

GAMEDAY

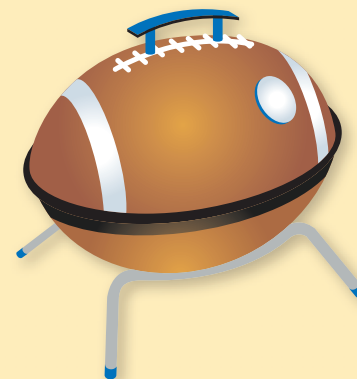


AN IOU SITUATION

Alabama, after last year's debacle at Oklahoma, looks for a little payback

Win a Mini Max Big Green Egg from Story & Lee!*

TAILGATE of the week RECIPE



Chess Brownies

INGREDIENTS

1 cup chopped pecans
1/2 cup margarine, melted
1 large egg
1 15.25 oz. pkg yellow cake mix

2 large eggs
1 8 oz. pkg cream cheese,
softened
1 16 oz. pkg powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS:

Stir together pecans, margarine, 1 egg and cake mix. Mix well. Press in bottom of a lightly greased 13x9 inch pan. Combine 2 eggs and cream cheese, beat in a large mixing bowl. Sift sugar, gradually add sugar, mix until smooth, pour on top. Take a spatula and smooth out evenly over top. Bake at 325 degrees for 40 minutes. Cool completely in pan. Cut into 30-35 squares.



This week's recipe submitted
by **Juanita Graham,**
Russellville, AL

Submit your recipes now and you could win \$50 if your recipe is selected.

To enter, submit your recipe to:

Tailgate Recipe Contest, 219 West Tennessee St., Florence, AL 35630 - Attn: Mara Beth Cravens

*Weekly winners are entered for grand prize drawing for a Mini Max Green Egg.



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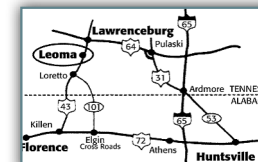
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Some will hope Atticus Sappington and Oregon have the heart to cover a big line this week.
 [CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

THE LINE

(as of Tuesday)

Thursday FAVORITE	TODAY	O/U	UNDERDOG
OLD DOMINION	10½	52½	Troy
Friday			
at LOUISVILLE	2½	50½	Clemson
at OREGON	25½	44½	Minnesota

Saturday			
at TEXAS A&M	18½	47½	South Carolina
at UCONN	7½	63½	Air Force
Kansas State	19½	52½	at OKLA. STATE
UTSA	18½	59½	at CHARLOTTE
South Florida	10½	64½	at NAVY
at INDIANA	29½	43½	Wisconsin
at CINCINNATI	6½	56½	Arizona
Notre Dame	11½	55½	at PITTSBURGH
Michigan	12½	41½	at NORTHWESTERN
at LSU	5½	56½	Arkansas
Oregon State	2½	48½	at TULSA
at ARIZONA STATE	11½	48½	West Virginia
at KENTUCKY	20½	52½	Tennessee Tech
Marshall	8½	63½	at GEORGIA ST.
North Texas	18½	69½	at UAB
at NEW MEXICO	14½	53½	Colorado State
Georgia Tech	16½	58½	at BOSTON COLLEGE
at ILLINOIS	14½	53½	Maryland
at USC	6½	49½	Iowa
South Alabama	4½	51½	at LA.-MONROE
at DUKE	5½	58½	Virginia
Penn State	7½	49½	at MICH. STATE
at SOUTHERN MISS	5½	65½	Texas State
at JAMES MADISON	21½	53½	App State
at MIAMI (Fla.)	14½	55½	NC State
at WESTERN KY.	13½	56½	Middle Tenn.
at TEXAS TECH	23½	47½	UCF
at ALABAMA	6½	46½	Oklahoma
at TULANE	17½	63½	Florida Atlantic
at EAST CAROLINA	2½	59½	Memphis
at TENNESSEE	40½	61½	New Mexico St.
at WAKE FOREST	6½	38½	North Carolina
at GA. SOUTHERN	2½	60½	Coastal Carolina
at WASHINGTON	16½	53½	Purdue
at UNLV	6½	71½	Utah State
at OLE MISS	15½	53½	Florida
Utah	8½	60½	at BAYLOR
at FLORIDA STATE	13½	54½	Virginia Tech
at GEORGIA	6½	48½	Texas
at OHIO STATE	33½	48½	UCLA
at MISSOURI	7½	51½	Mississippi St.
Kennesaw State	3½	54½	at JAX STATE
at WASH. STATE	7½	44½	Louisiana Tech
at BYU	4½	52½	TCU
at SAN DIEGO ST.	2½	41½	Boise State
at FRESNO STATE	3½	40½	Wyoming



Caleb Komolafe and the Northwestern Wildcats will have an early stretch Saturday before playing Michigan. [DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

GAMES ON TV

Thursday

Troy at Old Dominion, 6:30 p.m., ESPN

Friday

S.C. State at N.C. Central, 4:30 p.m., ESPN2
 Clemson at Louisville, 6:30 p.m., ESPN
 Minnesota at Oregon, 8 p.m., FOX

Saturday

Air Force at UConn, 11 a.m., CBSSN
 Arizona at Cincinnati, 11 a.m., FS1
 Kansas St. at Okla. St., 11 a.m., ESPN2
 Michigan at Northwestern, 11 a.m., FOX
 Notre Dame at Pittsburgh, 11 a.m., ABC
 S. Carolina at Texas A&M, 11 a.m., ESPN
 South Florida at Navy, 11 a.m., ESPN2
 Wisconsin at Indiana, 11 a.m., BTN

Arkansas at LSU, 11:45 a.m., SEC
 West Virginia at Arizona State, noon, TNT
 Georgia Tech at Boston College, 2:30 p.m., ACC
 Iowa at USC, 2:30 p.m., CBS
 Maryland at Illinois, 2:30 p.m., FS1
 N.C. State at Miami, 2:30 p.m., ESPN
 Oklahoma at Alabama, 2:30 p.m., ABC
 Penn St. at Michigan St., 2:30 p.m., BTN
 San Jose St. at Nevada, 2:30 p.m., CBSSN
 UCF at Texas Tech, 2:30 p.m., FOX
 Virginia at Duke, 2:30 p.m., ESPN2
 Memphis at E. Carolina, 3 p.m., ESPN2
 N.M. State at Tennessee, 3:15 p.m., SEC
 N. Carolina at Wake Forest, 3:30 p.m., CW
 Florida at Ole Miss, 6 p.m., ESPN
 Purdue at Washington, 6 p.m., FS1

Utah at Baylor, 6 p.m., ESPN2
 Utah State at UNLV, 6 p.m., CBSSN
 Texas at Georgia, 6:30 p.m., ABC
 UCLA at Ohio State, 6:30 p.m., NBC
 Virginia Tech at Florida State, 6:30 p.m., ACC
 Miss. State at Missouri, 6:45 p.m., SEC
 Kennesaw State at Jacksonville State, 7 p.m., ESPN2
 Louisiana Tech at Washington State, 9 p.m., CW
 TCU at BYU, 9:15 p.m., ESPN
 UC Davis at Montana State, 9:15 p.m., ESPN2
 Boise State at San Diego State, 9:30 p.m., CBSSN
 Wyoming at Fresno State, 9:30 p.m., FS1

TOP 25 SCHEDULE

Friday

No. 7 Oregon (8-1) vs. Minnesota (6-3), 8 p.m.
 No. 19 Louisville (7-2) vs. Clemson (4-5), 6:30 p.m.

Saturday

No. 1 Ohio St. (9-0) vs. UCLA (3-6), 6:30 p.m.
 No. 2 Indiana (10-0) vs. Wisconsin (3-6), 11 a.m.
 No. 3 Texas A&M (9-0) vs. South Carolina (3-6), 11 a.m.
 No. 4 Alabama (8-1) vs. No. 11 Oklahoma (7-2), 2:30 p.m.

No. 5 Georgia (8-1) vs. No. 10 Texas (7-2), 6:30 p.m.
 No. 6 Mississippi (9-1) vs. Florida (3-6), 6 p.m.
 No. 8 Texas Tech (9-1) vs. UCF (4-5), 2:30 p.m.
 No. 9 Notre Dame (7-2) at No. 23 Pittsburgh (7-2), 11 a.m.
 No. 12 BYU (8-1) vs. TCU (6-3), 9:15 p.m.
 No. 14 Georgia Tech (8-1) at Boston College (1-9), 2:30 p.m.
 No. 15 Utah (7-2) at Baylor (5-4), 6 p.m.
 No. 16 Miami (7-2) vs. NC State (5-4), 2:30 p.m.

No. 17 Southern Cal (7-2) vs. Iowa (6-3), 2:30 p.m.
 No. 18 Michigan (7-2) at Northwestern (5-4), 11 a.m.
 No. 20 Virginia (8-2) at Duke (5-4), 2:30 p.m.
 No. 21 Tennessee (6-3) vs. New Mexico St. (3-6), 3:15 p.m.
 No. 22 Cincinnati (7-2) vs. Arizona (6-3), 11 a.m.
 No. 24 James Madison (8-1) vs. Appalachian St. (4-5), 2:30 p.m.
 No. 25 South Florida (7-2) at Navy (7-2), 11 a.m.

Oklahoma at Alabama

When: 2:30 p.m. Saturday

TV/radio: ABC/FM-93.9, FM-97.7, AM-920

Records: No. 11 Oklahoma (7-2, 3-2 SEC), No. 4 Alabama (8-1, 6-0)

The series: Oklahoma leads 4-2-1.

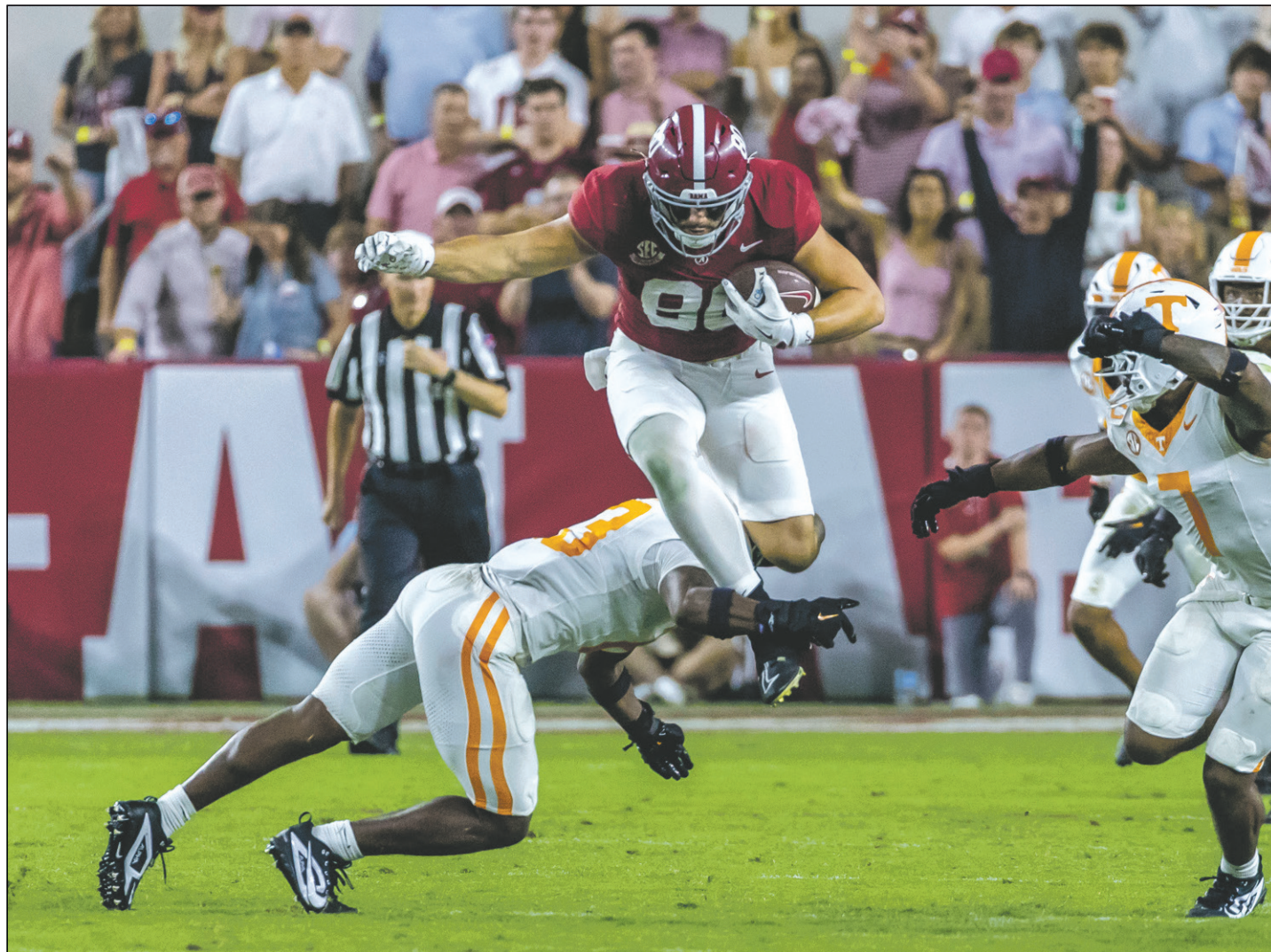
Four-down territory

1. Play it safe: Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin recently made headlines (when does he not?) after making comments on Oklahoma and coach Brent Venables stealing signals. Alabama offensive coordinator Ryan Grubb is prepping for that possible Sooner tactic. “For sure, on all fronts,” Grubb said. “They’re good at that, No. 1. And No. 2, we’re changing everything. If coach Venables is listening, just know they’re all changing. They do everything within the parameters of the game. Nothing illegal about what they do, they’re good at what they do. Certainly have to take that into consideration.”

2. Running into trouble: Alabama is among the worst running teams in the nation (No. 119 out of 132), averaging a meager 111 yards per game. Alabama finished with 72 and 56 yards in its last two games. The Crimson Tide faces a Sooner defense ranked No. 4 in the nation, allowing just 82 yards per game. On top of that, OU’s scoring defense is No. 7 in the country. “I know our communication has to be elite,” Grubb said. “That’s the one thing that we probably don’t talk about enough. A characteristic of a good offensive line — physically — you want to have that, but the No. 1 thing is communication.”

3. That one stung: There is no need to remind Alabama players of last year’s clash with the Sooners. Alabama needed a win against Oklahoma to have a shot at making the playoffs. Instead, the Crimson Tide took a 24-3 whipping from a 5-5 Sooner team, a loss that basically eliminated Alabama from playoff consideration. “We were also asked about this a few weeks ago when we played Vanderbilt,” Alabama coach Kalen DeBoer said, referencing Alabama’s loss to Vandy last year. “Our guys should remember that, because our experiences help us be better the next time around.”

4. Not salty on Talty: It’s been an up-and-down season for Tide kicker Connor Talty. He’s 11-of-16 overall and went



Josh Cuevas and the Alabama Crimson Tide hope to clear this week’s hurdle, the Oklahoma Sooners. [VASHA HUNT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

2-for-3 in each of the last two games he attempted field goals, including a 26-yard miss against LSU — his first miss inside 30 yards. Outside 40 yards, Talty is 5-of-8. DeBoer is quick to point out Talty’s successes. “The thing that I really like is when he’s had one that didn’t go well, he’s able to respond and come back and make the next one,” DeBoer said. “There’s been some big ones that he’s made that have stretched games.”

Key matchup

Alabama TE Josh Cuevas vs. Oklahoma TE Jaren Kanak

The tight end is a valuable weapon for both teams when a big play is needed. Cuevas has 24 catches for 261 yards with three touchdowns. Kanak has 30 catches

for 410 yards, the third best on the team.

Player of the week

Nikhai Hill-Green, LB

The graduate student has 39 tackles this season, and he had five tackles with recovered a fumble, which he forced, against LSU last week.

By the numbers

9: Counting Saturday, nine of Alabama’s 10 games have been televised on ABC.

21: The Crimson Tide is 89-13-1 in homecoming games, in which they have a 21-game win streak, last losing to LSU in 2001.

37: Oklahoma has won 37 of its 49 true road games since 2014.

49: Nearly half (49%) of OU opponent’s plays this season (280 of 572) have gone for 1 or fewer yards.

Prediction

Alabama 21, Oklahoma 17

The Crimson Tide was in a must-win situation last year against OU and failed miserably, falling 24-3. Alabama is in a similar situation this time, although not as dire. A loss will hurt but not necessarily keep the Tide out of the playoffs. It would eliminate the opportunity for a first-round bye. Just like the past six games, this one won’t be easy. It has all the makings of a defensive battle.

— Edwin Stanton



Georgia tight end Oscar Delp says the Bulldogs are “super excited” to play Texas. [JAMES PUGH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

UGA, Texas peaking with rematch looming

By Charles Odum
The Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — A rematch of last season’s Southeastern Conference championship game finds No. 5 Georgia and No. 10 Texas peaking for a game that could impact this season’s conference race and will be crucial to each team’s College Football Playoff hopes.

Texas (7-2, 4-1) will take a four-game winning streak into Saturday night’s game at Sanford Stadium. Georgia (8-1, 6-1) extended its winning streak to five games with last week’s 41-21 win at Mississippi State.

Gunner Stockton came off the bench to lead the Bulldogs to a 22-19 overtime win over Texas in last year’s SEC championship game in Atlanta.

Despite both teams carrying top-10 rankings in this week’s AP Top 25, Texas and Georgia do not control their hopes of returning to the SEC title game. No. 3 Texas A&M and No. 4 Alabama have no SEC losses and are on course to play in Atlanta.

Even so, much is on the line this week. The Bulldogs and Longhorns are playing to remain in position to enter a possible tiebreaker scenario if either Alabama or

Texas A&M lose. They also will be playing to protect their playoff hopes.

From the outside, it looks like the SEC’s game of the week. From the view of Georgia players, who already have played Top 25 conference games against Tennessee, Alabama and Ole Miss, plus a close win over Florida, the visit from Texas feels like just another week in the SEC.

“I mean, you’ve got to approach every single game the same in this league,” tight end Oscar Delp said Monday. “I mean, playing at Georgia, you know, you’re going to get every team’s best shot. I mean, no matter who we’re playing we’re the game of the year.”

Even so, Delp hinted the visit from quarterback Arch Manning and Texas might bring more than just the “another game” vibe to the prime-time SEC showdown.

“I think everyone understands what the magnitude is of every game we play, especially this one,” Delp said. “So we’re super excited to get out there and play.”

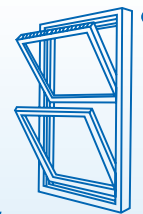
Safety KJ Bolden said Georgia’s grind of Top 25 tests will pay off in the postseason.

“I feel that this is great for our team that it gets us ready for, you know, later down the season, getting ready for those big type of games,” Bolden said. “So I feel like that will definitely help us down the road.”

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UNA at Tarleton State

When: 6 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN+

Records: UNA (2-8, 1-5 UNA), No. 6 Tarleton State (9-1, 5-1)

The series: Tarleton State leads 4-1.

Four-down territory

1. A ranked opponent (and on the road)?

This is perhaps a double whammy for UNA with Tarleton State being ranked sixth in the STATS Top 25 and with the matchup being in Stephenville, Texas. The Lions haven't fared well against ranked FCS foes — they're 1-23 all-time, including 0-3 this season. They lost 38-36 in double overtime at then-No. 6 Illinois State on Sept. 20, lost 52-23 at then-No. 19 Abilene Christian on Oct. 4 and 56-28 at then-No. 25 Austin Peay on Oct. 25. UNA is also 0-6 in road games this year — to go along with its 7-36 mark away from Braly Stadium since going Division I in 2018. Overall, the Lions have been outscored 265-147 in road contests this season. Neither is history on UNA's side.

2. Bigger (meaning better) in Texas:

Tarleton State is quite good. But you already knew that from it being ranked the sixth-best team in the FCS. The Texans, however, are at or near the top of the United Athletic Conference in almost every statistical category. They lead the league in scoring offense (43.6 points per game, also good for second in the FCS), total offense (465.4 yards per game), rushing offense (214.3 ypg), scoring defense (17.7 ppg, also good for 12th in the FCS), total defense (324.6 ypg), passing defense (155.1 ypg), interceptions (16) and fumbles recovered (13). Tarleton State is also second in sacks (24) and passing offense (251.1 ypg). The Texans are also technically tied atop the UAC standings with Abilene Christian. The Wildcats own the tiebreaker after beating Tarleton State 31-28 on a last-second field goal two weeks ago.

3. Not really particularly close: Saturday will mark the sixth all-time meeting between UNA and Tarleton State. Each of



Peyton Kramer has been one of the receivers helping Tarleton State rolling in the right direction this season. [TARLETON STATE ATHLETICS]

the previous five — two while both were in DII and three since both went DI — have been decided by at least two scores. The Texans won in Texas in 2012 (38-28) and 2023 (52-31), while leaving Florence victorious in 2022 (43-28) and last season (28-14). The Lions' win in the series was at home in 2012 (44-7). In last year's meeting, UNA was held to two first-half field goals and a Juice Allen 10-yard rushing touchdown in the third quarter. The Lions were shut out in the fourth.

4. Replacing some notable pieces: Tarleton State's offense last season was paced by running back Kayvon Britten and receiver Darius Cooper. Britten led the FCS with 1,982 rushing yards and was second in touchdowns with 23. Cooper topped the FCS with 1,450 receiving yards to go along with 14 scores. Both moved on and both have been replaced rather seamlessly. Tre Page III is the Texans' primary running back this season and has rushed for 839 yards (tied for 16th in the FCS) and seven touchdowns on 112 carries. Peyton Kramer (41 catches, 671 yards, 5 TDs), Cody Jackson (37, 600, 3) and Trevon West (29, 551, 2) have combined to make up Cooper's production.

Key matchup

UNA pass rush vs. Tarleton State QB Victor Gabalis

The Texans have plenty of notable players, but it never hurts when you have a consistent quarterback directing everything. In eight games — he missed two due to injury — Gabalis is completing just shy of 61% of his throws for 1,802 yards, 18 touchdowns and just two interceptions (one each against West Georgia and Abilene Christian). So, can the Lions disrupt that? UNA has gotten to opposing QBs 19 times this season (at least once in each game except for the season opener at Western Kentucky). But Tarleton State is third in the UAC in sacks allowed with 17.

Player of the week

The UNA QB

This all depends on Destin Wade's status. Wade left last week's game — a 24-17 loss to West Georgia — midway through the second quarter with a lower leg injury, which prompted freshman John Austin Wood to get his first extended playing time. The Lions scored touchdowns on two of their first three drives with Wade. They

managed one field goal with Wood and finished with 68 yards offense from the midway point of that second quarter on. Whomever is playing will need to be on point to contend with Tarleton State.

By the numbers

6: This is Tarleton State's sixth DI season. The Texans have yet to post a losing record. UNA currently has seven straight losing seasons.

44-21: Tarleton State's record as a DI program. UNA is 23-54 in seven-plus seasons.

8.57: The millions of dollars that was the Texans' football budget in 2024, according to the most recent figures. The Lions spent \$4.06 million.

1: The number of FCS playoff appearances Tarleton State has. The Texans did that last season. This year will likely be No. 2. UNA has none.

Prediction

Tarleton State 45, UNA 23

Yeah ... see the four-down territory above. Pretty simple, right?

— David Glovach

New Mexico State at Tennessee

When: 3:15 p.m. Saturday

TV/radio: SEC/FM-97.9, AM-1340

Records: New Mexico State (3-6), No. 21 Tennessee (6-3)

The series: First meeting.

Four-down territory

1. Moving on: There is no playoff spot for the Vols to think about after their loss to Oklahoma two weeks ago. There is no SEC title game to worry about, either. There is a chance to get better. After a bye week, Tennessee's focus is to win, improve and not worry about anything else. "Whatever happens after, that is after," Vols coach Josh Heupel said. "You cannot control any of that, so it's same thing we talk about — consistently in our program in all phases of the year. Control (what you can control) and win right now."

2. Back at it: Having lost two of their last three games, the Vols got a much-needed bye week to rest and get healthy. The week off was a boost for the Vols, particularly running back DeSean Bishop. "I love the bye weeks because you go all week missing football," he said. "It is good to have a little bit of time away from ball, but you come back ready to work and it is much needed, for sure." Bishop said the season hasn't worked out the way the team had hoped, but getting back on the field and finishing the season strong is the focus.

3. Deep thoughts: Tennessee has had an extra week to put its last loss in the rearview mirror. The loss to Oklahoma eliminated the Vols from playoff contention, but it's not the end of the world. "We have three big games left and we are blessed to be able to play this game," tight end Miles Kitselman said. "There is no reason to be down and out. We get to play football. We keep harping on that with the young guys."

4. Stay humble: Joey Aguilar leads the SEC with 2,737 passing yards, and his 21 TDs is tied for the league lead. He transferred to play for the Vols in his hopes of winning games. "I didn't come here to put up big numbers," he said. "I came here to compete and try to help this team win. I am just grateful and thankful to have this opportunity."



Tennessee running back DeSean Bishop and the Vols hope to find room to maneuver against New Mexico State. [MICHAEL SWENSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Key matchup

Tennessee QB Joey Aguilar vs. N.M. State QB Logan Fife

Aguilar needs 178 yards to reach 3,000 for the season. He's the reason the Vols' offense is one of the best in the nation. Fife is a preseason CUSA pick with 2,072 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Player of the week

Edwin Spillman, LB

The redshirt freshman has established himself as a leader with his 58 tackles, which is second on the team. In his last

game against the Sooners, Spillman had nine tackles with a sack and a 15-yard interception return.

By the numbers

20: Josh Heupel has a 20-3 record against non-conference opponents.

4: Joey Aguilar has four games with more than 300 passing yards this season.

6: Tennessee is 6-1 when wearing its Smokey Grey uniform.

131: The Vols have outscored opponents 131-45 in the first quarter.

Prediction

Tennessee 56, New Mexico State 10

It's a hard pill to swallow knowing there is no playoff future to play for, but the Vols can still finish the season strong and look forward to a bowl game. It's not what they want, but it's all they have. The Aggies are not competitive enough to keep up with Tennessee and that means more younger players should get opportunities to see action and get valuable experience for next season.

— Edwin Stanton



Tray Taylor and Troy are hoping a midweek matchup doesn't trip them up. [TROY ATHLETICS]

This week's SEC, state games

Troy at Old Dominion

When: 6:30 p.m. Thursday

TV: ESPN

Records: Troy (6-3, 4-1 Sun Belt), Old Dominion (6-3, 3-2)

The series: First meeting.

The lowdown: Troy, if it wins its final three games, will play in the Sun Belt championship game. ... The Trojans are playing their first midweek game of the

season. ... Troy had a five-game win streak snapped in its last game, a 23-10 home loss to Arkansas State on Nov. 1. ... The Trojans' sickly 187 yards offense was their second worst total of the season. They had 112 in a September home loss to Memphis. ... Old Dominion was also off last week following a 31-6 win at Louisiana-Monroe on Nov. 1. ... Colton Joseph was 12-of-22 passing for 231 yards

and ran for 72 yards and three scores for the Monarchs. ... Joseph is second in the nation with 15.38 yards per completion, is fifth in total offense and leads the nation with four completions of at least 70 yards. ... Troy's Tray Taylor averages 20.1 yards per catch, which ranks fifth in the nation. ... Old Dominion will be the 70th Division I school the Trojans have faced.

South Carolina at No. 3 Texas A&M

When: 11 a.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN

Records: South Carolina (3-6, 1-6 SEC), Texas A&M (9-0, 6-0)

The series: Texas A&M leads 9-2.

The lowdown: Texas A&M is 9-0 for the fifth time in program history.



Texas A&M is hoping it'll keep hearing the sweet sound of victory after getting off to its best start since 1992. [GERALD HERBERT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]



Tennessee Tech hasn't had many reasons to celebrate as a program, so 10 wins is a nice change of pace. [TENNESSEE TECH ATHLETICS]

SEC

From Page G8

The Aggies previously did it in 1919, 1939, 1975 and 1992. Only two of those seasons ended in claimed national championships — 1919 and 1939. ... South Carolina has lost four straight and six of its last seven since opening the season 2-0. ... Texas A&M will be the Gamecocks' fifth straight ranked opponent. That's a program first. ... The Aggies are currently tied atop the SEC standings with Alabama. Texas A&M, which still has one more SEC game after Saturday's matchup, last appeared in a conference title game in 1998 when it was still in the Big 12. ... South Carolina is tied for second-to-last in the league standings with Auburn. Only Arkansas has a worse SEC record.

Arkansas at LSU

When: 11:45 a.m. Saturday

TV: SEC

Records: Arkansas (2-7, 0-5 SEC), LSU (5-4, 2-4)

The series: LSU leads 45-23-2.

The lowdown: LSU has won eight of the last 10 meetings. Five of those matchups have been decided by one score. Arkansas' wins came in 2021 (16-13 in overtime) and 2015 (31-14). ... The Razorbacks' last SEC victory came Oct. 26, 2024. They beat Mississippi State 58-25. Arkansas lost to Mississippi State 38-35 two weeks ago. ... LSU's offense ranks 98th out of 134 FBS teams. The Tigers' 23.7 points per game is tied with Boston College,



LSU is looking to drum up some support for Saturday. It decided to ask its fans to wear purple. [VASHA HUNT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

behind Minnesota (23.8) and ahead of Liberty and Wake Forest (23.3 each). ... Arkansas' defense is 123rd. The Razorbacks allow 34.3 ppg, which is better than Georgia Southern (34.5), but ahead of Air Force and UTSA (33 each). ... LSU is encouraging fans to wear purple for the matchup, which also happened to be the color of a bruise. Seems appropriate for the way the season has gone.

Tennessee Tech at Kentucky

When: 12:30 p.m. Saturday

TV: SECN+

Records: Tennessee Tech (10-0), Kentucky (4-5)

The series: Kentucky leads 1-0.

The lowdown: Kentucky and Tennessee Tech last met in the 1951 season opener. The Wildcats won 72-13. The 72 points are the third-most in Kentucky history

behind the 83 it scored on North Dakota in 1950 and the 77 in put up against UTEP in 2002. ... Tennessee Tech is getting \$600,000 for the trip. ... The Golden Eagles are guaranteed to have a second straight winning season. The last time they accomplished that feat was 2000-01. ... Tennessee Tech has just 37 winning



The last time North Texas was 8-1, safety Quinton Hammonds was a bit far off from being born. The Mean Green were members of the Missouri Valley Conference and were known as the North Texas State Eagles. [NORTH TEXAS ATHLETICS]



Alabama A&M needs to pile up a few more wins to avoid another losing season. [ALABAMA A&M ATHLETICS]

SEC

From Page G9

seasons dating to 1922. This is No. 38. It last won 10 games in 1972. ... The Golden Eagles are ranked fifth in the STATS FCS top 25. ... Kentucky's last three-game win streak was 2023 when it opened the season with five straight wins. The Wildcats finished 7-6 that year. ... Keko Visperas, a transfer from Eastern Washington, is completing 65% of his passes for 2,104 yards, 22 touchdowns and four interceptions for Tennessee Tech. Cutter Boley has 12 touchdowns and eight picks for Kentucky.

North Texas at UAB

When: 1 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN+

Records: North Texas (8-1, 4-1 American), UAB (3-6, 1-4)

The series: UAB leads 6-2.

The lowdown: The Mean Green is one of five teams with one American Conference loss. ... North Texas ranks fifth nationally in total offense at almost 488 yards per game and second in scoring offense with a 44.4-point average. ... The Mean Green was last 8-1 in 1959 when it wasn't known as the Mean Green, nor the University of North Texas. The 1959 North Texas State Eagles started the season with eight straight wins, including one over Pensacola Navy, before losing at Tulsa. ... UNT's Quinton Hammonds intercepted two passes and



Devin Voisin and South Alabama will see if they can dash any hopes Louisiana-Monroe has of reaching bowl eligibility. [SOUTH ALABAMA ATHLETICS]

Caleb Hawkins ran 33 times for 197 yards in last week's 31-17 win over previously unbeaten Navy. ... The Mean Green's loss was 63-36 at home to South Florida. ... North Texas is trying to reach nine wins for the first time since 2018 and for the eighth time in school history. ... UAB's defense gave up a season-low 232 yards last week at Rice, but the offense also posted a season low with 215 yards in a 24-17 loss.

Florida A&M at Alabama A&M

When: 2 p.m. Saturday

TV: SWAC TV

Records: Florida A&M (4-5, 3-2 SWAC), Alabama A&M (4-6, 1-5)

The series: FAMU leads 12-2.

The lowdown: Alabama A&M needs to win its last two games to avoid a fifth straight non-winning season. Over the last 12 years, the Bulldogs have seven losing seasons and one .500 year. ... A&M squeezed out 204 yards offense in last week's 48-5 home loss to Prairie View A&M. ... The Bulldogs, who gave up 607 yards, led 5-0 early in the second quarter. ... Alabama A&M's Robert Cole

has punted 29 times the last three games, including a season-high 11 against Prairie View. ... The five points were the fewest by the Bulldogs in a SWAC game since losing 44-0 at Grambling State in 2005. ... It was the first five-point effort by Alabama A&M since at least 1947. ... Thad Franklin Jr. ran for 122 yards and a touchdown in FAMU's 31-28 win at Arkansas-Pine Bluff last weekend. The Rattlers gave up a last-minute touchdown before recovering an onside kick to seal it. ... Alabama A&M last beat FAMU in 1979. After 1979, the teams didn't meet again until 2021.

South Alabama at Louisiana-Monroe

When: 2:30 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN+

Records: South Alabama (2-7, 1-4 Sun Belt), Louisiana-Monroe (3-6, 1-4)

The series: USA leads 6-5.

The lowdown: The Jaguars were idle last week following a 31-22 home loss to Louisiana-Lafayette on Nov. 1. ... The Warhawks were also off last week following a 31-6 home loss to Old Dominion on Nov. 1. ULM has lost five straight. ... The Warhawks need to win out, including a bowl game, to avoid their 13th straight non-winning season. They last had a winning year in 2012. ... ULM lost the last six games of 2024, a skid started by South Alabama, 46-17. ... Jags receiver Jeremy Scott has posted consecutive 100-yard



Johnny Vaught is the only other Ole Miss coach than Lane Kiffin with multiple 10-win seasons with the Rebels. [OLE MISS]



Oscar Delp and Georgia were able to get in the last word — twice — against Texas last season. [JOHN BAZEMORE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

SEC

From Page G10

games. He had 121 against Georgia State three weeks ago and 102 vs. Louisiana-Lafayette. ... ULM head coach Bryant Vincent was a South Alabama assistant from 2011-13 and 2015-17.

Florida at No. 6 Ole Miss

When: 6 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN

Records: Florida (3-6, 2-4 SEC), Ole Miss (9-1, 5-1)

The series: Florida leads 13-12-1

The lowdown: Ole Miss went 7-1-1 against Florida from 1926-58, but is just 5-12 against the Gators since. ... Florida has won four of the last five meetings ... Lane Kiffin is looking to become the first Rebels coach with three consecutive 10-win seasons. Johnny Vaught had two in 1959-60. ... Overall, Ole Miss has just nine double-digit win seasons, four of which were under Vaught (1955, '59, '60 and '62). The Rebels' first year playing football was 1893. ... Florida has played five other top-10 teams this season. The Gators have lost four of them. The 29-21 win over then-No. 9 Texas on Oct. 4 was the exception. ... DJ Lagway will be Florida's starting quarterback despite being benched in last week's loss at Kentucky, interim coach Billy Gonzalez said Monday.

No. 10 Texas at No. 5 Georgia

When: 6:30 p.m. Saturday



Missouri has been trending in the wrong direction since it started 5-0. [L.G. PATTERSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

TV: ABC

Records: Texas (7-2, 4-1 SEC), Georgia (8-1, 6-1)

The series: Texas leads 4-3.

The lowdown: Georgia beat Texas twice last season. The Bulldogs upset the top-ranked Longhorns 30-15 in Austin that October and then beat No. 2 Texas 22-19

in overtime in the SEC championship game two months later. ... Saturday will

SEE SEC, G12

SEC

From Page G11

mark Texas' first trip to Athens, Georgia. The previous seven meetings took place in Atlanta (twice), Austin (twice), Dallas, Miami and New Orleans. ... The Bulldogs are 41-17 against ranked opponents under coach Kirby Smart, including 15-2 at home. They are also 8-0 in Athens against top-10 foes. ... This is Georgia's final SEC game on its schedule. Texas still has two more after this — Arkansas and Texas A&M. ... The Bulldogs are coming off a fifth straight win since losing to Alabama after topping Mississippi State 41-21. The Longhorns had a bye last week.

Mississippi State at No. 22 Missouri

When: 6:45 p.m. Saturday

TV: SEC

Records: Mississippi State (5-5, 1-5 SEC), Missouri (6-3, 2-3)

The series: Missouri leads 3-2.

The lowdown: Mizzou sported its 19th straight home capacity crowd for last week's 38-17 loss to Texas A&M. ... The Tigers, after starting 5-0, have lost three of their last four games. ... Jamal Roberts and Ahmad Hardy both ran for over 100 yards for Missouri. Roberts' 17 carries netted 110 yards and Hardy's 13 runs went for 109. ... Hardy crossed 1,000 for the season and now has 1,046. ... The Bulldogs can become bowl eligible for



Caleb Nix and Jacksonville State will be looking to remain the No. 1 team in Conference USA by the time they're finished with Kennesaw State. [JACKSONVILLE STATE ATHLETICS]

the first time since 2022. ... Mississippi State's 156.8-yard rushing average is its highest since a 220.6 in 2019. ... MSU quarterback Blake Shapen is set to make his 36th straight start. His 2,234 yards passing rank sixth in the SEC. ... Kyle Ferrie's 209 career points is seventh on MSU's all-time list. He's 15 points shy of having the most of a kicker. ... Missouri, after allowing four second-half touchdowns in its first eight games, gave up two to Texas A&M. ... The Tigers, who

entered with the nation's No. 5 defense (245.8 yards per game), gave up 464 yards. They now rank 10th.

Kennesaw State at Jacksonville State

When: 7 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPNU

Records: Kennesaw State (7-2, 5-0 Conference USA), Jacksonville State (6-3, 5-0)

The series: Kennesaw State leads 3-2.

The lowdown: The Owls and Gamecocks are the only two remaining teams unbeaten in Conference USA play. ... Kennesaw State's losses were 10-9 at Wake Forest and 56-9 at No. 2 Indiana. ... The Owls have won seven straight, their longest streak since a 10-gamer in 2021. ... Garrison Rippa's tiebreaking 45-yard field goal with 49 seconds remaining helped JSU become bowl eligible for the third straight year with a 30-27 win last week at Texas-El Paso. ... Rippa, who also made kicks of 30 and 36 yards, has 31 career field goals, which is sixth in school history. ... Caden Creel had 315 total yards and Cam Cook ran 19 times for 127 yards and a touchdown. ... Creel was 15-of-31 passing for 181 yards, including a 77-yard TD to Deondre Johnson, and ran 13 times for 134 yards. ... Caleb Nix's 93-yard interception return for a touchdown was the longest for the Gamecocks since Rashod Byers went 95 in 2013 at Austin Peay. ... Nix's ranks seventh in school history. ... Jax State is 27-2 since 2022 when reaching 30 points and 138-16 this century. ... Kennesaw State had a school-record six sacks and tied a school record with 14 tackles for loss in last week's 24-21 win at New Mexico State. ... Defensive back Kody Jones' career-high eight tackles included four for loss. ... Of the previous five games between the Owls and Gamecocks, two have gone to overtime.

— A. Stacy Long and David Glovach

PICKS PANEL



STACY LONG



DAVID GLOVACH



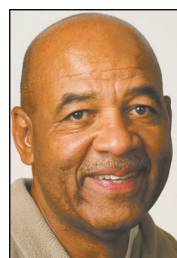
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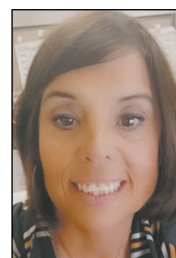
RENITA JIMMAR



GREGG DEWALT



DEANGELO MCDANIEL



MARA BETH CRAVENS



CALEB SUGGS

Oklahoma at Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Oklahoma
UNA at Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State	Tarleton State
Texas at Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Texas	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia
Arkansas at LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	LSU	Arkansas
Notre Dame at Pittsburgh	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Notre Dame	Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	Notre Dame
Kennesaw State at Jacksonville State	Kennesaw State	Kennesaw State	Kennesaw State	Jacksonville State	Jacksonville State	Jacksonville State	Jacksonville State	Kennesaw State
South Alabama at Louisiana-Monroe	South Alabama	South Alabama	South Alabama	South Alabama	Louisiana-Monroe	Louisiana-Monroe	South Alabama	South Alabama
Clemson at Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Louisville	Clemson	Clemson	Louisville
Arizona at Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Arizona
TCU at BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	TCU	BYU
Last week	8-2	8-2	8-2	9-1	8-2	4-6	5-5	8-2
Season record	80-30	74-36	72-38	71-39	70-40	59-51	57-53	53-57

Ohio State line deals with inconsistency

By Marcus Hartman
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Top-ranked Ohio State is still sorting out its offensive line heading into the final quarter of the regular season.

Coach Ryan Day said Tuesday he hopes the unit will be back at full strength after starting right tackle Phillip Daniels and top reserve Josh Padilla missed the Buckeyes' win at Purdue last Saturday with unspecified injuries.

"We'll kind of see as the week goes on, but we're expecting a full week of work out of those guys," Day said. The undefeated Buckeyes host UCLA (3-6) on Saturday night.

Sophomore Ian Moore started in place of Daniels, and Day paid him what amounts to a compliment for an offensive lineman.

"It was good to see Ian Moore in his first start play well," Day said. "I mean, when you don't notice somebody, that's a good sign at tackle, and we didn't really notice Ian too much."

Padilla had been splitting time the past few games at right guard with Tegra Tshabola, a junior in his second full season as a starter who has been inconsistent most of the season.

After Day said Tshabola had one of his better games two weeks ago against Penn State, the coach acknowledged he took a step back at Purdue.

That means snaps are up for grabs as the Buckeyes prepare for their last three games of the season.

Ethan Onianwa, a senior who transferred from Rice but lost the battle for right tackle to Daniels in August, is in the mix at right guard along with Padilla if he is healthy.

"We'll see how Ethan does today, but that's kind of where we feel like we are right now. And we feel like splitting the reps can help them — all those guys — become more efficient," Day said. "But we're going to keep evaluating, keep pushing on it and see where we go. And a big part of it is how healthy Josh is."

After hosting UCLA, the Buckeyes will play their final home game of the regular season against Rutgers then go to Michigan for the traditional regular-season finale.

The Bruins are 122nd in the nation in run defense (191.1 yards per game allowed) and last in the nation (134th) in both sacks (0.67 per game) and tackles



Ohio State's Ethan Onianwa is a possibility to start at right tackle this week against UCLA. [JAY LAPRETE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

for loss (3.1 per game), so they might not represent much of a threat.

Rutgers is 126th against the run (196.5 yards), 127th in sacks (1.0) and 95th in tackles for loss (3.9), but the Wolverines are a different animal.

The Buckeyes' rival is expected to present a much greater challenge as they currently rank 12th in the nation in run defense (100.2 yards), 18th in sacks (2.67) and 23rd in tackles for loss (6.7).

"I'm encouraged with a lot of things

that are going on up there, and if I thought it was a real problem or a mess, I would address it," Day said. "I know that we're going to get a lot more challenges here, and we're challenging these guys every day."

Pass protection has been strong all season for the Buckeyes, but the running game has been at best a work in progress.

While they are fourth in the country both in sacks allowed (0.56) and tackles for loss allowed (3.11), the

rushing offense ranks 69th (155.1 yards per game).

That is after they went for 170 yards on the ground at Purdue, their best total this season against a team from a Power Four conference.

"The backs need to continue to run better, and we need to continue to figure out ways to put them in a situation to be successful," Day said.

"I think they're grinding on it. They're working hard."

COLLEGE STANDINGS

(Through Nov. 8 games)

American Athletic Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Navy	5	1	192 154	7	2	288 241
North Texas	4	1	221 155	8	1	400 217
South Florida	4	1	251 132	7	2	378 218
Tulane	4	1	145 130	7	2	245 236
East Carolina	4	1	181 95	6	3	305 156
Memphis	4	2	228 147	8	2	371 211
Army	3	3	130 130	5	4	201 198
Temple	3	3	172 163	5	5	296 267
FAU	3	3	191 220	4	5	282 311
UTSA	2	3	170 176	4	5	295 297
Rice	2	4	113 181	5	5	211 279
UAB	1	4	118 170	3	6	244 334
Tulsa	0	6	129 237	2	7	197 277
Charlotte	0	6	106 257	1	8	162 346

Atlantic Coast Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Georgia Tech	5	1	193 152	8	1	324 208
Virginia	5	1	181 138	8	2	337 216
Pittsburgh	5	1	227 139	7	2	357 196
SMU	5	1	183 98	7	3	322 204
Duke	4	1	192 129	5	4	317 262
Louisville	4	2	177 147	7	2	296 195
Miami	3	2	149 89	7	2	296 135
Wake Forest	3	3	119 150	6	3	210 183
California	3	3	154 186	6	4	250 252
Clemson	3	4	214 169	4	5	251 202
N.C. State	2	3	170 181	5	4	292 275
North Carolina	2	3	91 101	4	5	175 192
Virginia Tech	2	3	124 148	3	6	219 267
Stanford	2	5	122 212	3	7	175 291
Florida St.	1	5	156 159	4	5	330 189
Syracuse	1	6	104 226	3	7	223 315
Boston College	0	6	98 230	1	9	237 345

Big 12 Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Texas Tech	6	1	247 91	9	1	421 126
BYU	5	1	167 149	8	1	297 165
Cincinnati	5	1	199 157	7	2	320 197
Houston	5	2	206 188	8	2	295 221
Utah	4	2	219 103	7	2	356 128
Arizona St.	4	2	130 155	6	3	222 213
Arizona	3	3	186 153	6	3	297 179
TCU	3	3	169 162	6	3	294 221
Baylor	3	3	190 174	5	4	304 264
Kansas St.	3	3	192 167	4	5	268 249
Iowa St.	3	4	176 179	6	4	271 215
Kansas	3	4	194 196	5	5	302 252
West Virginia	2	5	152 252	4	6	238 296
UCF	1	5	126 154	4	5	245 180
Colorado	1	6	132 246	3	7	220 300
Oklahoma St.	0	6	95 254	1	8	137 349

Big Sky Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Montana	6	0	227 153	10	0	399 234
Montana St.	6	0	294 65	8	2	389 161
UC Davis	5	1	204 131	7	2	295 259
Sacramento St.	4	2	241 180	6	4	355 264
N. Arizona	3	3	177 159	6	4	317 300
E. Washington	3	3	119 182	4	6	220 312
Idaho St.	3	3	161 192	4	6	328 308
Idaho	2	4	171 177	4	6	266 257
Cal Poly	1	5	137 187	3	7	260 309
N. Colorado	1	5	135 230	3	7	212 301
Weber St.	1	5	133 243	3	7	226 401
Portland St.	1	5	141 241	1	9	164 425

Big South-OVC Association

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Tennessee Tech	7	0	270 122	10	0	452 153
UT Martin	5	1	170 105	5	2	214 253
Gardner-Webb	4	2	154 145	6	4	276 314
Chas. Southern	3	3	137 149	4	6	178 265
L'wood (Mo.)	3	3	169 179	4	6	225 299
SE Missouri	2	4	134 151	3	7	243 314
W. Illinois	2	4	139 195	3	7	231 371
E. Illinois	2	5	130 158	3	7	198 252
Tennessee St.	0	6	63 172	2	8	135 282

Big Ten Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Indiana	7	0	289 98	10	0	445 121
Ohio St.	6	0	206 49	9	0	327 65
Oregon	5	1	179 101	8	1	348 124
Michigan	5	1	143 111	7	2	253 155
Southern Cal	5	1	200 129	7	2	356 196
Iowa	4	2	172 93	6	3	266 123
Minnesota	4	2	111 157	6	3	214 194



It's not corny, but the Iowa Hawkeyes can point the way toward the top of the Big Ten. [CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Nebraska	4	3	178 175	7	3	325 199
Illinois	3	3	163 211	6	3	298 233
Washington	3	3	127 125	6	3	294 180
Northwestern	3	3	110 135	5	4	197 172
UCLA	3	3	141 168	3	6	184 276
Rutgers	2	5	160 242	5	5	299 300
Maryland	1	5	125 178	4	5	228 211
Wisconsin	1	5	140 153	3	6	113 201
Maryland	0	6	124 213	3	6	230 283
Penn St.	0	6	144 184	3	6	276 201
Purdue	0	7	114 204	2	8	209 277

Coastal Athletic Association

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Rhode Island	6	0	230 118	8	2	302 207
Villanova	6	1	243 143	7	2	273 212
Monmouth (N.J.)	5	1	218 136	8	2	393 283
Maine	5	1	196 114	6	4	250 213
William & Mary	5	2	207 181	6	4	278 266
New Hampshire	4	2	150 128	6	4	245 215
Stony Brook	3	3	171 151	5	5	274 251
Elon	2	4	134 147	4	6	259 256
Towson	2	4	151 147	4	6	250 251
Campbell	2	4	169 182	2	8	241 364
NC A&T	2	4	146 229	2	8	210 405
Bryant	1	5	137 207	3	7	228 287
Hampton	0	6	102 231	2	8	191 347
Albany (N.Y.)	0	6	82 222	1	9	151 327

Conference USA

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Kennesaw St.	5	0	161 90	7	2	234 190
Jacksonville St.	5	0	155 124	6	3	269 234
W. Kentucky	5	1	164 138	7	2	271 205
Missouri St.	4	1	117 102	6	3	203 233

Liberty	3	2	149 120	4	5	210 202
Delaware	3	3	173 192	5	4	259 281
Louisiana Tech	3	3	192 127	5	4	253 170
FIU	2	3	144 147	4	5	234 269
UTEP	1	4	101 129	2	7	194 232
New Mexico St.	1	5	132 172	3	6	192 227
Middle Tenn.	0	5	115 157	1	8	181 288
Sam Houston St.	0	5	92 197	1	8	154 344

Ivy League

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Harvard	5	0	172 55	8	0	321 93
Yale	4	1	150 86	6	2	238 134
Dartmouth	3	2	120 103	6	2	212 164
Penn	3	2	129 140	5	3	211 214
Cornell	3	2	123 133	4	4	184 207
Princeton	2	3	105 106	3	5	192 214
Brown	0	5	95 173	3	5	198 213
Columbia	0	5	58 156	1	7	98 235

Mid-American Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Ohio	4	1	149 102	6	3	258 218
Buffalo	4	1	134 106	5	4	223 176
Miami (Ohio)	4	1	135 92	5	4	228 195
W. Michigan	4	1	118 63	5	4	201 171
Cent. Michigan	3	2	132 84	5	4	217 216
Toledo	3	2	168 58	5	4	296 131
Ball St.	3	2	86 118	4	5	148 251
Akron	3	3	134 155	4	6	213 271
Kent St.	2	3	117 120	3	6	162 309
E. Michigan	2	4	137 158	3	7	244 317
N. Illinois	1	4	69 138	2	7	110 219
Bowling Green	1	5	99 164	3	7	185 258

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
Delaware St.	3	0	76 58	7	3	344 256
S.C. State	3	0	129 62	7	3	319 272
N.C. Central	2	1	92 77	3	3	345 260
LIU Brooklyn	1	2	59 104	4	6	181 254
Howard	0	3	69 83	3	7	231 258
Morgan St.	0	3	68 109	1	9	208 348
Norfolk St.	0	3	68 109	1	9	208 348

Missouri Valley Conference

	Conference			All Games		
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA
N. Dakota St.	7	0	258 100	10	0	396 117
South Dakota	5	2	161 162	7	4	247 275
Illinois St.	4	2	201 154	7	3	235 268
North Dakota	4	2	185 101	6		

COLUMN

Everyone weighing their playoff chances

By Doug Segrest
For GameDay

Normally, we're the optimist. But when it comes to the SEC, this year we've been the glass half empty guy. Now it looks like we were wrong.

We've said all along that the SEC grind was too difficult. That's still true. But the parity we're seeing is not limited to the SEC.

Because when the first two College Football Playoff rankings were released, five SEC teams were projected to make the field while four others (Oklahoma, Vanderbilt, Missouri and Tennessee) were still in contention.

The committee matched up well with the AP rankings and mirrored almost exactly the now-defunct BCS computer rankings. What's interesting, though, is that even now the computers see things fairly similar, with one notable exception, on how the SEC stacks up.

Compare by Top 11s (because the Group of 5 champ makes up the 12th team in the field):

ESPN's College Football Power Index has four teams in the top 11 — No. 4 Alabama followed by No. 6 Georgia, No. 7 Texas A&M and No. 8 Texas. (Also ranked are No. 12 Ole Miss, No. 14 Tennessee, No. 16 Vanderbilt and No. 20 Missouri.)

ESPN's SP+Rankings have six teams in the top 11, but with a much different order — No. 5 Texas A&M, No. 8 Ole Miss, No. 9 Oklahoma, No. 10 Georgia and No. 11 Alabama. (Just missing are No. 14 Texas, No. 16 Vanderbilt, No. 17 Tennessee and No. 19 Missouri.)

The Sagarin rankings have five SEC teams in the top 11 — No. 4 Texas A&M, No. 5 Alabama, No. 7 Georgia, No. 9 Texas and No. 11 Ole Miss. (Missing are No. 14 Oklahoma, No. 15 Vanderbilt, No. 18 LSU, No. 19 Tennessee and No. 21 Missouri.)

The consensus: Texas A&M, Alabama and Georgia make it. Ole Miss and the rest have the most work to do.

Just remember, everything can change in a week's time.

Looking ahead

• **South Carolina at Texas A&M (11 a.m. on ABC):** A year ago, the Gamecocks were in the CFP mix. Now, they try to play spoiler, hoping the Aggies are



Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin, quarterback Trinidad Chambliss and the Rebels still have work to do or they'll be out of the playoffs. [ROGELIO V. SOLIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

looking ahead to the Texas showdown and a trip to Atlanta. According to the Allstate Playoff Predictor, the Aggies are a lock to make the field with a South Carolina loss as long as they get to the SEC title game.

• **Oklahoma at Alabama (2:30 p.m. on ABC):** Vengeance is the Tide's intention. Of the head-scratching losses a year ago, none was more shattering than the Tide's performance at OU. Can Ryan Grubb figure out Brent Venables' defense Saturday? According to the predictor, Alabama can also survive a loss as long as it gets to Atlanta.

• **Florida at Ole Miss (6 p.m. on ESPN):** The Gators' season officially went RIP last weekend against Kentucky. So, Ole Miss can't afford a stumble. Or can it? The predictor said Ole Miss still has a 58% chance of a playoff berth with a loss to Florida, as long as it wins the Egg Bowl.

• **Texas at Georgia (6:30 p.m. on ABC):** The other vengeance game. Georgia got Texas twice a year ago, but the Longhorns of November are surging. This could be a classic between the hedges. Is Texas toast with a loss? The predictor said no, giving the Longhorns

a 57% chance of getting in. Meanwhile, the predictor says Georgia has a 97% chance of surviving a loss and getting in even without playing in Atlanta.

• **Mississippi State at Missouri (6:45 p.m. on SEC Network):** State came back down to earth against Georgia. Can Missouri take advantage of the spiral? Uh, no. The predictor doesn't even give Missouri a 7% chance by winning out.

Doug Segrest, who covered college football for 28 years for numerous newspapers in Alabama and Tennessee, is a freelance columnist.



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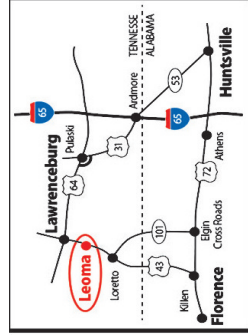
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