden

Flashes host VMI, and with Crum under center, the Golden Flashes will be a dangerous team. - Tim Murray



36.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#93 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	24	-5.4	-0.47	14.9	7-OC	25.6	5.4	16.07	6-DC	30.9	5.87	14.15
2017		16	-14.8	-1.08	23	7	15.9	4.73	18.66	6	30.8	5.81	12.41

NOTEWORTHY...

- KENT ST IS 8-2 ATS (L3Y) WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE
- KENT ST IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD ON GRASS FIELD
- KENT ST IS 8-2 OVER (L10G) AT HOME IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Texas A&M (+27)

9/11 VMI (-18)

9/18 at Iowa (+22)

9/25 at Maryland (+11)

10/2 BOWLING GREEN (-18.5)

10/9 BUFFALO (+4)

10/16 at W Michigan (+6)

10/23 at Ohio U (+4.5)

11/3 N ILLINOIS (-9)

11/10 at C Michigan (+4.5)

11/20 at Akron (-11.5)

11/27 MIAMI OHIO (-4.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

34.58
(#86 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.5 / -0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	49.8	1	38	113
Yards Per Point	12.2	12	11.2	120
Plays Per Game	82.8	2		
Time of Possession	30:01	65		
3rd Down Conv. %	56.1%	2	43.8%	94
Total Yards Per Game	606.5	1	424	79
Yards Per Play	7.3	3	6.2	98
Rush Attempts Per Game	50	3		
Rush Yards Per Game	283	3	262	123
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.7	7	6.2	121
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.5	63		
Completion %	71.4%	3	51.7%	3
Passing Yards Per Game	323.5	11	162	2
Yards Per Pass Attempt	10.3	5	7.1	49
Turnovers	1	25	1.2	83

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	E MICHIGAN	27-23	W	-5.5	L	66 U
11/10	at Bowling Green	62-24	W	-20.5	W	55.5 O
11/17	AKRON	69-35	W	-25.5	W	60 O
11/28	at Buffalo	41-70	L	8	L	71 O

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

MIAMI (OHIO) REDHAWKS

HEAD COACH: CHUCK MARTIN (8TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ERIC KOEHLER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOHN HAUSER / SPENCE NOWINSKY

LOCATION: OXFORD, OH • STADIUM: FRED C. YAGER STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5.5

0 +120 / U-140

PLAY
UNDER

A year after winning the MAC, Miami played only three games in 2020 because of COVID-19. The RedHawks went 2-1, including a season-opening 38-31 win over eventual conference champion Ball State. The return of RBs Jaylon Bester and Tyre Shelton gives Miami a massive boost. Bester and Shelton combined to rush for 1,328 yards in 2019 but missed last year with injuries. Bester rushed for 14 touchdowns in 2019. Brett Gabbert and AJ Mayer, the two quarterbacks who saw significant action in 2020, are back as well. While Miami is not the favorite to win the MAC East, +3300 (DraftKings) is way too high for a team seeking its second conference title in three years. Miami opens against neighborhood rival and likely preseason Top 10 team Cincinnati. The RedHawks will also be underdogs at Minnesota and Army. Then they face conference road games against Ball State, Ohio and Kent State. While there is some value on Miami to win the conference, there's only one way to go here. - Tim Murray

34.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#99 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		40.5	9.3	0.87	4.2	8-QB	31.8	5.81	12.45	8	22.6	4.94	15.39
2017		33.5	1.5	0.26	5.1	9	24.8	5.62	15.69	8	23.3	5.36	15.62

NOTEWORTHY...

- MIAMI OHIO IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- MIAMI OHIO IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) NONCONFERENCE VS. NON-POWER 5
- MIAMI OHIO IS 29-13-1 UNDER (\$2000) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Cincinnati (+22.5)

9/11 at Minnesota (+15.5)

9/18 LIU POST (-37.5)

9/25 at Army (+8)

10/2 C MICHIGAN (+1)

10/9 at E Michigan (+3)

10/16 AKRON (-14.5)

10/23 at Ball St (+12)

11/2 at Ohio U (+6)

11/9 BUFFALO (+6)

11/16 BOWLING GREEN (-16.5)

11/27 at Kent St (+4.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

32.49
(#99 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.5 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	28.7	57	26.7	47
Yards Per Point	12.7	26	14.7	43
Plays Per Game	63	120		
Time of Possession	28:43	90		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.5%	54	45.0%	99
Total Yards Per Game	365.3	89	393	52
Yards Per Play	5.8	46	5.6	70
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.3	106		
Rush Yards Per Game	127	99	125.3	20
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	90	3.4	16
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.3	93		
Completion %	55.3%	105	60.5%	51
Passing Yards Per Game	238.3	56	267.7	110
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.4	24	9.3	122
Turnovers	0.7	1	0.7	121

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	BALL ST	38-31	W	-1.5	W	57 O
11/10	at Buffalo	10-42	L	7	L	56.5 U
11/28	at Akron	38-7	W	-14	W	55 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

NORTHERN ILLINOIS HUSKIES

HEAD COACH: THOMAS HAMMOCK (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ERIC EIDSNESS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DERRICK JACKSON

LOCATION: DEKALB, IL • STADIUM: BRIGHAM FIELD AT HUSKIE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
OVER

It wasn't that long ago that NIU was averaging more than 10 wins a season, racking up 57 wins from 2010 to 2014. Instead, the Huskies are coming off an abbreviated 0-6 season and are ranked as the bottom team in the MAC West. However, NIU has some upside, and the Over/Under is set really low (opened 3.5 at DraftKings, though it's been bet up to four).

The offense returns all five starting linemen and RB Harrison Waylee. The biggest reason for optimism is the arrival of Michigan State transfer QB Rocky Lombardi. There's decent depth at wide receiver, led by Tyrice Richie (53 receptions, 597 yards, 4 TDs) and transfer TE Miles Joiner. The defense returns seven starters, though last year's unit allowed 38.7 PPG. The Huskies will undoubtedly take their lumps in the first three games of the season against Georgia Tech, Wyoming and Michigan, though they get Wyoming in DeKalb and could be live home 'dogs. Even if they don't pull that upset, they should beat FCS

school Maine as well as Bowling Green on Oct. 16. If NIU improves during the season, it could beat one of the Michigan directional schools and then would need to find just one more upset to at least get to the low total. - Dave Tuley

30

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#115 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		39	9.4	0.83	0.8	8-QB	26.6	5.04	13.48	6-DC	17.2	4.21	18.5
2017		39.5	12.2	0.77	1.6	5-QB	31	5.23	12.76	7	18.8	4.46	16.98

NOTEWORTHY...

- N ILLINOIS IS 26-9 ATS (L10Y) ON ROAD IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- N ILLINOIS IS 4-11 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- N ILLINOIS IS 8-0 UNDER (L8G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS



ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Georgia Tech (+15)

9/11 WYOMING (+6)

9/18 at Michigan (+25)

9/25 MAINE (-13)

10/2 E MICHIGAN (+2.5)

10/9 at Toledo (+16.5)

10/16 BOWLING GREEN (-12)

10/23 at C Michigan (+10.5)

11/3 at Kent St (+9)

11/10 BALL ST (+11.5)

11/17 at Buffalo (+16.5)

11/23 W MICHIGAN (+6.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

34.83
(#83 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.8 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	24.8	87	38.7	119
Yards Per Point	14.8	85	10.8	123
Plays Per Game	76	27		
Time of Possession	33:39	11		
3rd Down Conv. %	28.3%	120	31.2%	10
Total Yards Per Game	367.5	87	418.8	74
Yards Per Play	4.8	99	6.4	112
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.8	80		
Rush Yards Per Game	127	100	173.5	73
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	102	4.8	88
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.8	23		
Completion %	57.5%	92	65.0%	101
Passing Yards Per Game	240.5	51	245.3	80
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.5	92	9.2	119
Turnovers	1.7	90	1.2	90

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	BUFFALO	30-49	L	15	L	53.5 O
11/11	C MICHIGAN	10-40	L	6	L	57.5 U
11/18	at Ball St	25-31	L	14.5	W	59 U
11/28	at W Michigan	27-30	L	18.5	W	64.5 U
12/5	TOLEDO	24-41	L	9	L	53.5 O
12/12	at E Michigan	33-41	L	6.5	L	55.5 O

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

OHIO U BOBCATS

HEAD COACH: TIM ALBIN

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOTT ISPHORDING • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RON COLLINS / PETE GERMANO
LOCATION: ATHENS, OH • STADIUM: PEDEN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

After 16 seasons with the Bobcats, coach Frank Solich announced his retirement July 14, saying he needed “to focus on a cardiovascular health issue.” Under Solich, Ohio won the MAC East Division four times but lost in the conference championship game every time, most recently in 2016. Offensive coordinator Tim Albin was hired to replace Solich. Due to COVID-19, the Bobcats played only three games in 2020 and finished 2-1. Ohio returns 17 starters, including QBs Kurtis Rourke and Armani Rogers, its top two running backs, its seven top receivers and four offensive linemen. Additionally, Ohio added offensive lineman T.J. Jackson, a grad transfer from Virginia Tech. Jackson will likely start at left tackle. The MAC East is pretty close at the top with Kent State, Buffalo and Miami (Ohio), but the Bobcats’ schedule is the separator. Ohio avoids Western Michigan and defending MAC champ Ball State in crossover games, hosts one of the MAC West favorites, Toledo, and hosts Miami and Kent State. The Bobcats’ three road games in the division are against Buffalo, Akron and Bowling Green. Despite Solich’s retirement,

the manageable schedule and the talent returning is a reason +600 might be worth a look for Ohio to win its first conference championship in over five decades. The Bobcats open the season at home against Syracuse. If Ohio, as a 1-point underdog, can beat the Orange, the Bobcats should be able to surpass their win total. - *Tim Murray*

37.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#90 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46	16.3	1.01	-4.9	8-QB	41.6	7.13	11.48	4	25.4	6.12	15.5
2017		42.5	13.1	0.98	-1.2	7	38.9	6.3	11.1	6	25.8	5.32	14.46

NOTEWORTHY...

- OHIO U IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING CENTRAL MICHIGAN
- OHIO U IS 3-16-1 ATS (L20G) BEFORE PLAYING BUFFALO
- OHIO U IS 9-0-1 OVER (L10G) VS. SUN BELT

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 SYRACUSE (-4)

9/11 DUQUESNE (-28.5)

9/16 at LA Lafayette (+14.5)

9/25 at Northwestern (+12)

10/2 at Akron (-13.5)

10/9 C MICHIGAN (-2.5)

10/16 at Buffalo (+8.5)

10/23 KENT ST (-4.5)

11/2 MIAMI OHIO (-6)

11/9 at E Michigan (-0.5)

11/16 TOLEDO (+3)

11/26 at Bowling Green (-15.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

31.81
(#104 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.1 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	34.3	22	16.7	8
Yards Per Point	10.6	2	23.3	1
Plays Per Game	60	126		
Time of Possession	29:09	78		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.5%	88	34.1%	21
Total Yards Per Game	362.7	91	389	50
Yards Per Play	6	32	5.4	56
Rush Attempts Per Game	39	51		
Rush Yards Per Game	216.7	17	193.7	91
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.6	10	4.8	91
Pass Attempts Per Game	18	123		
Completion %	66.7%	17	54.4%	12
Passing Yards Per Game	146	116	195.3	20
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	33	6.4	14
Turnovers	0.7	2	2	20

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	at C Michigan	27-30	L	-2.5	L	53.5 O
11/10	AKRON	24-10	W	-27	L	58.5 U
11/28	BOWLING GREEN	52-10	W	-22	W	55 O

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

TOLEDO ROCKETS

HEAD COACH: JASON CANDLE (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE HALLETT / ROBERT WEINER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: VINCE KEHRES / CRAIG KULIGOWSKI
LOCATION: TOLEDO, OH • STADIUM: GLASS BOWL

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

The Rockets' Over/Under seems set just right at 8.5, but we have to lean to the Over. Toledo is seemingly always in the MAC West race, boasting 11 straight seasons with a winning record, so nine wins look more likely than seven.

QB Eli Peters left the team during spring football because of all the abuse his body has taken, but the Rockets know how to reload and have a capable backup in Carter Bradley. He passed for 432 yards against Central Michigan last year, though he could get challenged by a deep QBs room. The rest of the team is solid, with all five offensive linemen returning and other standouts in RB Bryant Koback, WR Isaiah Winstead and WR Matt Landers, a Georgia transfer. The defense should also rank among the MAC's best.

Toledo should get off to a 2-1 start, with a tough game at Notre Dame sandwiched between winnable home nonconference games against Norfolk State and Colorado State. The key MAC West game comes early (Sept. 25 at Ball State), but then there's another gimme at Massachusetts before the rest of the MAC schedule, which Toledo should breeze through. There should be no reason why the Rockets shouldn't have nine wins by the time they face one of their toughest tests on Nov. 16 at Ohio (potentially for the MAC East Division title); even if they're short, the Rockets still face Akron in the regular-season finale. - Dave Tuley

43.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#63 OF 130)

22

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		43	13.1	0.69	-0.7	6	42.5	6.37	10.77	6	29.4	5.68	14.38
2017		43	18	2.14	-1.9	5	39.6	7.47	13.52	7	21.6	5.33	16.84

NOTEWORTHY...

- TOLEDO IS 15-7 ATS (L5Y) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- TOLEDO IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG
- TOLEDO IS 8-2 OVER (L10G) ON ROAD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 NORFOLK ST (-44)

9/11 at Notre Dame (+18)

9/18 COLORADO ST (-13)

9/25 at Ball St (+3)

10/2 at Massachusetts (-22)

10/9 N ILLINOIS (-16.5)

10/16 at C Michigan (-3.5)

10/23 W MICHIGAN (-7.5)

11/2 E MICHIGAN (-11)

11/10 at Bowling Green (-21)

11/16 at Ohio U (-3)

11/27 AKRON (-24.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

28.51
(#125 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.1 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	35	20	24.3	36
Yards Per Point	14.1	59	14.9	40
Plays Per Game	79.3	11		
Time of Possession	33:31	12		
3rd Down Conv. %	48.2%	13	27.4%	3
Total Yards Per Game	494	11	362.2	35
Yards Per Play	6.2	29	5.2	37
Rush Attempts Per Game	40.5	40		
Rush Yards Per Game	168.2	58	129.2	25
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	74	3.7	31
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.5	26		
Completion %	65.3%	24	56.1%	19
Passing Yards Per Game	325.8	10	233	66
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.9	13	7.1	50
Turnovers	2	106	1.5	59

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	BOWLING GREEN	38-3	W	-23.5	W	64.5 U
11/11	at W Michigan	38-41	L	1.5	L	59.5 O
11/18	at E Michigan	45-28	W	-6.5	W	62.5 O
11/28	BALL ST	24-27	L	-9.5	L	68.5 U
12/5	at N Illinois	41-24	W	-9	W	53.5 O
12/12	C MICHIGAN	24-23	W	-10	L	55.5 U

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

WESTERN MICHIGAN BRONCOS

HEAD COACH: TIM LESTER (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: VACANT • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LOU ESPOSITO

LOCATION: KALAMAZOO, MI • STADIUM: WALDO STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

O +100 / U -120

PLAY
OVER

The Broncos are coming off a 4-2 record in the abbreviated 2020 season and are 24-20 under coach Tim Lester without a losing season, so they're usually right around .500. That would make sense if this were just another middling Western Michigan team, but there's plenty of upside that makes the Over the more likely winner and a push on a 6-6 season as the worst-case scenario. Kaleb Eleby (65%, 18 TDs, only 2 INTs) ranked No. 3 in the nation last year in passing efficiency behind only Mac Jones and Zach Wilson, who both went in the first round of the draft. Two of his favorite targets, Skyy Moore and Jaylen Hall, return, and the Broncos add Chattanooga transfer Bryce Nunnally to the attack. Western Michigan has a tough nonconference schedule, facing Michigan (assume a loss), Illinois State (win), Pittsburgh (loss) and San Jose State (loss), so they're likely to start 1-3 unless they can pull an upset. That means they need to go 6-2 in conference play to finish over .500. They don't have to play Ohio or Miami (Ohio) from the MAC East, plus they get to face Ball State, Kent State and Central Michigan at home.

The tough scheduling spots are the Oct. 2 date at Buffalo and the Oct. 23 date at Toledo, and the latter is especially important if the Broncos are in the MAC West race. A sweep of those games would give Western Michigan a shot at the MAC title game, but even if they lose both, we can't see the Broncos below .500. - Dave Tuley

39

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#81 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		34	3.6	0.55	1.3	8-QB	34.9	6.3	13.31	5	31.3	5.75	11.67
2017	Yes	37.5	6.9	0.03	3.6	5-QB, OC	35.4	5.57	11.24	7-DC	28.4	5.54	13.06

NOTEWORTHY...

- W MICHIGAN IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) VS. NON-FBS
- W MICHIGAN IS 6-20-3 ATS (L29G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG
- W MICHIGAN IS 8-2 UNDER (L3Y) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Michigan (+15.5)

9/11 ILLINOIS ST (-14.5)

9/18 at Pittsburgh (+12.5)

9/25 SAN JOSE ST (+1)

10/2 at Buffalo (+7.5)

10/9 BALL ST (+2.5)

10/16 KENT ST (-6)

10/23 at Toledo (+7.5)

11/3 C MICHIGAN (-4)

11/9 AKRON (-19.5)

11/16 at E Michigan (-1.5)

11/23 at N Illinois (-6.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

35.51
(#81 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 4-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/4	at Akron	58-13	W	-20.5	W	52.5 O
11/11	TOLEDO	41-38	W	-1.5	W	59.5 O
11/18	at C Michigan	52-44	W	-1	W	59.5 O
11/28	N ILLINOIS	30-27	W	-18.5	L	64.5 U
12/5	E MICHIGAN	42-53	L	-13.5	L	67 O
12/12	at Ball St	27-30	L	-2	L	67.5 U

**OFFENSE
STAT RANK**

**DEFENSE
STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	41.7	8	34.2	90
Yards Per Point	11.5	9	11.7	114
Plays Per Game	66.5	104		
Time of Possession	28:15	100		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.3%	39	39.6%	54
Total Yards Per Game	479.7	15	399.7	56
Yards Per Play	7.2	6	5.4	53
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.3	50		
Rush Yards Per Game	195.8	35	157.3	55
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	30	4.1	47
Pass Attempts Per Game	26	108		
Completion %	63.5%	34	63.8%	90
Passing Yards Per Game	283.8	24	242.3	77
Yards Per Pass Attempt	10.9	2	7.3	61
Turnovers	1	20	0.5	124



Carson Strong,
Nevada

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
Team	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
MOUNTAIN DIVISION								
BOISE ST	47	2.1	0.6	36.11 (77)	8.4	3.6	6.2	1.8
WYOMING	39	4.1	0	30.48 (115)	7.6	4.4	4.7	3.3
AIR FORCE	38.5	2.9	-0.1	30.9 (112)	7.3	4.7	4.6	3.4
COLORADO ST	33.5	2.8	-0.1	36.85 (73)	4.2	7.8	3.0	5.0
NEW MEXICO	29.5	1.4	-0.4	32.01 (102)	4.9	7.1	2.6	5.4
UTAH ST	28	3.4	0.1	31.82 (103)	4.0	8.0	2.5	5.5
WEST DIVISION								
SAN JOSE ST	43	2.3	0	31.81 (105)	8.2	3.8	5.6	2.4
NEVADA	43	3	-0.3	32.5 (98)	7.8	4.2	5.1	2.9
SAN DIEGO ST	39	2.2	0.5	33.07 (94)	7.0	5.0	4.4	3.6
FRESNO ST	37.5	3.5	0.4	32.75 (95)	6.2	5.8	4.0	4.0
HAWAII	34.5	2.3	-0.3	30.51 (113)	6.7	6.3	3.6	4.4
UNLV	25	1.8	0.2	37.91 (70)	2.1	9.9	1.7	6.3

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
BOISE ST	47
NEVADA	43
SAN JOSE ST	43
SAN DIEGO ST	39
WYOMING	39
AIR FORCE	38.5
FRESNO ST	37.5
HAWAII	34.5
COLORADO ST	33.5
NEW MEXICO	29.5
UTAH ST	28
UNLV	25

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
WYOMING	-4.1
FRESNO ST	-3.5
UTAH ST	-3.4
NEVADA	-3
AIR FORCE	-2.9
COLORADO ST	-2.8
HAWAII	-2.3
SAN JOSE ST	-2.3
SAN DIEGO ST	-2.2
BOISE ST	-2.1
UNLV	-1.8
NEW MEXICO	-1.4

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
BOISE ST	0.6
SAN DIEGO ST	0.5
FRESNO ST	0.4
UNLV	0.2
UTAH ST	0.1
SAN JOSE ST	0
WYOMING	0
AIR FORCE	-0.1
COLORADO ST	-0.1
HAWAII	-0.3
NEVADA	-0.3
NEW MEXICO	-0.4

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
NEVADA	22
WYOMING	21
COLORADO ST	20
FRESNO ST	20
SAN JOSE ST	20
HAWAII	18
BOISE ST	17
SAN DIEGO ST	17
NEW MEXICO	16
UNLV	16
UTAH ST	16
AIR FORCE	14

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
NEVADA	11
COLORADO ST	10
WYOMING	10
BOISE ST	9
FRESNO ST	9
SAN DIEGO ST	9
SAN JOSE ST	9
HAWAII	8
NEW MEXICO	8
UTAH ST	8
AIR FORCE	7
UNLV	6

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
FRESNO ST	11
NEVADA	11
SAN JOSE ST	11
WYOMING	11
COLORADO ST	10
HAWAII	10
UNLV	10
BOISE ST	8
NEW MEXICO	8
SAN DIEGO ST	8
UTAH ST	8
AIR FORCE	7

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

AIR FORCE FALCONS

HEAD COACH: TROY CALHOUN (15TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE THIESSEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOHN RUDZINSKI

LOCATION: COLORADO SPRINGS, CO • STADIUM: FALCON STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
UNDER

Experience is usually one of the most important factors when evaluating college football teams. Due to the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, many programs are loaded with returning talent. But that is not the case with Air Force. Only 13 starters return, and just four are on offense. QB Haaziq Daniels is back to run the offense for coach Troy Calhoun, but he returns with only two of his top five rushers and an offensive line that does not have a single player from last season's team. Generally, service academies can overcome losses on the offensive line, but with so little back on that side of the ball and a brutal schedule, it is fair to wonder what the Falcons will look like this season. They open against Lafayette before a challenging road game in Annapolis against Navy, a team they beat 40-7 last year and will likely have revenge on its mind. The Falcons' first conference game will be at home against Utah State in what is sure to be a coin-flip spot before they host Conference USA favorite Florida Atlantic. Air Force might have three losses by the time it heads to Albuquerque to face New Mexico. Then the schedule ratchets up. Air Force must face Wyoming,

Boise State and San Diego State the next three weeks. The Falcons figure to be underdogs in each of those games, and the test against Boise State will be on the road. After a week off, the Falcons have a neutral-site game against Army in Arlington, Texas, before back-to-back games at Colorado State and Nevada. Air Force draws three of the four conference teams with the highest win totals, along with San Diego State and rivalry games against the other two service academies. Given the lack of returning talent, it is nearly impossible to see how this program can win seven games. - Jonathan Von Tobel

38.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#84 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		38.5	12.2	0.55	3.2	5-QB	33.9	6.08	13.16	6	21.8	5.53	15.5
2017		37	6	-0.47	3.6	6	35.1	5.91	12.73	1	29.1	6.37	12.67

NOTEWORTHY...

- AIR FORCE IS 11-4 ATS (L5Y) IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- AIR FORCE IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. WYOMING
- AIR FORCE IS 12-2-1 UNDER (L15G) VS. INDEPENDENTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 LAFAYETTE (-31.5)

9/11 at Navy (-3)

9/18 UTAH ST (-13.5)

9/25 FLA ATLANTIC (-5.5)

10/2 at New Mexico (-7.5)

10/9 WYOMING (-2.5)

10/16 at Boise St (+10.5)

10/23 SAN DIEGO ST (-2)

11/6 vs. Army (+2)

11/13 at Colorado St (-2)

11/19 at Nevada (+7.5)

11/26 UNLV (-16)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

30.9
(#112 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/3	NAVY	40-7	W	6.5	W	46.5 O
10/24	at San Jose St	6-17	L	-7.5	L	64 U
10/31	BOISE ST	30-49	L	13.5	L	50 O
11/20	NEW MEXICO	28-0	W	-8	W	54.5 U
12/3	at Utah St	35-7	W	-13	W	52 U
12/19	at Army	7-10	L	-2.5	L	37.5 U

**OFFENSE
STAT RANK**

**DEFENSE
STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	24.3	91	15	2
Yards Per Point	16	105	20.3	4
Plays Per Game	62.5	124		
Time of Possession	32:30	17		
3rd Down Conv. %	48.5%	12	46.6%	106
Total Yards Per Game	389.3	68	304.5	6
Yards Per Play	6.2	27	5	25
Rush Attempts Per Game	52	2		
Rush Yards Per Game	305.7	1	137.7	31
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.9	4	3.9	34
Pass Attempts Per Game	10.2	126		
Completion %	55.7%	102	61.5%	65
Passing Yards Per Game	83.7	126	166.8	5
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	28	7	46
Turnovers	1.3	55	1.3	72

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

BOISE STATE BRONCOS

HEAD COACH: ANDY AVALOS (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM PLOUGH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SPENCER DANIELSON / KANE IOANE
LOCATION: BOISE, ID • STADIUM: ALBERTSONS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

Boise State begins its season as a road underdog at the Bounce House against UCF. The market drove down that number from Central Florida -10 to -4, but a Knights team with 17 returning starters will be a challenge. After hosting UTEP the next Friday, the Broncos have eight days to prepare for a home game against Oklahoma State, in which they are catching four points in the South Point's Game of the Year lines. The nonconference schedule will conclude three weeks later with a game at BYU that will likely be a coin-flip spot with a spread inside a field goal. The Broncos get no breaks in their conference schedule, either, as they face Nevada and Wyoming, but both will be making the trek to the Smurf Turf. The intriguing challenge will come when Boise State opens Mountain West play with a road game against a Utah State program with 19 returning starters, a quality transfer quarterback in Logan Bonner and a new coach in Blake Anderson. The Broncos have a quality team this season as 17 starters return, many at key positions. Hank Bachmeier and Jack Sears got time under center last year and will compete for the starting job, and the offensive line returns four starters, including two all-conference players.

First-year coach Andy Avalos was the defensive coordinator for Oregon the last two seasons, and he gets a defense that has seven linemen who started a game in 2020 and every starter back at linebacker, so this unit should be better than last season, when it gave up 27.1 points per game and 5.3 yards per play. However, given the unknown nature of Avalos as a head coach and a rugged schedule, this team is unlikely to surpass nine wins. Four opponents have win totals of 7.5 or higher, and while three will play the Broncos in Boise, an implied probability of 58.2% (-139) that this team wins fewer than nine games is accurate. - Jonathan Von Tobel

47

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#45 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		51.5	23.6	1.55	-8.6	6-QB	40.7	6.72	12.44	10	17.1	5.17	19.02
2017		48.5	20	2.09	-9.9	5	38.4	6.5	11.62	4	18.3	4.41	16.66

NOTEWORTHY...

- BOISE ST IS 13-2 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD WHEN TRAVELING 1,500 OR MORE MILES
- BOISE ST IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) AVENGING A LOSS
- BOISE ST IS 21-6-1 OVER (L10Y) ON ROAD AS UNRANKED TEAM

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 at UCF (+3)

9/10 UTEP (-27.5)

9/18 OKLAHOMA ST (+6.5)

9/25 at Utah St (-16)

10/2 NEVADA (-6.5)

10/9 at BYU (+1)

10/16 AIR FORCE (-10.5)

10/30 at Colorado St (-11.5)

11/6 at Fresno St (-6.5)

11/12 WYOMING (-10)

11/20 NEW MEXICO (-20)

11/26 at San Diego St (-6.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

36.11
(#77 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.1 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	UTAH ST	42-13	W	-17	W	51 0
10/31	at Air Force	49-30	W	-13.5	W	50 0
11/6	BYU	17-51	L	5.5	L	63 0
11/12	COLORADO ST	52-21	W	-14	W	62.5 0
11/21	at Hawaii	40-32	W	-12.5	L	56 0
12/12	at Wyoming	17-9	W	-10	L	48.5 U
12/19	vs. San Jose St	20-34	L	-6.5	L	59.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	33.9	25	27.1	52
Yards Per Point	10.4	1	13.8	72
Plays Per Game	66.3	106		
Time of Possession	29:22	71		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.3%	38	27.1%	2
Total Yards Per Game	352.6	98	373.3	41
Yards Per Play	5.3	77	5.1	27
Rush Attempts Per Game	32.6	111		
Rush Yards Per Game	110.7	114	163.7	61
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	106	4	44
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.7	61		
Completion %	62.6%	42	52.8%	7
Passing Yards Per Game	241.9	49	209.6	38
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.6	53	6.9	40
Turnovers	1	23	0.4	126

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

COLORADO STATE RAMS

HEAD COACH: STEVE ADDAZIO (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JON BUDMAYR • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHUCK HEATER
LOCATION: FORT COLLINS, CO • STADIUM: SONNY LUBICK FIELD AT CANVAS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

Steve Addazio's time as Colorado State's coach got off to a rocky start when a student abuse scandal rocked the program before the 2020 season. The product on the field did not fare much better as the Rams suffered three double-digit losses in four games before the season was cut short due to COVID-19. This season Addazio brings back 19 starters and a bevy of transfers in hopes of turning it around in his second year. There is plenty to like about this roster, especially on defense. Ten starters return, but the depth is key. Five defensive linemen have starting experience, the top eight linebackers are back and the only loss comes in the secondary. This front seven was one of the best in the Mountain West last season, allowing just 109 yards per game and 2.5 yards per carry. Bettors should expect that to continue in 2021. The real questions come on offense, specifically at quarterback. Todd Centeo, who started one game last season, will probably start, but the roster has no depth behind him. Much like Addazio teams of the past, this team will rely on a workhorse running back, and that will be Boston College transfer David Bailey. Inexperience at quarterback will likely hold this team back, especially once the schedule

is factored in. The Rams will host Vanderbilt and have road games against Toledo and Iowa as part of the nonconference schedule. In Mountain West play, Colorado State must face San Jose State, Boise State, Wyoming and Nevada. Three of those games are at home, but the Rams figure to be underdogs in all of them. UNLV is not on the schedule, so the worst conference team by win total on the schedule will be New Mexico, and that game will be on the road. The defense might be a strength, but with questions at quarterback and a challenging schedule, laying a price for this team to surpass 5 wins is not a winning wager. - Jonathan Von Tobel

33.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#103 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		28	-4.8	-0.23	15	4-OC	26.7	6.02	16.81	5-DC	31.5	6.25	13.22
2017		40	10.9	1.11	-1.3	6	35.3	7.03	14.83	9	24.4	5.92	16.71

NOTEWORTHY...

- COLORADO ST IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) AT HOME IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- COLORADO ST IS 5-13 ATS (L5Y) AVENGING A LOSS
- COLORADO ST IS 9-0 OVER (L9G) WHEN TRAVELING 1,000 OR MORE MILES

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 S DAKOTA ST (+4.5)

9/11 VANDERBILT (-2)

9/18 at Toledo (+13)

9/25 at Iowa (+24.5)

10/9 SAN JOSE ST (+6.5)

10/16 at New Mexico (-2.5)

10/22 at Utah St (-2)

10/30 BOISE ST (+11.5)

11/6 at Wyoming (+9.5)

11/13 AIR FORCE (+2)

11/20 at Hawaii (+3.5)

11/27 NEVADA (+6.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

36.85
(#73 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.8 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 1-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/29	at Fresno St	17-38	L	-2.5	L	57.5 U
11/5	WYOMING	34-24	W	3	W	52.5 O
11/12	at Boise St	21-52	L	14	L	62.5 O
12/5	at San Diego St	17-29	L	7.5	L	47 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	22.2	106	35.8	103
Yards Per Point	14.5	77	10	126
Plays Per Game	70.8	76		
Time of Possession	25:46	122		
3rd Down Conv. %	22.0%	127	40.3%	62
Total Yards Per Game	323.5	113	358.8	31
Yards Per Play	4.6	112	4.6	7
Rush Attempts Per Game	39	53		
Rush Yards Per Game	124	103	108.5	11
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	114	2.5	2
Pass Attempts Per Game	29	84		
Completion %	50.9%	120	60.7%	55
Passing Yards Per Game	199.5	88	250.2	87
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	78	8.2	105
Turnovers	1	17	1.2	81

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

FRESNO STATE BULLDOGS

HEAD COACH: KALEN DEBOER (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RYAN GRUBB • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WILLIAM INGE

LOCATION: FRESNO, CA • STADIUM: BULLDOG STADIUM AT JIM SWEENEY FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
OVER

After consecutive appearances in the Mountain West title game, one of which resulted in a conference championship, Fresno State has fallen back to the pack the last two seasons. The Bulldogs have mustered just seven wins the last two seasons, going 3-3 in 2020, and Kalen DeBoer must find a way to regain some of the magic this program once had. Given the state of the roster, he might be able to do it. DeBoer has 19 starters back, the most important being quarterback Jake Haener, who started in all six games last season. The Washington transfer improved as the season went along, throwing nine touchdown passes to two interceptions over the final three games while completing 65.7% of his passes. Haener will have back his top eight receivers, top three rushers and eight offensive linemen with starting experience, giving Fresno State an insanely high ceiling on offense. Pair that with a defense that brings back 10 starters and this team might have enough to navigate a tricky schedule. Fresno State is laying 27.5 points in its season opener with Connecticut, so it is likely the Bulldogs will be 1-0 when they head to Eugene to meet Oregon.

The Ducks are one of two Pac-12 opponents for the Bulldogs this season, the other being UCLA, and both will be road games. Their conference schedule presents some challenges, but none that are insurmountable. Fresno State must face Boise State, Wyoming, Nevada, San Jose State and San Diego State, and three of those games will come on the road. The Bulldogs will get Nevada and Boise State at home and should be slight favorites. Pair that with games against UNLV and New Mexico, as well as winnable games against Hawaii and Cal Poly, and this team has a very realistic path to at least six wins. Since there is no juiced price to lay, it is worth looking at this team to surpass its win total. - Jonathan Von Tobel



37.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#90 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		54.5	29	2.26	-13	7-QB	37.9	6.71	11.95	7-DC	8.9	4.46	34.16
2017	Yes	45	16.5	1.65	-1.9	10-OC	30.2	6.25	13.75	6-DC	13.7	4.59	21.89

NOTEWORTHY...

- FRESNO ST IS 9-0-1 ATS (L10G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG
- FRESNO ST IS 1-6-1 ATS (L8G) AT HOME BEFORE PLAYING HAWAII
- FRESNO ST IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 CONNECTICUT (-23)

9/4 at Oregon (+20.5)

9/11 CAL POLY SLO (-27)

9/18 at UCLA (+12.5)

9/24 UNLV (-16)

10/2 at Hawaii (-1)

10/16 at Wyoming (+5)

10/23 NEVADA (+1.5)

10/30 at San Diego St (+3.5)

11/6 BOISE ST (+6.5)

11/13 NEW MEXICO (-12)

11/25 at San Jose St (+7.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

32.75
(#95 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.5 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	32.8	32	30	66
Yards Per Point	14.6	80	14.3	51
Plays Per Game	81.3	5		
Time of Possession	31:37	28		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.2%	43	48.5%	116
Total Yards Per Game	479.3	16	430	85
Yards Per Play	5.9	39	5.8	81
Rush Attempts Per Game	36	90		
Rush Yards Per Game	123	105	212.3	105
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	104	5.2	106
Pass Attempts Per Game	41.3	9		
Completion %	63.7%	32	55.7%	17
Passing Yards Per Game	356.3	6	217.7	47
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.6	16	7.4	64
Turnovers	1.7	87	1.7	44

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	HAWAII	19-34	L	-3	L	64 U
10/29	COLORADO ST	38-17	W	2.5	W	57.5 U
11/7	at UNLV	40-27	W	-11.5	W	57.5 O
11/14	at Utah St	35-16	W	-11	W	52 U
12/5	at Nevada	26-37	L	6.5	L	59.5 O
12/12	vs. New Mexico	39-49	L	-17	L	55.5 O

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

HAWAII RAINBOW WARRIORS

HEAD COACH: TODD GRAHAM (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BO GRAHAM • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: VICTOR SANTA CRUZ / JACOB YORO
LOCATION: HONOLULU, HI • STADIUM: ALOHA STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

O +125 / U -145

PLAY
UNDER

In Todd Graham's first season in Honolulu, the Rainbow Warriors did some good things. They handed an undefeated Nevada team its first loss of the season in November and they pushed Boise State in a one-possession game as 13-point underdogs. This season Graham has 18 starters back, including dynamic quarterback Chevan Cordeiro and senior running back Calvin Turner. The Rainbows must work through a difficult schedule to reach seven wins, but the talent is there to do so. Hawaii has two Pac-12 opponents on the road in the first three weeks of the season, and it figures to be a decent underdog in both. The market has already moved UCLA up to -16.5 in their game at the Rose Bowl, and Oregon State is a quality program with 19 starters back. Those two are part of a five-game nonconference schedule that stretches into October with an interesting wrinkle: two games against the same opponent. Hawaii will play New Mexico State twice this season, once on the road and once at home. The Aggies are due for a rough season with only three starters back and a win total of 1.5, so those two games give the Rainbow Warriors an opportunity to pad their win total. But the conference schedule is a bear. Not only must Hawaii face division rivals San Jose State, San Diego State and Nevada, it also draws Wyoming from the Mountain

Division. The Rainbow Warriors do face Utah State and UNLV, the teams with the lowest win totals in the conference, and they host Fresno State and Colorado State in winnable games. All in all, Hawaii has games against Portland State, New Mexico State twice and UNLV, making four games in which they should be favored and win. From there, it is about taking care of business against the other opponents for three more wins, something easier said than done. If this were a regularly priced win total, it would be a play Over the wins. But an implied probability of 58.2% that this team will surpass seven wins is too high a price to pay given the rest of the schedule. - Jonathan Von Tobel

34.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#99 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		32.5	3.6	0.82	9.8	4	36.3	6.72	12.79	5	32.7	5.91	12.62
2017		24.5	-5.4	-0.31	12.3	8-OC	24.5	6.08	17.43	6-DC	29.9	6.39	14.5

NOTEWORTHY...

- HAWAII IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING FRESNO STATE
- HAWAII IS 2-13 ATS (L15G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- HAWAII IS 24-7 OVER (L31G) AT HOME NONCONFERENCE VS. NON-POWER 5

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 at UCLA (+16.5)

9/4 PORTLAND ST (-17.5)

9/11 at Oregon St (+8.5)

9/18 SAN JOSE ST (+6)

9/25 at New Mexico St (-15.5)

10/2 FRESNO ST (+1)

10/16 at Nevada (+12)

10/23 NEW MEXICO ST (-22)

10/30 at Utah St (-3)

11/6 SAN DIEGO ST (+2.5)

11/13 at UNLV (-7.5)

11/20 COLORADO ST (-3.5)

11/27 at Wyoming (+9)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

30.51
(#113 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	26.2	80	27.6	54
Yards Per Point	14.6	82	14.9	41
Plays Per Game	74.1	41		
Time of Possession	28:44	89		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.1%	71	41.7%	78
Total Yards Per Game	384	73	409.3	65
Yards Per Play	5.2	88	5.6	68
Rush Attempts Per Game	36	91		
Rush Yards Per Game	152.6	75	212.2	104
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	72	5.1	100
Pass Attempts Per Game	35	36		
Completion %	61.9%	52	54.9%	14
Passing Yards Per Game	231.4	60	197.1	23
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.6	90	6.7	26
Turnovers	1.3	52	1.9	27

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Fresno St	34-19	W	3	W	64 U
10/30	at Wyoming	7-31	L	-3	L	60.5 U
11/7	NEW MEXICO	39-33	W	-13	L	67 O
11/14	at San Diego St	10-34	L	9.5	L	51 U
11/21	BOISE ST	32-40	L	12.5	W	56 O
11/28	NEVADA	24-21	W	6.5	W	63.5 U
12/5	SAN JOSE ST	24-35	L	3	L	60 U
12/12	UNLV	38-21	W	-19	L	61.5 U
12/24	vs. Houston	28-14	W	7	W	61 U

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

NEVADA WOLF PACK

HEAD COACH: JAY NORVELL (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MATT MUMME • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN WARD

LOCATION: RENO, NV • STADIUM: MACKAY STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
UNDER

Over the last three seasons, Jay Norvell has led Nevada to 22 wins. With 20 returning starters this season and a quarterback some believe could be a first-round draft pick, the Wolf Pack are primed to continue that winning trend. Last season, Carson Strong won the Offensive Player of the Year Award in the Mountain West after throwing for 27 touchdowns and completing 70% of his passes. This season he gets all five receivers back and an offensive line that is missing just one starter from the 2020 unit. No question this team will be a legitimate threat in the conference, but a demanding schedule brings into question its ability to surpass 7.5 wins. The first five weeks will be an absolute slog. The Wolf Pack are catching 3.5 points in Berkeley against Cal in the season opener, and after a home game against Idaho State, they are certain to be underdogs in Manhattan against Kansas State. Nevada will then have an open week before having to trek to Boise for a massive conference battle with the Broncos. So, in the first five weeks, the Wolf Pack has road games against Cal, Kansas State and Boise State, all of which they will be more likely to

lose than win. The schedule lightens up considerably over the next several weeks as Nevada faces Hawaii, Fresno State and UNLV, certain to be favored in two of those. However, Strong & Co. must buckle down yet again to close the season as they face San Jose State and San Diego State among the final four games. In summation, Nevada gets two road games against Power 5 foes and draws Boise State, San Jose State and San Diego State in conference play. Given those challenges, even with the strength of this roster, there is no case to be made for laying a price on Over 7.5 wins. - Jonathan Von Tobel

43

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#68 OF 130)

22

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		40.5	10.8	1.66	2	7-QB	34.1	6.61	13.79	7	23.4	4.95	15.27
2017	Yes	32.5	2.2	0.69	10.5	5-OC	30.5	6.37	14.17	9-DC	28.2	5.68	15.47

NOTEWORTHY...

- NEVADA IS 13-3 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- NEVADA IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) IN SEPTEMBER
- NEVADA IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) AFTER PLAYING UNLV

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at California (+1.5)

9/11 IDAHO ST (-21.5)

9/18 at Kansas St (+6.5)

10/2 at Boise St (+6.5)

10/9 NEW MEXICO ST (-31)

10/16 HAWAII (-12)

10/23 at Fresno St (-1.5)

10/29 UNLV (-21)

11/6 SAN JOSE ST (-3)

11/13 at San Diego St (-1.5)

11/19 AIR FORCE (-7.5)

11/27 at Colorado St (-6.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

32.5
(#98 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	30.8	45	23.3	32
Yards Per Point	14.3	72	16.2	22
Plays Per Game	70.6	81		
Time of Possession	31:39	27		
3rd Down Conv. %	41.5%	53	35.1%	24
Total Yards Per Game	441.4	29	377.7	42
Yards Per Play	6.3	25	5.2	38
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.4	123		
Rush Yards Per Game	122.3	106	138.1	33
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	68	4	42
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.9	11		
Completion %	69.9%	6	60.6%	54
Passing Yards Per Game	319.1	13	239.6	74
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8	38	6.8	37
Turnovers	1	24	1	99

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 7-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	WYOMING	37-34	W	3	W	53.5 O
10/31	at UNLV	37-19	W	-14	W	58.5 U
11/5	UTAH ST	34-9	W	-17	W	58.5 U
11/14	vs. New Mexico	27-20	W	-17.5	L	62.5 U
11/21	SAN DIEGO ST	26-21	W	1.5	W	45.5 O
11/28	at Hawaii	21-24	L	-6.5	L	63.5 U
12/5	FRESNO ST	37-26	W	-6.5	W	59.5 O
12/11	vs. San Jose St	20-30	L	2.5	L	58 U
12/22	vs. Tulane	38-27	W	-1	W	56.5 O

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

NEW MEXICO LOBOS

HEAD COACH: DANNY GONZALES (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DREW MEHRINGER / DEREK WAREHIME • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROCKY LONG
LOCATION: ALBUQUERQUE, NM • STADIUM: DREAMSTYLE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

No program turned in a more impressive performance in 2020 than New Mexico. In Danny Gonzales' first year as coach, the Lobos won just twice, but they covered four of their seven games and were one of the most competitive teams in the Mountain West despite not playing a single game at home. This season Gonzales gets a traditional home schedule and 17 returning starters, meaning New Mexico can really build on an impressive start to the Gonzales era. The Lobos bring back eight starters on offense, most of them at key positions. Every quarterback who played a snap in 2020 returns, and they add former Kentucky QB Terry Wilson. Leading rusher Bobby Cole is back, and he lines up behind an offensive line that returns four starters. On defense, New Mexico has nine starters back with a ton of depth on the line and at defensive back. The Lobos open at home against Houston Baptist and New Mexico State. Those are two perfectly winnable games, so New Mexico should be undefeated before being fed to Texas A&M on Sept. 18 at College Station. The next week the Lobos travel to El Paso in a coin-flip spot against a UTEP team returning as much talent as the Lobos. New Mexico's conference

schedule does provide some hurdles, playing division powers Boise State and Wyoming on the road and drawing San Diego State from the West. However, the Lobos also get UNLV and Fresno State from the other division, avoiding Nevada and San Jose State. New Mexico's home schedule is very favorable, and if it is to surpass 4.5 wins, it will do so by taking advantage. Air Force, Colorado State, UNLV and Utah State will visit Albuquerque. Those four programs have the lowest win totals in the conference, opening the door for the Lobos to win five or more games for the first time since 2016. - Jonathan Von Tobel

29.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#117 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		25	-2.5	-0.56	13.7	7-OC	29.3	5.37	12.12	6	31.8	5.92	13.96
2017		26.5	-5.2	0.09	9.4	7	22.8	5.86	16.81	3	28	5.78	13.39

NOTEWORTHY...

- NEW MEXICO IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) HTH VS. SAN DIEGO STATE
- NEW MEXICO IS 4-12 ATS (L5Y) IN NOVEMBER
- NEW MEXICO IS 12-3 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 HOUSTON BAPTIST (-15)

9/11 NEW MEXICO ST (-16)

9/18 at Texas A&M (+33.5)

9/25 at UTEP (-4.5)

10/2 AIR FORCE (+7.5)

10/9 at San Diego St (+12)

10/16 COLORADO ST (+2.5)

10/23 at Wyoming (+14)

11/6 UNLV (-5.5)

11/13 at Fresno St (+12)

11/20 at Boise St (+20)

11/26 UTAH ST (-3)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

32.01
(#102 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

1.4 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game 23.9 94 32.6 85

Yards Per Point 16.5 111 13.7 73

Plays Per Game 74.3 39

Time of Possession 30:32 52

3rd Down Conv. % 43.0% 44 42.7% 86

Total Yards Per Game 393.7 62 447.3 98

Yards Per Play 5.3 79 6.6 118

Rush Attempts Per Game 41.3 32

Rush Yards Per Game 195.7 36 164.3 62

Yards Per Rush Attempt 4.7 44 4.8 90

Pass Attempts Per Game 30.7 72

Completion % 56.7% 96 65.3% 103

Passing Yards Per Game 198 94 283 116

Yards Per Pass Attempt 6.4 94 9 118

Turnovers 1.3 48 1.9 30

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/31	at San Jose St	21-38	L	13	L	57 O
11/7	at Hawaii	33-39	L	13	W	67 O
11/14	vs. Nevada	20-27	L	17.5	W	62.5 U
11/20	at Air Force	0-28	L	8	L	54.5 U
11/26	at Utah St	27-41	L	-6.5	L	49 O
12/5	WYOMING	17-16	W	15	W	51 U
12/12	vs. Fresno St	49-39	W	17	W	55.5 O

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS

HEAD COACH: BRADY HOKE (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF HECKLINSKI • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KURT MATTIX

LOCATION: SAN DIEGO, CA • STADIUM: DIGNITY HEALTH SPORTS PARK

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

0 - 125 / U + 105

PLAY
UNDER

Four of the previous six seasons have ended with San Diego State winning 10 or more games, but 2020 looked much different for the perennial powerhouse. The Aztecs managed just four wins against UNLV, Utah State, Hawaii and Colorado State last season, and three of those teams wound up winning one or zero games. San Diego State finished behind Nevada and San Jose State in the West Division. However, an offense brimming with talent and a defense with depth in the front seven could push the Aztecs back toward the top of their division. In total, 17 players return from the 2020 season for coach Brady Hoke, but what makes this roster special are returnees further down the depth chart. SDSU returns its top four running backs, top eight wide receivers, three starters along the defensive line and the entirety of its linebacker room. Those pieces will be needed to push for seven wins and to navigate one of the toughest schedules in the Mountain West. The Aztecs have two Pac-12 opponents on their nonconference slate this year, Arizona and Utah. They must face the Wildcats in Tucson before hosting the Utes, with SDSU a likely underdog.

The other two nonconference games, against New Mexico State and Towson, should be winnable, but the conference schedule offers no reprieve. Of the Aztecs' eight Mountain West opponents, four have win totals equal to or higher than their own. San Diego State must face the top two teams in its division, Nevada and San Jose State, as well as the favorite to win the Mountain Division, Boise State. The meeting with the Spartans is the only one on the road, but those combined with two Power 5 opponents make for an insane schedule. It is why, despite all the returning talent, we see a win total so low shaded to the Under. - Jonathan Von Tobel

39

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#81 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		41	7.7	1.25	-2.3	7-QB	25.5	5.91	14.85	7	17.8	4.66	17.29
2017		43	17.8	1.77	1.6	5	31.9	6.57	13.65	6-DC	14.1	4.79	20.06

NOTEWORTHY...

- SAN DIEGO ST IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG
- SAN DIEGO ST IS 2-12-1 ATS (L15G) AT HOME NONCONFERENCE VS. NON-POWER 5
- SAN DIEGO ST IS 21-3 UNDER (L24G) ON ROAD NONCONFERENCE VS. POWER 5

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 NEW MEXICO ST (-26)

9/11 at Arizona (-2.5)

9/18 UTAH (+9.5)

9/25 TOWSON (-15)

10/9 NEW MEXICO (-12)

10/15 at San Jose St (+6)

10/23 at Air Force (+2)

10/30 FRESNO ST (-3.5)

11/6 at Hawaii (-2.5)

11/13 NEVADA (+1.5)

11/20 at UNLV (-12.5)

11/26 BOISE ST (+6.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

33.07
(#94 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.2 / 0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 4-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	UNLV	34-6	W	-13.5	W	50.5 U
10/31	at Utah St	38-7	W	-8.5	W	40 O
11/6	SAN JOSE ST	17-28	L	-10	L	49.5 U
11/14	HAWAII	34-10	W	-9.5	W	51 U
11/21	at Nevada	21-26	L	-1.5	L	45.5 O
11/28	at Colorado	10-20	L	6	L	51 U
12/5	COLORADO ST	29-17	W	-7.5	W	47 U
12/12	at BYU	14-28	L	16	W	47 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	24.6	90	17.8	11
Yards Per Point	14.2	67	16	27
Plays Per Game	71.9	63		
Time of Possession	32:17	20		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.1%	95	29.2%	6
Total Yards Per Game	350.8	99	283.9	2
Yards Per Play	4.9	98	4.2	2
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.4	15		
Rush Yards Per Game	199.4	30	98.6	6
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	59	3.1	6
Pass Attempts Per Game	25.4	111		
Completion %	56.7%	97	59.9%	50
Passing Yards Per Game	151.4	115	185.2	11
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6	110	5.7	2
Turnovers	1.4	60	1.6	50

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

SAN JOSE STATE SPARTANS

HEAD COACH: BRENT BRENNAN (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEVIN MCGIVEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DERRICK ODUM

LOCATION: SAN JOSE, CA • STADIUM: CFCU STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

It was a slow burn for Brent Brennan in his first three years as San Jose State, but the flame finally reached the end of the fuse in 2020 with a Mountain West title. Now, with 20 returning starters and an extremely favorable schedule, the Spartans have all the pieces to repeat as conference champions.

Their season opens at home against Southern Utah, but the real challenge is Sept. 4 when San Jose State must face USC as a 16-point underdog on the road. After a week off, the Spartans load up on frequent-flyer miles with back-to-back trips to Hawaii and Western Michigan. Those games figure to be coin-flip spots, but San Jose State will be a sizable favorite at home Oct. 2 against New Mexico State before getting heavily into its conference schedule. The Spartans' most daunting road game for the rest of the season is Nov. 6 at Nevada, which could go a long way toward deciding the West representative in the conference title game. They get Wyoming and San Diego State at home, which is a favorable situation against the division rivals that could block their road to another title. In

addition, San Jose State figures to be a decent favorite in its other conference matchups with UNLV, Utah State and Fresno State.

It's easy to see a path to at least six wins, and to surpass 7.5, the Spartans must take two from among USC, Western Michigan, San Diego State, Wyoming and Nevada. That is certainly achievable, and bettors should expect San Jose State to win eight or more games this season. - Jonathan Von Tobel

43

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#68 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		27	-2.3	-0.08	17.1	8-QB, OC	26.8	5.47	13.72	6	29.1	5.55	15.2
2017	Yes	15.5	-18.4	-0.77	26	7-QB, OC	20.1	4.99	17.13	8-DC	38.5	5.76	12.04

NOTEWORTHY...

- SAN JOSE ST IS 5-0-1 ATS (L2Y) ON NON-GRASS FIELD
- SAN JOSE ST IS 5-15 ATS (L20G) BEFORE PLAYING NEVADA
- SAN JOSE ST IS 6-0 UNDER (L2Y) AVENGING A LOSS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 S UTAH (-24)

9/4 at USC (+14)

9/18 at Hawaii (-6)

9/25 at W Michigan (-1)

10/2 NEW MEXICO ST (-30.5)

10/9 at Colorado St (-6.5)

10/15 SAN DIEGO ST (-6)

10/23 at UNLV (-16)

10/30 WYOMING (-6.5)

11/6 at Nevada (+3)

11/13 UTAH ST (-17)

11/25 FRESNO ST (-7.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

31.81
(#105 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.3 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 7-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	AIR FORCE	17-6	W	7.5	W	64 U
10/31	NEW MEXICO	38-21	W	-13	W	57 O
11/6	at San Diego St	28-17	W	10	W	49.5 U
11/14	UNLV	34-17	W	-17	T	62 U
12/5	at Hawaii	35-24	W	-3	W	60 U
12/11	vs. Nevada	30-20	W	-2.5	W	58 U
12/19	vs. Boise St	34-20	W	6.5	W	59.5 U
12/31	vs. Ball St	13-34	L	-7.5	L	65.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	28.6	59	19.9	16
Yards Per Point	15.1	92	17.6	13
Plays Per Game	65.6	111		
Time of Possession	29:27	69		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.6%	86	39.2%	50
Total Yards Per Game	432.5	35	349.2	26
Yards Per Play	6.6	12	4.8	15
Rush Attempts Per Game	28.6	122		
Rush Yards Per Game	134.1	90	123.4	19
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	46	3.3	13
Pass Attempts Per Game	36	29		
Completion %	63.5%	33	62.1%	71
Passing Yards Per Game	298.4	18	225.9	58
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.3	27	6.9	41
Turnovers	1.1	32	1.4	67

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

UTAH STATE AGGIES

HEAD COACH: BLAKE ANDERSON (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANTHONY TUCKER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: EPHRAIM BANDA
LOCATION: LOGAN, UT • STADIUM: MERLIN OLSEN FIELD AT MAVERIK STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Besides New Mexico, Utah State is the most intriguing team in the conference. Blake Anderson comes from Arkansas State to take over a program that hit rock bottom last season. Anderson went 51-37 in seven seasons with the Red Wolves and made it to six bowl games. He brings with him quarterback Logan Bonner, who completed 59.5% of his passes for 28 touchdowns and seven interceptions over his final two seasons at Arkansas State. Anderson and Bonner join a team bringing back 19 starters, mostly on offense, and the Aggies could be formidable by season's end.

Utah State opens the season as a 16.5-point underdog at Washington State, and comes back home to host North Dakota before beginning its conference slate at Air Force. The Aggies have two more nonconference opponents, one of which is BYU on a Friday night in Logan, the other a trip to New Mexico State. Utah State has some real obstacles with its conference schedule, but the toughest games will come at home: The Aggies must face Boise State, San Jose State and Wyoming, with the Broncos and Cowboys making appearances at Logan. The tough stretch for Utah State comes in November.

After the game at New Mexico State, the Aggies make a trip to San Jose. Then they return home to host Wyoming before ending the season at New Mexico.

With North Dakota, UNLV and New Mexico State on the schedule, it will be no surprise to see the Aggies with at least three wins. If you pair that with coin-flip spots against Air Force, Colorado State, Hawaii and New Mexico, getting to four wins seems attainable in Anderson's first season. - Jonathan Von Tobel

28

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#119 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		52	27.1	2.05	-13.2	9-QB	48.6	7.01	10.35	9-DC	21.5	4.96	17.51
2017		34.5	9.3	1.01	8.3	5-OC	32.9	5.99	12.63	5	23.6	4.99	16.2

NOTEWORTHY...

- UTAH ST IS 12-3 ATS (L5Y) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- UTAH ST IS 0-5 ATS (L2Y) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- UTAH ST IS 12-2-1 OVER (L15G) AT HOME IN OCTOBER

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Washington St (+15)

9/10 N DAKOTA (+1)

9/18 at Air Force (+13.5)

9/25 BOISE ST (+16)

10/1 BYU (+14.5)

10/16 at UNLV (-1.5)

10/22 COLORADO ST (+2)

10/30 HAWAII (+3)

11/6 at New Mexico St (-9)

11/13 at San Jose St (+17)

11/20 WYOMING (+7.5)

11/26 at New Mexico (+3)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

31.82
(#103 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.4 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 1-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Boise St	13-42	L	17	L	51 O
10/31	SAN DIEGO ST	7-38	L	8.5	L	40 O
11/5	at Nevada	9-34	L	17	L	58.5 U
11/14	FRESNO ST	16-35	L	11	L	52 U
11/26	NEW MEXICO	41-27	W	6.5	W	49 O
12/3	AIR FORCE	7-35	L	13	L	52 U

OFFENSE
STAT RANK

DEFENSE
STAT RANK

Points Per Game	15.5	124	35.2	99
Yards Per Point	17.8	119	13.8	70
Plays Per Game	62.7	123		
Time of Possession	25:55	120		
3rd Down Conv. %	38.0%	80	46.3%	104
Total Yards Per Game	275.8	123	485.3	120
Yards Per Play	4.4	119	6.3	103
Rush Attempts Per Game	32	113		
Rush Yards Per Game	140	86	224.7	114
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	65	5.3	112
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.3	94		
Completion %	52.4%	118	67.7%	121
Passing Yards Per Game	135.8	120	260.7	101
Yards Per Pass Attempt	4.8	127	8.1	103
Turnovers	1.7	91	0.7	119

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

UNLV RUNNIN' REBELS

HEAD COACH: MARCUS ARROYO (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GLENN THOMAS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PETER HANSEN

LOCATION: WHITNEY, NV • STADIUM: ALLEGIANSTADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

1.5

0 + 105 / U - 125

PLAY
UNDER

Not often will bettors see a win total of 1.5 shaded to the Under, but the Rebels have no big positives. Marcus Arroyo's first season as coach went as poorly as possible, with zero wins and one cover for a team that seemed to get worse as the season went along. UNLV lost every game by double digits and brings back 18 starters from that team. Couple that with a brutal schedule and another winless season is not out of the question. The quarterback's job will likely come down to Doug Brumfield or Justin Rogers. Both appeared in two games last season and combined to throw for 312 yards and one touchdown. Whoever gets the job will have some quality talent to work with, at the very least. At wide receiver, Mountain West freshman of the year Kyle Williams is back, and senior running back Charles Williams is a fantastic runner who averaged over 5 yards per carry in his first four seasons. The defense is making a transition to a 3-4 scheme, which means key pass rushers Adam Plant and Jacoby Windmon are making the change to outside linebacker. The roster is not devoid of talent, but with another

massive hole at quarterback and a scheme change on defense, it is hard to see this team being very competitive. The schedule will do the Rebels no favors either. They open against a quality Eastern Washington team before games against Arizona State and Iowa State. In conference play, the Rebels must face San Jose State, Nevada and San Diego State — and will be substantial underdogs every time. In fact, UNLV will be an underdog in every game this season, and for good reason. — Jonathan Von Tobel

25

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#122 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		30.5	-2.4	-0.61	15.6	7-QB	31.4	5.58	13.21	7-DC	33.8	6.18	12.81
2017		30.5	1.1	0.4	11.3	9	30.4	6.44	14.46	3	29.3	6.04	15.05

NOTEWORTHY...

- UNLV IS 12-2-1 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS
- UNLV IS 3-16 ATS (L19G) AFTER PLAYING WYOMING
- UNLV IS 22-9 OVER (L10Y) AT HOME AVENGING A LOSS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 E WASHINGTON (+8)

9/11 at Arizona St (+29.5)

9/18 IOWA ST (+34.5)

9/24 at Fresno St (+16)

10/2 at TX-San Antonio (+14.5)

10/16 UTAH ST (+1.5)

10/23 SAN JOSE ST (+16)

10/29 at Nevada (+21)

11/6 at New Mexico (+5.5)

11/13 HAWAII (+7.5)

11/20 SAN DIEGO ST (+12.5)

11/26 at Air Force (+16)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

37.91
(#70 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

1.8 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	17.3	119	38	112
Yards Per Point	19.1	123	12.7	95
Plays Per Game	74.8	37		
Time of Possession	29:17	76		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.0%	91	46.8%	109
Total Yards Per Game	330.5	108	482.2	118
Yards Per Play	4.4	118	6.9	124
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.3	70		
Rush Yards Per Game	144.7	79	255	122
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	87	6.3	126
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.7	55		
Completion %	58.7%	81	60.7%	57
Passing Yards Per Game	185.8	106	227.2	60
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.7	114	8.4	109
Turnovers	1.5	67	0.8	115

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 0-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at San Diego St	6-34	L	13.5	L	50.5 U
10/31	NEVADA	19-37	L	14	L	58.5 U
11/7	FRESNO ST	27-40	L	11.5	L	57.5 O
11/14	at San Jose St	17-34	L	17	T	62 U
11/27	WYOMING	14-45	L	17	L	52 O
12/12	at Hawaii	21-38	L	19	W	61.5 U

MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE

WYOMING COWBOYS

HEAD COACH: CRAIG BOHL (8TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM POLASEK • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAY SAWVEL

LOCATION: LARAMIE, WY • STADIUM: JONAH FIELD AT WAR MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Of all the teams in the Mountain West, Wyoming returns the most starters from last season. Craig Bohl will not only have 21 players back, but he has depth at quarterback that gives the Cowboys an opportunity to push Boise State for the top spot in the Mountain Division. Wyoming will likely get off to a solid start because of a nonconference schedule that includes Montana State, Northern Illinois and Connecticut. NIU and UConn have win totals of 3.5 and 2.5, respectively, at DraftKings and figure to be poorly power-rated, making the Cowboys probable favorites in all their nonconference games. Ball State will provide an early challenge when it visits Laramie, as the Cardinals return 20 starters and have a win total of eight at DraftKings. Wyoming has the potential to enter conference play Oct. 9 with three or four wins, and the Cowboys will likely be favored in at least five conference games. They get a week to prepare for their opener against Air Force before returning home to host Fresno State and New Mexico. The schedule tightens up after that, with a brutal sandwich spot Nov. 6 at home against Colorado State. The

Cowboys will be in San Jose the previous weekend, and then they have one fewer day to prepare for a game Friday night in Boise. Once Wyoming is done navigating that three-week stretch, a tough road game awaits at Utah State. Asking for nine wins from Wyoming may seem like a lot, but given the depth on defense, the schedule and the returning personnel, it is hard to bet Under eight wins. - Jonathan Von Tobel

39

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#81 OF 130)

21

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		40	8.3	1.26	5	9	24.3	5.66	14.93	8	16	4.4	18.69
2017		40.5	8.4	0.43	-1.6	6	24	4.88	12.44	8-DC	15.6	4.45	20.57

NOTEWORTHY...

- WYOMING IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. AIR FORCE
- WYOMING IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) AT HOME VS. OPPONENT TRAVELING 1,000 OR MORE MILES
- WYOMING IS 14-5 UNDER (L5Y) AS UNDERDOG

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MONTANA ST (-12)

9/11 at N Illinois (-6)

9/18 BALL ST (+1)

9/25 at Connecticut (-18)

10/9 at Air Force (+2.5)

10/16 FRESNO ST (-5)

10/23 NEW MEXICO (-14)

10/30 at San Jose St (+6.5)

11/6 COLORADO ST (-9.5)

11/12 at Boise St (+10)

11/20 at Utah St (-7.5)

11/27 HAWAII (-9)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

30.48
(#115 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

4.1/0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	26.5	77	21	22
Yards Per Point	14.1	58	15.6	32
Plays Per Game	70.7	79		
Time of Possession	30:41	50		
3rd Down Conv. %	30.3%	117	36.3%	29
Total Yards Per Game	372.8	82	328	14
Yards Per Play	5.3	81	4.7	11
Rush Attempts Per Game	45.8	9		
Rush Yards Per Game	219.5	14	125.3	21
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.8	42	3.4	18
Pass Attempts Per Game	22.3	120		
Completion %	46.3%	123	63.5%	87
Passing Yards Per Game	153.3	113	202.7	28
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	80	6.8	38
Turnovers	1.5	65	1.7	46

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
10/24	at Nevada	34-37	L	-3	L	53.5 O
10/30	HAWAII	31-7	W	3	W	60.5 U
11/5	at Colorado St	24-34	L	-3	L	52.5 O
11/27	at UNLV	45-14	W	-17	W	52 O
12/5	at New Mexico	16-17	L	-15	L	51 U
12/12	BOISE ST	9-17	L	10	W	48.5 U

PAC-12 CONFERENCE *PREVIEW*

BY
MATT YOUNANS



Kedon Slovis,
USC

THE FAVORITES

USC and OREGON

A wide-open conference race means there is no dominant team, and that's the case again this year in the Pac-12. Five teams will set the pace -- Oregon (+250), Washington (+360), USC (+380), Arizona State (+450) and Utah (+600), according to the DraftKings odds board -- with UCLA chasing as a 12-1 long shot. USC is the obvious favorite in the South, and the North is a coin flip between Oregon and Washington.

Trojans quarterback Kedon Slovis is the conference's top Heisman Trophy candidate (28-1 at DraftKings) after totaling 47 touchdown passes in two seasons. USC coach Clay Helton has underachieved with an 18-13 record the last three seasons, and he was lucky to go 5-1 last year, when Slovis led improbable comebacks to beat Arizona State, Arizona and UCLA.

Oregon returns nine starters, including senior quarterback Anthony Brown, on an electric offense. The Ducks are probably more talented than the Huskies, but Oregon drew a more difficult schedule with road games against UCLA, Utah and Washington. The Huskies avoid playing USC and Utah from the South and will host Arizona State and UCLA. Washington faces a big question mark at quarterback, so it's tough to pick the Huskies to win the North.

The Sun Devils will be a threat with the return of quarterback Jayden Daniels, and the Bruins are hoping talented QB Dorian Thompson-Robinson has a breakthrough year for coach Chip Kelly, who's 10-21 in three disappointing years at UCLA. Kelly has 20 starters returning, so this is his chance to move up the standings and finally reach a bowl. Of the Power 5 conferences, the Pac-12 appears to be the odd man out of the four-team playoff picture, but the league has opportunities to make a statement and test its strength in several marquee nonconference games.

LIVE DOGS

UTAH and CALIFORNIA

Who's the best coach in the conference? If you don't answer Kyle Whittingham, it's the wrong answer. Utah went 11-3 in 2019 under Whittingham, and this team might be better. The Utes return 19 starters and have the league's top offensive and defensive lines. Baylor graduate transfer quarterback Charlie Brewer should lift the offense to the next level. The Utes get home games against Arizona State, Oregon and UCLA, and they are worth a shot to win the league at odds as high as 8-1. Cal coach Justin Wilcox is a defensive mastermind, and junior quarterback Chase Garbers is 8-3 in his last 11 starts for the gritty Golden Bears.

DEAD MONEY

ARIZONA

The Wildcats will carry a 12-game losing streak into this season. Jedd Fisch, formerly the quarterbacks coach for the New England Patriots, takes over as the only new head coach in the conference. Fisch can motivate Arizona's players to be more competitive, but a three-win season looks to be the ceiling.

LSU AT UCLA SEPT. 4

The Bruins, who open the previous week against Hawaii, will be home dogs at the Rose Bowl. Chip Kelly could use a signature win against a good SEC opponent.

OREGON AT OHIO STATE SEPT. 11

DraftKings opened the Buckeyes, the Big Ten's elite team, as 10-point home favorites.

WASHINGTON AT MICHIGAN SEPT. 11

The Huskies are getting respect as 1-point underdogs in Ann Arbor.

UTAH AT USC OCT. 9

The Trojans are 5-0 at home in this South rivalry since the Utes joined the Pac-12.

USC AT NOTRE DAME OCT. 23

The Fighting Irish have won three in a row against the Trojans, who get a week off between the Utah game and this clash.

OREGON AT WASHINGTON NOV. 6

The North title will likely be on the line. The Ducks are 6-1 in their last seven in Seattle.

**BIG
GAMES
ON THE
BOARD**

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
NORTH DIVISION								
OREGON	55.5	2.8	-0.6	39.86 (59)	9.1	2.9	7.0	2.0
WASHINGTON	50	3.3	0.1	39.78 (60)	8.3	3.7	6.1	2.9
CALIFORNIA	41.5	2.8	-0.1	41.48 (45)	5.1	6.9	3.5	5.5
STANFORD	43.5	3	0.1	44.56 (9)	4.9	7.1	3.5	5.5
WASHINGTON ST	39.5	3.5	-0.1	39.19 (61)	5.2	6.8	2.9	6.1
OREGON ST	40.5	2.3	-0.3	42.03 (39)	4.6	7.4	2.6	6.4
SOUTH DIVISION								
USC	54	3.1	-0.4	41.83 (41)	8.8	3.2	6.8	2.2
ARIZONA ST	51.5	3	-0.3	38.33 (65)	8.6	3.4	6.0	3.0
UTAH	50.5	3	0.3	40.62 (53)	8.1	3.9	5.8	3.2
UCLA	48.5	2	-0.5	43.82 (15)	6.3	5.7	4.2	4.8
COLORADO	44.5	2.5	0.1	43.2 (24)	5.4	6.6	3.8	5.2
ARIZONA	34	2.9	-0.9	42.78 (30)	2.8	9.2	1.4	7.6

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
OREGON	55.5
USC	54
ARIZONA ST	51.5
UTAH	50.5
WASHINGTON	50
UCLA	48.5
COLORADO	44.5
STANFORD	43.5
CALIFORNIA	41.5
OREGON ST	40.5
WASHINGTON ST	39.5
ARIZONA	34

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
WASHINGTON ST	-3.5
WASHINGTON	-3.3
USC	-3.1
ARIZONA ST	-3
STANFORD	-3
UTAH	-3
ARIZONA	-2.9
CALIFORNIA	-2.8
OREGON	-2.8
COLORADO	-2.5
OREGON ST	-2.3
UCLA	-2

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
UTAH	0.3
COLORADO	0.1
STANFORD	0.1
WASHINGTON	0.1
CALIFORNIA	-0.1
WASHINGTON ST	-0.1
ARIZONA ST	-0.3
OREGON ST	-0.3
USC	-0.4
UCLA	-0.5
OREGON	-0.6
ARIZONA	-0.9

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
ARIZONA ST	20
UCLA	20
CALIFORNIA	19
OREGON ST	18
UTAH	18
WASHINGTON	18
WASHINGTON ST	18
COLORADO	17
OREGON	17
USC	16
ARIZONA	15
STANFORD	15

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
CALIFORNIA	10
OREGON	10
UCLA	10
WASHINGTON	10
ARIZONA ST	9
COLORADO	9
OREGON ST	9
UTAH	9
USC	8
WASHINGTON ST	8
ARIZONA	7
STANFORD	7

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
ARIZONA ST	11
UCLA	10
WASHINGTON ST	10
CALIFORNIA	9
OREGON ST	9
UTAH	9
ARIZONA	8
COLORADO	8
STANFORD	8
USC	8
WASHINGTON	8
OREGON	7

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

ARIZONA WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: JEDD FISCH (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRENNAN CARROLL • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DON BROWN

LOCATION: TUCSON, AZ • STADIUM: ARIZONA STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

2.5

O -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

This is rock bottom for Arizona. Last season ended with a 70-7 loss to Arizona State, sending the Wildcats into this season riding a 12-game losing streak. The good news is the Kevin Sumlin error is history, and the Jedd Fisch era begins. Fisch, formerly the quarterbacks coach for the New England Patriots, takes over as the only new head coach in the conference. He's already doing a lot to change the culture in the program. A new coach typically has no problems motivating players who get a clean slate to compete for playing time, so expect the Wildcats to rise up and possibly exceed extremely low expectations.

Fisch brought in several transfers and two of them -- Jordan McCloud from South Florida and Gunner Cruz from Washington State -- are battling to be the starting quarterback. This team could improve in a hurry, but where are the wins on the schedule? Arizona has a chance to win two games in September when it hosts Northern Arizona and San Diego State. The Wildcats will be dogs in all four Pac-12 home games

against UCLA, Washington, California and Utah. It's tough to go Over 2.5 wins with a team that will be an underdog in 11 games, but upsets happen and Fisch's team will show a lot of fight. Be positive and bet on 3-9. - Matt Youmans

34

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#102 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	46	12.4	2.03	-2.8	7-QB, OC	37	7.13	14.15	9	24.6	5.09	15.61
2017		49.5	21.6	2.85	-11.7	7	45.5	8.16	12.54	7	23.9	5.32	17.08

NOTEWORTHY...

- ARIZONA IS 14-6-1 ATS (L21G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS
- ARIZONA IS 9-23 ATS (L10Y) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG
- ARIZONA IS 8-0 OVER (L8G) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. BYU (+12.5)

9/11 SAN DIEGO ST (+2.5)

9/18 N ARIZONA (-12)

9/25 at Oregon (+25)

10/9 UCLA (+11)

10/16 at Colorado (+14)

10/22 WASHINGTON (+13)

10/30 at USC (+24)

11/6 CALIFORNIA (+4.5)

11/13 UTAH (+14)

11/19 at Washington St (+10)

11/27 at Arizona St (+21.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.78
(#30 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / -0.9
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	17.4	118	39.8	120
Yards Per Point	21.2	124	11.9	110
Plays Per Game	78	16		
Time of Possession	28:01	102		
3rd Down Conv. %	32.9%	112	42.9%	88
Total Yards Per Game	369.4	85	473	114
Yards Per Play	4.7	104		
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.8	81	6.7	120
Rush Yards Per Game	156.4	71	270.6	124
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.2	71	5.9	120
Pass Attempts Per Game	37.8	20		
Completion %	60.3%	67	65.6%	107
Passing Yards Per Game	213	78	202.4	27
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	118	8.3	107
Turnovers	2.4	123	0.6	122

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/14	USC	30-34	L	15	W	68 U
11/21	at Washington	27-44	L	12.5	L	53.5 O
11/28	at UCLA	10-27	L	7	L	71 U
12/5	COLORADO	13-24	L	9.5	L	56 U
12/11	ARIZONA ST	7-70	L	13.5	L	65.5 O

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

ARIZONA STATE SUN DEVILS

HEAD COACH: HERM EDWARDS (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ZAK HILL • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANTONIO PIERCE

LOCATION: TEMPE, AZ • STADIUM: SUN DEVIL STADIUM, FRANK KUSH FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
UNDER

If all goes according to plan in Tempe, Jayden Daniels will play his way into Heisman Trophy contention and the Sun Devils will be in the hunt to win the South when they host USC in early November. The dual-threat Daniels, a third-year sophomore, might be the most talented quarterback in the conference. He passed for 17 touchdowns with two interceptions as a freshman and followed with five TD passes and one pick in four games last year, when Arizona State finished 2-2. The losses were by a total of eight points, and the wins were by a combined 76 points. Herm Edwards, 17-13 in three years as coach, has nine starters returning on offense and 11 on defense. But here's what could derail Edwards' big plans: the NCAA is investigating alleged recruiting violations in his program and his job could be in jeopardy.

The Sun Devils are talented enough to win nine or 10 games -- even with road trips to BYU, UCLA, Utah and Washington -- but the uncertainty surrounding the NCAA probe is cause for caution and dampens what should be a sunny forecast for the season. When betting Over high win totals such as 8.5, the worst-case scenario must be considered. In this case, Daniels is the real deal and Arizona State can win the division, but there's a chance things could take a turn for the worse for Edwards. - Matt Youmans

51.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#24 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	49.5	20.9	2.24	-6.8	8-QB, OC	40.3	7.17	12.31	4-DC	19.4	4.94	18.13
2017		47.5	18.9	1.52	-5.3	7-OC	37.5	6.86	13.87	8-DC	18.6	5.34	20.35

NOTEWORTHY...

- ARIZONA ST IS 10-0 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. WASHINGTON
- ARIZONA ST IS 1-8-1 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD VS. HIGHER-RANKED TEAM
- ARIZONA ST IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) WHEN TRAVELING 1,000 OR MORE MILES

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 S UTAH (-33)

9/11 UNLV (-29.5)

9/18 at BYU (-3)

9/25 COLORADO (-10)

10/2 at UCLA (-0.5)

10/8 STANFORD (-11)

10/16 at Utah (+2.5)

10/30 WASHINGTON ST (-15)

11/6 USC (-1)

11/13 at Washington (+2)

11/20 at Oregon St (-8.5)

11/27 ARIZONA (-21.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

38.33
(#65 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	40.2	12	23.2	31
Yards Per Point	11.4	8	18.7	9
Plays Per Game	64.5	115		
Time of Possession	29:01	82		
3rd Down Conv. %	46.7%	20	44.9%	98
Total Yards Per Game	458.5	20	435.8	89
Yards Per Play	7.1	8	5.3	41
Rush Attempts Per Game	41.2	34		
Rush Yards Per Game	264.2	6	183.2	84
Yards Per Rush Attempt	6.4	2	4.5	73
Pass Attempts Per Game	21.8	122		
Completion %	58.6%	83	63.3%	86
Passing Yards Per Game	194.2	98	252.5	89
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.9	12	6.4	16
Turnovers	1.2	43	3.2	1

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 2-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	at USC	27-28	L	11.5	W	57.5 U
12/5	UCLA	18-25	L	-3	L	57.5 U
12/11	at Arizona	70-7	W	-13.5	W	65.5 O
12/19	at Oregon St	46-33	W	-8	W	54.5 O

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

CALIFORNIA GOLDEN BEARS

HEAD COACH: JUSTIN WILCOX (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BILL MUSGRAVE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PETER SIRON
LOCATION: BERKELEY, CA • STADIUM: CALIFORNIA MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6.5

0 +115 / U -135

PLAY
UNDER

If a wise man ranked the coaches in the Pac-12, Cal's Justin Wilcox would be in the top five. Wilcox is a defensive wizard, but he's 21-21 through four years in Berkeley, mostly because the Golden Bears' offense tends to go into hibernation. That could be a different story this year with junior quarterback Chase Garbers returning. If the offense wakes up, this will be a sleeper team to watch. Garbers is not Aaron Rodgers (or even Jared Goff), but he's good and presumably getting better. The Bears are 8-3 in Garbers' last 11 starts, including a one-point loss to Stanford last year when the Cardinal blocked the potential tying PAT. Wilcox displayed his defensive wizardry in Cal's season-ending 21-17 upset of Oregon.

This team's fate will not be decided in September, but the Bears need to be at least 2-2 after hosting Nevada and Sacramento State and facing TCU and Washington on the road. The rest of the schedule shows three games the Bears are likely to lose (at Oregon, USC, at UCLA) and five

they should be favored to win (Washington State, Colorado, Oregon State, at Arizona, at Stanford). A seven-win season is within reach for Wilcox and the Bears, but that's a little too optimistic and a 6-6 season plus a bowl game seems more realistic. - Matt Youmans

41.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#73 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46	15.9	1.59	-8.1	10-QB	29.3	5.73	13.82	8	13.4	4.14	21.11
2017	Yes	47	18.3	1.45	-0.7	6-QB, OC	34.1	6.35	13.86	8-DC	15.8	4.9	22.96

NOTEWORTHY...

- CALIFORNIA IS 9-1 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG
- CALIFORNIA IS 6-18 ATS (L24G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- CALIFORNIA IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING COLORADO

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 NEVADA (-1.5)

9/11 at TCU (+14)

9/18 SACRAMENTO ST (-16)

9/25 at Washington (+12)

10/2 WASHINGTON ST (-5)

10/15 at Oregon (+17)

10/23 COLORADO (+0.5)

10/30 OREGON ST (-4)

11/6 at Arizona (-4.5)

11/13 USC (+9.5)

11/20 at Stanford (+5)

11/27 at UCLA (+9)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.48
(#45 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.8 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 1-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/15	at UCLA	10-34	L	-3.5	L	57 U
11/21	at Oregon St	27-31	L	-1	L	45.5 O
11/27	STANFORD	23-24	L	1	T	50.5 U
12/5	OREGON	21-17	W	8.5	W	59.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	20.2	110	26.5	45
Yards Per Point	15.7	101	13.8	68
Plays Per Game	75.2	35		
Time of Possession	31:33	31		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.8%	92	40.7%	67
Total Yards Per Game	318	114	367	37
Yards Per Play	4.2	123	5.5	65
Rush Attempts Per Game	37	73		
Rush Yards Per Game	125.2	102	170.2	68
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.4	107	4.5	71
Pass Attempts Per Game	34.5	40		
Completion %	61.6%	58	61.9%	70
Passing Yards Per Game	192.8	100	196.8	22
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	121	7.5	70
Turnovers	1.2	44	1.2	82

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

COLORADO BUFFALOES

HEAD COACH: KARL DORRELL (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DARRIN CHIAVERINI • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHRIS WILSON
LOCATION: BOULDER, CO • STADIUM: FOLSOM FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

No coach in the Pac-12 did more with less last year than Karl Dorrell. Almost every pundit picked the Buffaloes to finish last in the league, yet they opened by upsetting UCLA and Stanford on the way to a 4-0 start. A loss to Utah was followed by a 55-23 blowout to Texas in the Alamo Bowl, as Dorrell's debut season finished at 4-2. Now he returns eight starters on each side of the ball and faces a manageable schedule.

Colorado hosts Northern Colorado, Texas A&M and Minnesota in September, and the Buffaloes should be favored in conference home games against Arizona and Oregon State. The quarterback position is a question mark. The strength of the offense will be a ground attack powered by Jarek Broussard, who led the league with 895 rushing yards, and Alex Fontenot. The Buffaloes finished 5-7 in each of the three seasons before Dorrell's arrival and probably will regress to another losing record, as Dorrell still needs time to rebuild the talent level.

It's easy to envision the Buffaloes going winless on the Pac-12 road against Arizona State, California, Oregon, UCLA and Utah. This looks like a 4-8 season, unless Dorrell discovers a game-changing QB. Colorado will not be the surprise team in the conference this time around. - Matt Youmans

44.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#55 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		39.5	14.6	1.63	-2.5	4-QB	35.4	6.25	12.83	6	20.7	4.61	16.16
2017		41	11.5	0.92	-2.9	9-QB	30	6.34	16.03	3-DC	18.4	5.41	21.64

NOTEWORTHY...

- COLORADO IS 4-1 ATS (L2Y) VS. UNRANKED TEAM
- COLORADO IS 5-20 ATS (L25G) VS. AP TOP 10
- COLORADO IS 22-8-1 UNDER (\$2000) AT HOME IN SEPTEMBER

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/3 N COLORADO (-29)

9/11 TEXAS A&M (+12)

9/18 MINNESOTA (+0.5)

9/25 at Arizona St (+10)

10/2 USC (+6.5)

10/16 ARIZONA (-14)

10/23 at California (-0.5)

10/30 at Oregon (+13.5)

11/6 OREGON ST (-7)

11/13 at UCLA (+6)

11/20 WASHINGTON (+3)

11/26 at Utah (+9)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

43.2
(#24 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

2.5 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	28.5	61	31.7	75
Yards Per Point	14.5	76	13.3	83
Plays Per Game	76.8	21		
Time of Possession	31:33	30		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.7%	47	31.8%	13
Total Yards Per Game	413.8	46	420.3	77
Yards Per Play	5.4	71	5.9	85
Rush Attempts Per Game	46	8		
Rush Yards Per Game	212.3	22	181.2	82
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	50	5.4	114
Pass Attempts Per Game	29.7	82		
Completion %	55.1%	106	55.6%	16
Passing Yards Per Game	201.5	85	239.2	72
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	83	6.6	21
Turnovers	1.8	98	1.3	70

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	UCLA	48-42	W	7	W	57 0
11/14	at Stanford	35-32	W	10	W	55 0
11/28	SAN DIEGO ST	20-10	W	-6	W	51 U
12/5	at Arizona	24-13	W	-9.5	W	56 U
12/12	UTAH	21-38	L	3	L	49.5 0
12/29	vs. Texas	23-55	L	8	L	67.5 0

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

OREGON DUCKS

HEAD COACH: MARIO CRISTOBAL (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOE MOORHEAD • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM DERUYTER
LOCATION: EUGENE, OR • STADIUM: AUTZEN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

It starts with recruiting at Oregon. Fourth-year coach Mario Cristobal is a slick salesman, and his recruiting success has turned the Ducks into one of the nation's most talented teams. Anthony Brown, a senior who attempted only 23 passes last season, is the favorite to win the starting QB job, though the prospects he's competing with are highly touted. The running back position is loaded with CJ Verdell, Travis Dye and Sean Dollars. The receiver group is stacked with size and speed. Five starting offensive linemen return. Kayvon Thibodeaux is an elite end on another talented defense. The Ducks are dynamite in all areas aside from coaching. Cristobal's lapses in game management have been costly at times, and defensive coordinator Andy Avalos left to become the head coach at Boise State.

It will be difficult for the Ducks to win 10 games simply because they are 10-point underdogs at Ohio State in early September and play conference road games at Stanford, UCLA, Utah and Washington. The Ducks went

1-2 on the road in league play last year, getting upset by California and Oregon State.

Cristobal overachieves in recruiting and underachieves on the field, so although Oregon should sweep its seven-game home schedule, the crystal ball shows a 9-3 record at best. An upset of the Buckeyes could change things, but that's a lot to ask. - Matt Youmans

55.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#13 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	52	22.4	1.93	-11.6	7-QB	43.2	6.78	11.61	7	20.8	4.85	16.89
2017	Yes	53.5	25.5	3.13	-10	8-OC	42.5	7.46	12.81	9-DC	17	4.33	18.18

NOTEWORTHY...

- OREGON IS 12-2-1 ATS (L15G) HTH VS. WASHINGTON
- OREGON IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. WASHINGTON STATE
- OREGON IS 13-2 OVER (L15G) AFTER PLAYING UCLA

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+4000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 FRESNO ST (-20.5)

9/11 at Ohio St (+12.5)

9/18 STONY BROOK (-40)

9/25 ARIZONA (-25)

10/2 at Stanford (-8.5)

10/15 CALIFORNIA (-17)

10/23 at UCLA (-4.5)

10/30 COLORADO (-13.5)

11/6 at Washington (-1.5)

11/13 WASHINGTON ST (-19)

11/20 at Utah (-1.5)

11/27 OREGON ST (-18)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

39.86
(#59 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.8 / -0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	STANFORD	35-14	W	-10.5	W	49 T
11/14	at Washington St	43-29	W	-10	W	57.5 O
11/21	UCLA	38-35	W	-18	L	62.5 O
11/27	at Oregon St	38-41	L	-13	L	64.5 O
12/5	at California	17-21	L	-8.5	L	59.5 U
12/18	at USC	31-24	W	3	W	64.5 U
1/2	vs. Iowa St	17-34	L	4.5	L	57.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	31.3	41	28.3	58
Yards Per Point	13.2	35	14.3	50
Plays Per Game	62.7	122		
Time of Possession	26:10	119		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.2%	41	41.4%	75
Total Yards Per Game	412.9	47	405.9	59
Yards Per Play	6.6	13	5.2	40
Rush Attempts Per Game	33.9	105		
Rush Yards Per Game	166.7	63	169.6	67
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	34	4.2	54
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.3	103		
Completion %	63.4%	35	61.1%	60
Passing Yards Per Game	246.1	46	236.3	68
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9	11	6.7	23
Turnovers	2.3	120	1	106

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

OREGON STATE BEAVERS

HEAD COACH: JONATHAN SMITH (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN LINDGREN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM TIBESAR

LOCATION: CORVALLIS, OR • STADIUM: RESER STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

0 +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

Each conference always has a surprise team, and the Beavers are candidates in the Pac-12. Fourth-year coach Jonathan Smith has 19 starters coming back after a 2-5 season riddled with tough luck. Oregon State lost three games -- against Washington, Utah and Stanford -- by six or fewer points. A team with experience should find ways to win more close games, and Smith is a solid coach. He took over a one-win team and went 5-7 two years later.

This will be his most talented team in Corvallis, as these are no longer the beleaguered Beavers. Tristan Gebbia, a returning junior, is dueling with Colorado transfer Sam Noyer for the starting quarterback job. The toughest starter to replace will be star running back Jermar Jefferson. Oregon State opens the season as a 7-point underdog at Purdue before returning home in the favorite's role against Hawaii and Idaho. The league schedule is a grinder with five road games, including USC and Oregon, and only four home games. The Beavers

are expected to be 'dogs in three of those home games against Arizona State, Utah and Washington.

But the wins and losses are not graded on paper in the preseason, and the Beavers showed that last year by upsetting the Ducks 41-38 as 13-point dogs. Expect a 4-8 or 5-7 finish. - Matt Youmans

40.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#77 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	30	-1.5	0.02	9.5	7-OC	34.9	6.38	13.92	8-DC	36.4	6.36	12.64
2017		31.5	-4.5	0.66	2.7	7	26.6	6.28	15.19	8	31.1	5.62	12.94

NOTEWORTHY...

- OREGON ST IS 28-9 ATS (L37G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER
- OREGON ST IS 9-21 ATS (S2000) ON ROAD IN SEPTEMBER
- OREGON ST IS 10-0 OVER (L10G) AVENGING A LOSS VS. WASHINGTON STATE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Purdue (+7)

9/11 HAWAII (-8.5)

9/18 IDAHO (-19.5)

9/25 at USC (+17)

10/2 WASHINGTON (+7.5)

10/9 at Washington St (+3)

10/23 UTAH (+8)

10/30 at California (+4)

11/6 at Colorado (+7)

11/13 STANFORD (+1)

11/20 ARIZONA ST (+8.5)

11/27 at Oregon (+18)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.03
(#39 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	28.9	56	33.3	88
Yards Per Point	14.2	63	13.3	85
Plays Per Game	71.9	64		
Time of Possession	27:57	103		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.0%	62	45.7%	101
Total Yards Per Game	408.9	52	441.4	92
Yards Per Play	5.7	48	6.4	108
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.9	79		
Rush Yards Per Game	197.6	31	216.7	110
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.4	15	5.5	116
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.3	50		
Completion %	57.5%	91	62.9%	79
Passing Yards Per Game	211.3	79	224.7	55
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.3	99	7.8	89
Turnovers	1.1	35	0.9	114

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	WASHINGTON ST	28-38	L	-3	L	63.5 O
11/14	at Washington	21-27	L	13	W	50.5 U
11/21	CALIFORNIA	31-27	W	1	W	45.5 O
11/27	OREGON	41-38	W	13	W	64.5 O
12/5	at Utah	24-30	L	14	W	51 O
12/12	STANFORD	24-27	L	1.5	L	56.5 U
12/19	ARIZONA ST	33-46	L	8	L	54.5 O

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

STANFORD CARDINAL

HEAD COACH: DAVID SHAW (11TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TAVITA PRITCHARD • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LANCE ANDERSON
LOCATION: STANFORD, CA • STADIUM: STANFORD STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

Enthusiasts of wide-open passing offenses will not be big fans of this Stanford team. The marquee offensive threat for the Cardinal will be running back Austin Jones, who leads a deep and talented backfield. Stanford coach David Shaw will run the ball ... and run some more, employing two tight ends and hoping to overpower defenses with a relentless ground attack. Shaw is a conservative play-caller and he'll be phoning in more of the same no matter who wins the quarterback competition between former five-star recruits Tanner McKee and Jack West. McKee and West combined for 26 pass attempts last year behind NFL-bound starter Davis Mills.

Shaw did well to put up a 4-2 record when the Cardinal were homeless for most of the season during COVID-19 restrictions. Stanford finished with a dramatic 48-47 win at UCLA in double overtime. It's crazy to be too critical of Shaw, who has a 90-36 record on "The Farm," but he's 8-10 the last two years. The Cardinal also faces one of the nation's most

challenging schedules. Good luck finding an easy home win against the lineup of UCLA, Oregon, Washington, Utah, California and Notre Dame.

Still, Shaw should have enough talent to win at least four games while springing a few upsets. While Stanford's style might not be exciting, its running attack will be strong. - Matt Youmans

43.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#63 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		52.5	24.3	2.65	-10.6	9-QB, OC	39.6	7.55	12.02	6	15.3	4.9	23.21
2017		58	28.9	2.91	-16	8	39.1	7.89	12.13	8	10.2	4.99	33.23

NOTEWORTHY...

- STANFORD IS 12-2-1 ATS (L15G) BEFORE PLAYING OREGON STATE
- STANFORD IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD BEFORE PLAYING WASHINGTON STATE
- STANFORD IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Kansas St (+2)

9/11 at USC (+13.5)

9/18 at Vanderbilt (-6.5)

9/25 UCLA (+1.5)

10/2 OREGON (+8.5)

10/8 at Arizona St (+11)

10/16 at Washington St (-0.5)

10/30 WASHINGTON (+3.5)

11/5 UTAH (+4.5)

11/13 at Oregon St (-1)

11/20 CALIFORNIA (-5)

11/27 NOTRE DAME (+11.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

44.56
(#9 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	29.3	54	31.7	76
Yards Per Point	14.3	69	13.9	66
Plays Per Game	71.5	68		
Time of Possession	31:50	23		
3rd Down Conv. %	48.2%	14	51.3%	122
Total Yards Per Game	420.2	43	438.7	91
Yards Per Play	5.9	40	6.4	110
Rush Attempts Per Game	33	108		
Rush Yards Per Game	133.5	91	222	111
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4	78	5.5	115
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.8	22		
Completion %	65.2%	25	64.1%	94
Passing Yards Per Game	286.7	21	216.7	45
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.8	48	8.3	108
Turnovers	0.8	8	1.2	91

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	at Oregon	14-35	L	10.5	L	49 T
11/14	COLORADO	32-35	L	-10	L	55 O
11/27	at California	24-23	W	-1	T	50.5 U
12/5	at Washington	31-26	W	12.5	W	49.5 O
12/12	at Oregon St	27-24	W	-1.5	W	56.5 U
12/19	at UCLA	48-47	W	7.5	W	61 O

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

UCLA BRUINS

HEAD COACH: CHIP KELLY (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JUSTIN FRYE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JERRY AZZINARO

LOCATION: PASADENA, CA • STADIUM: ROSE BOWL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

0 - 115 / U - 105

PLAY
UNDER

A humbled Chip Kelly faces a crossroads. He's no longer considered a cutting-edge offensive coach and carries a 10-21 record into his fourth year with the Bruins. He does bring back 20 starters, including the most experienced quarterback in the conference, so he's got something going for him. If he can't win this season, maybe the game has passed him by and he simply can't win at UCLA. He's a long way from duplicating the success he had at Oregon, where he rolled to a 46-7 record in four years.

Dorian Thompson-Robinson had a solid showing at QB in the shortened 2020 season, passing for 12 touchdowns with four interceptions. He displayed improvement after totaling 19 turnovers in 2019. The ground attack is the key to Kelly's offense, and it's in good hands with senior Brittain Brown and Michigan transfer Zach Charbonnet running behind an experienced, physical offensive line. The defense, which allowed a combined 91 points in season-ending losses to USC and Stanford, should

be at its strongest point in Kelly's tenure. But there's always a downside, and the schedule is tougher than a \$2 steak. UCLA will face LSU, Arizona State and Oregon at home in addition to Washington, Utah and USC on the road. The Bruins are capable of winning six or seven games -- enough to reach a bowl -- but eight is a long shot. - Matt Youmans

48.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#36 OF 130)

20

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	44.5	12.6	1.93	-2.5	5-OC	36.5	6.92	13.48	7-DC	23.9	4.98	15.46
2017		46.5	17.9	2.86	-7.3	9-OC	39.9	8.05	14.66	6	22.1	5.19	18.39

NOTEWORTHY...

- UCLA IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AFTER PLAYING COLORADO
- UCLA IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING WASHINGTON
- UCLA IS 9-1 UNDER (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING OREGON

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

8/28 HAWAII (-16.5)

9/4 LSU (+4)

9/18 FRESNO ST (-12.5)

9/25 at Stanford (-1.5)

10/2 ARIZONA ST (+0.5)

10/9 at Arizona (-11)

10/16 at Washington (+5.5)

10/23 OREGON (+4.4)

10/30 at Utah (+5.5)

11/13 COLORADO (-6)

11/20 at USC (+9)

11/27 CALIFORNIA (-9)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.82
(#15 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2 / -0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	35.4	19	30.7	71
Yards Per Point	12.8	28	13.3	81
Plays Per Game	75.9	29		
Time of Possession	28:53	86		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.3%	33	45.8%	102
Total Yards Per Game	455	21	409.9	66
Yards Per Play	6	37	5.2	39
Rush Attempts Per Game	45.6	11		
Rush Yards Per Game	230.6	12	135.7	28
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	25	3.6	24
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.6	89		
Completion %	65.0%	26	61.2%	62
Passing Yards Per Game	224.4	70	274.1	113
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.9	45	7.3	60
Turnovers	1.9	99	1.6	54

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	at Colorado	42-48	L	-7	L	57 0
11/15	CALIFORNIA	34-10	W	3.5	W	57 U
11/21	at Oregon	35-38	L	18	W	62.5 0
11/28	ARIZONA	27-10	W	-7	W	71 U
12/5	at Arizona St	25-18	W	3	W	57.5 U
12/12	USC	38-43	L	3	L	64.5 0
12/19	STANFORD	47-48	L	-7.5	L	61 0

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

USC TROJANS

HEAD COACH: CLAY HELTON (7TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: GRAHAM HARRELL • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TODD ORLANDO

LOCATION: LOS ANGELES, CA • STADIUM: LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL COLISEUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
UNDER

Almost everything about USC looks good on paper: The roster is loaded with talent, led by veteran quarterback Kedon Slovis, and the schedule is hospitable (seven home games and no games against North favorites Oregon and Washington). But the Trojans are too often paper tigers for coach Clay Helton, who is 18-13 straight up and 13-18 ATS the last three seasons. USC was lucky to finish 5-1 last season, when improbable comebacks were required to beat Arizona State, Arizona and UCLA.

Slovis has thrown 47 touchdown passes in two seasons and is the conference's top Heisman Trophy candidate (28-1 odds at DraftKings), yet his arm strength is a concern after he suffered a separated shoulder in last year's Pac-12 title game. Drake London could be the league's top wide receiver, and Texas transfer Keaontay Ingram is primed to take over as the team's go-to running back. The Trojans will flash plenty of firepower in offensive coordinator Graham Harrell's wide-open attack.

Aside from edge rusher Drake Jackson, a top NFL prospect, there are

question marks all over the defensive depth chart.

Home games against Stanford, Utah and UCLA are probably tougher than they appear, and Arizona State, California and Notre Dame will be tough spots on the road. Helton is a poor game manager who had the luck factor on his side last year, so it wouldn't be surprising if USC finishes 8-4 and Helton remains on the hot seat. - Matt Youmans

54

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#19 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		50	16.9	2.3	-6.1	7	34.8	6.91	13.13	6	17.9	4.61	18.63
2017		57.5	27	3.4	-15.6	5	41	8.18	14.62	7	14	4.78	24.43

NOTEWORTHY...

- USC IS 14-3 ATS (L17G) AT HOME VS. LOWER-RANKED TEAM
- USC IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- USC IS 8-2 OVER (L3Y) AS UNRANKED TEAM

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+4000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 SAN JOSE ST (-14)

9/11 STANFORD (-13.5)

9/18 at Washington St (-10.5)

9/25 OREGON ST (-17)

10/2 at Colorado (-6.5)

10/9 UTAH (-6.5)

10/23 at Notre Dame (+8)

10/30 ARIZONA (-24)

11/6 at Arizona St (+1)

11/13 at California (-9.5)

11/20 UCLA (-9)

11/27 BYU (-11.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.83
(#41 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.1/-0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS **RECORD: 5-1**

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	ARIZONA ST	28-27	W	-11.5	L	57.5 U
11/14	at Arizona	34-30	W	-15	L	68 U
11/21	at Utah	33-17	W	-1	W	60.5 U
12/6	WASHINGTON ST	38-13	W	-10	W	68.5 U
12/12	at UCLA	43-38	W	-3	W	64.5 O
12/18	OREGON	24-31	L	-3	L	64.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	33.3	28	26	44
Yards Per Point	12.5	17	14.2	55
Plays Per Game	77.3	19		
Time of Possession	30:06	61		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.8%	37	39.2%	52
Total Yards Per Game	416.7	44	369.7	39
Yards Per Play	5.4	70	5.3	44
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.7	115		
Rush Yards Per Game	97.3	118	153.3	46
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	115	4.2	57
Pass Attempts Per Game	44.2	2		
Completion %	67.2%	12	64.7%	99
Passing Yards Per Game	319.3	12	216.3	44
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.2	65	6.9	44
Turnovers	1.8	97	2.7	2

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

UTAH UTES

HEAD COACH: KYLE WHITTINGHAM (17TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ANDY LUDWIG • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MORGAN SCALLEY

LOCATION: SALT LAKE CITY, UT • STADIUM: RICE-ECCLES STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

With a rebuilding year in the rear-view mirror, Kyle Whittingham is building toward something special. While media pundits will hype USC and Oregon as the Pac-12's fashionable favorites, it's a mistake to overlook Utah. Whittingham is the best coach in the conference and he's got a team that reflects his blue-collar image.

It starts up front, where the Utes return all of their starters on the offensive line and boast a deep, experienced defensive line. Ten starters return on defense. The team's most important starter could be a newcomer -- Baylor graduate transfer quarterback Charlie Brewer, who's capable of lifting the offense to the next level after poor QB play doomed the Utes early last season. If Brewer delivers, this will be one of Whittingham's elite teams in his 17 years in Salt Lake City, and that's saying something considering his 11-win team in 2019 was in the hunt for the College Football Playoff. It's possible Utah could be favored in 11 games, with the only obvious underdog spot being Oct. 9 at USC. The Utes get home games

against Arizona State, Oregon and UCLA, so the schedule sets up well.

The bottom line is Whittingham is a bet-on coach, and he has the league's top offensive and defensive lines, so Utah is worth a shot to win the league at around 8-1 odds. — Matt Youmans



50.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#27 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		52.5	28.4	2.98	-10.4	8-QB	39.5	6.94	12.09	6	11.1	3.96	24.34
2017		53	19.7	2.1	-12.4	4-QB, OC	34	6.66	14.23	5	14.3	4.56	21.69

NOTEWORTHY...

- UTAH IS 20-5 ATS (L25G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- UTAH IS 15-22-2 ATS (S2000) AT HOME IN SEPTEMBER
- UTAH IS 10-0 OVER (L10G) ON ROAD AVENGING A LOSS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 WEBER ST (-24)

9/11 at BYU (-2.5)

9/18 at San Diego St (-9.5)

9/25 WASHINGTON ST (-14)

10/9 at USC (+6.5)

10/16 ARIZONA ST (-2.5)

10/23 at Oregon St (-8)

10/30 UCLA (-5.5)

11/5 at Stanford (-4.5)

11/13 at Arizona (-14)

11/20 OREGON (+1.5)

11/26 COLORADO (-9)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.62
(#53 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / 0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/21	USC	17-33	L	1	L	60.5 U
11/28	at Washington	21-24	L	8.5	W	48.5 U
12/5	OREGON ST	30-24	W	-14	L	51 O
12/12	at Colorado	38-21	W	-3	W	49.5 O
12/19	WASHINGTON ST	45-28	W	-12.5	W	54.5 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	30.2	49	26	43
Yards Per Point	13.6	51	14	60
Plays Per Game	70.8	74		
Time of Possession	33:19	13		
3rd Down Conv. %	37.7%	85	33.8%	19
Total Yards Per Game	409.8	50	365	36
Yards Per Play	5.8	47	5.3	48
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.2	57		
Rush Yards Per Game	194	41	107.8	10
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.1	24	3.8	32
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.2	67		
Completion %	60.9%	63	57.6%	29
Passing Yards Per Game	215.8	76	257.2	96
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.9	76	6.7	29
Turnovers	2.6	125	2.6	3

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON HUSKIES

HEAD COACH: JIMMY LAKE (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JOHN DONOVAN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BOB GREGORY / IKAIKA MALLOE
LOCATION: SEATTLE, WA • STADIUM: ALASKA AIRLINES FIELD AT HUSKY STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

The Huskies could go two ways, and a lot depends on how redshirt freshman Dylan Morris drives the offense. Morris was far from spectacular last season, completing 61% of his passes with four touchdowns and three interceptions. Washington finished 3-1 thanks to a four-game home schedule. The Huskies beat Arizona and pulled out narrow victories over Oregon State and Utah before falling to Stanford as 11-point favorites, so the results were not convincing in coach Jimmy Lake's first year. Lake did have a young team, and 10 starters return on offense and eight on defense.

The schedule looks like something Lake drew up in his office and submitted to the league office for approval. The Huskies' four road games in league play are against lightweights Arizona, Colorado, Oregon State and Stanford; Washington doesn't face USC or Utah. The nonconference lineup is Montana, Michigan and Arkansas State, and the Huskies are 1-point dogs in Ann Arbor. (Oregon drew a tougher Big Ten opponent

with a trip to Ohio State.)

If Morris elevates his level of play, Washington can win 10 games. It would be somewhat surprising if the Huskies win fewer than nine against this schedule. But if Morris is not the answer at quarterback, this team could go in the wrong direction or quickly turn to freshman Sam Huard to try to save the season. - Matt Youmans

50

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#29 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		58.5	27.2	3.11	-16.5	8-QB, OC	35.8	7.14	13.47	9	8.6	4.03	30.5
2017		62.5	36.1	3.75	-21.4	7	41.9	7.44	11.32	6	5.9	3.68	41.68

NOTEWORTHY...

- WASHINGTON IS 19-6 ATS (L25G) AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- WASHINGTON IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. ARIZONA STATE
- WASHINGTON IS 12-2 OVER (L14G) AFTER PLAYING UCLA

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+8000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 MONTANA (-17.5)

9/11 at Michigan (+4.5)

9/18 ARKANSAS ST (-19.5)

9/25 CALIFORNIA (-12)

10/2 at Oregon St (-7.5)

10/16 UCLA (-5.5)

10/22 at Arizona (-13)

10/30 at Stanford (-3.5)

11/6 OREGON (+1.5)

11/13 ARIZONA ST (-2)

11/20 at Colorado (-3)

11/26 WASHINGTON ST (-14)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

39.78
(#60 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	30.2	46	25	38
Yards Per Point	13.3	39	13.8	67
Plays Per Game	67	102		
Time of Possession	31:51	21		
3rd Down Conv. %	47.3%	18	42.3%	83
Total Yards Per Game	402.8	58	346.2	25
Yards Per Play	6	36	5.1	33
Rush Attempts Per Game	39	52		
Rush Yards Per Game	176.2	53	161.2	58
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.5	56	4.5	76
Pass Attempts Per Game	27.8	100		
Completion %	61.3%	61	63.3%	84
Passing Yards Per Game	226.5	67	185	10
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	31	6.3	12
Turnovers	0.8	3	2	22

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 3-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/14	OREGON ST	27-21	W	-13	L	50.5 U
11/21	ARIZONA	44-27	W	-12.5	W	53.5 O
11/28	UTAH	24-21	W	-8.5	L	48.5 U
12/5	STANFORD	26-31	L	-12.5	L	49.5 O

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON STATE COUGARS

HEAD COACH: NICK ROLOVICH (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN SMITH / CRAIG STUTZMANN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAKE DICKERT
LOCATION: PULLMAN, WA • STADIUM: MARTIN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

0 + 100 / U - 120

PLAY
UNDER

Nick Rolovich left Hawaii to replace Mike Leach as the Cougars' coach, surely aware that Leach would be a tough act to follow. There was not much action last year, however, as Washington State went 1-3 with an abbreviated schedule. In an odd season finale, the Cougars blew a 28-7 halftime lead at Utah and lost 45-28. Rolovich is a sharp offensive coach, has had a year to implement his system and 18 starters are returning, so this is his real starting point. Finding the right quarterback is his first priority.

Last year's starter, freshman Jayden de Laura, will compete with Tennessee transfer Jarrett Guarantano, who has 30 career starts. The top wideouts are tiny sticks of dynamite -- 5-foot-9 Travell Harris and 5-8 Renard Bell. The running attack will be handled capably by returnees Max Borghi and Deon McIntosh. The offense packs potential. A disastrous defense that allowed 38.5 PPG has 10 starters coming back, but is that good news?

Rolovich should open with home victories over Utah State and Portland State, but the rest of the schedule is nowhere near as soft. This appears to be a 5-7 or 6-6 team on paper, so Under 6 wins is the way to look. - Matt Youmans

39.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#79 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
2020	Yes	43.5	13.6	0.47	-3.3	6, 0C	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
2018		56	29.3	2.36	-13.4	4	46.6	7.13	11.36	6-DC	17.3	4.77	17.67
2017		48.5	23	2.28	-12.4	7	37.1	6.62	14.25	9	14.1	4.34	19.29

NOTEWORTHY...

- WASHINGTON ST IS 12-3 ATS (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS
- WASHINGTON ST IS 2-12 ATS (L14G) AVENGING A LOSS VS. WASHINGTON
- WASHINGTON ST IS 21-4 OVER (L25G) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+25000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 UTAH ST (-15)

9/11 PORTLAND ST (-23.5)

9/18 USC (+10.5)

9/25 at Utah (+14)

10/2 at California (+5)

10/9 OREGON ST (-3)

10/16 STANFORD (+0.5)

10/23 BYU (+3)

10/30 at Arizona St (+15)

11/13 at Oregon (+19)

11/19 ARIZONA (-10)

11/26 at Washington (+14)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

39.19
(#61 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.5 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	27	72	38.5	118
Yards Per Point	14.2	66	12	108
Plays Per Game	67.8	97		
Time of Possession	31:27	34		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.2%	70	48.1%	114
Total Yards Per Game	384	72	461.8	110
Yards Per Play	5.7	50	6.5	114
Rush Attempts Per Game	27.5	124		
Rush Yards Per Game	129.2	98	154.8	51
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.7	45	5	99
Pass Attempts Per Game	38	19		
Completion %	61.8%	53	67.8%	123
Passing Yards Per Game	254.8	39	307	123
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	86	8.1	101
Turnovers	2	108	1.5	60

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 1-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
11/7	at Oregon St	38-28	W	3	W	63.5 O
11/14	OREGON	29-43	L	10	L	57.5 O
12/6	at USC	13-38	L	10	L	68.5 U
12/19	at Utah	28-45	L	12.5	L	54.5 O

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

PREVIEW

BY
BRUCE MARSHALL



Bryce Young,
Alabama

THE FAVORITES

ALABAMA and FLORIDA

We're not going too far out on a limb to project Alabama as one of the favorites. Though most Southeastern Conference insiders suspect that not even the Nick Saban assembly line of talent will be able to seamlessly replace all the offensive talent that migrated to the NFL, including QB Mac Jones, two wideouts in Heisman Trophy winner DeVonta Smith and Jaylen Waddle and running back Najee Harris, all drafted in the first round. Also gone is offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian, now the head coach at Texas. But the Crimson Tide doesn't have to score 48 points a game again to be formidable, and blue-chippers abound, led by five-star sophomore QB Bryce Young, who is capable of picking up where Jones left off. The defense might be the highlight of this Tide edition. Meanwhile, Georgia is getting lots of love from SEC East pundits, but we slightly prefer Florida. Dan Mullen understands offense better than Kirby Smart, and the Gators were in contention for national honors until late last season when a spate of injuries

thinned the ranks. After Mullen finally got over the hump against Smart last year, Florida wears the bull's-eye until further notice in the non-Bama half of the league.

LIVE DOG

MISSISSIPPI STATE

Rewind to 2013, Mike Leach's second year at Washington State. All of a sudden, things began to click for the Cougars' Air Raid offense, and the squad became a force in the Pac-12 and a bowl team for the first time in a decade. Mississippi State hasn't had that kind of drought — in fact, the Bulldogs got into a bowl game last year at 3-7 because of COVID-19 weirdness — but a similar breakthrough in Starkville wouldn't surprise. Sophomore QB Will Rogers had a bumpy go in his test run last year, but he was looking confident by the end of the season. Moreover, many insiders believe it takes a year to really get a grip on the reads and progressions integral to a Leach offense. The defense held up quite well for most of 2020, as defensive coordinator Zach Arnett kept plenty of capable opponents off balance with a variety of stunts and blitzes. Don't expect MSU to beat Bama for the first time since 2007, but don't be surprised if the Bulldogs are upgraded either.

DEAD MONEY

AUBURN

Though a more conventional case can perhaps be made against Vanderbilt after it lost every game last season and covered only three spreads, the Commodores might be so discounted that they could provide some value for first-year coach Clark Lea. Auburn, meanwhile, likely doesn't get the same benefit. Routinely overrated by the oddsmakers after Gus Malzahn's smashing debut in 2013, the Tigers have been a pretty consistent money-burner since, and no surprise if Bryan Harsin's Auburn debut is similarly overpriced (at least for a while). Spread failings or not, the thought persists among some SEC observers that Auburn hasn't made an upgrade with this hire. And if not, point-spread shortcomings from the previous regime are not likely to change much either.

GEORGIA VS. CLEMSON AT CHARLOTTE N.C. SEPT. 4

This used to be an annual showdown, and it renews for the first time since 2014. No other opening-week game has this sort of potential playoff consequences, and it's a chance for quarterbacks D.J. Uiagalelei of Clemson and JT Daniels of Georgia to kick-start potential Heisman campaigns. After being a cut beneath the national elite the last few years, this is a chance for Kirby Smart's Bulldogs to quickly establish their national contender chops.

TEXAS AT ARKANSAS SEPT. 11

We'll find out if Arkansas is ready to make a move up the SEC West ladder in Sam Pittman's second year based on whether the Razorbacks can take down Texas and new coach Steve Sarkisian. But let's face it: The appeal of this one is more nostalgic, as these once-bitter rivals from the old Southwest Conference have met only three times in the regular season since Arkansas moved to the SEC in 1992.

BIG GAMES ON THE BOARD

(continued on next page)

ALABAMA AT FLORIDA SEPT. 18

Until the league powerbrokers decide to alter the slate, only once every six years does the SEC cycle into this matchup during the regular season, and only once every 12 years will they meet in Gainesville, so this will be a rare Tide visit to the Swamp. It's also a rematch of last year's SEC title game in Atlanta, where the Gators gave it a run before falling short in a 52-46 shootout. Dan Mullen is still looking for his first win over Nick Saban, losing all 10 meetings dating to his Mississippi State days.

ALABAMA AT TEXAS A&M OCT. 9

How much has Jimbo Fisher closed the gap on former mentor Nick Saban and Alabama? Well, A&M lost just once last season, and it was against the Crimson Tide 52-24. That was a special Bama team, but A&M is paying Fisher all that money to reach the College Football Playoff and win the title. We'll find out whether the Aggies are really ready to challenge Bama and whether Fisher has found a QB to replace the graduated Kellen Mond.

FLORIDA AT LSU OCT. 16

It is not lost on Gators fans that their league schedule is looking much harder than Georgia's, mainly because of that Sept. 18 test against Alabama, and Florida might have to win this game to keep within touching distance of the Bulldogs when they meet two weeks later. About the only highlight of a disappointing 2020 for the Tigers was their 37-34 stunner at Gainesville that knocked the Gators out of the national title picture, so Florida will be seeking revenge.

FLORIDA VS. GEORGIA AT JACKSONVILLE OCT. 30

As has often been the case in recent years, this grudge match at what they now call TIAA Bank Field will likely go a long way toward determining whether the Gators or Bulldogs reach the SEC title game in Atlanta. Florida broke a three-game losing streak in the series a year ago with a 44-28 romp.

ALABAMA AT AUBURN NOV. 27

Gus Malzahn had the hex on Nick Saban at Jordan-Hare Stadium, beating him three of four times, which has created a pretty high bar for new coach Bryan Harsin to clear. While we expect the Tide to be ready to roll into the SEC title game by this point, we're more curious at how the Auburn support base will react if Harsin undershoots expectations in his debut season. A decisive loss to Bama might get Tigers backers wishing they still had Malzahn.

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

Team	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength and Rank	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.		PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
EAST DIVISION								
GEORGIA	62	3.8	0.6	42.18 (37)	9.9	2.1	6.7	1.3
FLORIDA	58	3.9	-0.1	41.53 (43)	8.9	3.1	5.1	2.9
KENTUCKY	49.5	3.3	0.1	38.23 (66)	7.6	4.4	4.1	3.9
MISSOURI	49.5	4.1	-0.4	40.42 (55)	7.3	4.7	4.0	4.0
TENNESSEE	46	2.7	-0.3	41.04 (50)	6.3	5.7	2.9	5.1
SOUTH CAROLINA	41	3.6	0.1	43.53 (20)	4.3	7.7	2.1	5.9
VANDERBILT	34.5	2.5	-0.1	40.55 (54)	3.7	8.3	1.0	7.0
WEST DIVISION								
ALABAMA	70.5	3.8	0.6	41.23 (47)	10.9	1.1	7.1	0.9
TEXAS A&M	59	3.8	0.1	41.21 (48)	9.2	2.8	5.4	2.6
LSU	54	3.8	0.4	43.5 (21)	7.5	4.5	4.0	4.0
AUBURN	54	4.1	0.2	42.18 (36)	7.3	4.7	4.0	4.0
OLE MISS	51.5	3	-0.5	44.75 (6)	7.1	4.9	3.9	4.1
MISSISSIPPI ST	49.5	3.3	-0.4	43.05 (26)	6.4	5.6	3.4	4.6
ARKANSAS	48	2.9	-0.7	46.2 (1)	5.4	6.6	2.3	5.7

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
ALABAMA	70.5
GEORGIA	62
TEXAS A&M	59
FLORIDA	58
AUBURN	54
LSU	54
OLE MISS	51.5
KENTUCKY	49.5
MISSISSIPPI ST	49.5
MISSOURI	49.5
ARKANSAS	48
TENNESSEE	46
SOUTH CAROLINA	41
VANDERBILT	34.5

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
AUBURN	-4.1
MISSOURI	-4.1
FLORIDA	-3.9
ALABAMA	-3.8
GEORGIA	-3.8
LSU	-3.8
TEXAS A&M	-3.8
SOUTH CAROLINA	-3.6
KENTUCKY	-3.3
MISSISSIPPI ST	-3.3
OLE MISS	-3
ARKANSAS	-2.9
TENNESSEE	-2.7
VANDERBILT	-2.5

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
ALABAMA	0.6
GEORGIA	0.6
LSU	0.4
AUBURN	0.2
KENTUCKY	0.1
SOUTH CAROLINA	0.1
TEXAS A&M	0.1
FLORIDA	-0.1
VANDERBILT	-0.1
TENNESSEE	-0.3
MISSISSIPPI ST	-0.4
MISSOURI	-0.4
OLE MISS	-0.5
ARKANSAS	-0.7

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
ARKANSAS	19
LSU	18
OLE MISS	18
AUBURN	16
MISSISSIPPI ST	16
MISSOURI	16
TEXAS A&M	14
VANDERBILT	14
GEORGIA	13
KENTUCKY	13
SOUTH CAROLINA	13
ALABAMA	12
TENNESSEE	11
FLORIDA	10

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
ARKANSAS	9
AUBURN	9
LSU	9
GEORGIA	8
MISSISSIPPI ST	8
MISSOURI	8
OLE MISS	8
SOUTH CAROLINA	8
VANDERBILT	8
KENTUCKY	7
FLORIDA	5
TEXAS A&M	5
ALABAMA	4
TENNESSEE	4

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
ARKANSAS	10
OLE MISS	10
LSU	9
TEXAS A&M	9
ALABAMA	8
MISSISSIPPI ST	8
MISSOURI	8
AUBURN	7
TENNESSEE	7
KENTUCKY	6
VANDERBILT	6
FLORIDA	5
GEORGIA	5
SOUTH CAROLINA	5

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

HEAD COACH: NICK SABAN (15TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BILL O'BRIEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PETE GOLDING

LOCATION: TUSCALOOSA, AL • STADIUM: BRYANT-DENNY STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

11.5

O -105 / U -115

PLAY
OVER

No room for error here, as the Crimson Tide needs to sweep the regular-season slate for this Over to cash. Daunting? Maybe not. Been there, done that, as recently as last season, Nick Saban's latest unbeaten masterpiece and national title winner. This is not the same Bama team, certainly not on offense after losing QB Mac Jones, WRs DeVonta Smith and Jaylen Waddle and RB Najee Harris to the first round of the draft. But after scoring 48.5 PPG, the Tide can afford a bit of a drop and still be the team to beat.

Some think sophomore QB Bryce Young, a former five-star recruit, might eventually be even better than Jones, and Saban has simply been reloading on offense for years as his pipeline is not close to running dry. Indeed, another top-rated recruiting class could offer immediate help, and Saban has been stockpiling blue-chip RBs like Trey Sanders and Jase McClellan, who should be able to fill Harris' shoes. Meanwhile, Saban hired Bill O'Brien, Bill Belichick's former offensive coordinator at New

England and the longtime Texans and Penn State head coach, to take Steve Sarkisian's place coordinating the offense. Also look for another star-studded defense to feature in the fall, with the usual collection of future NFL draftees.

The banana peels on the schedule look to be trips to Florida on Sept. 18 and Texas A&M on Oct. 9, but we suspect the gap between the Tide and the SEC West might be as wide as it was a year ago. We'd rather not forecast a spot where the Crimson Tide might lose. - Bruce Marshall



70.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#1 OF 130)

12

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
4

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		77	49.4	5.27	-34.8	7-QB, OC	56.5	9.21	10.86	3-DC	7.1	3.94	36.31
2017		71	43	4.58	-26.4	6-OC	46.6	8.09	11.68	5	3.6	3.51	61.75

NOTEWORTHY...

- ALABAMA IS 5-0 ATS (L2Y) AT HOME IN ALL GAMES
- ALABAMA IS 1-7 ATS (L8G) AFTER PLAYING TWXAS A&M
- ALABAMA IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) AFTER PLAYING LSU

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+250

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Miami Fl (-14.5)

9/11 MERCER (-58)

9/18 at Florida (-9)

9/25 SOUTHERN MISS (-44)

10/2 OLE MISS (-23.5)

10/9 at Texas A&M (-8.5)

10/16 at Mississippi St (-18.5)

10/23 TENNESSEE (-28.5)

11/6 LSU (-20)

11/13 NEW MEXICO ST (-59.5)

11/20 ARKANSAS (-27)

11/27 at Auburn (-13)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

41.23
(#47 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.8 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game 48.5 2 19.4 13

Yards Per Point 11.2 5 18.2 11

Plays Per Game 70.8 75

Time of Possession 30:55 44

3rd Down Conv. % 58.9% 1 41.5% 76

Total Yards Per Game 541.8 4 352.2 29

Yards Per Play 7.7 2 4.9 17

Rush Attempts Per Game 36.6 83

Rush Yards Per Game 183.6 48 113.1 15

Yards Per Rush Attempt 5 29 3.3 12

Pass Attempts Per Game 32.7 54

Completion % 76.2% 1 58.1% 35

Passing Yards Per Game 358.2 3 239.2 71

Yards Per Pass Attempt 11 1 6.6 20

Turnovers 0.9 15 1.7 43

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 13-0

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at Missouri	38-19	W	-28.5	L	54.5 O
10/3	TEXAS A&M	52-24	W	-18	W	54 O
10/10	at Ole Miss	63-48	W	-24	L	74 O
10/17	GEORGIA	41-24	W	-5.5	W	56.5 O
10/24	at Tennessee	48-17	W	-22	W	66.5 U
10/31	MISSISSIPPI ST	41-0	W	-28.5	W	64 U
11/21	KENTUCKY	63-3	W	-31	W	58 O
11/28	AUBURN	42-13	W	-25	W	65 U
12/5	at LSU	55-17	W	-28.5	W	64 O
12/12	at Arkansas	52-3	W	-28	W	70.5 U
12/19	vs. Florida	52-46	W	-16	L	74.5 O
1/1	vs. Notre Dame	31-14	W	-18	L	65.5 U
1/11	vs. Ohio St	52-24	W	-9	W	76 T

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS

HEAD COACH: SAM PITTMAN (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KENDAL BRILES • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BARRY ODOM
LOCATION: FAYETTEVILLE, AR • STADIUM: DONALD W. REYNOLDS RAZORBACK STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
UNDER

In his first spin as a head coach after a long and distinguished career as an assistant, Sam Pittman proved a breath of fresh air in Fayetteville last season. He was an upgrade over the massively disappointing Chad Morris regime. Pittman also seemed to make good moves with his coordinators, hiring up-and-comer Kendal Briles to handle the offense and former Missouri head coach Barry Odom to run the defense. Yet when the dust settled, the Razorbacks were only 3-7, with the defense falling apart late. The unit allowed 50 or more points three times in the last four games, all losses. Odom needs to put together a pass rush in a hurry or SEC offenses will continue to gouge huge chunks of yardage despite the return of nine starters. On the other side of the ball, some think Briles might find sophomore QB KJ Jefferson's dual-threat skills a better fit for his schemes than Feleipe Franks, who was serviceable with 17 TD passes and four interceptions in his final go-around last year. Overall, 17 starters return, and the arrow seems to be pointing upward, but the schedule is enough to make us blink on 5.5 wins.

We think there's a good chance the Hogs will hit midseason below .500, especially with three straight games away from Fayetteville into October, while facing LSU and Alabama back-to-back on the road in November is another sadistic bit of scheduling. Because of all those roadblocks, getting to .500 looks like a real challenge, even though Pittman might have the program, which last year broke a 20-game SEC losing streak, back on the way to respectability. - *Bruce Marshall*



48

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#38 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	36	4.9	0.8	-1.3	9-OC	30.2	5.94	13.29	8-DC	25.3	5.15	14.02
2017		40	8.7	1.05	-0.6	7	35.8	6.64	12.39	6-DC	27.1	5.59	14.01

NOTEWORTHY...

- ARKANSAS IS 11-3 ATS (L14G) AFTER PLAYING AUBURN
- ARKANSAS IS 0-8 ATS (L8G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- ARKANSAS IS 5-0 UNDER (L2Y) AT HOME IN ALL GAMES

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 RICE (-20)

9/11 TEXAS (+7.5)

9/18 GA SOUTHERN (-13)

9/25 vs. Texas A&M (+12)

10/2 at Georgia (+18.5)

10/9 at Ole Miss (+7)

10/16 AUBURN (+3.5)

10/23 AK-PINE BLUFF (-42.5)

11/6 MISSISSIPPI ST (-2)

11/13 at LSU (+10.5)

11/20 at Alabama (+27)

11/26 MISSOURI (-2)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

46.2
(#1 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / -0.7
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	GEORGIA	10-37	L	27.5	W	53 U
10/3	at Mississippi St	21-14	W	16.5	W	68 U
10/10	at Auburn	28-30	L	13	W	46 O
10/17	OLE MISS	33-21	W	-1	W	78 U
10/31	at Texas A&M	31-42	L	14.5	W	55 O
11/7	TENNESSEE	24-13	W	1.5	W	55 U
11/14	at Florida	35-63	L	17.5	L	62 O
11/21	LSU	24-27	L	1.5	L	65.5 U
12/5	at Missouri	48-50	L	2	T	55 O
12/12	ALABAMA	3-52	L	28	L	70.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	25.7	81	34.9	95
Yards Per Point	15.2	94	12.9	92
Plays Per Game	71.2	71		
Time of Possession	25:16	126		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.8%	103	46.8%	110
Total Yards Per Game	391.5	64	451.7	103
Yards Per Play	5.5	63		
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.4	48	5.6	66
Rush Yards Per Game	151.3	76	192.1	89
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	89	4.6	81
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.4	92		
Completion %	64.4%	27	66.3%	114
Passing Yards Per Game	240.2	52	259.6	100
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.5	23	6.8	34
Turnovers	1.3	49	1.8	34

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

AUBURN TIGERS

HEAD COACH: BRYAN HARSIN (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE BOBO • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DEREK MASON

LOCATION: AUBURN, AL • STADIUM: PAT DYE FIELD AT JORDAN-HARE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
UNDER

If Gus Malzahn did know something, it was on offense. But not even he could get QB Bo Nix to perform consistently last season, hastening Malzahn's departure. Can new coach Bryan Harsin squeeze more consistency out of Nix? We're not sure, especially as the OL was bothered by inconsistency and promising RB Tank Bigsby had his freshman year cut short by injury. Let's also remember that of the many successful coaches like Harsin who have moved on from Boise State in the last 20 years, only Chris Petersen at Washington succeeded. Dirk Koetter was fired at Arizona State, and Dan Hawkins was fired at Colorado and is now at UC Davis. The SEC isn't the Mountain West or the Sun Belt, where Harsin succeeded for one season before moving to Boise. We'll also see about the adjustment to new defensive coordinator Derek Mason, most recently the head coach at Vanderbilt and who will likely be junking the 4-2-5 alignment that worked fairly well for predecessor Kevin Steele and instead use 3-4 and 4-3 defenses. No matter, the best case for an Auburn Over rests with a schedule that

provides a pair of gimmes in Akron and Alabama State before a trip to Penn State. But the SEC West is unforgiving, and Harsin would likely have to go 5-3 in league play to exceed seven wins. We don't see it. - *Bruce Marshall*

54

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#19 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		59	24.3	1.8	-15.8	6-QB	36.7	6.38	11.85	7	12.4	4.58	25.54
2017		62.5	39.9	4.35	-23.6	8-OC	44.5	8.1	13.11	7	4.6	3.75	55.8

NOTEWORTHY...

- AUBURN IS 29-12-2 ATS (S2000) AT HOME VS. AP TOP 25
- AUBURN IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) WITH O/U LINE OF 40 OR LESS
- AUBURN IS 44-20-1 UNDER (L65G) VS. AP TOP 10

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 AKRON (-36)

9/11 ALABAMA ST (-54)

9/18 at Penn St (+4)

9/25 GEORGIA ST (-19.5)

10/2 at LSU (+3.5)

10/9 GEORGIA (+4.5)

10/16 at Arkansas (-3.5)

10/30 OLE MISS (-7)

11/6 at Texas A&M (+8.5)

11/13 MISSISSIPPI ST (-9)

11/20 at South Carolina (-9.5)

11/27 ALABAMA (+13)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.18
(#36 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

4.1 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	KENTUCKY	29-13	W	-6	W	46.5 U
10/3	at Georgia	6-27	L	7.5	L	44 U
10/10	ARKANSAS	30-28	W	-13	L	46 O
10/17	at South Carolina	22-30	L	-2	L	54.5 U
10/24	at Ole Miss	35-28	W	-3.5	W	73.5 U
10/31	LSU	48-11	W	0	W	63 U
11/21	TENNESSEE	30-17	W	-10	W	51 U
11/28	at Alabama	13-42	L	25	L	65 U
12/5	TEXAS A&M	20-31	L	5.5	L	49 O
12/12	at Mississippi St	24-10	W	-4	W	49.5 U
1/1	vs. Northwestern	19-35	L	3.5	L	45 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	25.1	86	24.7	37
Yards Per Point	15.3	95	16.4	21
Plays Per Game	70.4	83		
Time of Possession	28:43	91		
3rd Down Conv. %	44.9%	29	50.3%	120
Total Yards Per Game	382.8	74	406	60
Yards Per Play	5.4	68	5.4	61
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.6	92		
Rush Yards Per Game	162.5	67	163.4	60
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	53	4.2	53
Pass Attempts Per Game	32.9	52		
Completion %	59.7%	74	64.6%	97
Passing Yards Per Game	220.3	73	242.6	78
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.7	87	7.3	62
Turnovers	0.8	7	1.2	88

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

FLORIDA GATORS

HEAD COACH: DAN MULLEN (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: VACANT • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TODD GRANTHAM

LOCATION: GAINESVILLE, FL • STADIUM: STEVE SPURRIER-FLORIDA FIELD AT BEN HILL GRIFFIN STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
OVER

Alabama's once-every-six-years appearance on the schedule makes things a bit more problematic for Florida, which at least gets to host the Crimson Tide at the Swamp. And the hard-to-satisfy Gators fan base might be starting to get a bit impatient with Dan Mullen. After all, Florida coaches are supposed to win national titles, not lose three games to close the season, as the Gators did last year. However, some think Mullen might be able to do more with once-ballyhooed recruit Emory Jones at QB than he could with Heisman finalist Kyle Trask, who was more of a pocket thrower. Jones is a pure dual-threat along the lines of another former Mullen pupil, Dak Prescott, and a revamped offense will now feature more run-pass option and direct QB runs with the mobile Jones, who also possesses a strong arm. And while do-everything, NFL-bound tight end Kyle Pitts leaves some awfully big shoes to fill, Mullen has plenty of capable weapons to step into the breach.

We can't overlook the late-season collapse of the Florida defense last year, due to a combination of factors that included injuries, but veteran coordinator Todd Grantham can still feature a likely future first-round pick in defensive end Zachary Carter, while the transfer portal has brought potential-impact defensive tackles Antonio Shelton from Penn State and Daquan Newkirk from Auburn. But as long as the secondary tightens up after allowing an SEC-worst 28 TD passes, the Gators can get to 10 wins, especially with the nonleague portion of the schedule not very threatening with hated Florida State now a shell of its former self. - *Bruce Marshall*

58 STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#8 OF 130)

10 NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
5

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	60	28.6	2.67	-18.8	10-QB, OC	43.6	7.13	11.26	9-DC	15	4.46	19.91
2017		43	13	1.45	-3.8	9	31.7	6.31	12.88	5-DC	18.7	4.87	15.82

NOTEWORTHY...

- FLORIDA IS 12-3 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- FLORIDA IS 4-10-1 ATS (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- FLORIDA IS 5-0 OVER (L2Y) AVENGING A LOSS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+4000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 FLA ATLANTIC (-26)

9/11 at South Florida (-23)

9/18 ALABAMA (+9)

9/25 TENNESSEE (-16)

10/2 at Kentucky (-5)

10/9 VANDERBILT (-27.5)

10/16 at LSU (+0)

10/30 vs. Georgia (+4.5)

11/6 at South Carolina (-13.5)

11/13 SAMFORD (-41)

11/20 at Missouri (-4.5)

11/27 FLORIDA ST (-17.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.53
(#43 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.9 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	39.8	13	30.8	72
Yards Per Point	12.8	27	13.9	63
Plays Per Game	71.7	67		
Time of Possession	30:30	54		
3rd Down Conv. %	50.0%	5	41.1%	71
Total Yards Per Game	509.8	9	428	83
Yards Per Play	7.1	7	5.8	82
Rush Attempts Per Game	30.6	116		
Rush Yards Per Game	131.2	93	170.5	69
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	69	4.6	78
Pass Attempts Per Game	39.4	13		
Completion %	67.9%	8	64.1%	93
Passing Yards Per Game	378.6	1	257.5	97
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.6	7	7.8	85
Turnovers	1.6	81	1.3	71

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 8-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at Ole Miss	51-35	W	-13.5	W	59.5 O
10/3	SOUTH CAROLINA	38-24	W	-14.5	L	57 O
10/10	at Texas A&M	38-41	L	-5.5	L	59 O
10/31	MISSOURI	41-17	W	-13	W	63.5 U
11/7	vs. Georgia	44-28	W	3	W	55 O
11/14	ARKANSAS	63-35	W	-17.5	W	62 O
11/21	at Vanderbilt	38-17	W	-30.5	L	68.5 U
11/28	KENTUCKY	34-10	W	-23.5	W	60.5 U
12/5	at Tennessee	31-19	W	-17.5	L	62.5 U
12/12	LSU	34-37	L	-23	L	65.5 O
12/19	vs. Alabama	46-52	L	16	W	74.5 O
12/30	vs. Oklahoma	20-55	L	7.5	L	65 O

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

GEORGIA BULLDOGS

HEAD COACH: KIRBY SMART (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TODD MONKEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAN LANNING / GLENN SCHUMANN
LOCATION: ATHENS, GA • STADIUM: SANFORD STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

10.5

O -130 / U +110

PLAY
UNDER

People forget that Kirby Smart was forced to use three QBs by midseason last year, and that didn't even include Wake Forest transfer Jamie Newman, the projected starter who opted out on the eve of the season. Former USC transfer JT Daniels, recovering from knee surgery, finally was able to take over at midseason and twice passed for better than 300 yards in his last four starts. But it's worth noting that no one blocked the door when Daniels wanted to leave USC, and late-season wins over three SEC also-rans padded Daniels' stats and Georgia's resume before a late rally reversed what looked like a loss to Cincinnati in the Peach Bowl.

Smart's defenses are usually formidable, and last season's unit topped the nation in rushing defense. But Georgia was also shredded by the two best offenses it faced, Alabama and Florida. The problem with a Georgia Over recommendation is that a neutral-site loss to Clemson in the opener would leave the Bulldogs no margin for error to get to 11 wins. We suspect they'll fall short. - Bruce Marshall

62

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#5 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		65.5	39.7	4.48	-24	8-QB	48.6	8.72	11.86	5	8.9	4.24	29.72
2017		69	39.6	4.4	-24.3	7	44	8.19	11.94	10	4.4	3.79	51.92

NOTEWORTHY...

- GEORGIA IS 10-0 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD HTH VS. GEORGIA TECH
- GEORGIA IS 0-8 ATS (L8G) AT HOME BEFORE PLAYING FLORIDA
- GEORGIA IS 19-7 UNDER (\$2000) ON ROAD IN SEPTEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+600**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 vs. Clemson (+5)

9/11 UAB (-21.5)

9/18 SOUTH CAROLINA (-24.5)

9/25 at Vanderbilt (-25.5)

10/2 ARKANSAS (-18.5)

10/9 at Auburn (-4.5)

10/16 KENTUCKY (-16)

10/30 vs. Florida (-4.5)

11/6 MISSOURI (-16.5)

11/13 at Tennessee (-14)

11/20 CHARLESTON SOUT (-53)

11/27 at Georgia Tech (-17.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

42.18
(#37 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	32.3	34	20	18
Yards Per Point	13.1	34	16.1	25
Plays Per Game	70.3	84		
Time of Possession	30:08	60		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.9%	23	35.7%	28
Total Yards Per Game	424.1	40	321	11
Yards Per Play	6	33	4.6	9
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.7	66		
Rush Yards Per Game	174.2	55	72.3	1
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	49	2.4	1
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.6	74		
Completion %	58.2%	86	65.7%	109
Passing Yards Per Game	249.9	43	248.7	85
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.2	30	6.9	42
Turnovers	1.5	70	1.3	77

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-2

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at Arkansas	37-10	W	-27.5	L	53 U
10/3	AUBURN	27-6	W	-7.5	W	44 U
10/10	TENNESSEE	44-21	W	-12.5	W	44 O
10/17	at Alabama	24-41	L	5.5	L	56.5 O
10/31	at Kentucky	14-3	W	-17	L	42.5 U
11/7	vs. Florida	28-44	L	-3	L	55 O
11/21	MISSISSIPPI ST	31-24	W	-26.5	L	44 O
11/28	at South Carolina	45-16	W	-22	W	51 O
12/12	at Missouri	49-14	W	-14	W	54.5 O
1/1	vs. Cincinnati	24-21	W	-7.5	L	53 U

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

KENTUCKY WILDCATS

HEAD COACH: MARK STOOPS (9TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LIAM COEN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRAD WHITE
LOCATION: LEXINGTON, KY • STADIUM: KROGER FIELD AT C.M. NEWTON GROUNDS

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
UNDER

We're reluctant to strongly endorse UK because we're not sure Mark Stoops has found the sort of playmakers on offense, like RB Benny Snell in 2018 or unconventional QB Lynn Bowden in 2019, who made those Wildcats editions go. A year ago the Cats struggled mightily on offense behind limited QB Terry Wilson, who fared better when able to hand off to Snell in 2018 but was mostly ineffective last year before heading to the portal and landing at New Mexico. Former Auburn transfer Joey Gatewood struggled in brief appearances, too, suggesting that Stoops might be ready to give Penn State transfer Will Levis the keys to the offense now coordinated by Liam Coen, pulled from the NFL Rams' staff. Stoops and Coen have punishing north-south RB Chris Rodriguez Jr. (6.6 YPC and 11 TDs in 2020) and change-of-pace runner Kavosiey Smoke to provide a diversion, but this was the SEC's lowest-ranked offense a year ago.

The defense was asked to carry much of the burden last fall and eventually buckled in late-season blowout losses to Alabama and Florida and now must replace seven starters. The good news for UK is that the nonleague slate consists of three layups in Lexington — ULM, Chattanooga and New Mexico State — and what should be a winnable trip to Louisville. But the non-Vandy SEC games are another matter, and Stoops will need a lot more offense to improve on last year's 5-6 mark, which included a 23-21 Gator Bowl win over NC State. — *Bruce Marshall*

49.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#32 OF 130)

13

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		53.5	25	2.03	-10.8	7	34.5	6.55	12.26	8	9.5	4.53	30.16
2017		44.5	11.8	1.02	-4.9	8	32.6	6.49	12.55	9-DC	20.8	5.47	17.9

NOTEWORTHY...

- KENTUCKY IS 11-4 ATS (L15G) AT HOME AS UNRANKED TEAM
- KENTUCKY IS 10-24 ATS (L10Y) IN NOVEMBER
- KENTUCKY IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+15000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 LA MONROE (-29)

9/11 MISSOURI (-3.5)

9/18 CHATTANOOGA (-32.5)

9/25 at South Carolina (-5)

10/2 FLORIDA (+5)

10/9 LSU (+1.5)

10/16 at Georgia (+16)

10/30 at Mississippi St (+3)

11/6 TENNESSEE (-7)

11/13 at Vanderbilt (-12.5)

11/20 NEW MEXICO ST (-38)

11/27 at Louisville (-1)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

38.23
(#66 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.3 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	21.8	107	25.9	42
Yards Per Point	14.6	79	14.7	45
Plays Per Game	63.2	118		
Time of Possession	31:03	41		
3rd Down Conv. %	36.6%	93	42.6%	84
Total Yards Per Game	317.7	115	380.7	45
Yards Per Play	5	93	5.4	55
Rush Attempts Per Game	39.7	44		
Rush Yards Per Game	195.9	33	156.1	53
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.9	33	4.2	56
Pass Attempts Per Game	21.9	121		
Completion %	59.3%	76	66.0%	111
Passing Yards Per Game	121.8	122	224.6	54
Yards Per Pass Attempt	5.6	122	6.9	43
Turnovers	1.1	28	2	21

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at Auburn	13-29	L	6	L	46.5 U
10/3	OLE MISS	41-42	L	-6.5	L	63 O
10/10	MISSISSIPPI ST	24-2	W	-3.5	W	57.5 U
10/17	at Tennessee	34-7	W	6.5	W	45.5 U
10/24	at Missouri	10-20	L	-3	L	47 U
10/31	GEORGIA	3-14	L	17	W	42.5 U
11/14	VANDERBILT	38-35	W	-18	L	42 O
11/21	at Alabama	3-63	L	31	L	58 O
11/28	at Florida	10-34	L	23.5	L	60.5 U
12/5	SOUTH CAROLINA	41-18	W	-11.5	W	48 O
1/2	vs. NC State	23-21	W	-3	L	49.5 U

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

LSU TIGERS

HEAD COACH: ED ORGERON (6TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JAKE PEETZ • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DARONTE JONES

LOCATION: BATON ROUGE, LA • STADIUM: TIGER STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8

O -140 / U +120

PLAY
PASS

Ed Orgeron set the bar pretty high in 2019, with a generational offense led by Joe Burrow and an unbeaten national-title year. So maybe LSU backsliding last year shouldn't have been much of a surprise, especially with injuries and key opt-outs thinning the ranks. But the way it unraveled last season, especially for a defense against which opponents scored 44 or more points five times, had LSU fans shaking their heads. It was a complete breakdown for the stop unit, with the nation's worst pass defense forcing Orgeron to jettison coordinator Bo Pelini and enlist Daronte Jones from the Minnesota Vikings to try to restore some order. Nine starters return, but Jones needs to work on the defensive culture and work ethic that waned under Pelini.

Orgeron is also trying to recreate the magic of 2019 by bringing in Joe Brady disciples Jake Peetz and DJ Mangas to run the offense. We'll see whether QB Myles Brennan, who missed most of 2020 due to a torn abdomen, can reclaim the job from sophomore Max Johnson, who

took most of the snaps in 2020 and was running the first team in the spring. It will help that sophomore Kayshon Boutte looks like the next great LSU receiver after catching 308 yards worth of passes in the wild 53-48 win over Ole Miss. But it's not going back to 2019 by simply wishing, and Orgeron is at risk of getting off on the wrong foot when facing a resurgent UCLA at the Rose Bowl in the opener. With the usual SEC West hurdles and hooking Florida in the annual crossover game, getting to nine wins looks a chore; eight wins looks about right. - *Bruce Marshall*

54

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#19 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		57.5	28.7	2.27	-15.2	5-OC	41.2	6.45	11.26	5	12.5	4.18	23.72
2017		59.5	25.2	3.13	-17.8	6-OC	36.1	7.45	13.55	5	10.9	4.32	24.74

NOTEWORTHY...

- LSU IS 10-0 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. TEXAS A&M
- LSU IS 1-8-1 ATS (L10G) AT HOME IN SEPTEMBER
- LSU IS 20-8 OVER (L10Y) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 14 POINTS

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+4000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at UCLA (-4)

9/11 MCNEESE ST (-39)

9/18 C MICHIGAN (-20)

9/25 at Mississippi St (-1.5)

10/2 AUBURN (-3.5)

10/9 at Kentucky (-1.5)

10/16 FLORIDA (+0)

10/23 at Ole Miss (+0)

11/6 at Alabama (+20)

11/13 ARKANSAS (-10.5)

11/20 LA MONROE (-34)

11/27 TEXAS A&M (+1.5)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

43.5
(#21 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.8 / 0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	32	37	34.9	96
Yards Per Point	13.6	50	14.1	58
Plays Per Game	81.1	7		
Time of Possession	31:24	36		
3rd Down Conv. %	34.6%	100	37.3%	37
Total Yards Per Game	433.9	34	492	124
Yards Per Play	5.4	75	7	125
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.5	85		
Rush Yards Per Game	121.7	107	169	65
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.3	108	4.9	94
Pass Attempts Per Game	42.1	5		
Completion %	58.7%	82	59.6%	47
Passing Yards Per Game	312.2	14	323	127
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	62	9.7	124
Turnovers	1.3	51	2.2	10

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	MISSISSIPPI ST	34-44	L	-14.5	L	57.5 O
10/3	at Vanderbilt	41-7	W	-20.5	W	49 U
10/10	at Missouri	41-45	L	-14	L	53 O
10/24	SOUTH CAROLINA	52-24	W	-5	W	55 O
10/31	at Auburn	11-48	L	0	L	63 U
11/21	at Arkansas	27-24	W	-1.5	W	65.5 U
11/28	at Texas A&M	7-20	L	15.5	W	59.5 U
12/5	ALABAMA	17-55	L	28.5	L	64 O
12/12	at Florida	37-34	W	23	W	65.5 O
12/19	OLE MISS	53-48	W	-1	W	75 O

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

MISSISSIPPI STATE BULLDOGS

HEAD COACH: MIKE LEACH (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE LEACH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ZACH ARNETT

LOCATION: STARKVILLE, MS • STADIUM: DAVIS WADE STADIUM AT SCOTT FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

0 -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

Year 2 of a Mike Leach regime is worth watching, as we saw at Washington State. In 2013, his second year with the Cougars, things suddenly began to click, especially on offense. As parallels exist between Leach's first year at WSU and his maiden run in Starkville last season, might that carry into the second season as well?

One challenge Leach is facing that he didn't in the Pac-12 is SEC defenses, which seemed to get a grasp on what Leach was doing with his Air Raid after the shocking opening win over LSU. Specifically, no one else was daring to play Leach's receivers man-to-man, as the various zone looks seem to confound the Bulldogs' QBs. By the end of the season, however, freshman Will Rogers was looking a lot more confident in the pocket after the Bulldogs scored only 30 points total in four October games.

Rogers, who passed for nearly 2,000 yards, might get a push from Southern Miss transfer Jack Abraham, and almost all the skill-position weapons are back, including WR Jaden Walley, who caught a school-record

718 yards worth of passes as a freshman. The defense didn't cause MSU to lose any games last fall, as Zach Arnett coordinated a confounding unit that kept most opponents off balance.

Working against the Bulldogs is that, unlike some SEC teams, Leach has not just one but a couple of spiky nonconference games against NC State and Memphis. But Mississippi State will have a chance in those and might even be able to sweep its nonleague slate; if that happens, getting above .500 becomes easier. — Bruce Marshall

49.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#32 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	63	32.8	3.75	-20.4	9-QB, OC	37.6	7.37	12.47	8-DC	4.8	3.62	49
2017		55	27.4	1.99	-13.8	7	40	6.53	12.41	6-DC	12.6	4.54	20.76

NOTEWORTHY...

- MISSISSIPPI ST IS 11-5 ATS (L5Y) IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- MISSISSIPPI ST IS 0-9 ATS (L9G) ON ROAD VS. HIGHER-RANKED TEAM
- MISSISSIPPI ST IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING AUBURN

ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 LOUISIANA TECH (-21.5)

9/11 NC STATE (-5)

9/18 at Memphis (+2.5)

9/25 LSU (+1.5)

10/2 at Texas A&M (+13.5)

10/16 ALABAMA (+18.5)

10/23 at Vanderbilt (-12)

10/30 KENTUCKY (-3)

11/6 at Arkansas (+2)

11/13 at Auburn (+9)

11/20 TENNESSEE ST (-44.5)

11/25 OLE MISS (-2)

SCHEDULE
STRENGTH

43.05
(#26 of 130)

FIELD
RATINGS

3.3 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game 21.4 109 28.1 57

Yards Per Point 15.9 102 13.9 64

Plays Per Game 72.3 59

Time of Possession 30:57 43

3rd Down Conv. % 32.5% 115 41.0% 70

Total Yards Per Game 340.2 104 389.7 51

Yards Per Play 4.7 105 5.3 46

Rush Attempts Per Game 18.5 127

Rush Yards Per Game 43.9 127 126.4 22

Yards Per Rush Attempt 2.4 126 3.6 21

Pass Attempts Per Game 50.6 1

Completion % 67.0% 14 61.7% 66

Passing Yards Per Game 296.3 20 263.4 104

Yards Per Pass Attempt 5.9 111 7.4 65

Turnovers 2.4 122 1.6 49

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at LSU	44-34	W	14.5	W	57.5 O
10/3	ARKANSAS	14-21	L	-16.5	L	68 U
10/10	at Kentucky	2-24	L	3.5	L	57.5 U
10/17	TEXAS A&M	14-28	L	3.5	L	56 U
10/31	at Alabama	0-41	L	28.5	L	64 U
11/7	VANDERBILT	24-17	W	-18	L	45 U
11/21	at Georgia	24-31	L	26.5	W	44 O
11/28	at Ole Miss	24-31	L	8.5	W	71 U
12/12	AUBURN	10-24	L	4	L	49.5 U
12/19	MISSOURI	51-32	W	1.5	W	49 O
12/31	vs. Tulsa	28-26	W	1	W	44.5 O

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

MISSOURI TIGERS

HEAD COACH: ELIAH DRINKWITZ (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ELIAH DRINKWITZ / CURTIS LUPER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: STEVE WILKS
LOCATION: COLUMBIA, MO • STADIUM: FAUROT FIELD AT MEMORIAL STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

In his first year as a head coach in the SEC, Eli Drinkwitz impressed onlookers. Especially notable were two October wins in which he employed drastically different strategies to beat LSU and Kentucky. Drinkwitz opened the bomb bays with fearless freshman QB Connor Bazelak passing for 406 yards in the LSU upset. Then he used a clock-eating, short-yardage offense that stopped Kentucky's secondary from making momentum-changing plays in an old-style 20-10 win. But by December, Missouri was running on fumes, especially the defense, which surrendered almost 50 PPG across the last three games. Enter former NFL head coach Steve Wilks, a defensive tactician enlisted by Drinkwitz to plug some of those gaps and savvy enough to make good use of a robust collection of defensive linemen and edge rushers. Trajan Jeffcoat had six sacks in 2020, while Blaze Alldredge recorded 21.5 tackles for loss in his last full season of 2019. As for Bazelak, look for him to benefit from the addition of potential big-play wideout and Ohio State transfer Mookie Cooper. The schedule provides much of the optimism for an Over call, with a trip to Boston College looking

like the only potentially dangerous non-SEC date and only the trip to Georgia looking like a game where Mizzou might be a significant underdog. We're expecting Drinkwitz to win at least eight times. - Bruce Marshall

49.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#32 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		58	31.2	2.52	-14.8	9-QB, OC	46.6	7.33	12.12	7	15.4	4.8	21.02
2017		51.5	20	3.11	-6.7	10	46.6	8.22	12.47	5	26.6	5.11	14.26

NOTEWORTHY...

- MISSOURI IS 11-4 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- MISSOURI IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD
- MISSOURI IS 12-2-1 UNDER (L15G) AT HOME IN NOVEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+20000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 C MICHIGAN (-15.5)

9/11 at Kentucky (+3.5)

9/18 SE MISSOURI ST (-33)

9/25 at Boston College (+0.5)

10/2 TENNESSEE (-8)

10/9 NORTH TEXAS (-23)

10/16 TEXAS A&M (+5.5)

10/30 at Vanderbilt (-12)

11/6 at Georgia (+16.5)

11/13 SOUTH CAROLINA (-12.5)

11/20 FLORIDA (+4.5)

11/26 at Arkansas (+2)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.42
(#55 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

4.1 / -0.4
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	26.7	74	32.3	83
Yards Per Point	15.1	90	12.6	98
Plays Per Game	72.9	54		
Time of Possession	30:47	47		
3rd Down Conv. %	43.3%	40	37.6%	41
Total Yards Per Game	402	59	407.7	63
Yards Per Play	5.5	61	5.9	92
Rush Attempts Per Game	35.1	96		
Rush Yards Per Game	135.2	89	162.2	59
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.9	88		
Pass Attempts Per Game	36.3	27	4.5	75
Completion %	67.8%	9	58.4%	38
Passing Yards Per Game	266.8	32	245.5	82
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.3	64	7.9	97
Turnovers	1.4	61	1	102

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	ALABAMA	19-38	L	28.5	W	54.5 O
10/3	at Tennessee	12-35	L	10	L	48.5 U
10/10	LSU	45-41	W	14	W	53 O
10/24	KENTUCKY	20-10	W	3	W	47 U
10/31	at Florida	17-41	L	13	L	63.5 U
11/21	at South Carolina	17-10	W	-4	W	57.5 U
11/28	VANDERBILT	41-0	W	-13	W	51 U
12/5	ARKANSAS	50-48	W	-2	T	55 O
12/12	GEORGIA	14-49	L	14	L	54.5 O
12/19	at Mississippi St	32-51	L	-1.5	L	49 O

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

OLE MISS REBELS

HEAD COACH: LANE KIFFIN (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JEFF LEBBY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: D. J. DURKIN / CHRIS PARTRIDGE
LOCATION: OXFORD, MS • STADIUM: VAUGHT-HEMINGWAY STADIUM AT HOLLINGSWORTH FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7.5

O -110 / U -110

PLAY
UNDER

Hype abounds in Oxford after the Outback Bowl win over Indiana, but in retrospect most of the damage Ole Miss did in Lane Kiffin's debut season came against the bottom half of the SEC. We're pumping the brakes just a bit because the Rebels leaked too much on defense and were only 4-5 against league opponents. Anticipating many upgrades on defense looks dubious with seven starters on hand from last year, when the front seven wasn't physical enough or fast enough to knock most foes off balance. The chance always exists that the Rebels can merely outscore foes, and QB Matt Corral effectively grasped the Kiffin schemes en route to 3,337 passing yards and 29 TD passes, though his 14 interceptions were an issue. Kiffin is also reportedly figuring out more ways to use John Rhys Plumlee, who provided a spark at QB in 2019, and can be deployed in the slot, out wide, at running back or a bit more as a change-of-pace QB this fall. Kiffin might have no choice but to find a way to get Plumlee more involved after the departure of star wideout Elijah Moore, who had 86 catches in 2020. But with an average

score of 39-38 last season, we might have to ask Ole Miss to win eight shootouts to cast an Over vote. We suspect it's more likely the Rebels will fall a bit short but will provide fun watching nonetheless. - Bruce Marshall

51.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#24 OF 130)

18

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		44.5	15	3.01	-6.6	8	41.9	8.46	14.46	7	26.9	5.45	15.49
2017	Yes	48.5	12.2	2.57	-3.9	5-QB, OC	40	7.99	13.39	6-DC	27.8	5.42	14.57

NOTEWORTHY...

- OLE MISS IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) ON NEUTRAL FIELD
- OLE MISS IS 3-17 ATS (L20G) ON ROAD AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- OLE MISS IS 25-9 UNDER (L10Y) AS AP TOP 25

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+10000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/6 vs. Louisville (-6)

9/11 AUSTIN PEAY (-34.5)

9/18 TULANE (-11)

10/2 at Alabama (+23.5)

10/9 ARKANSAS (-7)

10/16 at Tennessee (-2.5)

10/23 LSU (+0)

10/30 at Auburn (+7)

11/6 LIBERTY (-8.5)

11/13 TEXAS A&M (+4.5)

11/20 VANDERBILT (-20)

11/25 at Mississippi St (+2)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

44.75
(#6 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / -0.5
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	39.2	14	38.3	117
Yards Per Point	14.2	65	13.6	75
Plays Per Game	81.6	4		
Time of Possession	27:51	105		
3rd Down Conv. %	49.7%	6	46.7%	107
Total Yards Per Game	555.9	3	519	127
Yards Per Play	6.8	10	6.5	115
Rush Attempts Per Game	46.2	6		
Rush Yards Per Game	211	24	206.9	100
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.6	52	5.3	111
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.5	47		
Completion %	71.0%	4	68.0%	124
Passing Yards Per Game	344.9	7	312.1	126
Yards Per Pass Attempt	10.3	4	8.1	100
Turnovers	1.8	95	1.3	75

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	FLORIDA	35-51	L	13.5	L	59.5 O
10/3	at Kentucky	42-41	W	6.5	W	63 O
10/10	ALABAMA	48-63	L	24	W	74 O
10/17	at Arkansas	21-33	L	1	L	78 U
10/24	AUBURN	28-35	L	3.5	L	73.5 U
10/31	at Vanderbilt	54-21	W	-17	W	63.5 O
11/14	SOUTH CAROLINA	59-42	W	-12.5	W	73 O
11/28	MISSISSIPPI ST	31-24	W	-8.5	L	71 U
12/19	at LSU	48-53	L	1	L	75 O
1/2	vs. Indiana	26-20	W	7.5	W	68 U

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTH CAROLINA GAMECOCKS

HEAD COACH: SHANE BEAMER (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MARCUS SATTERFIELD • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CLAYTON WHITE
LOCATION: COLUMBIA, SC • STADIUM: WILLIAMS-BRICE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4

O +110 / U -130

PLAY
UNDER

Checking every applicable box, new coach Shane Beamer has the masses excited in Columbia. They are thrilled to have an enthusiastic new leader after Will Muschamp's businesslike approach the last five years. But whatever Beamer's pedigree, including being the son of Frank, the greatest coach in Virginia Tech history, he has never been a head coach, and he inherits a program that went off the rails last year.

Beamer and new offensive coordinator Marcus Satterfield will try to make lemonade from lemons on offense, with sophomore QB Luke Doty failing to excite in his audition at the end of 2020 and FCS St. Francis (Pa.) transfer Jason Brown not having played since 2019. Satterfield will likely try to pivot the offense around productive RB Kevin Harris (1,138 yards rushing last year), the only established threat. But with questions at QB, we're not sure how much upside the offense has.

Prospects are not much better on defense, where things also unraveled last season, and new coordinator Clayton White has to completely revamp a secondary that lost five players to the portal or the NFL. The Gamecocks' best chances at wins are right out of the gate against Eastern Illinois and East Carolina, but we can envision this season spinning out of control as Beamer tries to grasp his new assignment with a transitional roster. It is not a recipe that suggests much beyond three wins. - Bruce Marshall

41
13

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#75 OF 130)

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8

RET
DEFENSE
5

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		48.5	22.5	2.73	-7.9	8-QB	42.1	7.57	12.38	6	19.6	4.84	18.72
2017		49.5	19.7	1.96	-10.9	10	31.8	6.54	12.77	6	12.1	4.58	26.71

NOTEWORTHY...

- SOUTH CAROLINA IS 6-1-1 ATS (L8G) VS. AP NO. 2
- SOUTH CAROLINA IS 4-11 ATS (L15G) VS. UNRANKED TEAM
- SOUTH CAROLINA IS 5-0 OVER (L2Y) ON ROAD

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 E ILLINOIS (-36)

9/11 at East Carolina (-2.5)

9/18 at Georgia (+24.5)

9/25 KENTUCKY (+5)

10/2 TROY (-3)

10/9 at Tennessee (+7.5)

10/16 VANDERBILT (-10)

10/23 at Texas A&M (+21.5)

11/6 FLORIDA (+13.5)

11/13 at Missouri (+12.5)

11/20 AUBURN (+9.5)

11/27 CLEMSON (+23)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

43.53
(#20 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 23.5 97 36 104

Yards Per Point 15.1 93 12.5 102

Plays Per Game 69.1 91

Time of Possession 29:20 72

3rd Down Conv. % 36.5% 94 48.4% 115

Total Yards Per Game 355.1 96 451.5 101

Yards Per Play 5.1 89 6.4 109

Rush Attempts Per Game 36.9 78

Rush Yards Per Game 167.9 60 195.4 93

Yards Per Rush Attempt 4.6 54 4.9 95

Pass Attempts Per Game 29.5 83

Completion % 59.3% 77 66.6% 115

Passing Yards Per Game 187.2 105 256.1 94

Yards Per Pass Attempt 6.3 100 8.8 115

Turnovers 1.5 75 1.1 94

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-8

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	TENNESSEE	27-31	L	4	T	45 0
10/3	at Florida	24-38	L	14.5	W	57 0
10/10	at Vanderbilt	41-7	W	-14.5	W	41.5 0
10/17	AUBURN	30-22	W	2	W	54.5 U
10/24	at LSU	24-52	L	5	L	55 0
11/7	TEXAS A&M	3-48	L	9.5	L	58.5 U
11/14	at Ole Miss	42-59	L	12.5	L	73 0
11/21	MISSOURI	10-17	L	4	L	57.5 U
11/28	GEORGIA	16-45	L	22	L	51 0
12/5	at Kentucky	18-41	L	11.5	L	48 0

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

TENNESSEE VOLUNTEERS

HEAD COACH: JOSH HEUPEL (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ALEX GOLESH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: TIM BANKS

LOCATION: KNOXVILLE, TN • STADIUM: NEYLAND STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

6

O +100 / U -120

PLAY
PASS

Over the last half-century, even coaches who once won big at Tennessee — think Doug Dickey, Bill Battle, Johnny Majors and Phil Fulmer — endured uncomfortable exits. The Vols' support base had even less tolerance for those who didn't win soon enough — think Derek Dooley and recently deposed Jeremy Pruitt. Into this cauldron arrives Josh Heupel, riding shotgun into Neyland Stadium from UCF alongside new athletic director Danny White and hoping to clear the stench from the Pruitt regime, which left recruiting violations in its wake. Heupel had a successful three-year run in Orlando, going 28-8, but also inherited an undefeated team from Scott Frost. There are questions whether the track-meet style that Heupel prefers will play as well in the SEC as it did the American, especially with the talent on hand in Knoxville.

The offense is undergoing a complete rebuild, maybe not a bad thing after stalling a year ago. Heupel is likely to install the same up-tempo spread that worked with the Golden Knights and will turn to Virginia Tech transfer Hendon Hooker, who passed for 2,894 yards and 22 TDs the last two years with the Hokies, or Michigan transfer Joe Milton, who started the last

five games for the Wolverines in 2020. Heupel certainly wasn't hired because of his defensive expertise, as UCF ranked 123rd on that side of the ball last year. The return of five "super seniors" on the defensive line should help the manpower up front and give new coordinator Tim Banks something to work with, and the secondary is experienced, though the linebacker corps was gutted by the portal.

If the Vols have hope, the schedule could offer four nonleague wins at Neyland Stadium and Heupel should be able to scrape out a couple of SEC wins. It's that soft nonleague slate, however, that makes us think the Vols can get to .500. — *Bruce Marshall*

46

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#50 OF 130)

11

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
4

RET
DEFENSE
7

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	40.5	13.6	1.75	-5.5	6-QB, OC	33	6.59	11.93	6-DC	19.4	4.84	16.63
2017		35.5	6.2	0.45	1.1	7-QB, OC	27.3	5.62	12.57	7	21	5.16	17.06

NOTEWORTHY...

- TENNESSEE IS 11-4 ATS (L15G) - HTH VS. KENTUCKY
- TENNESSEE IS 3-14 ATS (L17G) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- TENNESSEE IS 5-0 UNDER (L2Y) AT HOME

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+15000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 BOWLING GREEN (-28)

9/11 PITTSBURGH (-0.5)

9/18 TENNESSEE TECH (-37)

9/25 at Florida (+16)

10/2 at Missouri (+8)

10/9 SOUTH CAROLINA (-7.5)

10/16 OLE MISS (+2.5)

10/23 at Alabama (+28.5)

11/6 at Kentucky (+7)

11/13 GEORGIA (+14)

11/20 S ALABAMA (-21)

11/27 VANDERBILT (-14.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.04
(#50 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.7 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 3-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at South Carolina	31-27	W	-4	T	45 O
10/3	MISSOURI	35-12	W	-10	W	48.5 U
10/10	at Georgia	21-44	L	12.5	L	44 O
10/17	KENTUCKY	7-34	L	-6.5	L	45.5 U
10/24	ALABAMA	17-48	L	22	L	66.5 U
11/7	at Arkansas	13-24	L	-1.5	L	55 U
11/21	at Auburn	17-30	L	10	L	51 U
12/5	FLORIDA	19-31	L	17.5	W	62.5 U
12/12	at Vanderbilt	42-17	W	-14.5	W	50.5 O
12/19	TEXAS A&M	13-34	L	13.5	L	49.5 U

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	21.5	108	30.1	67
Yards Per Point	16.1	107	13.5	76
Plays Per Game	68.9	92		
Time of Possession	27:56	104		
3rd Down Conv. %	30.2%	118	47.6%	112
Total Yards Per Game	346.2	102	407.4	62
Yards Per Play	5	94	5.7	76
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.5	69		
Rush Yards Per Game	141.5	83	141.6	38
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.8	91	3.7	30
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.5	91		
Completion %	62.8%	39	68.2%	125
Passing Yards Per Game	204.7	83	265.8	107
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.2	67	8.5	110
Turnovers	1.5	76	1	101

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

TEXAS A&M AGGIES

HEAD COACH: JIMBO FISHER (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DARRELL DICKEY • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MIKE ELKO

LOCATION: COLLEGE STATION, TX • STADIUM: KYLE FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9.5

0 + 105 / U - 125

PLAY
OVER

During Jimbo Fisher's first two years at A&M, he had to deal with nonconference games against Clemson, and while the Aggies put up a fight, they lost both of them. Now, instead of Clemson, A&M's biggest non-SEC challenge is Colorado, which should help Fisher clear this 9.5-win hurdle.

We'd be even more confident if we knew a bit more about the quarterback battle in College Station post-Kellen Mond. In fact, what could hold back the Aggies is the situation at QB, where fast but untested Haynes King, who took only a few snaps last fall, needs to provide a dynamic dimension for A&M to threaten elite status. Everything else seems in place, with 1,000-yard runner Isaiah Spiller back as well as the top five receivers. Meanwhile, Fisher has been able to hold on to the "\$2.1 Million Man," high-priced defensive coordinator Mike Elko, who got a raise when suitors were inquiring about his interest in becoming a head coach, which figures to come soon enough. Elko molded the nation's

ninth-ranked defense last year and returns nine starters.

If Mond were still in the fold, maybe this would be the year that Fisher could get Alabama, especially as the Tide must visit Kyle Field. No matter. We suspect it's a good bet the Aggies get to 10 wins. - *Bruce Marshall*

59

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#7 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
5

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	58.5	27.8	2.34	-15.2	8-QB, OC	45.2	7.39	12.54	8-DC	17.3	5.04	17.37
2017		49	17.5	1.57	-7	5-QB	37.3	6.37	12.24	7	19.8	4.8	17.08

NOTEWORTHY...

- TEXAS A&M IS 12-2-2 ATS (L5Y) IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- TEXAS A&M IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) HTH VS. LSU
- TEXAS A&M IS 8-0 OVER (L8G) BEFORE PLAYING MISSISSIPPI

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+3500**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 KENT ST (-27)

9/11 at Colorado (-12)

9/18 NEW MEXICO (-33.5)

9/25 vs. Arkansas (-12)

10/2 MISSISSIPPI ST (-13.5)

10/9 ALABAMA (+8.5)

10/16 at Missouri (-5.5)

10/23 SOUTH CAROLINA (-21.5)

11/6 AUBURN (-8.5)

11/13 at Ole Miss (-4.5)

11/20 PRAIRIE VIEW (-53.5)

11/27 at LSU (-1.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

41.21
(#48 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / 0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	32.6	33	21.7	26
Yards Per Point	13.5	49	14.6	46
Plays Per Game	68.4	93		
Time of Possession	34:48	4		
3rd Down Conv. %	54.9%	3	35.0%	23
Total Yards Per Game	439.2	32	317.3	10
Yards Per Play	6.4	19	5.1	28
Rush Attempts Per Game	37.6	68		
Rush Yards Per Game	205.1	27	92	2
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.5	12	3.3	10
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.2	77		
Completion %	62.9%	38	63.2%	83
Passing Yards Per Game	234.1	59	225.3	56
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.8	50	7.3	57
Turnovers	0.8	5	1.4	66

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 9-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	VANDERBILT	17-12	W	-32.5	L	46 U
10/3	at Alabama	24-52	L	18	L	54 O
10/10	FLORIDA	41-38	W	5.5	W	59 O
10/17	at Mississippi St	28-14	W	-3.5	W	56 U
10/31	ARKANSAS	42-31	W	-14.5	L	55 O
11/7	at South Carolina	48-3	W	-9.5	W	58.5 U
11/28	LSU	20-7	W	-15.5	L	59.5 U
12/5	at Auburn	31-20	W	-5.5	W	49 O
12/19	at Tennessee	34-13	W	-13.5	W	49.5 U
1/2	vs. North Carolina	41-27	W	-10	W	66 O

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

VANDERBILT COMMODORES

HEAD COACH: CLARK LEA (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DAVID RAIH • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JESSE MINTER

LOCATION: NASHVILLE, TN • STADIUM: VANDERBILT STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

3.5

0 +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

Given how bad the Commodores were last year, going 0-9 in their first winless season, clearing the three-win hurdle looks awfully daunting. Even so, alumnus and new head coach Clark Lea, fresh off a successful stint as defensive coordinator on Brian Kelly's Notre Dame staff, has fans excited after the well-meaning Derek Mason ran the program into the ground the last couple of years. Lea, however, knows the challenges and certainly realizes that a bit of guile will be his best chance to compete. Expect the offense to spread it out and let sophomore QB Ken Seals, who flashed some promise even while under siege last fall, wing it. The top three receivers are still in the mix, including Cam Johnson, who caught 56 passes a year ago. The collapse of Mason's once-combative defense, all the way down to ranking 121st nationally, really submerged the Commodores.

Lea's defensive acumen will be put to the test, and Vandy simply has to generate more impact plays on defense after recording just two interceptions last season. But East Tennessee State and UConn provide real opportunities at home, and then it's a matter of finding one more win (Colorado State? Kentucky? South Carolina?) to get to three. Asking anything more from Lea in his maiden run might mean he'll be worthy of some Coach of the Year votes. - *Bruce Marshall*

34.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#99 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
6

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		46.5	19.5	2.03	-1.1	7-QB, OC	36.1	7.17	13.05	5-DC	16.6	5.14	21.96
2017		38.5	7.5	1.38	1.4	9	31.9	6.51	12.77	7	24.4	5.13	14.11

NOTEWORTHY...

- VANDERBILT IS 8-1-1 ATS (L10G) BEFORE PLAYING KENTUCKY
- VANDERBILT IS 3-11-1 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG
- VANDERBILT IS 20-5 UNDER (L25G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 E TENN ST (-21.5)

9/11 at Colorado St (+2)

9/18 STANFORD (+6.5)

9/25 GEORGIA (+25.5)

10/2 CONNECTICUT (-19)

10/9 at Florida (+27.5)

10/16 at South Carolina (+10)

10/23 MISSISSIPPI ST (+12)

10/30 MISSOURI (+12)

11/13 KENTUCKY (+12.5)

11/20 at Ole Miss (+20)

11/27 at Tennessee (+14.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

40.55
(#54 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.5 / -0.1
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 0-9

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/26	at Texas A&M	12-17	L	32.5	W	46 U
10/3	LSU	7-41	L	20.5	L	49 U
10/10	SOUTH CAROLINA	7-41	L	14.5	L	41.5 O
10/31	OLE MISS	21-54	L	17	L	63.5 O
11/7	at Mississippi St	17-24	L	18	W	45 U
11/14	at Kentucky	35-38	L	18	W	42 O
11/21	FLORIDA	17-38	L	30.5	W	68.5 U
11/28	at Missouri	0-41	L	13	L	51 U
12/12	TENNESSEE	17-42	L	14.5	L	50.5 O

2020 STATS & RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
Points Per Game	14.8	125	37.3	110
Yards Per Point	22.3	125	13.1	89
Plays Per Game	72.1	61		
Time of Possession	29:42	67		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.9%	65	43.9%	95
Total Yards Per Game	330	109	487.9	121
Yards Per Play	4.6	111	7.1	126
Rush Attempts Per Game	36.6	84		
Rush Yards Per Game	110.1	115	191.4	88
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3	119	5.7	117
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.4	48		
Completion %	63.8%	31	73.4%	127
Passing Yards Per Game	219.9	74	296.4	118
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.6	91	8.9	116
Turnovers	1.9	100	1	98

SUN BELT CONFERENCE PREVIEW



Grayson McCall,
Coastal Carolina

2021 PROJECTED STANDINGS

	2021	Home	Road	Schedule Strength	ALL GAMES		CONFERENCE	
Team	SM PR	Field Adv.	Field Adv.	and Rank	PrjW's	PrjL's	PrjW's	PrjL's
EAST DIVISION								
COASTAL CAROLINA	50.5	2.6	0.2	29.84 (120)	10.1	1.9	6.5	1.5
APPALACHIAN ST	49.5	3.8	0.6	33.66 (91)	9.0	3.0	6.1	1.9
TROY	41	2.9	0.8	34.14 (87)	7.1	4.9	4.5	3.5
GEORGIA ST	38.5	2.8	0	38.74 (64)	5.2	6.8	3.7	4.3
GA SOUTHERN	38	3.6	-0.3	34.75 (84)	5.6	6.4	3.6	4.4
WEST DIVISION								
LA LAFAYETTE	48.5	3.8	0.2	33.61 (92)	8.9	3.1	6.4	1.6
ARKANSAS ST	33.5	3.6	0.2	35.88 (78)	4.3	7.7	3.0	5.0
TEXAS ST UNIV	31.5	2.6	-0.3	32.68 (96)	4.8	7.2	2.8	5.2
S ALABAMA	28.5	3.2	-0.6	32.21 (101)	4.1	7.9	2.0	6.0
LA MONROE	24	3	-0.3	36.63 (74)	2.4	9.6	1.4	6.6

HOW THEY STACK UP...

POWER RATING

TEAM	RATING
COASTAL CAROLINA	50.5
APPALACHIAN ST	49.5
LA LAFAYETTE	48.5
TROY	41
GEORGIA ST	38.5
GA SOUTHERN	38
ARKANSAS ST	33.5
TEXAS ST UNIV	31.5
S ALABAMA	28.5
LA MONROE	24

HOME FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
APPALACHIAN ST	-3.8
LA LAFAYETTE	-3.8
ARKANSAS ST	-3.6
GA SOUTHERN	-3.6
S ALABAMA	-3.2
LA MONROE	-3
TROY	-2.9
GEORGIA ST	-2.8
COASTAL CAROLINA	-2.6
TEXAS ST UNIV	-2.6

ROAD FIELD RATING

TEAM	RATING
TROY	0.8
APPALACHIAN ST	0.6
ARKANSAS ST	0.2
COASTAL CAROLINA	0.2
LA LAFAYETTE	0.2
GEORGIA ST	0
GA SOUTHERN	-0.3
LA MONROE	-0.3
TEXAS ST UNIV	-0.3
S ALABAMA	-0.6

RETURNING STARTERS

TEAM	RATING
TROY	21
LA LAFAYETTE	20
COASTAL CAROLINA	19
GEORGIA ST	19
APPALACHIAN ST	17
LA MONROE	17
S ALABAMA	16
TEXAS ST UNIV	16
ARKANSAS ST	15
GA SOUTHERN	14

RET. STARTERS (OFF)

TEAM	RATING
GEORGIA ST	11
TROY	10
COASTAL CAROLINA	9
LA LAFAYETTE	9
TEXAS ST UNIV	8
APPALACHIAN ST	7
GA SOUTHERN	7
LA MONROE	7
S ALABAMA	7
ARKANSAS ST	6

RET. STARTERS (DEF)

TEAM	RATING
LA LAFAYETTE	11
TROY	11
APPALACHIAN ST	10
COASTAL CAROLINA	10
LA MONROE	10
ARKANSAS ST	9
S ALABAMA	9
GEORGIA ST	8
TEXAS ST UNIV	8
GA SOUTHERN	7

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

APPALACHIAN STATE MOUNTAINEERS

HEAD COACH: SHAWN CLARK (2ND)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: FRANK PONCE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DALE JONES

LOCATION: BOONE, NC • STADIUM: KIDD BREWER STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

8.5

O -115 / U -105

PLAY
OVER

Maybe Chase Brice can blame COVID-19 and the oddities it caused for his failures last season at Duke, where he arrived with some ballyhoo as a transfer from Clemson only to fall flat on his face. Brice gets one more chance at QB, this time at Appalachian State. He's still looking to match his career highlight at Clemson in 2018, when he came off the bench to bail out the Tigers in an early-season game against Syracuse that ended up as the closest call of an undefeated national title season. Brice might have more weapons at his disposal than he had in Durham, especially with junior RB Camerun Peoples off a 1,124-yard rushing season that included five TDs in the Myrtle Beach Bowl romp past North Texas.

But if the Mountaineers plan to give Coastal Carolina a run in the Sun Belt East, it will probably be due to a robust defense that returns nine starters, bolstered by DEs Demetrius Taylor and Caleb Spurlin, "super seniors" taking advantage of the extra year of eligibility because of

the pandemic. Appalachian State does get Coastal at Boone on Oct. 20 but faces some challenges in nonleague play, traveling to Miami and facing East Carolina in Charlotte, while also hosting dangerous Marshall. Still, given the altitudes at which App State has been flying in recent years, falling beneath 8.5 wins seems unlikely. - Bruce Marshall

49.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#32 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		48.5	22	2.17	-5.5	6	37.2	6.49	11.61	5-DC	15.2	4.31	18.28
2017		42	10.4	0.88	1.6	7	31.4	6.39	13.82	7	21	5.51	17.26

NOTEWORTHY...

- APPALACHIAN ST IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) ON ROAD WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE
- APPALACHIAN ST IS 0-5 ATS (L2Y) ON ROAD IN ALL GAMES
- APPALACHIAN ST IS 11-5 UNDER (L5Y) ON ROAD IN CONFERENCE GAMES

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 vs. East Carolina (-15.5)

9/11 at Miami Fl (+10)

9/18 ELON (-41.5)

9/23 MARSHALL (-12.5)

10/2 at Georgia St (-9)

10/12 at LA Lafayette (+2)

10/20 COASTAL CAROLINA (-2.5)

10/30 LA MONROE (-29.5)

11/6 at Arkansas St (-13)

11/13 S ALABAMA (-25.5)

11/20 at Troy (-6)

11/27 GA SOUTHERN (-15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

33.66
(#91 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.8 / 0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	32.2	36	19.9	17
Yards Per Point	13.8	55	16.7	19
Plays Per Game	71.3	70		
Time of Possession	31:48	24		
3rd Down Conv. %	49.3%	7	37.1%	35
Total Yards Per Game	445.2	25	331.6	16
Yards Per Play	6.2	26	4.8	13
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.9	17		
Rush Yards Per Game	253	8	154.6	50
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.8	5	4.1	49
Pass Attempts Per Game	25.6	110		
Completion %	63.1%	37	48.3%	1
Passing Yards Per Game	192.2	101	177	8
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.5	59	5.9	5
Turnovers	1.5	77	1.6	47

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 9-3

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	CHARLOTTE	35-20	W	-17	L	59 U
9/19	at Marshall	7-17	L	-6	L	60.5 U
9/26	CAMPBELL	52-21	W	-33.5	L	52.5 O
10/22	ARKANSAS ST	45-17	W	-13.5	W	69 U
10/31	at LA Monroe	31-13	W	-28.5	L	58 U
11/7	at Texas St Univ	38-17	W	-21.5	L	58 U
11/14	GEORGIA ST	17-13	W	-18.5	L	63 U
11/21	at Coastal Carolina	23-34	L	3	L	48.5 O
11/28	TROY	47-10	W	-14	W	51 O
12/4	LA LAFAYETTE	21-24	L	-3.5	L	53 U
12/12	at GA Southern	34-26	W	-9	L	45.5 O
12/21	vs. North Texas	56-28	W	-22	W	68 O

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

ARKANSAS STATE RED WOLVES

HEAD COACH: BUTCH JONES (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: KEITH HECKENDORF • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ROB HARLEY

LOCATION: JONESBORO, AR • STADIUM: CENTENNIAL BANK STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

0 +105 / U -125

PLAY
OVER

It's been awhile, but if that face looks familiar on the Red Wolves' sideline, it should: Butch Jones returns to the head coaching ranks three years after getting moved out at Tennessee. Jones has spent the last three autumns watching how Nick Saban does it while on the Alabama staff, and he was a consistent winner at Central Michigan and Cincinnati.

He's inheriting a bit less than a full cupboard from Blake Anderson, who moved to Utah State, but he does have some experience at QB in junior Layne Hatcher (19 TD passes last fall) and Florida State transfer James Blackman, who at one time generated faint comparisons to Jameis Winston. Four starters are back along an OL that Jones hopes will better balance the offense after ASU evolved into nearly an all-pass offense a year ago. Hatcher and Logan Bonner, who transferred to Utah State, paced a 364-ypg offense that ranked second nationally.

Serious concerns hover over the defense, especially in the secondary, after the Red Wolves ranked a lowly 126th against the pass last year. New defensive coordinator Rob Harley (via Pitt) is transitioning from a 3-4 to four-man fronts to try to take better advantage of the talent on hand. The upside might be limited in Jones' debut at aptly named Jonesboro, but we suspect the Red Wolves have a decent chance to find at least five wins in this slate. - Bruce Marshall

33.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#103 OF 130)

15

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
6

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		39	9	0.94	4.2	7-QB	32.2	6.5	14.92	5	23.3	5.56	15.7
2017		38.5	9.5	0.5	1.7	5	33.4	6.01	14.37	5	23.9	5.51	16.63

NOTEWORTHY...

- ARKANSAS ST IS 10-0 ATS (L10G) - HTH VS. ULM
- ARKANSAS ST IS 13-20-1 ATS (L34G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER
- ARKANSAS ST IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) ON ROAD NONCONFERENCE VS. NON-POWER 5

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 C ARKANSAS (-13)

9/11 MEMPHIS (+10.5)

9/18 at Washington (+19.5)

9/25 at Tulsa (+13.5)

10/2 at Ga Southern (+8)

10/7 COASTAL CAROLINA (+13.5)

10/21 LA LAFAYETTE (+11.5)

10/30 at S Alabama (-2)

11/6 APPALACHIAN ST (+13)

11/13 at LA Monroe (-6.5)

11/20 at Georgia St (+7.5)

11/27 TEXAS ST UNIV (-6)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

35.88
(#78 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game 31.2 42 38.2 116

Yards Per Point 15.4 99 12.5 103

Plays Per Game 79.9 9

Time of Possession 28:52 87

3rd Down Conv. % 39.7% 67 40.6% 66

Total Yards Per Game 481.4 14 476.8 117

Yards Per Play 6 35 6.4 107

Rush Attempts Per Game 35 98

Rush Yards Per Game 119.8 109 164.7 63

Yards Per Rush Attempt 3.4 103 4.2 55

Pass Attempts Per Game 42.3 4

Completion % 60.1% 72 66.3% 113

Passing Yards Per Game 361.6 2 312.1 125

Yards Per Pass Attempt 8.5 19 9.2 120

Turnovers 1.5 68 0.9 112

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 4-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	at Memphis	24-37	L	18.5	W	71 U
9/12	at Kansas St	35-31	W	15	W	56.5 O
10/3	at Coastal Carolina	23-52	L	-3.5	L	64.5 O
10/10	C ARKANSAS	50-27	W	-14.5	W	55.5 O
10/15	GEORGIA ST	59-52	W	-3.5	W	72.5 O
10/22	at Appalachian St	17-45	L	13.5	L	69 U
10/31	TROY	10-38	L	-3.5	L	69 U
11/7	at LA Lafayette	20-27	L	14.5	W	68.5 U
11/21	at Texas St Univ	45-47	L	-4.5	L	69 O
11/28	S ALABAMA	31-38	L	-7.5	L	64 O
12/5	LA MONROE	48-15	W	-20	W	72 U

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

COASTAL CAROLINA CHANTICLEERS

HEAD COACH: JAMEY CHADWELL (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: WILLY KORN / NEWLAND ISAAC • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: CHAD STAGGS

LOCATION: CONWAY, SC • STADIUM: BROOKS STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

10

0 -125 / U +105

PLAY
OVER

With 19 of 22 starters back from last year's stunning 11-1 breakthrough, with a double-digit number of seniors and graduates returning for an extra year of eligibility and, most importantly, with coach Jamey Chadwell resisting the temptation to cash in elsewhere and instead signing a contract extension, it would be a surprise if the Chanticleers failed to match last season's win total. The 37-ppg offense returns sophomore QB Grayson McCall, earning mention as a Heisman Trophy long shot after tossing 26 TD passes as a freshman, and returns nearly all of his weapons in Coastal's triple-option spread. One of the Sun Belt's best defenses also returns nearly en masse, spearheading an opportunistic team that ranked ninth nationally in turnover margin at +13. The real reason we like the Over is that we don't see two losses on the schedule. Coastal has an even softer nonleague slate than a year ago, as BYU is replaced by Buffalo, whose coach bolted in late spring, and only two Sun Belt foes played Coastal within single digits a season ago. Now, can the Chanticleers improve on their No. 12 finish in the final

College Football Playoff rankings? - Bruce Marshall

50.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#27 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		24.5	-2.4	-1	12.3	7	28.3	6.06	13.95	5-DC	30.7	7.05	14.17
2017		23.5	-7.9	-0.24	19.8	4	23.6	5.66	14.98	6	31.5	5.9	12.73

NOTEWORTHY...

- COASTAL CAROLINA IS 9-2 ATS (L3Y) ON ROAD
- COASTAL CAROLINA IS 6-13 ATS (L5Y) AT HOME AS UNRANKED TEAM
- COASTAL CAROLINA IS 12-2-1 OVER (L15G) IN SEPTEMBER

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+40000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/2 THE CITADEL (-40)

9/10 KANSAS (-22.5)

9/18 at Buffalo (-4)

9/25 MASSACHUSETTS (-35.5)

10/2 LA MONROE (-29.5)

10/7 at Arkansas St (-13.5)

10/20 at Appalachian St (+2.5)

10/28 TROY (-11.5)

11/6 at Ga Southern (-9)

11/13 GEORGIA ST (-14.5)

11/20 TEXAS ST UNIV (-22)

11/26 at S Alabama (-19)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

29.84
(#120 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.6 / 0.2
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE
STAT RANK** **DEFENSE
STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	36.6	17	20.2	19
Yards Per Point	12.2	13	17.4	15
Plays Per Game	69.6	87		
Time of Possession	34:34	5		
3rd Down Conv. %	51.8%	4	34.9%	22
Total Yards Per Game	448.4	24	351.9	28
Yards Per Play	6.4	18	5.3	50
Rush Attempts Per Game	43.8	18		
Rush Yards Per Game	220.6	13	142.8	40
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5	26	4.4	68
Pass Attempts Per Game	24.5	116		
Completion %	66.7%	18	61.5%	63
Passing Yards Per Game	227.7	66	209.1	36
Yards Per Pass Attempt	9.3	9	6.8	33
Turnovers	1.1	26	2.2	11

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 11-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Kansas	38-23	W	4	W	55 O
9/18	CAMPBELL	43-21	W	-27.5	L	61 O
10/3	ARKANSAS ST	52-23	W	3.5	W	64.5 O
10/14	at LA Lafayette	30-27	W	9.5	W	58 U
10/24	GA SOUTHERN	28-14	W	-1.5	W	48.5 U
10/31	at Georgia St	51-0	W	-4	W	61 U
11/7	S ALABAMA	23-6	W	-17	T	58 U
11/21	APPALACHIAN ST	34-23	W	-3	W	48.5 O
11/28	at Texas St Univ	49-14	W	-17	W	58.5 O
12/5	BYU	22-17	W	8.5	W	63 U
12/12	at Troy	42-38	W	-12	L	54 O
12/26	vs. Liberty	34-37	L	-6.5	L	59.5 O

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

GEORGIA SOUTHERN EAGLES

HEAD COACH: CHAD LUNSFORD (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: DOUG RUSE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: SCOT SLOAN
LOCATION: STATESBORO, GA • STADIUM: ALLEN E. PAULSON STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

O -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

The marketplace still assumes that Sun Belt teams are likely to take their licks in nonleague play, hence a general reduction in most of the season win numbers. But a look at some of the Sun Belt's nonconference victims last year should dispel some of those notions, and in Georgia Southern's case it is coming off an eight-win season and a 38-3 drubbing of Louisiana Tech in the New Orleans Bowl. Having returned to their option roots a few years ago when Chad Lunsford took over as coach, the Eagles have been the Sun Belt's version of Air Force since. Lunsford is looking for a new QB after Shai Werts transferred to Louisville, but Werts was a one-dimensional threat. Georgia Southern believes holdover Justin Tomlin, who flashed some upside in brief work last fall, can run the option just as effectively and maybe even improve the aerial dimension after the Eagles finished 124th in passing last year. Scot Sloan's 3-4 defensive looks have proven sticky for most Sun Belt foes and even had league champ Coastal Carolina confounded into the fourth quarter last October. Arkansas and BYU (at Statesboro)

provide tough nonconference challenges, but with several potential wins on the slate, it is not asking much for the Eagles to get to at least five wins and perhaps threaten another bowl visit. - Bruce Marshall

38

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#86 OF 130)

14

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7

RET
DEFENSE
7



STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		38.5	10.8	0.66	4.4	9-QB, OC	31	6.01	11.22	9-DC	20.2	5.35	17.7
2017		25	-6.2	-1.26	19.5	5-QB, OC	23.3	5.03	15.09	5	29.5	6.28	13.25

NOTEWORTHY...

- GA SOUTHERN IS 11-4 ATS (L5Y) AVENGING A LOSS
- GA SOUTHERN IS 6-10 ATS (L5Y) ON ROAD IN CONFERENCE GAMES
- GA SOUTHERN IS 8-0 UNDER (L8G) AT HOME IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 GARDNER WEBB (-33)

9/11 at Fla Atlantic (+1.5)

9/18 at Arkansas (+13)

9/25 LA LAFAYETTE (+7)

10/2 ARKANSAS ST (-8)

10/9 at Troy (+6)

10/14 at S Alabama (-6)

10/30 GEORGIA ST (-3)

11/6 COASTAL CAROLINA (+9)

11/13 at Texas St Univ (-3.5)

11/20 BYU (+4)

11/27 at Appalachian St (+15.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

34.75
(#84 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.6 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	27.2	68	20.3	21
Yards Per Point	13.7	53	15.8	31
Plays Per Game	63.6	117		
Time of Possession	32:46	15		
3rd Down Conv. %	40.8%	58	33.9%	20
Total Yards Per Game	373.6	81	322.1	12
Yards Per Play	5.9	41	4.9	20
Rush Attempts Per Game	48.9	4		
Rush Yards Per Game	265.8	4	110.5	12
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.4	14	3.4	17
Pass Attempts Per Game	13.3	124		
Completion %	55.6%	103	57.3%	27
Passing Yards Per Game	107.8	124	211.6	39
Yards Per Pass Attempt	8.1	35	6.7	24
Turnovers	1.3	58	2.2	13

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 8-5

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	CAMPBELL	27-26	W	-28	L	58.5 U
9/26	at LA Lafayette	18-20	L	12	W	49 U
10/3	at LA Monroe	35-30	W	-19.5	L	51 O
10/17	MASSACHUSETTS	41-0	W	-31	W	62 U
10/24	at Coastal Carolina	14-28	L	1.5	L	48.5 U
10/29	S ALABAMA	24-17	W	-3.5	W	52 U
11/7	TROY	20-13	W	2.5	W	52 U
11/14	TEXAS ST UNIV	40-38	W	-13	L	49.5 O
11/21	at Army	27-28	L	3	W	38.5 O
11/28	at Georgia St	24-30	L	3	L	51.5 O
12/5	FLA ATLANTIC	20-3	W	2.5	W	40.5 U
12/12	APPALACHIAN ST	26-34	L	9	W	45.5 O
12/23	vs. Louisiana Tech	38-3	W	-7	W	48 U

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

GEORGIA STATE PANTHERS

HEAD COACH: SHAWN ELLIOTT (5TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRAD GLENN • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: NATE FUQUA

LOCATION: ATLANTA, GA • STADIUM: CENTER PARC STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

5

0 -120 / U +100

PLAY
OVER

We can understand why many might have lost the scent on the Panthers even before the season begins, as one look at the nonconference schedule — at North Carolina and Auburn, plus hosting always awkward Army — is enough reason to pause. Georgia State should be commended for tackling the sort of slate most schools from power conferences wouldn't dare risk. But fifth-year coach Shawn Elliott has patiently built the program, targeting 2021 as the potential payoff. He has practically everyone back, including all 11 starters on offense, from last fall's bowl winner that scored better than 33 ppg. The roster is now loaded with experienced upperclassmen, though sophomore QB Cornelious Brown IV detonates the offense after accounting for 24 TDs as a freshman. Look for Brown to be a bit more comfortable with the passing game this fall with all of his targets still in the fold plus UCF transfer wideout Ja'Cyais Credle. Elliott has some concerns with a defense that leaked last fall, allowing almost 32 ppg, and lost the nation's sacks leader, LB Jordan Strachan, who transferred to South Carolina. But the secondary returns

intact and should improve on the conference's ninth-rated pass defense. Another bowl bid for Elliott would not surprise. — Bruce Marshall

38.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#84 OF 130)

19

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
11 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		24.5	-6.5	-1.28	16.2	6	26.3	5.98	15.42	5	32.8	7.26	13.98
2017	Yes	23	-5.4	-0.36	12.8	8-OC	20.3	5.44	19.01	6-DC	25.7	5.8	15.2

NOTEWORTHY...

- GEORGIA ST IS 13-3-1 ATS (L17G) ON ROAD IN OCTOBER
- GEORGIA ST IS 4-11 ATS (L5Y) IN NOVEMBER
- GEORGIA ST IS 4-1 OVER (L2Y) AT HOME

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 ARMY (-1)

9/11 at North Carolina (+21.5)

9/18 CHARLOTTE (-11.5)

9/25 at Auburn (+19.5)

10/2 APPALACHIAN ST (+9)

10/9 at LA Monroe (-11.5)

10/23 TEXAS ST UNIV (-10)

10/30 at Ga Southern (+3)

11/4 at LA Lafayette (+14)

11/13 at Coastal Carolina (+14.5)

11/20 ARKANSAS ST (-7.5)

11/27 TROY (+0.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

38.74
(#64 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.8 / 0
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	33.3	29	31.7	77
Yards Per Point	12.7	25	13	91
Plays Per Game	76.2	25		
Time of Possession	28:52	88		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.5%	24	37.0%	33
Total Yards Per Game	424.3	39	411.1	67
Yards Per Play	5.6	55	5.4	57
Rush Attempts Per Game	44.3	16		
Rush Yards Per Game	194	40	136.8	29
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.4	64	3.9	35
Pass Attempts Per Game	30.7	73		
Completion %	58.3%	84	62.6%	75
Passing Yards Per Game	230.3	63	274.3	114
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.5	58	7.3	59
Turnovers	2	104	2.1	17

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 6-4

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	LA LAFAYETTE	31-34	L	17	W	58 O
10/3	EAST CAROLINA	49-29	W	1.5	W	70.5 O
10/15	at Arkansas St	52-59	L	3.5	L	72.5 O
10/24	at Troy	36-34	W	2.5	W	68.5 O
10/31	COASTAL CAROLINA	0-51	L	4	L	61 U
11/7	LA MONROE	52-34	W	-18.5	L	59 O
11/14	at Appalachian St	13-17	L	18.5	W	63 U
11/21	at S Alabama	31-14	W	-4	W	58.5 U
11/28	GA SOUTHERN	30-24	W	-3	W	51.5 O
12/26	vs. W Kentucky	39-21	W	-3.5	W	49.5 O

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

LOUISIANA RAGIN' CAJUNS

HEAD COACH: BILLY NAPIER (4TH)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MICHAEL DESORMEAUX / TIM LEGER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: PATRICK TONEY
LOCATION: LAFAYETTE, LA • STADIUM: CAJUN FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

9.5

O +105 / U -125

PLAY
UNDER

This might end up being the Sun Belt's best team, and the Under call is strictly a reaction to a schedule with several potential potholes. The Ragin' Cajuns will have to at least split road games at Texas and Liberty and a home pair against Frank Solich's ever-capable Ohio and Sun Belt East contender Appalachian State to have a shot at an Over. That will also require avoiding banana peels in the other games. It will be tricky, but expect Louisiana to give it a go as coach Billy Napier (28-11 the last three years) has resisted the temptation to accept higher-profile jobs. Twenty of 22 starters return from last season's 10-1 team that won a bowl over UTSA and notched the program's first finish in the top 20, ranking 15th in the final poll. With a senior-laden lineup, many Sun Belt insiders suspect Napier might be planning to bolt after this season, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. If the roster has a hole, it might be at running back, where the long-standing duo of Trey Ragas and Elijah Mitchell have finally departed for the NFL. But senior QB Levi Lewis is 24-4 as a starter, and the seasoned

defense returns 22 players who were on the field for at least 100 snaps a year ago. We'd be tempted to change our tune on the Under if fully convinced Napier could open with an upset at Texas in Steve Sarkisian's debut. But after Louisiana beat Iowa State to start last season, we suspect the Longhorns will be on high alert. - Bruce Marshall

48.5
20

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#36 OF 130)

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
9 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	33.5	5.4	1.12	7.8	8-OC	36.2	7.14	12.83	3-DC	30.9	6.03	13.19
2017		21.5	-9.2	-0.48	14.6	6-QB, OC	26.6	5.93	15.35	7	35.8	6.41	13.41

NOTEWORTHY...

- LA LAFAYETTE IS 13-5 ATS (L5Y) ON ROAD WITH NAPIER AS COACH
- LA LAFAYETTE IS 2-8 ATS (L10G) AS FAVORITE OF MORE THAN 7 POINTS
- LA LAFAYETTE IS 13-2 OVER (L15G) ON ROAD IN SEPTEMBER



**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+50000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Texas (+12.5)

9/11 NICHOLLS ST (-30)

9/16 OHIO U (-14.5)

9/25 at Ga Southern (-7)

10/2 at S Alabama (-17)

10/12 APPALACHIAN ST (-2)

10/21 at Arkansas St (-11.5)

10/30 TEXAS ST UNIV (-21)

11/4 GEORGIA ST (-14)

11/13 at Troy (-5)

11/20 at Liberty (+1)

11/27 LA MONROE (-28.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH** **33.61**
(#92 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS** **3.8 / 0.2**
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE **DEFENSE**
STAT RANK **STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	33.6	26	22	28
Yards Per Point	12.5	18	16.2	24
Plays Per Game	67.7	98		
Time of Possession	28:27	98		
3rd Down Conv. %	42.8%	46	43.5%	93
Total Yards Per Game	421.8	41	355.4	30
Yards Per Play	6.2	28	4.8	16
Rush Attempts Per Game	38.8	54		
Rush Yards Per Game	213.6	21	184.7	85
Yards Per Rush Attempt	5.5	11	4.3	63
Pass Attempts Per Game	28.1	98		
Completion %	57.9%	88	51.9%	4
Passing Yards Per Game	208.2	81	170.6	6
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.4	63	5.8	3
Turnovers	1.2	40	2.1	18

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 10-1

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Iowa St	31-14	W	13	W	56.5 U
9/19	at Georgia St	34-31	W	-17	L	58 O
9/26	GA SOUTHERN	20-18	W	-12	L	49 U
10/14	COASTAL CAROLINA	27-30	L	-9.5	L	58 U
10/23	at Uab	24-20	W	-2.5	W	50.5 U
10/31	at Texas St Univ	44-34	W	-15.5	L	56.5 O
11/7	ARKANSAS ST	27-20	W	-14.5	L	68.5 U
11/14	S ALABAMA	38-10	W	-14	W	53.5 U
11/28	at LA Monroe	70-20	W	-28.5	W	58 O
12/4	at Appalachian St	24-21	W	3.5	W	53 U
12/26	vs. TX-San Antonio	31-24	W	-14.5	L	55 T

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

LOUISIANA-MONROE WARHAWKS

HEAD COACH: TERRY BOWDEN (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: RICH RODRIGUEZ • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: ZAC ALLEY

LOCATION: MONROE, LA • STADIUM: JPS FIELD AT MALONE STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

1.5

0 + 120 / U - 140

PLAY
OVER

After swallowing an 0-10 doughnut that cost coach Matt Viator his job, it looks a bit risky to project a couple of wins from the Warhawks. It's riskier still, perhaps, to entrust a recovery to Terry Bowden, who was an offensive analyst on Dabo Swinney's Clemson staff the last two years before resurfacing in Monroe. But before dismissing the chance Bowden can pull a couple of wins out of his hat, remember his debut year at Auburn in 1993, when he took a probation-saddled team to an 11-0 record. And seeing what happened at Akron after he left his most recent head coaching assignment should generate further appreciation, as Bowden's Zips looked like Ohio State compared with the post-Bowden Akron under Tom Arth. The late 1990s look of the staff is augmented by veteran offensive coordinator Rich Rodriguez, who has put together potent offenses at a variety of stops, including Tulane, West Virginia and Arizona, the last two as head coach, despite his Michigan misadventure. He has brought along son Rhett, who passed for 578 yards in limited work at Arizona, to compete for the QB job. Bowden has already worked

the transfer portal hard in an attempt to immediately upgrade the roster. Former Purdue WR Jared Sparks and ex-USF TE Jacob Mathis also could make immediate impacts. We expect ULM to beat Jackson State on Sept. 18, and Bowden is still clever and resourceful enough to find one more win to get above this modest total. - Bruce Marshall

24

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#123 OF 130)

17

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
10

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		33	-1	0.39	8.7	9-QB	28	6.46	15.39	8	29	6.07	14.26
2017		28	-0.9	-0.05	13.5	7	35.6	6.79	13.73	8	36.5	6.84	13.74

NOTEWORTHY...

- LA MONROE IS 22-9-1 ATS (\$2000) ON ROAD AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- LA MONROE IS 0-10 ATS (L10G) AVENGING A LOSS VS. ARKANSAS STATE
- LA MONROE IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) ON ROAD WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 at Kentucky (+29)

9/18 JACKSON ST (-24)

9/25 TROY (+15)

10/2 at Coastal Carolina (+29.5)

10/9 GEORGIA ST (+11.5)

10/16 LIBERTY (+19)

10/23 S ALABAMA (+1)

10/30 at Appalachian St (+29.5)

11/6 at Texas St Univ (+10.5)

11/13 ARKANSAS ST (+6.5)

11/20 at LSU (+34)

11/27 at LA Lafayette (+28.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

36.63
(#74 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK

Points Per Game	16.3	122	42	123
Yards Per Point	18.8	122	11.1	122
Plays Per Game	65.8	108		
Time of Possession	27:16	112		
3rd Down Conv. %	25.6%	124	57.0%	127
Total Yards Per Game	305.7	118	464.3	112
Yards Per Play	4.6	108	6.7	121
Rush Attempts Per Game	24.8	126		
Rush Yards Per Game	76.7	125	249	121
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.1	118	5.4	113
Pass Attempts Per Game	38.3	18		
Completion %	58.2%	85	58.1%	34
Passing Yards Per Game	229	65	215.3	42
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6	108	9.9	125
Turnovers	1.9	102	1	105

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 0-10

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/12	at Army	7-37	L	24	L	53.5 U
9/19	TEXAS ST UNIV	17-38	L	3	L	58 U
9/26	UTEP	6-31	L	-9.5	L	49 U
10/3	GA SOUTHERN	30-35	L	19.5	W	51 O
10/10	at Liberty	7-40	L	17	L	63.5 U
10/24	at S Alabama	14-38	L	14.5	L	57 U
10/31	APPALACHIAN ST	13-31	L	28.5	W	58 U
11/7	at Georgia St	34-52	L	18.5	W	59 O
11/28	LA LAFAYETTE	20-70	L	28.5	L	58 O
12/5	at Arkansas St	15-48	L	20	L	72 U

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

SOUTH ALABAMA JAGUARS

HEAD COACH: KANE WOMMACK (1ST)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: MAJOR APPLEWHITE • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: COREY BATOON
LOCATION: MOBILE, AL • STADIUM: HANCOCK WHITNEY STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

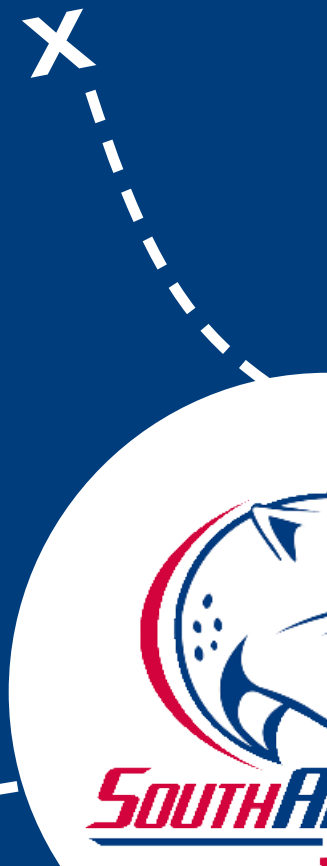
5

O +125 / U -145

PLAY
UNDER

After spinning their wheels for three years under Steve Campbell, the Jaguars decided to start anew in 2021 by hiring former Indiana defensive coordinator Kane Wommack, at 34 one of the youngest head coaches in FBS. Wommack, who knows the territory after serving as USA's defensive coordinator in 2016-17, is not the only new face. Transfer QB Jake Bentley, most recently at Utah and before that a starter at South Carolina, gets one more kick at the can after already passing for 8,409 yards and 61 TDs in his career, with holdover sophomore Desmond Trotter another alternative after throwing for 1,917 yards as a sophomore. The problem is an offensive line that too often resembled a sieve last season and allowed a whopping 40 sacks. Indeed, line play on both sides of the ball left a lot to be desired. Plenty of roster questions remain, with new offensive coordinator Major Applewhite tasked with generating a running game after the Jaguars ranked 112th in rushing a year ago. Wommack hopes his new defense can create more havoc than Campbell's, which sorely lacked

a big-play dimension. If Wommack doesn't get the Jaguars to five wins by Halloween, we're thinking he won't get there with a rugged November slate that includes top Sun Belt contenders and a trip to Tennessee, with the only home game at the Jaguars' modern, second-year stadium against conference favorite Coastal Carolina. Getting above four wins looks like a chore. - Bruce Marshall



28.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#118 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
7 QB

RET
DEFENSE
9

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018	Yes	21.5	-10.8	-0.99	18	6-QB, OC	25.7	5.47	14.38	7-DC	36.4	6.46	11.9
2017		25	-4.2	-0.51	14.8	4	19.1	5.23	17.91	6	23.3	5.74	17.5

NOTEWORTHY...

- S ALABAMA IS 8-2 ATS (L10G) AT HOME IN OCTOBER
- S ALABAMA IS 3-12 ATS (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS
- S ALABAMA IS 10-0 UNDER (L10G) AT HOME AS FAVORITE OF 7 OR FEWER POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 SOUTHERN MISS (-1)

9/11 at Bowling Green (-5.5)

9/18 ALCORN ST (-21)

10/2 LA LAFAYETTE (+17)

10/9 at Texas St Univ (+6)

10/14 GA SOUTHERN (+6)

10/23 at LA Monroe (-1)

10/30 ARKANSAS ST (+2)

11/6 at Troy (+16)

11/13 at Appalachian St (+25.5)

11/20 at Tennessee (+21)

11/26 COASTAL CAROLINA (+19)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

32.21
(#101 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

3.2 / -0.6
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	19.9	112	27.3	53
Yards Per Point	18	120	16	26
Plays Per Game	73.5	45		
Time of Possession	30:22	56		
3rd Down Conv. %	39.5%	69	41.3%	72
Total Yards Per Game	359.2	95	436.6	90
Yards Per Play	4.9	97	6.4	106
Rush Attempts Per Game	38	61		
Rush Yards Per Game	112	112	175.1	76
Yards Per Rush Attempt	2.9	120	4.7	84
Pass Attempts Per Game	31.9	58		
Completion %	62.4%	46	66.0%	110
Passing Yards Per Game	247.2	45	261.5	102
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.7	51	8.7	113
Turnovers	1.4	59	1.3	78

2020 RESULTS

RECORD: 4-7

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/3	at Southern Miss	32-21	W	12	W	54.5 U
9/12	TULANE	24-27	L	11.5	W	51.5 U
9/24	UAB	10-42	L	8	L	47.5 O
10/17	TEXAS ST UNIV	30-20	W	-4.5	W	57.5 U
10/24	LA MONROE	38-14	W	-14.5	W	57 U
10/29	at GA Southern	17-24	L	3.5	L	52 U
11/7	at Coastal Carolina	6-23	L	17	T	58 U
11/14	at LA Lafayette	10-38	L	14	L	53.5 U
11/21	GEORGIA ST	14-31	L	4	L	58.5 U
11/28	at Arkansas St	38-31	W	7.5	W	64 O
12/5	TROY	0-29	L	4	L	54.5 U

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

TEXAS STATE BOBCATS

HEAD COACH: JAKE SPAVITAL (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: JACOB PEELER • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRIAN GAMBEL / ZAC SPAVITAL
LOCATION: SAN MARCOS, TX • STADIUM: JIM WACKER FIELD AT BOBCAT STADIUM

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

4.5

O +110 / U -130

PLAY
UNDER

A sure sign that a coach is feeling pressure is when transfers and jucos are the only additions for the incoming class. That means no freshmen, and it's a sure sign that third-year coach Jake Spavital knows the score after winning just five times in two years at Texas State. Not wanting to take a manager's job at the nearby Buc-ee's, Spavital knows he must get his offense in gear. Spavital has shown little hint of the Dana Holgorsen influence he was supposed to bring from West Virginia a couple of years ago. The offense did improve somewhat in Spavital's second season, but no clear-cut front-runner has emerged at QB, with former Memphis transfer Brady McBride now being pushed by NC State transfer Ty Evans after injuries disrupted the position a year ago. Spavital hopes the portal will provide the upgrades the OL needed after unconvincing work a year ago. Meanwhile, the defense returns seven of its top 10 tacklers, but we're not sure that's a good thing after TSU ranked in triple digits in every major defensive category. Expecting South Alabama to more than double its win total of two from last season looks problematic. - Bruce Marshall

31.5

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#108 OF 130)

16

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
8 QB

RET
DEFENSE
8

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		22	-9.2	-0.33	19.2	7	19.3	5.03	16.93	7-DC	28.4	5.37	13.65
2017		15.5	-14.8	-1.23	22.2	7-QB, OC	18	4.87	19.23	6	32.8	6.1	13.2

NOTEWORTHY...

- TEXAS ST UNIV IS 4-1 ATS (L2Y) AT HOME AS UNDERDOG
- TEXAS ST UNIV IS 5-19-1 ATS (L25G) WITH O/U LINE OF 60 OR MORE
- TEXAS ST UNIV IS 13-2 UNDER (L15G) AS UNDERDOG OF MORE THAN 20 POINTS

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**

2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 BAYLOR (+10)

9/11 at Fla International (-2.5)

9/18 INCARNATE WORD (-19)

9/25 at E Michigan (+6.5)

10/9 S ALABAMA (-6)

10/16 TROY (+7.5)

10/23 at Georgia St (+10)

10/30 at LA Lafayette (+21)

11/6 LA MONROE (-10.5)

11/13 GA SOUTHERN (+3.5)

11/20 at Coastal Carolina (+22)

11/27 at Arkansas St (+6)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

32.68
(#96 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.6 / -0.3
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	27.7	66	38.2	115
Yards Per Point	13.4	41	13	90
Plays Per Game	67	101		
Time of Possession	25:50	121		
3rd Down Conv. %	33.1%	109	48.9%	117
Total Yards Per Game	370.3	84	497.2	125
Yards Per Play	5.5	59	6.3	102
Rush Attempts Per Game	31	114		
Rush Yards Per Game	131.9	92	226.8	115
Yards Per Rush Attempt	4.3	70	5.2	105
Pass Attempts Per Game	33.8	45		
Completion %	61.2%	62	67.3%	119
Passing Yards Per Game	238.4	55	270.4	112
Yards Per Pass Attempt	7.1	71	7.9	92
Turnovers	1.5	71	1.2	80

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 2-10

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/5	SMU	24-31	L	24.5	W	70 U
9/12	TX-SAN ANTONIO	48-51	L	-5.5	L	56.5 O
9/19	at LA Monroe	38-17	W	-3	W	58 U
9/26	at Boston College	21-24	L	21.5	W	58 U
10/10	at Troy	17-37	L	7	L	59.5 U
10/17	at S Alabama	20-30	L	4.5	L	57.5 U
10/24	at BYU	14-52	L	30	L	61.5 O
10/31	LA LAFAYETTE	34-44	L	15.5	W	56.5 O
11/7	APPALACHIAN ST	17-38	L	21.5	W	58 U
11/14	at GA Southern	38-40	L	13	W	49.5 O
11/21	ARKANSAS ST	47-45	W	4.5	W	69 O
11/28	COASTAL CAROLINA	14-49	L	17	L	58.5 O

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

TROY TROJANS

HEAD COACH: CHIP LINDSEY (3RD)

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: LUKE MEADOWS • DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: BRANDON HALL
LOCATION: TROY, AL • STADIUM: VETERANS MEMORIAL STADIUM AT LARRY BLAKENEY FIELD

SEASON
WIN TOTAL

7

0 +100 / U -120

PLAY
UNDER

While several Sun Belt entries have been punching above their weight the last couple of seasons, Troy hasn't, failing to crack .500 since coach Chip Lindsey moved from Auburn's staff in 2019. Since Neal Brown left for West Virginia, the offense has regressed, down more than a TD a game than in 2019, a troubling trend under Lindsey. Despite all 11 starters returning on offense, Lindsey was conducting auditions for all positions in the spring, even at QB. Sophomore Gunnar Watson won't be assured of running the first string even after a promising debut season of 16 TD passes, as competition arrived with Missouri transfer Taylor Powell. Lindsey's offense was also trending toward imbalance a year ago, ranking 117th rushing, and serious downfield threats among the receiving corps have yet to emerge. The defense did improve last year, fortified by transfer LBs Richard Jibunor from Auburn and Jayden McDonald from Iowa. And defensive coordinator Brandon Hall welcomes more manpower from the portal, including a trio of ACC transfers led by ex-NC State CB Taiyon Palmer. But after inheriting a functional roster from Brown, there is no

reason that Lindsey shouldn't have been able to get above .500 either of the last two seasons, suggesting he could be another respected coordinator who has trouble transitioning to the top spot. - Bruce Marshall



41

STEVE
MAKINEN'S
POWER RATING
(#75 OF 130)

21

NUMBER OF
RETURNING
STARTERS

RET
OFFENSE
10 QB

RET
DEFENSE
11

STEVE MAKINEN'S EFFECTIVE STATISTICS

SEASON	NEW HC?	SM PR	EFF STRG	EYPP+/-	SM BR	OFFRS-NEW	EOPPG	EOYPP	EOYPPT	DEFRS-NEW	EDPPG	EDFYPP	EDYPPT
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
2018		40	10.2	1.08	0.9	7-OC	30	6.02	13.03	6	19.9	4.94	17.16
2017		42.5	12	1.27	1.8	8	31.2	6.18	13.25	6	19.2	4.91	17.85

NOTEWORTHY...

- TROY IS 11-4 ATS (L15G) ON ROAD AVENGING A LOSS
- TROY IS 1-9 ATS (L10G) AT HOME IN NONCONFERENCE GAMES
- TROY IS 13-2 OVER (L15G) ON ROAD VS. SEC

**ODDS
TO WIN
CFP
+100000**



2021 SCHEDULE

DATE OPPONENT (Est. Line)

9/4 SOUTHERN (-25.5)

9/11 LIBERTY (+2)

9/18 at Southern Miss (-8)

9/25 at LA Monroe (-15)

10/2 at South Carolina (+3)

10/9 GA SOUTHERN (-6)

10/16 at Texas St Univ (-7.5)

10/28 at Coastal Carolina (+11.5)

11/6 S ALABAMA (-16)

11/13 LA LAFAYETTE (+5)

11/20 APPALACHIAN ST (+6)

11/27 at Georgia St (-0.5)

**SCHEDULE
STRENGTH**

34.14
(#87 of 130)

**FIELD
RATINGS**

2.9 / 0.8
(HOME/ROAD)

2020 STATS & RANKS

**OFFENSE DEFENSE
STAT RANK STAT RANK**

Points Per Game	27	73	25.4	39
Yards Per Point	14.1	62	15.9	30
Plays Per Game	73.2	49		
Time of Possession	26:59	115		
3rd Down Conv. %	45.0%	28	38.5%	48
Total Yards Per Game	381.4	76	403.3	58
Yards Per Play	5.2	87	5.4	59
Rush Attempts Per Game	29.4	118		
Rush Yards Per Game	95.5	119	178	78
Yards Per Rush Attempt	3.2	113	4.3	61
Pass Attempts Per Game	41.8	7		
Completion %	65.3%	23	67.7%	122
Passing Yards Per Game	285.9	22	225.3	57
Yards Per Pass Attempt	6.8	81	7.3	58
Turnovers	1.5	69	1.3	76

2020 RESULTS RECORD: 5-6

DATE	OPPONENT	SCORE	SU	FL	ATS	TOTAL
9/19	at Middle Tenn St	47-14	W	-6.5	W	70.5 U
9/26	at BYU	7-48	L	14	L	60.5 U
10/10	TEXAS ST UNIV	37-17	W	-7	W	59.5 U
10/17	E KENTUCKY	31-29	W	-30	L	60 T
10/24	GEORGIA ST	34-36	L	-2.5	L	68.5 O
10/31	at Arkansas St	38-10	W	3.5	W	69 U
11/7	at GA Southern	13-20	L	-2.5	L	52 U
11/21	MIDDLE TENN ST	17-20	L	-11	L	61 U
11/28	at Appalachian St	10-47	L	14	L	51 O
12/5	at S Alabama	29-0	W	-4	W	54.5 U
12/12	COASTAL CAROLINA	38-42	L	12	W	54 O

COACHING CHANGES CAN BE KEY WHEN BETTING COLLEGE FOOTBALL

By Steve Makinen

The 2021 college football season will feature 17 new head coaches at schools across the country, eight of whom will be taking the lead role for the first time. In this article I'm analyzing the coaching changes. Why? Because they are typically very impactful on teams' prospects for a season, particularly early on.

For our upcoming VSIN Pro Football Betting Guide, I put together a piece detailing the performance trends of rookie head coaches in the NFL. I found that 26 of the last 41 rookie coaches improved their teams' won-lost records in their first season. I'll have the college football numbers for this in a few weeks when I look at carryover systems, but I can tell you that the success rate at the college level is nowhere near as high. There are a few reasons for this, with instability being No. 1. 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 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 Group of 5 teams each year, and reestablishing 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 there's more parity, and a breath of fresh air can make a world of difference.

With that in mind, let's run through the 17 FBS head coaching changes that have occurred since the conclusion of last season. I'll try to provide my insights as well as a prediction for how that coach and program might fare in 2021. Following the breakdown of the new head coaches, you'll find a list of the coordinator changes as well.

Of course, the changing of head coaches and/or coordinators makes up a big part of what goes into my Stability Ratings each season. The more times you see a team's name in this article, the lower the Stability Rating they will have going into the 2021 season. I'll have all of this and more for PSW readers in the coming weeks.

ARIZONA

New Head Coach: Jedd Fisch

Career Record: 1-1

Former Head Coach: Kevin Sumlin, 3 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Disappointing can hardly begin to describe the Kevin Sumlin era at Arizona. After success at previous stops, Sumlin went just 9-20 in his three seasons in Tucson, including 0-5 last year. Rather than hiring another seasoned college coach, Arizona plucked from the pro ranks, giving the head coaching job to Jedd Fisch, most recently the quarterbacks coach of the New England Patriots. His team will have 15 starters back, typically a good number, but actually fewest in the Pac-12 this season. DraftKings set the Arizona win total at a paltry 2.5, meaning they don't expect much from the Wildcats in 2021.

Better or worse in 2021? With Fisch having only two college head coaching games to his record, and the fewest starters in the conference returning, the Arizona situation figures to be quite unstable. It would be impossible to be worse than zero victories again, but even a couple of W's doesn't mean the Wildcats will be better.

ARKANSAS STATE

New Head Coach: Butch Jones

Career Record: 84-54

Former Head Coach: Blake Anderson, 7 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: It's going to be tough to keep the momentum that Blake Anderson built at Arkansas State in seven seasons, but Butch Jones has taken on bigger projects in the past. Don't worry about him being too big of a name for the Sun Belt either, as he spent the last several seasons in the SEC, most recently at Alabama as special assistant to the head coach and offensive analyst. In fact, his greatest head coaching successes came at the Group of 5 levels of college football, specifically at Central Michigan and Cincinnati, where he had a 50-27 record. It wasn't until his last of five seasons at Tennessee that things unraveled. The ASU job won't be as easy as it might have been before 2020, as last year the Red Wolves failed to make a bowl game for the first time since 2010, and the departing Anderson took starting QB Logan Bonner with him to Utah State. However, Layne Hatcher was part of a tier-two QB system last year and posted an impressive 19-2 touchdown-to-interception ratio. Besides Hatcher, 15 starters return, second fewest in the Sun Belt.

(continued on next page)

Better or worse in 2021? DraftKings has a total of only 3.5 wins posted for Arkansas State. It seems like an egregious error. After nine straight seasons winning at least seven games, I'd be quite surprised if the Red Wolves finished below .500.

AUBURN

New Head Coach: Bryan Harsin

Career Record: 76-24

Former Head Coach: Gus Malzahn, 8 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Most of the eight seasons of the Gus Malzahn era were good, as he brought the Tigers to within a minute of a national title in his first year. The final season, with a 6-5 record, and his eventual firing were unceremonious, but he certainly didn't leave the cupboard bare for Bryan Harsin, who comes to Auburn after a great run at Boise State in which his teams went 69-19. One of Harsin's biggest decisions will come early in deciding between returning QB starter Bo Nix and NC State transfer T.J. Finley.

Better or worse in 2021? There's the age-old argument that coaches stepping up a level from Group of 5 to SEC football can be in over their heads. I don't think that will be the case for Harsin, however, as the Broncos were well known for competing well with the big boys in his tenure. It might just not take off this year. With a DraftKings win prop set at 7, I see five likely wins, three maybes and four probable losses. I'll settle on a 6-6 season for Auburn in 2021.

BOISE STATE

New Head Coach: Andy Avalos

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Bryan Harsin, 7 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Replacing Harsin at Boise State is alumnus Andy Avalos, who has the fourth most tackles in school history. He also served as the school's defensive coordinator before making the lateral position move over to Oregon the past couple of seasons. He returns to his alma mater for his first head coaching gig and really couldn't ask for much more of a shot at early success. His team returns 84%-plus of its production, including starting QB Hank Bachmeier. The Broncos are obviously a national name at this point and it's tough to see that changing much under Avalos.

Better or worse in 2021? Ask any Boise State fan and I'm sure there was a lot of dissatisfaction with a 5-2 finish last season. The Broncos were smacked around pretty good by both BYU and San Jose State. The 2021 schedule is tough with nonconference games at UCF and BYU, and home versus Oklahoma State. Plus they close the regular season at San Diego State. I can see a push on the DraftKings prop of 9 wins but probably not an Over.

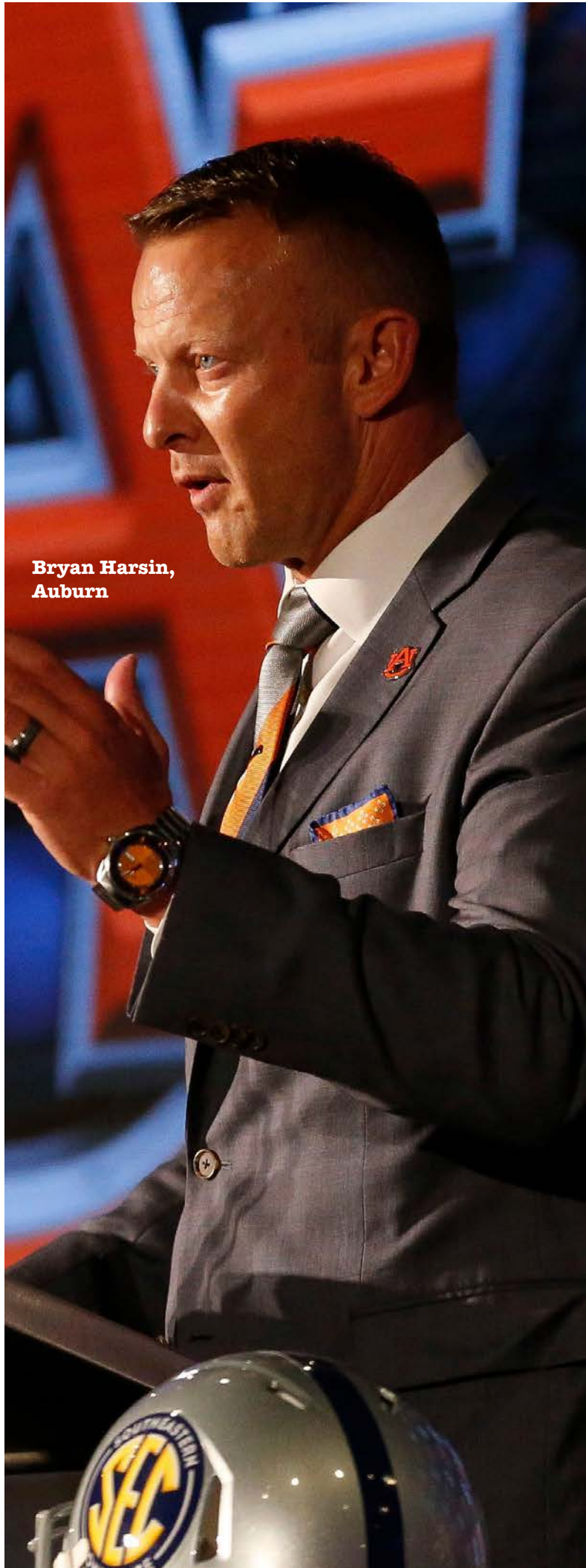
BUFFALO

New Head Coach: Maurice Linguist

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Lance Leipold, 6 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: After a very good run with Buffalo, particularly over the last three seasons when the Bulls went 24-10, Lance Leipold made the "step up" and moved on to Kansas.



**Bryan Harsin,
Auburn**

Well-traveled first-time head coach Maurice Linguist replaces him. Since leaving as Buffalo's defensive coordinator after the 2013 season, Linguist has made six stops at the college and NFL levels. He was hired away from Michigan before even coaching a game as the Wolverines' defensive coordinator. Buffalo has solid talent back, including starting QB Kyle Vantrease, but will have to replace the incredible production of running back Jaret Patterson.

Better or worse in 2021? Buffalo has a DraftKings win prop of 8.5 for 2021 and the nonconference slate features two highly intriguing games, the first at Nebraska, and the second at home versus Coastal Carolina. I would speculate that a win in either locks up the Over on the win total, considering how good this program has been in conference play the last few seasons.

ILLINOIS

New Head Coach: Bret Bielema

Career Record: 97-58

Former Head Coach: Lovie Smith, 5 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: You have to think Illinois' brass believes Bret Bielema was out of his element with Arkansas in the SEC and that he is much better suited for success in the Big Ten, like he enjoyed at Wisconsin. He was 68-24 as head coach of the Badgers. Since then, just 29-34, including 11-29 in conference play. Otherwise, to me this was a head-scratching hire, as Bielema has not coached like he did in Madison. That said, I never really saw the thinking in the Lovie Smith hire either. Smith leaves after a 17-40 run in five seasons, so there's literally nowhere to go but up for this program. It's going to be a tough road to hoe, however, as evidenced by the 3-win total set by DraftKings.

Better or worse in 2021? The Illini have four seemingly winnable home games. Getting all four of those is a must if they are to top the three-win mark as, mark these words, this team will NOT win a road game. This is by far the worst team in the Big Ten West Division.

KANSAS

New Head Coach: Lance Leipold

Career Record: 37-33

Former Head Coach: Les Miles, 2 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Almost every analyst who broke down the Les Miles hiring at Kansas focused on one key area as the secret to improvement: his ability to recruit better than predecessors. That never materialized and Miles was stuck in a position he wasn't accustomed to — perennial loser. He was fired in the wake of allegations of inappropriate behavior toward female students during his tenure at LSU. Lance Leipold, off a successful run at Buffalo, is probably much better suited for the patience it will take to ever turn the Jayhawks program around. People forget that Leipold endured a 2-10 season in his second season at Buffalo and improved by eight wins just two years later.

Better or worse in 2021? Not that it really matters much at Kansas typically, but Leipold does get 17 starters back. That winless group lost six of its nine games by 30-plus points, however. This is a massive undertaking for any coach, and the 1-win prop set by DraftKings is very telling. Even the Jayhawks' FCS game will be a tough one.

LOUISIANA-MONROE

New Head Coach: Terry Bowden

Career Record: 82-69

Former Head Coach: Matt Viator, 5 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Yes, this is the same Terry Bowden who began his Division I head coaching career at Auburn in '93. Since leaving the SEC in '98, Bowden has been at North Alabama, Akron and now Louisiana-Monroe. Here he takes over a team that was 0-10 a season ago and was outscored 42-16 per game. However, there are 17 starters back and QB Colby Suits showed some promise last year. Whether the Warhawks can get used to the system changes, especially on offense with Rich Rodriguez taking over as offensive coordinator, will have a huge effect on their immediate prospects.

Better or worse in 2021? DraftKings has set a miniscule 1.5-win prop on ULM for 2021, which could be a layup Over wager if you ask me. Before last year's 0-10 season, the Warhawks won fewer than four games just once in the last decade. This is not a perennial loser, and with the strange COVID-19 season in the rearview, it wouldn't surprise me to see this program rebound with a nonconference win over Jackson State and at least a couple of Sun Belt victories.

MARSHALL

New Head Coach: Charles Huff

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Doc Holliday, 11 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Another first-time head coach takes over at Marshall and probably faces the most pressure of any of his fellow rookies. Charles Huff arrives via Alabama, where he was associate head coach and running backs coach. He takes over a program that enjoyed great success and consistency under Doc Holliday, winning 85 games in 11 seasons. The Herd get 16 starters back, led on offense by QB Grant Wells, who enjoyed a solid redshirt freshman season in 2020. However, the key to success this year will be the defense, which gets a new coordinator in Lance Guidry after the 2020 unit allowed the fewest points in the country.

Better or worse in 2021? Huff would have to really screw up to put a crack in the foundation that Holliday established at Marshall. Perhaps changing defensive coordinators after a nation's best performance could kick-start that. The win prop for 2021 is set at 7.5, and I count at least four fairly difficult road games, leaving little room for another hiccup. I'll take a slight lean on the Under 7.5.

SOUTH ALABAMA

New Head Coach: Kane Wommack

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Steve Campbell, 3 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: After a 9-26 run over three years at South Alabama, Steve Campbell was fired despite enjoying his best season in 2020. The Jaguars went 4-7 after going 2-10 the prior season, and even pulled a pair of upsets as underdogs of more than a touchdown. There was reason to believe the program would continue the trend upward as well, with 16 starters back and QB Desmond Trotter (11 TDs, 4 INTs, 8 starts) having



**Shane Beamer,
South Carolina**

shown promise. Rookie head coach Kane Wommack takes over after most recently serving as the defensive coordinator at Indiana. He made a pretty nice splash in adding Major Applewhite to his staff as offensive coordinator.

Better or worse in 2021? The DraftKings win prop for South Alabama is set at 4. It's a very fair number and one that I will choose to go Under on. Why? The Jaguars' schedule is heavily backloaded, and there's a good chance they'll be an underdog in their last five games. Teams with new coaching staffs are typically unstable early. If they don't get their four wins in the early part of the year, they won't get them at all.

SOUTH CAROLINA

New Head Coach: Shane Beamer

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Will Muschamp, 5 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: The five-year Will Muschamp era at South Carolina was in a word "underwhelming." He was fired after the team's 2-5 start last season, and it cost the school a lot of money to make the change. The Gamecocks finished 2-8, making their two-year record 6-16. Insert a rookie head coach with a brand name, Shane Beamer, son of legendary Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer. Shane arrives from Oklahoma, where he helped coach one of the nation's top offensive attacks over the last few seasons. The South Carolina offense has faltered during that 6-16 stretch, dropping by about a touchdown from its 2018 pace of 30 points per game, so a change could do some good. Collin

Hill, who transferred from Colorado State and served as the starting QB, is gone, turning over duties to Luke Doty, who threw 71 passes last season.

Better or worse in 2021? With a new quarterback under center and a whole new coaching staff on the sideline, South Carolina will be one of the most unstable programs entering 2021. The DraftKings win prop is set at 4.0, and in looking at the schedule, I can easily see where the four wins would come from. The other eight games have the usual SEC high level of difficulty. This looks like a 4-8 team in Beamer's first season. I'll pass on any wager.

SOUTHERN MISS

New Head Coach: Will Hall

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Jay Hopson, 5 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: After losing the season opener to South Alabama as a 13.5-point favorite, Jay Hopson abruptly resigned, leaving mop-up duties to interim coach Scotty Walden the rest of the way. The team finished 3-7, its first sub-.500 record since 2014. Insert new head coach Will Hall, who most recently led an offensive resurgence as coordinator at Tulane. This will be Hall's first head gig, and although he does have 18 starters back, he will be starting fresh at quarterback as multiyear starter Jack Abraham decided to transfer after 2020. Although the Golden Eagles only won three games, they were closer to a six-win team, losing three times by a field goal or less and posting all of their victories by double digits.

(continued on next page)

Better or worse in 2021? Southern Miss is a program that is used to winning, and other than following the lean years of 2012-14 (four total wins), this is as close to a rebuild as it has seen recently. And entirely new staff plus a new QB typically doesn't add up to a lot of success. DraftKings had not set a win prop as of Tuesday, but I wouldn't bet anything higher than 5.5 to go Over.

TENNESSEE

New Head Coach: Josh Heupel

Career Record: 28-8

Former Head Coach: Jeremy Pruitt, 3 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Josh Heupel took over a UCF program that was rolling and kept it rolling, at least until last season when it leveled off to a 6-4 finish. Even still, that team averaged 42.2 points per game, its fourth straight season of 40-plus. Tennessee is hoping to capture a little of that offensive magic by hiring Heupel, as the Vols have scored about half of that total in the same span, including 21.5 per game a year ago in going 3-7. That just doesn't cut it in the SEC. Keeping up with the likes of Florida and Georgia is the only way to compete for division titles. Heupel has some intriguing options at QB, including end-of-2020 starter Harrison Bailey and Virginia Tech transfer Hendon Hooker.

Better or worse in 2021? It's unfortunate that things went south in Knoxville last season as the program seemed to be trending in the right direction under Pruitt until recruiting allegations surfaced. It will be interesting watching Heupel here, though, as Tennessee is a program capable of big things and UCF accomplished big things under his leadership. The win total is set at 6 by DraftKings, and like most new coaching situations, the instability comes early. There is a key game on the schedule in Week 2 with UT hosting Pitt. A win there and this team will be 3-0 heading to Florida for Game 4 and at least a push on the 6. A loss to Pitt and I think the 2021 season will be forgettable.

TEXAS

New Head Coach: Steve Sarkisian

Career Record: 46-35

Former Head Coach: Tom Herman, 4 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Count me among the many who thought Tom Herman would thrive at Texas. I believed it was a natural fit. Well, four seasons and a ho-hum 32-18 record after that hiring, the Longhorns start anew again under Steve Sarkisian, who brings a wealth of coaching experience, most recently as Alabama's offensive coordinator. Obviously, the explosion of the Tide's offense in recent years was a big reason that Sarkisian was highly sought after for head coaching spots after having last led a program at USC in 2015. He brings on a new staff and will also be starting over at quarterback, with four-year starter Sam Ehlinger having moved on to the NFL. There are capable replacements with Casey Thompson and Hudson Card battling for the top spot, but Texas isn't getting the recruits that Alabama is, so it could take time for Sarkisian to see significant progress.

Better or worse in 2021? The Longhorns were 7-3 despite scoring 42.7 points per game last season. Offense wasn't really the issue. Becoming the best defensive team in the high-scoring Big 12 will be the key to Texas' national success going forward. There are only 14 starters back in 2021, second lowest in the Big 12. Still, the season wins prop is set at 8. This feels like a max 8-win team, so I would lean UNDER.

UCF

New Head Coach: Gus Malzahn

Career Record: 77-38

Former Head Coach: Josh Heupel, 3 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: The Gus Malzahn hiring at UCF feels like the strangest of the coaching changes for 2021. The Knights have achieved great success under their last two coaches, who were hired as up-and-comers. Going to an established name who was generally judged as someone who didn't get the most out of his team at a bigger school seems like a complete change of direction. Some have suggested Malzahn could be a key to this program being welcomed by a Power 5 conference. We'll see how it works out, but early indications are that the experts don't see much of a drop-off coming in 2021, with DraftKings pegging UCF at 9.5 wins. A total of 15 starters are back, including QB Dillon Gabriel, who had 32 TDs and only four interceptions in 2020 in leading this offense to its fourth straight 40-plus points-per-game season.

Better or worse in 2021? I question whether or not the hiring of Malzahn is a good long-term solution for UCF. But I doubt it will change the team's fortunes in the American right away. Expect the Knights to be among the best Group of 5 teams in the country again, with a key to staking that claim coming in Week 1 versus Boise State.

UTAH STATE

New Head Coach: Blake Anderson

Career Record: 51-37

Former Head Coach: Gary Andersen, 2 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Anderson replaces Andersen, and the path for the incoming coach was somewhat unusual in that most head coaches who take the step up from a Sun Belt-level program do so at the height of their success. Anderson arrives from Arkansas State after his worst season leading the program, as it fell to 4-7 in 2020 after six straight years with at least seven wins. He brings with him starting QB Logan Bonner, who had to sit out the spring game. The new hurry-up offense was led by Andrew Peasley and Cooper Legas in that exhibition. The former recorded modest numbers a year ago in limited action. The Aggies' offense is desperate for a pick-me-up after posting just 15.5 points per game in going 1-5 last season. In all, eight starters are back on each side of the ball.

Better or worse in 2021? With an entirely new staff, new quarterback and unrecognizable offensive system being brought in, I will proclaim that Utah State's program is THE SINGLE MOST unstable situation in college football for 2021. The season-win prop is set fairly at 3. Things will assuredly be different from last season, when USU bottomed out. That doesn't mean things will be better, especially right away. In fact, mark the Week 2 game versus North Dakota as a potential FCS upset. I couldn't possibly bet the most unstable situation team to go Over its win total.

VANDERBILT

New Head Coach: Clark Lea

Career Record: 0-0

Former Head Coach: Derek Mason, 7 seasons

Steve's Thoughts: Derek Mason left Vanderbilt after an 0-9 record in his seventh season, a stretch that failed to include even a single bowl game victory. It wouldn't take much for

Clark Lea to get things moving in a better direction. Lea was the defensive coordinator of Notre Dame the last three seasons, so he should have a good idea of what it takes to win in big-time college football. There are 14 starters back for 2021, and while most reworked staffs would probably just as soon start over from a 0-9 team, there is one significant piece in place that will get a chance to grow in the new system — QB Ken Seals, a former prized recruit from the state of Texas who endured ups and downs in his freshman season last year. He'll get the chance to blossom under new offensive coordinator David Raih, who spent the last three years in the NFL with Arizona and Green Bay.

Better or worse in 2021? Although they will clearly take some lumps in 2021, the Commodores will be a better team, if for no other reason than being given a chance to flush 2020 with a new coaching staff in place. The season-win prop is set at 3, a sign that the experts don't expect things to be nearly as miserable in Nashville this fall. I'm going to call for an Over on this one with Vandy showing good signs of growth under Lea.

Offensive Coordinator Changes for 2021

Here are all of the offensive coordinator changes for the 2021 season. Obviously, the biggest name is right at the top of the list, with former Houston Texans head coach Bill O'Brien taking the OC job at Alabama, replacing Steve Sarkisian, who left for the top job at Texas. You'll see that three of the OC jobs are still open, with Florida, Louisville and Western Michigan yet to fill their vacancies.

ALABAMA: Bill O'Brien repl. Steve Sarkisian
APPALACHIAN STATE: Frank Ponce repl. Tony Peterson
ARIZONA: Brennan Carroll repl. Noel Mazzone
AUBURN: Mike Bobo repl. Chad Morris
BAYLOR: Jeff Grimes repl. Larry Fedora
BOISE STATE: Tim Plough repl. Eric Kiesau
BUFFALO: Shane Montgomery repl. Andy Kotelnicki and Jim Zebrowski
BYU: Aaron Roderick repl. Jeff Grimes
CENTRAL MICHIGAN: Kevin Barbay repl. Charlie Frye
COLORADO STATE: Jon Budmayr repl. Joey Lynch
DUKE: Re'Quan Boyette and Jeff Faris replace Zac Roper
EASTERN MICHIGAN: Chris Creighton repl. Chris Creighton
FLORIDA ATLANTIC: Mike Johnson repl. Drew Mehringer and Clint Trickett
FLORIDA INT.: Andrew Breiner repl. Rich Skrosky
FLORIDA: VACANT POSITION replacing Billy Gonzales and John Hevesy
GEORGIA SOUTHERN: Doug Ruse repl. Bob DeBesse
HAWAII: Bo Graham repl. GJ Kinne and Tony Hull
ILLINOIS: Tony Petersen repl. Rod Smith
KANSAS: Andy Kotelnicki repl. Brent Dearmon
KENTUCKY: Liam Coen repl. Eddie Gran / Darin Hinshaw
LOUISIANA: Michael Desormeaux and Tim Leger replace Rob Sale
LOUISIANA-MONROE: Rich Rodriguez repl. Eman Naghavi
LOUISVILLE: VACANT POSITION replacing Dwayne Ledford
LSU: Jake Peetz repl. Steve Ensminger
MARYLAND: Dan Enos repl. Scottie Montgomery and Joker Phillips
MASSACHUSETTS: Angelo Mirando repl. Jim Jackson and Micah James
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE: Brent Dearmon repl. Tony Franklin
PENN STATE: Mike Yurcich repl. Kirk Ciarrocca
RICE: Marques Tuiasosopo repl. Jerry Mack
SOUTH ALABAMA: Major Applewhite repl. Kenny Edenfield
SOUTH CAROLINA: Marcus Satterfield repl. Mike Bobo
SOUTHERN MISS: Cayden Cochran repl. Matt Kubik and Scotty Walden
TCU: Doug Meacham repl. Sonny Cumbie

TENNESSEE: Alex Golesh repl. Jim Chaney
TEXAS: Kyle Flood repl. Mike Yurcich
TEXAS TECH: Sonny Cumbie repl. David Yost
TROY: Luke Meadows repl. Ryan Pugh
TULANE: Chip Long repl. Will Hall
UCF: Tim Harris Jr. and G.J. Kinne replace Alex Golesh and Anthony Tucker
UTAH STATE: Anthony Tucker repl. Bodie Reeder
UTEP: Dave Warner repl. Mike Canales
VANDERBILT: David Raih repl. Todd Fitch
WESTERN KENTUCKY: Zach Kittley repl. Bryan Ellis and Ryan Alpin
WESTERN MICHIGAN: VACANT POSITION replacing Jake Moreland
WYOMING: Tim Polasek repl. Brent Vigen

Defensive Coordinator Changes for 2021

There were 45 offensive coordinator changes. There are 37 on the defensive side. A couple of interesting situations are at Miami, where head coach Manny Diaz grabs the reins of the defense as well. The Hurricanes thrived in that area when he was the defensive coordinator before taking the top job. At Notre Dame, former Cincinnati DC Marcus Freeman, who won the 247Sports award for being the top man at his position last season, takes over for Clark Lea, who got his first head coaching opportunity at Vanderbilt.

ARIZONA: Don Brown repl. Paul Rhoads
ARKANSAS STATE: Rob Harley repl. David Duggan
AUBURN: Derek Mason repl. Kevin Steele and Travis Williams
BOWLING GREEN: Eric Lewis repl. Brian VanGorder
BUFFALO: Joe Cauthen repl. Brian Borland
CINCINNATI: Mike Tressel repl. Marcus Freeman
COLORADO: Chris Wilson repl. Tyson Summers
FLORIDA ATLANTIC: Mike Stoops repl. Jim Leavitt
FLORIDA INT: Everett Withers repl. Jeff Copp and Jerod Kruse
ILLINOIS: Ryan Walters repl. Lovie Smith
INDIANA: Charlton Warren repl. Kane Wommack
KANSAS: Brian Borland repl. DJ Eliot
LOUISIANA-MONROE: Zac Alley repl. Mike Collins
LSU: Daronte Jones repl. Bo Pelini
MARSHALL: Lance Guidry repl. JC Price and Brad Lambert
MARYLAND: Brian Stewart and Brian Williams replace Jon Hoke
MIAMI: Manny Diaz repl. Blake Baker and Ephraim Banda
MICHIGAN: Mike Macdonald repl. Don Brown
MISSOURI: Steve Wilks repl. Ryan Walters
NORTH TEXAS: Phil Bennett repl. Clint Bowen
NORTHWESTERN: Jim O'Neil repl. Mike Hankwitz
NOTRE DAME: Marcus Freeman repl. Clark Lea
OREGON: Tim DeRuyter repl. Andy Avalos and Keith Heyward
PURDUE: Brad Lambert repl. Bob Diaco and Anthony Poindexter
SMU: Jim Leavitt repl. Kevin Kane
SOUTH ALABAMA: Corey Batoon repl. Greg Stewart
SOUTH CAROLINA: Clayton White repl. Travaris Robinson
SOUTHERN MISS: Austin Armstrong repl. Tony Pecoraro
TENNESSEE: Tim Banks repl. Derrick Ansley and Jimmy Brumbaugh
TEXAS: Jeff Choate and Pete Kwiatkowski replace Chris Ash
TULANE: Chris Hampton repl. Jack Curtis
TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO: Jess Loepp and Rod Wright replace Tyrone Nix
UCF: David Gibbs and Travis Williams replace Randy Shannon
UTAH STATE: Ephraim Banda repl. Stacy Collins and Frank Maile
UTEP: Bradley Dale Peveto repl. Mike Cox
VANDERBILT: Jesse Minter repl. Ted Roof
WEST VIRGINIA: ShaDon Brown and Jordan Lesley replace Committee

HOW CFB RECRUITING RANKS CAN AID YOUR HANDICAPPING

By Steve Makinen

Championships are often won off the field or court. Recruiting plays such a huge role in college sports, and football is at the top of the list. It is one of the most important factors in building a college football program. However, being versed in the recruiting game shouldn't be considered essential only for coaches; 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 and what it has on the field.

Fortunately for us bettors, there are now numerous sources that help us to better understand how well a team is faring in the process, not only qualitatively but quantitatively. Perhaps the leader in the arena, and a well-trusted service, 247Sports (247sports.com) logs all of the recruits for every team each season and generates a numerical grade based on the combined scores of the players a team signs. I started a process last year during the COVID-19 downturn in looking hard at these numerical recruiting rankings of the FBS programs over the last decade and more, and as usual, anything numerically rated can be turned into useful foundational betting analysis.

It's well known that schools like Alabama, Georgia, LSU and Ohio State are wildly successful in the recruiting game, and their consistent on-field success can be attributed accordingly. In fact, Alabama has scored the highest national rating on 247Sports in nine of the last 11 seasons, with Georgia filling in the gaps in the other two years, including 2020. The Tide regained the top spot for 2021. Again, none of this is earth-shattering news, but with all of 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 on college football. Similarly, knowing which teams are trending in the right or wrong direction in terms of recruiting success can also prove to be beneficial for the handicapper.

Of course, 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 be a fundamental part of your college football knowledge base.

I am going to address all of those subjects in this article, including projecting this year's standings by conference based solely on the recruiting rankings from 247Sports and a predictive formula that I was able to uncover using regression analysis.

2021 Projected Standings Using Last 3 Years Recruiting Rankings

After compiling all of the year-by-year recruiting rankings for the FBS teams since 2007, and comparing them to the teams' actual records and my final power ratings 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 three recruiting classes. It was greater than one year, two years, four years, and any special combined formulas I derived using the one- to four-year window. As is the case with any statistical study, there are exceptions to the rule, but knowing what I know from 20-plus years in this industry on both sides of the counter, I am comfortable with using this three-year time window analyzing teams' prospects for a season. That said, we could see some change to the grades for each window after this coming season because of the extra year of eligibility granted to players (super seniors) following the COVID-19 season.

On the next page are the would-be projected standings for the 2021 season for each conference using their combined average rank for their last three recruiting classes (2021, 2020, 2019). 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.

You will see there are literally no major surprises projected at the top of any of the conference standings. The MAC could see some change from last year based on these numbers, as well as Conference USA. Also, win-starved fans of UNLV could be in for a better than usual season based upon the No. 2 projection in the Mountain West. Surely you can find plenty of more useful tidbits as you study the recruiting rankings chart by conference.

(continued on next page)

ACC		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 CLEMSON	6.00	4
2 MIAMI FL	17.00	16
3 NORTH CAROLINA	21.00	18
3 FLORIDA ST	21.00	18
5 NC STATE	36.00	33
6 VIRGINIA	39.67	39
7 GEORGIA TECH	41.00	42
8 PITTSBURGH	43.33	44
9 VIRGINIA TECH	47.00	47
10 LOUISVILLE	50.00	52
11 BOSTON COLLEGE	54.67	55
12 DUKE	55.67	56
13 SYRACUSE	57.00	59
14 WAKE FOREST	61.00	63

American Athletic		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 CINCINNATI	53.67	54
2 MEMPHIS	60.00	60
3 UCF	61.67	65
4 SMU	66.67	68
5 HOUSTON	79.00	77
6 TULANE	80.00	78
7 SOUTH FLORIDA	80.33	79
8 EAST CAROLINA	81.33	80
9 TEMPLE	105.33	108
10 CONNECTICUT	114.33	121
11 TULSA	115.00	122
12 NAVY	116.67	123

Big 12		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 OKLAHOMA	9.00	8
1 TEXAS	9.00	8
3 OKLAHOMA ST	37.67	35
4 TCU	39.67	38
5 WEST VIRGINIA	41.67	43
6 BAYLOR	44.67	45
7 IOWA ST	50.00	51
8 KANSAS ST	56.33	57
9 TEXAS TECH	61.00	62
10 KANSAS	63.00	66

Big Ten		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 OHIO ST	7.00	6
2 MICHIGAN	11.67	11
3 PENN ST	16.00	15
4 NEBRASKA	19.00	17
5 WISCONSIN	23.33	21
6 MARYLAND	32.00	28
7 IOWA	33.33	29
8 MICHIGAN ST	40.00	40
9 MINNESOTA	40.33	41
10 PURDUE	44.67	46
11 NORTHWESTERN	49.00	49
11 INDIANA	49.00	49
13 RUTGERS	56.67	58
14 ILLINOIS	70.33	70

Conference USA		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 FLA ATLANTIC	72.00	73
2 NORTH TEXAS	73.67	74
3 FLA INTERNATIONAL	82.00	81
4 TX-SAN ANTONIO	91.33	88
5 LOUISIANA TECH	92.00	90
6 SOUTHERN MISS	93.33	92
7 MARSHALL	95.00	93
8 UAB	96.67	96
9 RICE	98.00	97
10 W KENTUCKY	98.33	98
11 MIDDLE TENN ST	100.00	101
12 OLD DOMINION	104.00	105
13 CHARLOTTE	107.67	111
14 UTEP	122.00	130

MAC		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 TOLEDO	70.33	71
2 MIAMI OHIO	88.33	85
3 W MICHIGAN	91.67	89
4 N ILLINOIS	96.00	95
5 C MICHIGAN	100.00	100
6 BOWLING GREEN	105.67	109
7 KENT ST	108.00	113
8 OHIO U	109.00	115
9 E MICHIGAN	110.00	116
10 BUFFALO	110.67	117
11 BALL ST	113.00	119
12 AKRON	119.00	125

Mountain West		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 BOISE ST	61.67	64
2 UNLV	82.00	82
3 SAN DIEGO ST	85.00	84
4 COLORADO ST	91.00	87
5 FRESNO ST	92.67	91
6 NEVADA	99.00	99
7 AIR FORCE	103.00	103
8 NEW MEXICO	104.67	106
9 WYOMING	107.00	110
10 UTAH ST	111.67	118
11 SAN JOSE ST	121.00	128
12 HAWAII	121.33	129

Pac 12		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 OREGON	8.33	7
2 WASHINGTON	22.33	20
3 USC	27.00	25
4 STANFORD	30.33	27
5 UCLA	34.33	30
6 UTAH	34.67	31
6 ARIZONA ST	34.67	31
8 CALIFORNIA	37.00	34
9 COLORADO	47.67	48
10 WASHINGTON ST	60.33	61
11 ARIZONA	64.67	67
12 OREGON ST	71.00	72

SEC		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 ALABAMA	1.33	1
2 GEORGIA	2.33	2
3 LSU	4.00	3
4 TEXAS A&M	6.00	5
5 FLORIDA	9.67	10
6 AUBURN	12.33	12
7 TENNESSEE	15.00	14
8 OLE MISS	24.33	22
9 MISSISSIPPI ST	25.67	23
10 ARKANSAS	26.00	24
11 KENTUCKY	30.33	26
12 MISSOURI	38.33	36
13 SOUTH CAROLINA	39.33	37
14 VANDERBILT	52.33	53

Sun Belt		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 LA LAFAYETTE	74.33	75
2 APPALACHIAN ST	85.00	83
3 TROY	90.00	86
4 ARKANSAS ST	96.00	94
5 GA SOUTHERN	102.00	102
6 GEORGIA ST	103.67	104
7 COASTAL CAROLINA	105.33	107
8 LA MONROE	113.00	120
9 S ALABAMA	118.67	124
10 TEXAS ST UNIV	119.00	126

Independents		
Conf	3-Year	Natl
Rk Team	Avg	Rk
1 NOTRE DAME	14.00	13
2 LIBERTY	68.50	69
3 BYU	78.00	76
4 ARMY	108.00	112
5 MASSACHUSETTS	109.00	114
6 NEW MEXICO ST	119.67	127

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 it 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 take a 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 as compared with 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 made coaching changes in recent years and as a result, how relevant this info might be for 2021.

Top 20 Teams Whose On-field Performance Consistently Exceeds Their Recruiting Rating

As you look at the teams on the "overachieving" list, you'll see a common trend in that these schools typically have either stable coaching situations or undergo changes that involve a coach leaving willingly because he was hired away by another program. Such is the case for No. 1 on the list, a program (Appalachian State) that is heading into 2021 with Shawn Clark coaching in his second year, the first time the Mountaineers have had the same coach as the prior season since 2018. Interestingly, the three armed forces teams find themselves in the Nos. 2-3 spots, a credit to the quality character of kids those teams recruit.

Another thing to note here is that the top six teams are all the same as a year ago when I conducted this study, only shuffled a bit differently in the Nos. 3-6 spots.

You'll find that most of the teams on this list, 15 in fact, are from Group of 5 conferences. Only Kansas State (No. 12), Wisconsin (No. 15), Iowa (No. 17), Oklahoma State (No. 18), and Iowa State (No. 19) represent the Power 5 leagues. The Big Ten teams are particularly interesting cases in that both the Badgers (No. 15) and Iowa (No. 24) have just signed their highest-rated classes (2021 class) in any of the years of my study, which dates to 2007. Perhaps these programs are poised to join the elite class of college football in the coming years?

1. APPALACHIAN STATE: Recruiting Ranking: 102.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 47.2 — Difference: +55
2. AIR FORCE: Recruiting Ranking: 111.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 68 — Difference: +43.2
3. ARMY: Recruiting Ranking: 113.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 73.6 — Difference: +40
4. OHIO: Recruiting Ranking: 113.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 73.4 — Difference: +39.8
5. NAVY: Recruiting Ranking: 106.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 67.4 — Difference: +39
6. WYOMING: Recruiting Ranking: 110, EOY SM Power Rating: 71.6 — Difference: +38.4
7. BUFFALO: Recruiting Ranking: 118.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 83.2 — Difference: +35.6
8. UCF: Recruiting Ranking: 62.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 29.2 — Difference: +33.4
9. TULSA: Recruiting Ranking: 99.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 71.2 — Difference: +28
10. SAN DIEGO STATE: Recruiting Ranking: 86.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 60.6 — Difference: +25.8
11. BOISE STATE: Recruiting Ranking: 61.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 37.6 — Difference: +24
12. KANSAS STATE: Recruiting Ranking: 62.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 39 — Difference: +23.6
13. TEMPLE: Recruiting Ranking: 92.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 70.8 — Difference: +21.6
14. MEMPHIS: Recruiting Ranking: 66.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 45.4 — Difference: +21
15. WISCONSIN: Recruiting Ranking: 34.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 14 — Difference: +20.8
16. BYU: Recruiting Ranking: 70.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 50 — Difference: +20.4
17. IOWA: Recruiting Ranking: 40.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 20.4 — Difference: +20.2
18. OKLAHOMA STATE: Recruiting Ranking: 40, EOY SM Power Rating: 19.8 — Difference: +20.2
19. IOWA STATE: Recruiting Ranking: 50.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 31.2 — Difference: +19.6
20. EASTERN MICHIGAN: Recruiting Ranking: 117.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 98.2 — Difference: +19.6

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 because of lack of success. At the top of the list is a school (Rutgers) that rehired its most successful coach in program history before last season and enjoyed a renaissance 2020 campaign. In fact, the Scarlet Knights' "difference" improved by 6.2 since this study last year, meaning another decent won-lost record in 2021 should take them off the top of this underachieving list by next spring.

For the underachieving list, the top four teams remain the same, with a bit of a shuffle. UCLA at No. 9 falls back a bit from its No. 5 ranking last year.

Overall, this list is dominated by Power 5 conference schools, who use the lure of playing in big-time college football games to sign good athletes but haven't transferred that success to the field.

The only Group of 5 schools you'll find among this collection of underachievers are East Carolina (No. 9), Texas State (No. 17), San Jose State (No. 18) and Marshall (No. 19). Texas State could find itself off of the list next season, but not for a good reason. The

Bobcats scored the lowest-rated 2021 class in the country by far, and thus continued struggles on the field won't hurt nearly as badly in this form of analysis.

In all honesty, it's somewhat surprising to see Marshall on this list, as the Herd have had a good run of success. However, Doc Holliday's recruiting classes were on par with very low-level Power 5 programs, so it could easily be argued that Marshall didn't achieve anywhere near the level of success it should have recently.

A total of seven teams from this group have welcomed new head coaches for 2021, including Kansas, Tennessee, South Carolina and Illinois among the top eight, so they will be interesting cases to follow.

1. RUTGERS: Recruit Ranking: 54.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 105 - Difference: -50.2
2. MARYLAND: Recruit Ranking: 36.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 76.6 - Difference: -40.4
3. KANSAS: Recruit Ranking: 66.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 104.4 - Difference: -37.8
4. ARKANSAS: Recruit Ranking: 26.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 64 - Difference: -37.4
5. UCLA: Recruit Ranking: 17.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 52.4 - Difference: -35.2
6. TENNESSEE: Recruit Ranking: 12.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 46 - Difference: -33.6
7. SOUTH CAROLINA: Recruit Ranking: 20.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 52 - Difference: -31.8
8. ILLINOIS: Recruit Ranking: 56.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 84.2 - Difference: -27.8
9. EAST CAROLINA: Recruit Ranking: 79.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 106.6 - Difference: -27
10. OREGON STATE: Recruit Ranking: 58.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 84.6 - Difference: -26.4
11. NEBRASKA: Recruit Ranking: 26, EOY SM Power Rating: 51.6 - Difference: -25.6
12. TEXAS: Recruit Ranking: 11.2, EOY SM Power Rating: 36.6 - Difference: -25.4
13. FLORIDA STATE: Recruit Ranking: 5.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 30.8 - Difference: -25.2
14. VANDERBILT: Recruit Ranking: 51, EOY SM Power Rating: 74.4 - Difference: -23.4
15. OLE MISS: Recruit Ranking: 18.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 42 - Difference: -23.2
16. ARIZONA STATE: Recruit Ranking: 26.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 49.6 - Difference: -22.8
17. TEXAS STATE: Recruit Ranking: 102.6, EOY SM Power Rating: 123.6 - Difference: -21
18. SAN JOSE STATE: Recruit Ranking: 87.8, EOY SM Power Rating: 106.2 - Difference: -18.4
19. MARSHALL: Recruit Ranking: 69.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 86.8 - Difference: -17.4
20. NORTH CAROLINA: Recruit Ranking: 27.4, EOY SM Power Rating: 44.2 - Difference: -16.8

Teams Whose Recruiting Appears to be Trending in One Direction or the Other

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. Let's take a look at teams on both ends.

TEAMS WHOSE RECRUITING RANKINGS ARE TRENDING IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION

Air Force (Last 4 years recruiting ranks: 118, 109, 106, 104)

The Falcons signed a better class than the prior year for the fourth straight season this spring, a good sign considering Air Force has consistently been one of the best "overachieving" teams in the country.

Appalachian State (Last 4 years recruiting ranks: 113, 99, 83, 73)

The Mountaineers classes keep getting better & better despite what has been a flurry of coaching changes in recent years. This program is becoming a legitimate brand name and should continue to have great Sun Belt success in 2021 and beyond.

Boston College (2021 recruiting rank: 37, prior 9-year average 67.7)

Jeff Hatley enters his second season at Boston College riding some great offseason news, as his program signed its best class in any of the last 15 seasons. The results might not show up in 2021, but the future looks bright.

California (Last 5 recruiting ranks: 70, 42, 43, 39, 29)

California's recruiting is showing a good pattern under fifth-year coach Justin Wilcox. The 2021 ranking of No. 29 is the school's highest in 10 years.

Cincinnati (Last 2 average recruiting rank: 41, 2010-19: 61.2)

Cincinnati has put together its best two recruiting classes since before my study (2007). With QB Desmond Ridder back in 2021, Luke Fickell's success should continue.

Iowa (Last 3 recruiting ranks: 41, 35, 24 - prior 9-year average 44.7)

Coach Kirk Ferentz is the longest-tenured coach in college football, but clearly his recruiting message isn't getting stale. He just scored his best class in over a decade, and his team could be on the cusp on taking another step forward.

Louisiana (Last 3 recruiting ranks: 76, 79, 68 - prior 8-year average 110.7)

The Ragin Cajuns are making it quite fashionable to play football in Lafayette. The program could make a big jump forward after three straight solid classes, including a decade-best No. 68 ranking in 2021.

(continued on next page)

Maryland (Last 5 years average recruiting rank: 28.4, prior 6 years: 41.8)

A solid uptick in recent recruiting classes should have Maryland in position to achieve some greater success in the coming years in the Big Ten. To put the 13.4 improvement in perspective over the last five seasons, it is the difference of being a mid-tier Big Ten team or a bottom feeder.

Minnesota (Last 3 years average recruiting rank: 39.8, prior 7 years: 58.3)

Three of the last four P.J. Fleck recruiting classes have ranked No. 38 in the country. From 2010 to 2017, Minnesota football did not have a class ranked better than No. 46. Fleck is having a great impact in the Twin Cities, on and off the field.

North Carolina (Last 2 recruiting ranks: 19, 14 – prior 10 years, just once sub-20)

Mack Brown is having a huge impact on recruiting at North Carolina, so much that this program should be dreaming much bigger on a national scale in the coming seasons.

North Texas (Last 3 years average recruiting rank: 73.7 – prior 9-year average: 106.7)

Coach Seth Littrell and North Texas should be due for a huge rebound after three straight banner recruiting classes by UNT standards.

Oregon (Last 3 years recruiting rank: 7, 12, 6 – prior 9 years, no sub-12 rankings)

Coach Mario Cristobal's last three classes have been stellar, and the best in recent memory at Oregon, a school that most bettors feel recruits better than it really does. Perhaps the recent uptick is noticed on the field this fall.

Pittsburgh (Last 2 recruiting ranks: 44, 27 – prior 10-year best: 30)

Coach Pat Narduzzi is making Pittsburgh a college football town once again, and in 2021 welcomes the program's best recruiting class in over a decade.

Texas A&M (Last 3 recruiting ranks: 4, 6, 8 – prior 9-year average: 15.4)

Texas A&M has always had good recruiting classes. Under Head Coach Jimbo Fisher, they have become great. The Aggies have gotten the talent over the last three seasons that have them poised to compete with the elite in the SEC.

UTSA (Last 5 recruiting average: 86.8 – prior 6-year average: 113.7)

While recruiting ranking averages of 86.8 don't scream of great success, the Roadrunners' recent five classes are on par with the top teams in Conference USA.

UNLV (Last 2 recruiting ranks: 77, 67 – prior 10-year average: 103.3)

Marcus Arroyo is just in his second year at UNLV, but his impact on the football program should start being felt in the next year or two. The last two classes are the best the Runnin' Rebels have signed in at least a decade. We'll see if this team can start turning the corner in 2021.

Wisconsin (Last 3 recruiting ranks: 29, 25, 16 – prior 9-year average: 43.1)

Wisconsin has had a reputation for producing a better product on the field than its talent level indicates. The latter part of that equation could be changing as Paul Chryst has scored landmark classes in three straight years by Badgers standard, topping out at No. 16 for 2021. Are the Badgers ready to join the CFP elite?



**Paul Chryst (red hat),
Wisconsin**

TEAMS WHOSE RECRUITING RANKINGS ARE TRENDING IN A NEGATIVE DIRECTION

Arizona (Last 8 years' recruiting ranks: 31, 48, 48, 45, 61, 55, 62, 77)

The Wildcats' classes have dropped from the top 24% in the country to the top 59% in eight years. The shine of playing Arizona football has worn off for top recruits. New coach Jedd Fisch is going to have trouble finding success unless this pattern changes.

Arizona State (2021 recruiting rank: 52, worst since 2011)

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have had an impact on the 2021 signings in Tempe. Perhaps not enough recruits got to do the in-person visit to see all the wonderful things ASU has to offer. It shouldn't affect much in 2021, but it could in future seasons.

Connecticut (Last 5 average recruiting ranks: 109.2; 2010-16: 86.3)

Connecticut not only missed an entire football season last fall, but its recent recruiting classes suggest that this program may struggle for a while.

Florida Atlantic (Last 3 recruiting ranks: 61, 73, 82)

Lane Kiffin was a natural when it came to recruiting, and his efforts had a huge impact on FAU's success in his tenure. It's obvious that current coach Willie Taggart doesn't match Kiffin in recruiting or on-field coaching.

Florida State (Last 6 years' recruiting ranks: 3, 6, 11, 18, 22, 23)

After consistently signing top-5 classes in the early part of the decade, FSU has slipped in five straight years. The fact that the Seminoles haven't won 10 or more games since 2016 is no accident.

Hawaii (2010-18 average recruiting rank: 94.1, 2019-21: 121.3)

Hawaii is another program that probably suffered from lack of in-person visits last year, as second-year coach Todd Graham's most recent recruiting class ranked just 124th in the country. That followed a No. 125 in 2020. Recent classes suggest things will get worse before getting better.

Houston (5 straight recruiting ranks of 69 or worse after 36 in 2016)

Houston signed a program-best 36th-ranked recruiting class in 2016 after a 13-1 campaign. Since then it's been 69, 73, 72, 82 and most recently 83. This won't help coach Dana Holgorsen recapture that magic anytime soon.

Marshall (2010-19 average recruiting rank: 69.4, last two: 95, 119)

Despite a prolonged run of success, top recruits never seemed to want to turn to Marshall and former coach Doc Holliday. We saw the Thundering Herd on the underachieving list earlier. Two bad classes in a row could drop this team dramatically under new coach Charles Huff.

Michigan State (Last 2 years' recruiting ranks: 43, 44; prior 10 years, none higher than 37)

East Lansing doesn't seem to be the football destination it was under former coach Mark Dantonio, as this program has fallen behind almost every Big Ten East Division team in that regard in the last two years. The downward spiral could continue in 2021.

Penn State (Last 4 years' recruiting ranks: 6, 12, 15, 21)

Most programs would love to have recruiting classes ranked 21st in the country, but for Penn State, the 2021 class was the third straight that didn't meet the previous year's standard. That trend is headed the wrong way.

South Carolina (2021 recruiting rank: 79)

Coming off one of the worst seasons in program history, new South Carolina coach Justin Beamer signed what has been ranked as the nation's 79th-best recruiting class. That is certainly not a good start for the Gamecocks, who never ranked worse than 25th in any of the previous 10 seasons.

Temple (Last 5 years' average recruiting rank: 103.8; prior 5 years: 71.8)

In Matt Rhule's tenure with Temple, the program was gaining a strong foothold in the Philadelphia/Pennsylvania recruiting market. A lot has changed since, as three of the last five classes have been ranked 100 or worse.

Texas Tech (Last 5 years' average recruiting rank: 63.2; prior 8 years: 36.9)

A distinct drop-off in recruiting prowess finds Texas Tech in the midst of a downturn. This year's class, ranked 72nd, actually dropped behind Kansas for the Big 12's worst.

Tulsa (Last 5 recruiting ranks: 85, 97, 107, 112, 126)

Tulsa is another program that seems to have hit rock bottom in terms of recruiting, as only five teams ranked worse this season, according to 247sports. Clearly the emerging pattern will not be one of being able to compete in the American Athletic over the next few years.

UCLA (Last 3 years' recruiting ranks: 40, 32, 31; prior 7-year average, 15.3)

Coach Chip Kelly was expected to have a big impact on recruiting at UCLA. He has, only the impact has been negative. His last three classes have ranked outside the top 30 in the country after regular top-15s in the seven years before. The difference is usually competing for conference championships or not.

(continued on next page)

Utah State (Last 2 recruiting ranks: 117, 128)

Coach Blake Anderson's first recruiting class scored 128th in the country, meaning only two FBS schools did worse. This is an inauspicious start, and coming off a season in which the Aggies were one of the worst offenses in football, it doesn't bode well for an immediate turnaround.

Potential 2021 Surprise Teams Based on Recent Performance/Recruiting

There are naturally teams that surprise each season, both positively and negatively, and many factors contribute to this. From analyzing the recruiting rankings against my power ratings, I came up with some potential teams that show signs of a rapid improvement or decline in 2021.

TEAMS THAT COULD IMPROVE SIGNIFICANTLY IN 2021

California

California got just four games in last year and won only one. The pandemic was treated differently in California, and as such the 2020 season was a virtual throwaway for the Golden Bears. They bring back a solid group of 19 starters, including highly rated QB Chase Garbers, and coach Justin Wilcox just signed the best recruiting class in his five-year stay. The scores his classes have gotten have improved in four straight years. Cal was making good progress as a program before 2020. I look for them to put it together again this fall.

Maryland

The 2017 and 2018 recruiting classes at Maryland were ranked 18th and 28th, respectively, in the country, and with super seniors now in play because of the extra year of eligibility, the players of those years will be the upperclassmen leading their teams this season. That bodes well for Mike Locksley and the Terps. What also helps is that Maryland played some very competitive football last season, finishing 2-3 and scoring a huge upset of Penn State, with QB Tualia Tagovailoa gaining some valuable experience and production.



Mike Locksley,
Maryland

Miami

The 2017-19 recruiting classes at Miami ranked 17th in the country for the three-year measurement. That has proven to be a key factor for projecting success. Most of those players will be upperclassmen for coach Manny Diaz this season, and that list does not include QB D'Eriq King, who started his career at Houston and had a big year for the Hurricanes in 2020. He surprised a lot of people when he decided to come back for another run. After a huge bowl game performance against Oklahoma State, I expect a big season from him. Miami should be right in the hunt for the ACC crown.

USC

The height of USC's recent recruiting success came in the 2017-18 seasons, when each class ranked fourth in the country. Those successes came on the heels of back-to-back double-digit-win seasons. The Trojans are just 18-13 since. However, after last year's 5-1 campaign, combined with the return of stud QB Kedon Slovis and 15 other starters, this could be the season USC makes it back into the national spotlight. This team has a good chance to head to Notre Dame on Oct. 23 undefeated at 6-0, and that contest would certainly put this program back front and center.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin has been one of the best programs in the country in winning with modest recruiting classes. But recently the Badgers have picked up the recruiting efforts, scoring program-best classes in three straight seasons. Now we get to see what this program can do with higher-tier talent. One such player is back at quarterback in Graham Mertz, who looked Heisman-worthy in the first two games last season before losing many of his top weapons to injury. The team didn't really recover until the final two games. With the momentum of a big bowl win and bigger recruiting efforts in tow, coach Paul Chryst might have his best chance at a playoff berth yet.

TEAMS THAT COULD DECLINE SIGNIFICANTLY IN 2021

Buffalo

Buffalo was one of the top teams in the country on my list above for "overachieving," taking the talent it recruits and making it successful. The problem is that it was with the old coaching staff, and Lance Leipold has moved on to Kansas. Also, the groups that had success in recent years were more highly rated than the players currently on the roster. In fact, the 2018-20 recruiting classes for the Bulls were ranked No. 127 in the country, meaning 247sports found only three worse programs. That's not a good sign for a new coaching staff that loses its bell-cow runner in Jaret Patterson and brings back 15 starters, a very low total for the MAC.

Coastal Carolina

This might not be popular analysis, as Coastal Carolina was one of the feel-good stories of college football last year, but it seems this program caught lightning in a bottle, rallying around all the adversity that was part of the 2020 season. Sure, QB Grayson McCall had a big year and is back this fall, but the Chanticleers will no longer be under the radar and are still recovering from the season-ending loss to Liberty that derailed their undefeated season. They also allowed 400+ yards in four of their last five games. Momentum isn't on their side anymore. However, most importantly, the 2017-20 recruiting classes combined for 125th best in the country. I don't see this team overachieving so greatly again in 2021.

Connecticut

The Huskies were one of only two teams not to play a single game last fall, and while returning a full coaching staff and 15 starters represents a stable situation, the program won just nine games over the previous four years. The last three recruiting classes have combined to rank 121st in the country, abysmal for an American Athletic Conference team. The Huskies have three very winnable games, and the other nine should be considered automatic losses.

Hawaii

I wrote about Hawaii in this same spot last year when it had a new coach, new quarterback and only 11 starters back. The Warriors also had the worst two recruiting classes in recent memory in 2019-20. The Warriors proved me wrong under coach Todd Graham, going 5-4. But their recruiting got worse this spring, as Graham brought in the country's 124th-ranked class. These poorly rated classes will be relied on this fall. The school is also facing some stadium drama, and one of its best former players, QB Colt Brennan, died last spring. Things aren't looking up.

Houston

It was not a huge surprise that Houston scored its best recruiting class, ranked No. 36, after its 13-1 season of 2015 under Tom Herman. The talent brought in since has not reached that level, with 2017 ranking the best at No. 69 and bottoming out with 82nd and 83rd rankings the last two years under Dana Holgorsen. He is just 7-13 in two seasons with the Cougars, and the talent level doesn't suggest a quick turnaround. Don't confuse these Cougars with those of the past under Herman or Major Applewhite.

Marshall

Not sure if it was just fatigue or something else, but Doc Holliday's efforts in recruiting waned in recent years, and he was replaced after last year's 7-3 finish. The problem was the three losses came at the end, when the Herd scored just 23 total points after averaging 37. The crumbs he left for new coach Charles Huff on the recruiting trail wound up in a 119th-ranked class this spring, easily the program's worst in the last 15 years. That came just one year after a then-low 95th ranking. The lesser talent figures to catch up at some point, and with a new coach in place and the memories of a horrible finish to 2020 still fresh, it just might be this season.

Tulsa

Tulsa is a program whose recruiting classes have been ranked worse than the previous year in four consecutive seasons. This spring, 247sports felt that only four FBS programs signed less talent than the Golden Hurricane. Does this mean the program is headed for dark days? Possibly, as talent is obviously key in competing, and coach Philip Montgomery has been used to working with higher levels of it in recent years. But his last four teams are just 15-30. He also loses multiyear starting QB Zach Smith. Off a 6-3 campaign, this team will be very lucky to reach a bowl game.