

GAMEDAY



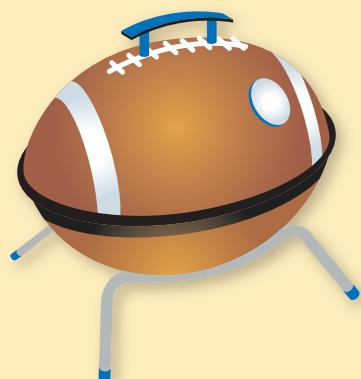
EMPTY CALORIES

Tigers, Crimson Tide tune up for Iron Bowl against lesser competition

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

TAILGATE of the week RECIPE

Stuffed Crescent Rolls



INGREDIENTS

2 cans of crescent rolls
1 to 2 celery sticks, chopped
2 green onions, chopped
1 8 oz. cream cheese

1/4 cup bell pepper
1 chub of Jimmy Dean sausage
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

Cook sausage. Add celery, onion, green pepper. Cook for 8 minutes. Take off stove. Add cream cheese, mix well. Take one crescent roll, break in half, roll on bake sheet. Top with 1/2 of filling. Take other half of crescent roll and put on top of filling. Pinch sides together. Do the same with the other crescent roll. Grease pan with butter. Beat one egg & milk, spread over top for it be golden brown.



This week's recipe submitted
by Etta Cheatom,
Leighton, 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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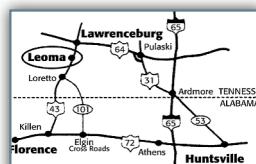
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Air Force hopes to spread its wings this week at home against New Mexico. [JACK DEMPSEY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

THE LINE

(as of Tuesday)

Thursday
FAVORITE TODAY O/U **UNDERDOG**
 at ARKANSAS STATE 2½ 54½ Louisiana-Lafayette

Friday
 Florida State 4½ 61½ at N.C. STATE
 at UNLV 2½ 64½ Hawaii

Saturday
 Miami (Fla.) 17½ 48½ at VIRGINIA TECH
 at ARMY 9½ 45½ Tulsa
 at NORTHWESTERN 3½ 40½ Minnesota
 at IOWA STATE 4½ 54½ Kansas
 at OKLAHOMA 7½ 42½ Missouri
 at SMU 2½ 53½ Louisville
 at OHIO STATE 31½ 55½ Rutgers
 at GEORGIA 43½ 52½ Charlotte
 at ARIZONA 6½ 62½ Baylor
 at JAMES MADISON 13½ 42½ Washington State
 Old Dominion 12½ 62½ at GA. SOUTHERN
 at KENNESAW STATE 6½ 57½ Missouri State
 Marshall 4½ 54½ at APP STATE
 at UTEP 3½ 44½ New Mexico State
 at MIDDLE TENN. 6½ 53½ Sam Houston
 South Florida 21½ 69½ at UAB
 UConn 7½ 65½ at FLA. ATLANTIC
 Liberty 1½ 45½ at LOUISIANA TECH
 at OREGON 9½ 59½ USC
 at NOTRE DAME 35½ 50½ Syracuse
 at TEXAS 8½ 57½ Arkansas
 Duke 6½ 51½ at N. CAROLINA
 at IOWA 16½ 42½ Michigan State
 Jacksonville State 1½ 55½ at FLORIDA INT'L
 at VANDERBILT 9½ 53½ Kentucky
 Southern Miss 2½ 54½ at SOUTH ALABAMA
 at UTAH 17½ 53½ Kansas State
 Michigan 13½ 45½ at MARYLAND
 at TROY 11½ 51½ Georgia State
 at HOUSTON 1½ 54½ TCU
 at UCF 14½ 48½ Oklahoma State
 at SOUTH CAROLINA 23½ 50½ Coastal Carolina
 at PENN STATE 9½ 44½ Nebraska
 at BOISE STATE 16½ 44½ Colorado State
 New Mexico 3½ 56½ at AIR FORCE
 at GEORGIA TECH 2½ 61½ Pittsburgh
 Cal 3½ 47½ at STANFORD
 North Texas 18½ 55½ at RICE
 Illinois 8½ 40½ at WISCONSIN
 Tennessee 3½ 57½ at FLORIDA
 at LSU 22½ 50½ Western Kentucky
 Arizona State 6½ 48½ at COLORADO
 BYU 2½ 54½ at CINCINNATI
 at SAN DIEGO STATE 12½ 49½ San Jose State
 Washington 10½ 51½ at UCLA
 at FRESNO STATE 2½ 50½ Utah State



The Harvard Crimson hope to signal an outright Ivy League title after Saturday's game with Yale on ESPNU. [HARVARD ATHLETICS]

GAMES ON TV

Thursday

Louisiana-Lafayette at Arkansas State,
 6:30 p.m., ESPN

Friday

Florida State at N.C. State, 7 p.m., ESPN
 Hawaii at UNLV, 9:30 p.m., FS1

Saturday

Delaware at Wake Forest, 11 a.m., ACC
 Harvard at Yale, 11 a.m., ESPN
 Kansas at Iowa State, 11 a.m., FS1
 Louisville at SMU, 11 a.m., ESPN2
 Miami at Virginia Tech, 11 a.m., ESPN
 Minnesota at Northwestern, 11 a.m., BTN
 Missouri at Oklahoma, 11 a.m., ABC
 Rutgers at Ohio State, 11 a.m., FOX

Tulsa at Army, 11 a.m., CBSSN

Charlotte at Georgia, 11:45 a.m., SEC

Baylor at Arizona, noon, TNT

Arkansas-Pine Bluff at Alabama State,
 noon, GrioTV

Arkansas at Texas, 2:30 p.m., ABC

Jacksonville State at FIU, 2:30 p.m., CBSSN

Kentucky at Vanderbilt, 2:30 p.m., ESPN

Michigan State at Iowa, 2:30 p.m., FS1

Syracuse at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m., NBC

USC at Oregon, 2:30 p.m., CBS

Tulane at Temple, 2:45 p.m., ESPNU

Kansas State at Utah, 3 p.m., ESPN2

Michigan at Maryland, 3 p.m., BTN

TCU at Houston, 3 p.m., FOX

Coastal Carolina at South Carolina, 3:15
 p.m., SEC

Furman at Clemson, 3:30 p.m., CW

Colorado State at Boise State, 6 p.m., FS1

Nebraska at Penn State, 6 p.m., NBC

New Mexico at Air Force, 6 p.m., CBSSN

Pittsburgh at Georgia Tech, 6 p.m., ESPN

California at Stanford, 6:30 p.m., ACC

Illinois at Wisconsin, 6:30 p.m., BTN

North Texas at Rice, 6:30 p.m., ESPNU

Tennessee at Florida, 6:30 p.m., ABC

Western Kentucky at LSU, 6:45 p.m., SEC

Arizona State at Colorado, 7 p.m., ESPN2

BYU at Cincinnati, 7 p.m., FOX

San Jose State at San Diego State, 9:30

p.m., FS1

Utah State at Fresno State, 9:30 p.m.,

CBSSN

Washington at UCLA, 9:30 p.m., NBC

TOP 25 SCHEDULE

Saturday

No. 1 Ohio St. (10-0) vs. Rutgers (5-5), 11 a.m.
 No. 3 Texas A&M (10-0) vs. Samford (1-10), 11 a.m.
 No. 4 Georgia (9-1) vs. Charlotte (1-9), 11:45 a.m.
 No. 6 Oregon (9-1) vs. No. 16 Southern Cal (8-2), 2:30 p.m.
 No. 8 Oklahoma (8-2) vs. No. 23 Missouri (7-3), 11 a.m.

No. 9 Notre Dame (8-2) vs. Syracuse (3-7), 2:30 p.m.

No. 10 Alabama (8-2) vs. Eastern Illinois (3-8), 1 p.m.

No. 11 BYU (9-1) at Cincinnati (7-3), 7 p.m.

No. 12 Vanderbilt (8-2) vs. Kentucky (5-5), 2:30 p.m.

No. 13 Utah (8-2) vs. Kansas St. (5-5), 3 p.m.

No. 14 Miami (Fla.) (8-2) at Virginia Tech (3-7), 11 a.m.

No. 15 Georgia Tech (9-1) vs. Pittsburgh (7-3), 6 p.m.

No. 17 Texas (7-3) vs. Arkansas (2-8), 2:30 p.m.

No. 18 Michigan (8-2) at Maryland (4-6), 3 p.m.

No. 20 Tennessee (7-3) at Florida (3-7), 6:30 p.m.

No. 21 James Madison (9-1) vs. Washington St. (5-5), noon

No. 22 North Texas (9-1) at Rice (5-5), 6:30 p.m.

No. 24 Tulane (8-2) at Temple (5-5), 2:45 p.m.

No. 25 Houston (8-2) vs. TCU (6-4), 3 p.m.

Eastern Illinois at Alabama

When: 1 p.m. Saturday

TV/radio: SEC+ / FM-93.9, FM 97.7, AM-920

Records: Eastern Illinois (3-8), No. 10 Alabama (8-2)

The series: First meeting.

Four-down territory

1. Bad to worse: It's bad enough when Ty Simpson gets sacked, but it's worse when he is strip sacked. That's happened in five straight games. The one against Oklahoma last week led to a field goal and the deciding 23-21 score. Two other strip sacks led to field goals for opponents while another led to a touchdown. "The message all week that Ty knows and is frustrated about is getting the ball out of his hand," offensive coordinator Ryan Grubb said. "He's beaten himself up more than anybody."

2. Time for change? Daniel Hill had one of the most productive outings by a Crimson Tide running back all season in last week's loss. He rushed for 60 yards and two touchdowns with five receptions for 37 yards. He earned more carries (15) than starter Jam Miller (nine for 27 yards). While the run game is one of the worst in the SEC (14th), Alabama could benefit by inserting Hill as the starter. For now, it's still Miller's job. "He wasn't perfect, just like any player," Grubb said of Hill. "I think he's shown the capability of being the guy who can get those tough yards."

3. Responds well: Excluding the season finale against Michigan, the Crimson Tide followed a loss with a win three straight times in 2024. Alabama dropped this year's opener but followed with a win. There isn't much concern Alabama dropping this weekend's matchup with the Panthers, but the loss to OU still stings considering the playoff and SEC title-game implications. "I can already see us dialed in. I know the character of this football team," Alabama head coach Kalen DeBoer said.

4. Panther pride: Alabama defensive coordinator Kane Wommack has a soft spot in his heart for Eastern Illinois. He got his first defensive coordinator job with the Panthers as a 26-year-old. "I learned a lot, positively and certainly through certain adversity as well," he said. "There's some people that are still in that program, Tom Michael, their athletic director who I have a tremendous



Alabama defensive back Red Morgan should gain loads of experience when the Crimson Tide takes on Eastern Illinois. [VASHA HUNT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

amount of respect for. So, a neat opportunity to play them and obviously for our guys I think we're all just ready to get back there on the field."

Key matchup

Alabama DL Edric Hill vs. Eastern Illinois DL Samuel Robles

Hill has started just two games, but is a big presence off the bench with 17 tackles and two sacks. Robles is the leader for the Panthers up front with 27 tackles, including four sacks and six tackles for loss.

Player of the week

Red Morgan, CB

The backup has come up big the

last two games with tackles in the backfield, including a forced fumble against Oklahoma. He's getting more playing time — and should see much more against the Panthers.

By the numbers

2: Alabama is the second-least penalized team in the SEC behind Kentucky.

27: Alabama will recognize 27 players before the game for Senior Day.

36: Kalen DeBoer is 36-4 in the month of November.

2016: The Crimson Tide has had a

running back in the SEC top 10 every year since 2016, except for both of Kalen DeBoer's two seasons.

Prediction

Alabama 42, Eastern Illinois 13

There is no better game to play after a tough loss than a cupcake. No offense to Eastern Illinois, but it is getting just over half a million dollars to come to Tuscaloosa, and with it comes an expected tail whipping. Alabama has to get some confidence in the run game before a crucial showdown in Auburn next week.

— Edwin Stanton

Mercer at Auburn

When: 1 p.m. Saturday
TV/radio: SEC+/FM-94.9, FM 100.3
Records: Mercer (9-1), Auburn (4-6)
The series: Auburn leads 13-0.

Four-down territory

1. Take a seat: Ashton Daniels will sit out the Mercer game to keep his redshirt status intact, said Auburn interim coach D.J. Durkin. Daniels could see action if needed against Alabama next week and maintain his redshirt status. That leaves Jackson Arnold and Deuce Knight as the options for Saturday. Arnold has 1,278 passing yards and six touchdowns through nine games. Knight has played in just one game and has two completions on five attempts for 20 yards.

2. Full strength: Top receiver Cam Coleman had an extra week to rest and recover from an ankle injury he sustained against Vanderbilt. He was limited in that game but still finished it. Coleman has 47 receptions for 617 yards and four touchdowns. "Cam's healthy, he's great," Durkin said. "He's been practicing and doing well. He's a full go. I think wherever he hobbled from the game, that's just part of it. He had a lot of touches, and we made a lot of plays in the game as part of it. We're excited about having him to continue to move forward."

3. Slight adjustment: The Auburn defense didn't live up to its reputation the last time out in a 45-38 overtime loss to Vanderbilt. The Tigers hadn't allowed more than 24 points in a game all season. That game was the Tigers' first since firing Hugh Freeze, and the staff was still working out new assignments. With the help of the bye week, Durkin and the staff have put a better plan in place. "It's important in any profession, especially ours, that you take time and reflect. You have to go back and reflect," Durkin said. "We coach our guys all the time and grade them on the film on what they did. I think as a coach, we do the same things."

4. Don't forget him: Most of the attention at receiver goes to Coleman, and rightfully so. But Eric Singleton Jr. has become a valuable weapon for the Tiger offense. He has a catch in every game of his career, extending his streak to 34 games with a career-high 11 catches for 102 yards and a touchdown in Auburn's last game at Vanderbilt. The 11 receptions



Auburn receiver Eric Singleton Jr. has become a valuable weapon for the Tigers. [MICHAEL WOODS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

were the most by an Auburn player since Seth Williams had 13 vs. Georgia in 2019.

Key matchup

Auburn RB Jeremiah Cobb vs. Mercer RB CJ Miller

Cobb has proved to be one of the top backs in the SEC with 904 yards (90 per game) and four touchdowns. Miller is the bell cow for Mercer with 804 yards (81 per game) and 13 touchdowns.

Player of the week

Jackson Arnold, QB

After being benched for a few games,

Arnold will get his chance to shine with Ashton Daniels sitting this one out. It's a perfect opportunity for success and confidence building.

By the numbers

1: Auburn is the only SEC team with a kickoff return for a touchdown this season.

1: The Tigers' 193 interception return yards is the most in the SEC.

4: Auburn is 4-1 this season and 14-5 the last three seasons when scoring 20-plus points in a game.

19: Auburn will honor 19 players for

Senior Day before the game.

Prediction

Auburn 35, Mercer 14

The Tigers have lost six of their last seven games, so Mercer is a welcome sight. The Bears are a great Southern Conference team, but they don't have a chance, even against an abysmal Auburn team. Auburn needs all the confidence it can get before hosting Alabama next week for their regular-season finale.

— Edwin Stanton

Tennessee at Florida

When: 6:30 p.m. Saturday

TV/radio: ABC/ FM-97.9/AM-1340

Records: No. 20 Tennessee (7-3, 3-3 SEC), Florida (3-7, 2-5)

The series: Florida leads 32-22.

Four-down territory

1. In the running: Chris Brazzell is having an exceptional season and is one of the top receivers in the nation. With 873 yards and eight touchdowns, Brazzell was named a semifinalist for the Biletnikoff Award, given to the best receiver in the country. "I never was really worried about Belitnikoff to be honest, so I wasn't really thinking it, but I kind of thought and believed in myself as one of the best receivers," he said.

2. Swamp fever: Saying Tennessee doesn't play well in Gainesville is a huge understatement. The Vols haven't won in the Swamp since 2003 and have an 8-17 overall record at their rival's home field. The last three meetings in the Sunshine State have not been close with the Vols being outscored 101-33. "This is a great game, and it's going to be a great stage," Vols coach Josh Heupel said. "One play doesn't have anything to do with the next, and a previous trip down to Gainesville doesn't have anything to do with it."

3. Fast start: Tennessee outscores opponents 688-247 in the first quarter under Heupel, including 145-45 this season. The Vols have scored at least one touchdown in the first quarter in 49 of 62 games, including nine of 10 games this season. Six of those 10 games have seen the Vols score multiple first-quarter touchdowns. "You've got to prepare the right way. You've got to practice the right way, and you're going to have to go play extremely well in this one," Heupel said.

4. Not a factor: The Vols are not worried about any changes the Gators and interim coach Billy Gonzales might have planned for Saturday. Florida has a few games under its belt with Gonzales at the helm, so the Vols don't expect to see anything out of the ordinary, but are staying cautious. "You know that there could be a whole change in the offense or defense," UT linebacker Jeremiah Telander said. "We do have a couple of games (on film) with them and the new coach. We trust our preparation and what the coaches tell us."



Tennessee freshman Colton Hood ranks fifth in the SEC in pass breakups. [WADE PAYNE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Key matchup

Tennessee RB DeSean Bishop vs. Florida RB Jadan Baugh

Don't be surprised to see both players have big days. Bishop has been reliable the whole season with 770 yards on 119 attempts with 10 touchdowns. Baugh has been the workhorse for the Gators with 164 attempts for 808 yards and six touchdowns.

Player of the week

Colton Hood, DB

The freshman has made an immediate impact and is tied for fifth in the SEC in

pass breakups with eight, and he has four tackles for loss.

By the numbers

4: Chris Brazzell has produced an SEC-best four 100-yard receiving games this season.

6: Tennessee has scored six defensive touchdowns, which is second in the FBS. (Louisiana Tech has seven.)

2003-04: The Vols are seeking back-to-back wins against Florida for the first time since 2003-04.

2: Florida has lost two of its last three

games after leading in the fourth quarter.

Prediction

Tennessee 35, Florida 21

It's been a minute since Tennessee knocked off Florida in back-to-back games. Now is as good an opportunity to do that as any. Florida is reeling with no signs of anything going right from now until the season finale with Florida State. Look for Tennessee to dominate from the start and never look back.

— Edwin Stanton

Southern Utah at UNA

When: 6 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN+

Records: Southern Utah (6-5, 5-2 UAC), UNA (2-9, 1-6)

The series: Tied 1-1.

Four-down territory

1. Signing off: It is finally here. UNA's final game at Braly Stadium. It's been the Lions' home since the program was restarted in 1949. UNA will move into its new facility next season. While it has outlived its usefulness, Braly has seen some notable achievements from the Lions. They won three straight Division II national titles (1993-95) there and had two more teams (1985 and 2016) qualify for the title game (although those were played in different stadiums). Overall, UNA has compiled a 281-134-8 record at Braly, including a 26-8 mark in playoff games. It's been quite rough since the Lions decided to move to Division I in 2018. They have a 16-20 home record since then and have produced five straight losing records. A loss Saturday would make six. But seven of those 16 wins came in the first two years of the DI move. So, is parting sweet sorrow?

2. One streak will continue: UNA has lost its last four games, including the 61-0 scrubbing it received at Tarleton State last week. It was the worst loss in school history. Another loss on Saturday would tie the program mark for most losses in a regular season. The Lions went 1-10 in 1971 and in 2022. Southern Utah, meanwhile, comes into the matchup the victor of five straight. That includes a 31-24 win over Abilene Christian (a team that beat UNA 52-23), a 33-17 victory against Austin Peay (a team UNA lost to 56-28) and a 28-21 win over Central Arkansas (a team that topped UNA 49-21). The Thunderbirds also bested Utah Tech 28-7 (a team tied with the Lions at the bottom of the league standings, but beat UNA 34-33 in overtime) and Eastern Kentucky 27-17 (a team UNA also beat 35-14).

3. Push the pause button: Perhaps it's fitting Southern Utah will be the



Southern Utah's Lando Brown, left, has made plenty of teammates happy this season with his ability to get after quarterbacks. [SOUTHERN UTAH ATHLETICS]

opponent for UNA's final game at Braly. The Thunderbirds were the Lions' first opponent in that first DI season in 2018. UNA won 34-30 in Cedar City, Utah. (It was not a sign of things to come.) The Lions returned last season and lost 38-26. But this might be the last matchup between the two for a while. Southern Utah is leaving the UAC after this season to return to the Big Sky, a place it was a conference member from 2012-21. UNA is remaining in the UAC, which will be the rebranded WAC for all sports.

4. Familiar face: Southern Utah coach DeLane Fitzgerald and UNA coach Brent Dearmon are acquainted with each other. Fitzgerald served as Dearmon's college offensive coordinator at Bethel (Tennessee) in 2005. The Wildcats finished the season 7-4, including 5-0 in conference play. Dearmon was a junior quarterback. It was of his quieter seasons. Dearmon, who holds the school records for career passing yards (7,045) and touchdowns (77), had his fewest passing yards that season (not listed among the single-season marks with his three other years) as well as passing TDs (13, after 25 as a freshman, 21 as a sophomore and 18 as a senior). Fitzgerald left the next year to be the offensive coordinator at DIII

Southern Virginia.

Key matchup

UNA defense (the whole thing) vs. Southern Utah RB Joshua Dye

Stopping Dye will be the Lions' top priority. The redshirt sophomore ranks second in the FCS with 1,723 rushing yards, 9 yards behind Monmouth's Rodney Nelson. Dye leads the FCS in rushing touchdowns with 25. Not too shabby considering Targhee Lambson rushed for more than 1,900 yards for the Thunderbirds last season, which included a 173-yards and three-touchdown effort against UNA last season. The Lions are giving up almost 180 yards on the ground per game this year.

Player of the week

Your best guess

Is there even one to pick after last week's debacle? But let's go with QB John Austin Wood. It's been a tough going for the freshman since he was pressed into playing time against West Georgia, where he finished 4-for-11 passing for 25 yards and an interception. He followed that up with another 4-for-11 outing at Tarleton State for 23 yards before being benched for DC Tabscott, who proceeded

to throw four interceptions. Overall, Wood has led the offense to three points in his two showings, but he also hasn't gotten a chance to look very comfortable, either. He's getting hit — in the backfield — a lot. Southern Utah's Lando Brown leads the league with 12 sacks.

By the numbers

5: The number of games UNA has given up at least 45 points — 55 to Western Kentucky, 52 to Abilene Christian, 49 to Central Arkansas, 56 to Austin Peay and 61 to Tarleton State. All five were losses.

4: The number of games UNA has at least 30 points — 49 against DI Northeastern State (Oklahoma), 36 at Illinois State, 35 against Eastern Kentucky and 33 at Utah Tech. The road games were losses.

3: The number of games Southern Utah has lost by three points.

2: The number of games UNA has won at Braly Stadium this season.

Prediction

Southern Utah 33, UNA 10

Seems like an appropriate way for UNA to say goodbye to Braly Stadium.

— David Glovach



Texas A&M fans might be tipping their caps to coach Mike Elko who has the Aggies at 10 wins for the first time in more than a decade. [DAVID J. PHILLIP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

This week's SEC, state games

Samford at No. 3 Texas A&M

When: 11 a.m. Saturday

TV: SEC+

Records: Samford (1-10), Texas A&M (10-0)

The series: First meeting.

The lowdown: This will be Scot Sloan's second game as Samford's interim coach. The Bulldogs lost 30-16 at Austin Peay last week. ... Texas A&M managed — barely — to top lowly South Carolina. The Aggies needed to engineer a 27-point

comeback — the largest in school history — to win 31-30. ... This will be Samford's second Power Four opponent. Its second trip to Texas as well. The Bulldogs lost 42-7 at Baylor on Sept. 13. This time, however, Samford is likely to keep an eye out for wayward state troopers. ... Texas A&M is 10-0 for the first time since 1992 and has its first 10-win season since 2012. The Aggies finished 11-2 that year. ... Samford's win came against fellow bottom-feeder VMI. The Bulldogs

won 24-22 on Oct. 18. VMI is also 1-10.

... Samford, however, will be well compensated for its future beatdown. The Aggies are paying \$550,000. ... Texas A&M opened its pocketbook for Mike Elko, too. He received a six-year extension after the comeback win.

No. 23 Missouri at No. 8 Oklahoma

When: 11 a.m. Saturday

TV: ABC

Records: Missouri (7-3, 3-3 SEC),

Oklahoma (8-2, 4-2)

The series: Oklahoma leads 67-25-5.

The lowdown: The former rivals in the Big 8 and then Big 12 met last year for the first time since 2011. Missouri won 30-24. ... Before Missouri's 36-27 win in 2010, the Tigers had lost 19 of the previous 20 meetings. ... Mizzou last beat OU in consecutive meetings in 1965 and 1966. Before that, 1931 and 1932. ...



Brent Venables and Oklahoma will be looking to bring some more Sooner swag against another ranked opponent. [VASHA HUNT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]



Jevan Jackson proved to be a bright spot in UAB's bleak showing last week against North Texas. [UAB ATHLETICS]

SEC

From Page G8

The Sooners have won 18 straight home games against the Tigers and 31 of the last 33. The losses were in 1960 and 1966. ... Mizzou's Ahmad Hardy had the type of game last week that would delight a fan of the traditional Sooners. He ran for 300 yards on 25 carries in a 49-27 win over Mississippi State. ... Hardy scored on runs of 72, 43 and 10 yards. ... Hardy fell 19 yards shy of the school record set by Devin West in 1998. ... Hardy has 1,346 yards this season, which ranks fifth in Mizzou single-season history, and took over as the nation's leader. ... Hardy's 300 is the most in an FBS game this season. ... The Tigers also returned two interceptions for touchdowns for the second time in school history. They also did it at Texas Tech in 2006. ... OU kicker Tate Sandell is 7-for-7 on field goals of at least 50 yards this season. The FBS record is eight by Tennessee's Fuad Reveiz in 1982. ... Oklahoma's consecutive wins this month at Tennessee and at Alabama mark the first time it has back-to-back road victories over top-15 teams since 2015.

Charlotte at No. 4 Georgia

When: 11:45 a.m. Saturday

TV: SECN

Records: Charlotte (1-9), Georgia (9-1)



SEE SEC, G10 There won't be many visible fireworks for Georgia's home game Saturday. It's an 11:45 a.m. game. [COLIN HUBBARD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]



Jacksonville State running back Cam Cook had gotten an opportunity to pose in front of plenty of opponents this season. [JACKSONVILLE STATE ATHLETICS]



Noah Toster and South Alabama were finally able to throw up a "W" after taking down Louisiana-Monroe last week. [SOUTH ALABAMA ATHLETICS]

SEC

From Page G9

The series: First meeting.

The lowdown: Georgia, start your engines. Charlotte sits 131st in FBS, allowing 37.4 points per game, ranking ahead of only UMass, UAB and Georgia State. ... The 49ers beat Monmouth 42-35 in mid-September and enter on a seven-game losing streak. ... Charlotte's Derrick Eley returned a kickoff 88 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter of last week's 28-7 loss to Texas-San Antonio. It was the first kickoff-return TD for the 49ers since 2020 and the fifth in school history. ... UGA quarterback Gunner Stockton has accounted for 27 touchdowns (19 passing, eight rushing). The school record is 39 by Aaron Murray in 2012. ... Stockton was 24-of-29 passing for 229 yards and four touchdowns in last week's 35-10 home win over Texas. ... Georgia receiver Zachariah Branch has 59 receptions and ranks third in school history. Look out, Brock Bowers (63 in 2022) and Brice Hunter (76 in 1993). ... The Bulldogs are 24-1 at home against non-conference teams under coach Kirby Smart. The loss was 28-27 to Georgia Tech in 2016.

Alabama A&M at Texas Southern

When: 2 p.m. Saturday

TV: HBCU GO

SEE SEC, G11



Alabama A&M has already bottled up another losing season. The Bulldogs, however, could prevent Texas Southern from achieving a winning year. [ALABAMA A&M ATHLETICS]

SEC

From Page G10

Records: Alabama A&M (4-7, 1-6 SWAC), Texas Southern (5-5, 4-3)

The series: Alabama A&M leads 15-4.

The lowdown: Texas Southern, with a win, will finish its first winning season since going 8-3 in 2000. ... A&M, with last week's 26-23 home loss to Florida A&M, sealed its fifth straight non-winning season. The Bulldogs' last 12 years have featured seven losing seasons and one .500 finish. ... Alabama A&M has lost six of its last seven games. ... Bulldogs kicker David Faulk suffered his first missed field goal of the season against FAMU. He's 10-of-11 this season after a 29-yard first-quarter miss. ... Ryan Morrow ran 18 times for 136 yards for the Bulldogs, including an 80-yard touchdown. ... Texas Southern won at Southern for the first time since 2010 last week. ... KJ Cooper threw for three touchdowns and Lawrence Butler ran for two scores in a 35-30 victory over the one-win Jags. ... Athan Renfro ranks second in the SWAC with 835 yards rushing. ... The Bulldogs and Tigers last met in 2022, a 24-20 A&M victory in which the Bulldogs ran for 258 yards.

South Florida at UAB

When: 2 p.m. Saturday

TV: ESPN+

Records: South Florida (7-3, 4-2 American), UAB (3-7, 1-5)

The series: Tied 2-2.

The lowdown: South Florida ranks fourth in the nation in total offense with a 492.3-yard average and fifth in scoring offense at a 41.6-point average. ... UAB sits 133rd in the 134-team FBS in scoring defense, allowing 38.7 points per game. (Hello, Georgia State.) ... USF's two league losses were both by three points and on the road. ... The Bulls scored with 1:55 left last week at Navy to lose 41-38. ... The game featured 1,080 combined yards and, in the fourth quarter, 39 points. ... USF quarterback Byrum Brown was 23-of-32 passing for 327 yards and two touchdowns and ran 17 times for 136 yards and two scores. ... Brown's 463 total yards is tied for 11th in the FBS this season. ... Brown has six straight games with at least 300 yards total offense. His 337.1-yard average is second in the nation behind Georgia Tech's Haynes King (340.7). ... UAB is playing its home finale and has lost six of its last seven games, the exception over then-No. 22 Memphis. ... Running back Jevon Jackson ran 16 times for 159 yards



The people from the Natural State have had to endure the fifth-longest losing streak in the FBS. [GERALD HERBERT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

in last week's 53-24 home loss to North Texas. It was his second 100-yard game with the Blazers and 12th of his career (UTEP, Austin Peay).

Jacksonville State at Florida International

When: 2:30 p.m. Saturday

TV: CBSSN

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

The series: Jacksonville State leads 3-0.

The lowdown: The Gamecocks took control of the Conference USA race with last week's 35-26 home win over Kennesaw State. ... JSU set a home record with an announced crowd of 24,166 last week. ... Jacksonville State's Cam Cook, no longer the nation's leading rusher, had 117 yards on 27 carries last week. ... His 1,296 yards this season rank seventh in school history, 49 behind sixth-place Tyler Huff from 2024. ... But he now ranks 40 yards behind Missouri's Ahmad Hardy for the national lead. ... The Gamecocks are one of five FBS teams still unbeaten in conference play. The others: Indiana and Ohio State (Big Ten), Texas A&M (SEC) and James Madison (Sun Belt). ... Florida International



Diego Pavia and Vanderbilt will look to keep brushing away the program's past demons when Kentucky visits Saturday. [GEORGE WALKER IV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

beat Liberty 34-27 in overtime last week, capped by Mister Clark's final-play interception in the end zone. ... Kejon Owens, with 84 yards rushing, breeched 1,000 for the season. He has 1,039 and is

the first FIU running back to reach four figures since Kedrick Rhodes in 2011. ... Rhodes has the school record at 1,159. ...

SEC

From Page G11

The Panthers have won two straight and their last three-game streak was in 2023 when they beat Maine, North Texas and UConn.

Southern Miss at South Alabama**When:** 2:30 p.m. Saturday**TV:** ESPN+**Records:** Southern Miss (7-3, 5-1 Sun Belt), South Alabama (3-7, 2-4)**The series:** South Alabama leads 5-0.

The lowdown: The two campuses are located just 90 miles apart. ... USA running back Kentrel Bullock scored twice in last week's 26-14 win at Louisiana-Monroe. He has 24 career touchdowns with the Jags. ... South Alabama had lost seven of its previous eight, beating only lowly Georgia State. ... South Alabama's 5-0 record against USM includes a 35-14 tally that ended the 2024 season. ... The Golden Eagles hired Marshall's Charles Huff in the offseason and have enjoyed an immense turnaround. ... Southern Miss was 1-11 last year, including 0-8 in the Sun Belt. This year, the Golden Eagles are atop the Sun Belt's West Division. ... Huff is tied for the third-most wins by a first-year USM coach. Ahead of him are Bobby Collins, who went 7-4 in 1975, and former Muscle Shoals coach Curley Hallman, who went 10-2 in 1988. ... USM quarterback Braylon Braxton was the Sun Belt's preseason offensive player of the year. ... Braxton, who played for Huff at Marshall last year, has 2,186 yards on 67% passing with 19 touchdowns and five interceptions.

Arkansas at No. 17 Texas**When:** 2:30 p.m. Saturday**TV:** ABC**Records:** Arkansas (2-8, 0-6 SEC), Texas (7-3, 4-2)**The series:** Texas leads 57-23.

The lowdown: This is the 81st meeting between the former Southwest Conference foes, which included a string of 60 straight matchups from 1932-91. Arkansas left for the greener pastures of the SEC the next season. The inaugural matchup took place in 1894. ... This will be the Razorbacks' first trip to Austin since 2008 and just the third since 1990. ... Texas is coming off a 35-10 loss at Georgia. It marked the fourth time this season the Longhorns failed to score more than 21 points. ... Arkansas is looking to snap an eight-game losing streak, which is the fifth longest in the FBS behind UMass (14), Boston College



The only time the few Georgia State fans could happily wave their flags at Troy was 2020. [GEORGIA STATE ATHLETICS]

(10), Purdue (9) and Oklahoma State (9). ... The Razorbacks last won an SEC game on Oct. 26, 2024. ... This is just Texas' second home game since the middle of September.

Kentucky at No. 12 Vanderbilt**When:** 2:30 p.m. Saturday**TV:** ESPN**Records:** Kentucky (5-5, 2-5 SEC), Vanderbilt (8-2, 4-2)**The series:** Kentucky leads 48-44-4.

The lowdown: Kentucky can become bowl eligible with a win after knocking Tennessee Tech from the ranks of the unbeaten last week. The Wildcats won 42-10. Tennessee Tech is an FCS program. ... It marked the first time Kentucky scored at least 38 points in consecutive games since 2021. ... Vanderbilt has not lost a home this season. Its losses were at Alabama (30-14) on Oct. 4 and at Texas (34-31) on Nov. 1. ... The Wildcats have a losing record in Nashville. They're 22-27-2. ... Four of Kentucky's losses have come against ranked teams — then-No. 20 Ole Miss (30-23), then-No. 12 Georgia (35-14) and then-No. 17 Tennessee (56-34). ... Vanderbilt can secure its first winning SEC record



Shane Beamer and South Carolina will certainly not try to leave a stadium as exacerbated as they did a week ago. [DAVID J. PHILLIP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

since 2012. James Franklin was the coach then. Franklin was announced as Virginia Tech's new coach Monday.

Georgia State at Troy**When:** 3 p.m. Saturday**TV:** ESPN+**Records:** Georgia State (1-9, 0-6 Sun Belt), Troy (6-4, 4-2)**The series:** Troy leads 6-4.

SEC

From Page G12

The lowdown: Troy, with a win Saturday and over Southern Miss next week, clinches a spot in the Sun Belt championship game. ... The Trojans, since joining the Sun Belt in 2004, have a 105-62 league record. No other team has more than 92 wins. ... Georgia State has one win at Troy's Veterans Memorial Stadium, 36-34 in 2020. ... Old Dominion's 33-0 skinning of the Trojans last week marked Troy's first shutout loss since a 66-0 skull dragging at Georgia in 2014. ... Troy's 138 yards offense was its second straight sub-200 effort and third this season. ... The Trojans last did such in consecutive games in 2003 when they opened with 138 yards at Kansas State and followed with 189 yards at Minnesota. ... Alas, they also capped 2002 with three straight games of such futility and five of their last six. ... Such a defensive effort would be stunning from Georgia State, which ranks 131st of 134 FBS teams in total defense and dead last in scoring defense. The Panthers surrendered an average of 455.4 yards and 39.6 points per game. ... GSU's win was over FCS Murray State, though four of the Panthers' losses were by 13 points or less.

Coastal Carolina at South Carolina

When: 3:15 p.m. Saturday
TV: SECN



Officially, Western Kentucky was never tripped up by LSU in 2015. The Tigers vacated their win.

[JONATHAN BACHMAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Records: Coastal Carolina (6-4), South Carolina (3-7)

The series: South Carolina leads 2-0.

The lowdown: The Gamecocks were on the wrong end of the biggest comeback in Texas A&M history last week. They led 30-3 and lost 31-30. ... South Carolina has lost five straight and will finish with its second losing season in Shane Beamer's five-year tenure. ... Coastal Carolina had won four straight until last week's 45-40 loss at Georgia Southern. ... The Chants posted a season-high 482 yards

offense and had a 96-yard kickoff return for a touchdown. ... Alas, Georgia Southern ran for 302 yards, including 262 by OJ Arnold, whose total ranks second in the nation this year. ... Coastal Carolina is bowl eligible for a sixth straight season. ... South Carolina's 70-10 win over the Chanticleers in 2013 still ranks sixth in school history for points scored. ... The 2018 meeting was a bit more pedestrian 49-15 final. ... The Gamecocks are 58-4 this century against teams not currently in a Power 4 conference.

Western Kentucky at LSU

When: 6:45 p.m. Saturday

TV: SECN

Records: Western Kentucky (8-2), LSU (6-4)

The series: LSU leads 1-0.

The lowdown: The teams have played twice, both LSU victories, but the 2015 win was vacated due to NCAA sanctions. ... LSU snapped a three-game losing streak with last week's 23-22 home victory over Arkansas and gave interim coach Frank Wilson his first win. ... The Tigers scored the go-ahead touchdown with 7:53 remaining and, after stopping the wretched Razorbacks' ensuing drive, ran out the final 5:08. ... Michael Van Buren Jr., LSU's starting quarterback after Garrett Nussmeier's injury, was 21-of-31 for 221 yards and the go-ahead 12-yard TD. ... Western Kentucky racked 642 yards total offense in last week's 42-26 win over Middle Tennessee. It marked the seventh straight win by the Hilltoppers in a rivalry known as 100 Miles of Hate. ... Western Kentucky has reached eight wins in six of coach Tyson Helton's seven seasons. ... The 2015 LSU-Western Kentucky game, a 48-20 Tiger victory later vacated, drew an announced crowd of 101,561, which ranks third in Hilltopper history. The two biggest crowds to see Western were at Alabama in 2012 and 2016.

— A. Stacy Long and David Glovach

PICKS PANEL



STACY LONG

DAVID GLOVACH

SIRVELL CARTER

RENITA JIMMAR

IGREBB DEWALT

DEANGELO MCDANIEL

MARA BETH CRAVENS

CALEB SUGGS

Mercer at Auburn	Auburn	Auburn	Auburn	Auburn	Auburn	Mercer	Auburn	Auburn
Eastern Illinois at Alabama	Alabama							
Tennessee at Florida	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Tennessee	Florida	Florida	Florida	Tennessee
Southern Utah at UNA	Southern Utah							
Harvard at Yale	Harvard	Harvard	Harvard	Harvard	Yale	Harvard	Yale	Yale
Arkansas at Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Texas	Arkansas	Arkansas	Texas
Kentucky at Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Vanderbilt	Kentucky	Vanderbilt
Minnesota at Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Northwestern	Minnesota	Minnesota	Minnesota
BYU at Cincinnati	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	Cincinnati	BYU
Cal at Stanford	Cal	Cal	Cal	Stanford	Stanford	Cal	Cal	Cal
Last week	6-4	6-4	6-4	7-3	5-5	6-4	6-4	7-3
Season record	86-34	80-40	78-42	78-42	75-45	65-55	63-57	60-60

COLLEGE STANDINGS

(Through Nov. 15 games)

American Athletic Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Navy	6	1	233	192	8	2	329	279
North Texas	5	1	274	179	9	1	453	241
Tulane	5	1	180	154	8	2	280	260
East Carolina	5	1	212	122	7	3	336	183
South Florida	4	2	289	173	7	3	416	259
Memphis	4	3	255	178	8	3	398	242
Army	3	3	130	130	5	4	201	198
Temple	3	3	172	163	5	5	296	267
UTSA	3	3	198	183	5	5	323	304
FAU	3	4	215	255	4	6	306	346
Rice	2	4	113	181	5	5	211	279
UAB	1	5	142	223	3	7	268	387
Tulsa	0	6	129	237	3	7	228	291
Charlotte	0	7	113	285	1	9	169	374

Atlantic Coast Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Georgia Tech	6	1	229	186	9	1	360	242
Virginia	6	1	215	155	9	2	371	233
Pittsburgh	5	1	227	139	7	3	372	233
SMU	5	1	183	98	7	3	322	204
Miami	4	2	190	96	8	2	337	142
Duke	4	2	209	163	5	5	334	296
Louisville	4	3	196	167	7	3	315	215
Wake Forest	4	3	147	162	7	3	238	195
California	3	3	154	186	6	4	250	252
Clemson	4	4	234	188	5	5	271	221
N.C. State	2	4	177	222	5	5	299	316
North Carolina	2	4	103	129	4	6	187	220
Virginia Tech	2	4	138	182	3	7	233	301
Florida St.	2	5	190	173	5	5	364	203
Stanford	2	5	122	212	3	7	175	291
Syracuse	1	6	104	226	3	7	223	315
Boston College	0	7	132	266	1	10	271	381

Big 12 Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Texas Tech	7	1	295	100	10	1	469	135
BYU	6	1	211	162	9	1	341	178
Houston	5	2	206	188	8	2	295	221
Utah	5	2	274	131	8	2	411	156
Arizona St.	5	2	155	178	7	3	247	236
Cincinnati	5	2	223	187	7	3	344	227
Arizona	4	3	216	177	7	3	327	203
Kansas St.	4	3	206	173	5	5	282	255
Iowa St.	3	4	176	179	6	4	271	215
TCU	3	4	182	206	6	4	307	265
Baylor	3	4	218	229	5	5	332	319
Kansas	3	4	194	196	5	5	302	252
West Virginia	2	6	175	277	4	7	261	321
UCF	1	6	135	202	4	6	254	228
Colorado	1	6	132	246	3	7	220	300
Oklahoma St.	0	7	101	268	1	9	143	363

Big Sky Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Montana	7	0	290	170	11	0	462	251
Montana St.	7	0	332	82	9	2	427	178
UC Davis	5	2	221	169	7	3	312	297
Sacramento St.	5	2	264	200	7	4	378	284
N. Arizona	4	3	212	186	7	4	352	327
E. Washington	4	3	146	185	5	6	247	319
Idaho St.	4	3	192	195	5	6	359	311
Idaho	2	5	191	200	4	7	286	280
Cal Poly	1	6	164	222	3	8	287	344
N. Colorado	1	6	142	257	3	8	219	328
Weber St.	1	6	136	274	3	8	229	432
Portland St.	1	6	158	304	1	10	181	488

Big South-OVC Association

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Tennessee Tech	7	0	270	122	10	1	462	195
UT Martin	6	1	187	119	6	5	231	267
Gardner-Webb	5	2	184	155	7	4	306	328
L'wood (Mo.)	4	3	211	191	5	6	267	311
Chas. Southern	3	4	151	166	4	7	192	282
SE Missouri	3	4	166	168	4	7	265	331
W. Illinois	2	5	156	217	3	8	248	393
E. Illinois	2	6	142	200	3	8	210	294
Tennessee St.	0	7	77	202	2	9	149	312

Big Ten Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Indiana	8	0	320	105	11	0	476	128
Ohio St.	7	0	254	99	10	0	375	75
Oregon	6	1	221	114	9	1	390	137
Michigan	6	1	167	133	8	2	277	177
Southern Cal	6	1	226	150	8	2	382	217
Illinois	4	3	187	217	7	3	322	239
Nebraska	4	3	178	175	7	3	325	199



Justin Lamson and the Montana State Bobcats face the Montana Grizzlies on Saturday in the 124th Brawl of the Wild game with the winner also taking the Big Sky Conference championship. [LYDIA ELY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Southeastern Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Texas A&M	7	0	244	150	10	0	371	236
Georgia	7	1	263	175	9	1	336	188
Mississippi	6	1	228	184	10	1	409	222
Alabama	6	1	188	133	8	2	316	178
Oklahoma	4	2	138	129	8	2	283	148
Vanderbilt	4	2	169	143	8	2	383	222
Texas	4	2	149	152	7	3	276	183
Missouri	3	3	152	146	7	3	349	199
Tennessee	3	3	219	213	7	3	434	289
LSU	3	4	140	166	6	4	236	193
Kentucky	2	5	145	182	5	5	259	231
Florida	2	5	130	192	3	7	208	236
Mississippi St.	1	6	188	265	5	6	347	312
Auburn	1	6	128	162	4	6	239	204
South Carolina	1	7	145	209	3	7	207	230
Arkansas	0	6	189	214	2	8	341	323

Southern Conference

	Conference		All Games					
	WL	PF	PA	WL	PF	PA		
Mercer	8	0	369	168	9	1	417	197
W. Carolina	5	2	287	230	6	5	415	396
ETSU	4	3	243	180	6	5	362	320
Chattanooga	4	3	212	219	5	5	326	361
Wofford	4	3	177	112	5	6	239	194
Furman	4	4	194	243	6	5	283	327
The Citadel	3	4	200	178	4	7	220	294
Samford	1	7	149	301	4	1	107	407
VMI	0	7	94	271	1	10	185	403

Southland Conference

	Conference		All			

COLUMN

Coaching carousel joins season of chaos

By Doug Segrest
For GameDay

We've only got two weeks left of the most chaotic, thrilling college football regular season we've ever seen. Yes, even better than 2007, which was more a battle of mediocrity. (Sorry, LSU.)

Nowhere does this hold true more than the SEC.

Yes, the haves and have-nots have separated, by the slimmest of margins. Consider poor Arkansas, winless in the SEC, yet five of the losses have come by six points or less. The exception: a nine-point loss to Auburn that kept the Tigers out of the cellar.

Meanwhile Auburn's losses pile up in one-score affairs. Flip those around and these Tigers could easily be headed into the Iron Bowl playing for a CFP berth.

Chaos, we expected. But only on the field. Now it's spilling over into the world of coaching carousels. Lane Kiffin has his choices of life-changing offers. Last week, it looked like he'd bolt Oxford for Gainesville. This week, Baton Rouge enters, stage left.

He may well stay put at Ole Miss and build the kind of legacy he can't build anywhere else. Or he may stall his current SEC suitors and wait for the Texas job to open. Speculation — and some reporting — is that Steve Sarkisian may not be long for Austin.

At any other point in human history, that would seem ludicrous. But in this season to top all seasons, it would make perfect sense.

Meanwhile, the rest of college football once again ridicules a handful of teams for taking a cupcake breather before huge rivalry games. Where were they when the SEC was taking on Ohio State and Baylor, while the Big Ten was feasting on Grambling and Kennesaw State? Or when the SEC tested itself against Michigan, Arizona State and Clemson (well, it seemed big at the time) while the Big 12 kicked off against UT Martin and Wagner?

For the record, the SEC went 10-3 against Power Four brethren. Only the Big 12 had a similar record (10-6), but still went 0-3 against the SEC. That's why more than a third of the league may get a playoff bid.

But we've got to get to decision day first. Until then, the only guarantee is that



Florida and its fans have made their interest in Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin well known. [ROGELIO V. SOLIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

you take nothing for granted. We're a long way from over.

Looking ahead

• **Missouri at Oklahoma (11 a.m. on ABC):** The Sooners are back in the mix after taking down Alabama a week ago. Theoretically, Missouri's chances are kaput. But a Mizzou victory over the Sooners could create some handwringing for the committee.

• Arkansas at Texas (2:30 p.m. on ABC):

This seems like a no-brainer, and it should be. But think of this: If Texas opened with a cupcake instead of at Ohio State, the Longhorns would still be very much in the mix. At some point, scheduling has to matter more to the CFP.

• Kentucky at Vanderbilt (2:30 p.m. on ESPN):

Vandy still has an outside shot at making the CFP. But resurgent Kentucky can alter who gets to Atlanta with an upset

win that would totally change tiebreakers.

• Tennessee at Florida (6:30 p.m. on ABC):

In a galaxy not too long ago and not too far away this was, briefly, the SEC's premier rivalry. It's still got plenty of gas, even though the stakes aren't the same.

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



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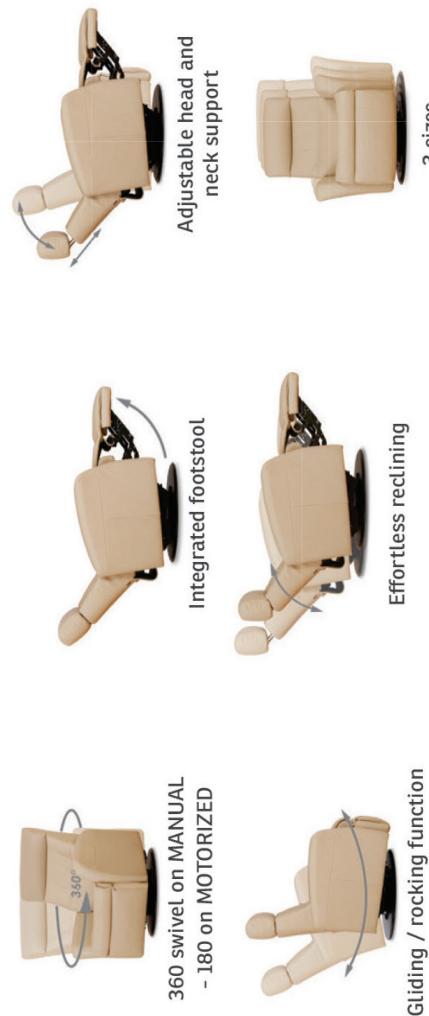
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