

GAMEDAY

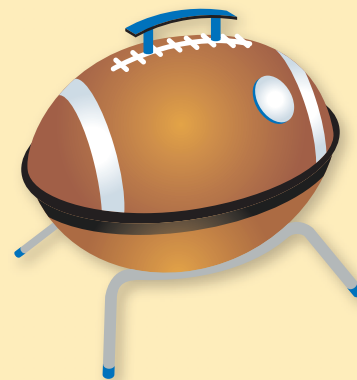


OLD VS. NEW

Longtime power Georgia faces newcomer Texas for SEC championship

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TAILGATE of the week RECIPE



Chicken-Cheese Ball

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1 ounce envelope of dry Hidden Valley Ranch Original Seasoning Mix
- 1 8 ounce package cream cheese
- 1 2.5 ounce can chunk chicken breast, fully cooked and packed in water

DIRECTIONS:

With a fork, blend seasoning mix with cream cheese. Then drain water from chicken breast and add chicken to the cream cheese mixture, a little at a time, using a fork to thoroughly blend the ingredients. Refrigerate for about 15-20 minutes before manually forming ingredients into a ball. Roll ball in pecans chopped fine. Tailgaters will use a butter knife to help themselves to chicken-cheese mixture served on wheat-thin crackers.



**This week's recipe submitted
by Jean Johnson,
Florence, 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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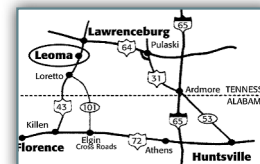
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GAMES ON TV

Friday

Conference USA championship: Western Kentucky at Jacksonville State, 6 p.m., CBSSN
American championship: Tulane at Army, 7 p.m., ABC
Mountain West championship: UNLV at Boise State, 7 p.m., FOX

Saturday

Big 12 championship: Arizona State vs. Iowa State, 11 a.m., ABC
MAC championship: Ohio vs. Miami (Ohio), 11 a.m., ESPN
SWAC championship: Southern at Jackson State, 1 p.m., ESPN2
SEC championship: Texas vs. Georgia, 3 p.m., ABC
Sun Belt Conference championship: Marshall at Louisiana-Lafayette, 6:30 p.m., ESPN
ACC championship: SMU vs. Clemson, 7 p.m., ABC
Big Ten championship: Oregon vs. Penn State, 7 p.m., CBS

Dec. 14

Celebration Bowl, Atlanta, 11 a.m., ABC
Salute to Veterans Bowl, South Alabama vs. Western Michigan, Montgomery, 8 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 17

Frisco Bowl, Frisco, Texas, 8 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 18

Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl, 4:30 p.m., ESPN
L.A. Bowl, Inglewood, Calif., 8 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 19

New Orleans Bowl, 6 p.m., ESPN2

Dec. 20

Cure Bowl, Orlando, Fla., 11 a.m., ESPN
Gasparilla Bowl, Tampa, Fla., 2:30 p.m., ESPN
CFP first-round game, 7 p.m., ABC/ESPN



Arizona State fans will hope to cheer the Sun Devils to a Big 12 championship in their first year in the conference. [ROSS D. FRANKLIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Dec. 21

CFP first-round game, 11 a.m., TNT
CFP first-round game, 3 p.m., TNT
CFP first-round game, 7 p.m., ABC/ESPN

Dec. 23

Myrtle Beach Bowl, Conway, S.C., 10 a.m., ESPN
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, Boise, Idaho, 1:30 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 24

Hawaii Bowl, San Jose State vs. South Florida, Honolulu, 7 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 26

Game Above Sports Bowl, Detroit, 1 p.m., ESPN
Rate Bowl, Phoenix, 4:30 p.m., ESPN
68 Ventures Bowl, Mobile, 8 p.m., 8 p.m.

Dec. 27

Armed Forces Bowl, Fort Worth, Texas, 11 a.m., ESPN
Birmingham Bowl, 2:30 p.m., ESPN
Liberty Bowl, Memphis, 6 p.m., ESPN
Holiday Bowl, San Diego, 7 p.m., FOX
Las Vegas Bowl, 9:30 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 28

Fenway Bowl, Boston, 10 a.m., ESPN
Pinstripe Bowl, New York, 11 a.m., ABC
New Mexico Bowl, Albuquerque, 1:15 p.m., ESPN
Pop-Tarts Bowl, Orlando, 2:30 p.m., ABC
Arizona Bowl, Tucson, Ariz., 11 a.m., ABC
Military Bowl, Annapolis, Md., 4:45 p.m., ESPN
Alamo Bowl, San Antonio, 6:30 p.m., ABC
Independence Bowl, Shreveport, La., 8:15 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 30

Music City Bowl, Nashville, 1:30 p.m., ESPN

Dec. 31

ReliaQuest Bowl, Tampa, Fla., 11 a.m., ESPN
Sun Bowl, El Paso, Texas, 1 p.m., CBS
Citrus Bowl, Orlando, Fla., 2 p.m., ABC
Texas Bowl, Houston, Texas, 2:30 p.m., ESPN
Fiesta Bowl, playoff quarterfinal, Glendale, Ariz., 6:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 1

Peach Bowl, playoff quarterfinal, Atlanta, noon, ESPN
Rose Bowl, playoff quarterfinal, Pasadena, Calif., 4 p.m., ESPN
Sugar Bowl, playoff quarterfinal, New Orleans, 7:45 p.m., ESPN

Jan. 2

Gator Bowl, Jacksonville, Fla., 6:30 p.m., ESPN

Jan. 3

First Responder Bowl, Dallas, 3 p.m., ESPN
Duke's Mayo Bowl, Charlotte, N.C., 6:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 4

Bahamas Bowl, Nassau, Bahamas, 10 a.m., ESPN/ESPN2

Jan. 9

Orange Bowl, playoff semifinal, Miami Gardens, Texas, 6:30 p.m., ESPN

Jan. 10

Cotton Bowl, playoff semifinal, Arlington, Texas, 6:30 p.m., ESPN

Jan. 20

CFP championship, Atlanta, 6:30 p.m., ESPN

SEC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME HISTORY

2023: Alabama 27, Georgia 24 (MVP Jalen Milroe, Alabama)
2022: Georgia 50, LSU 30 (Stetson Bennett, Georgia)
2021: Alabama 41, Georgia 24 (Bryce Young, Alabama)
2020: Alabama 52, Florida 46 (Najee Harris, Alabama)
2019: LSU 37, Georgia 10 (Joe Burrow, LSU)
2018: Alabama 35, Georgia 28 (Josh Jacobs, Alabama)
2017: Georgia 28, Auburn 7 (Roquan Smith, Georgia)
2016: Alabama 54, Florida 16 (Reuben Foster, Alabama)
2015: Alabama 29, Florida 15 (Derrick Henry, Alabama)
2014: Alabama 42, Missouri 13 (Blake Sims, Alabama)
2013: Auburn 59, Missouri 42 (Tre Mason, Auburn)

2012: Alabama 32, Georgia 28 (Eddie Lacy, Alabama)
2011: LSU 42, Georgia 10 (Tyrann Mathieu, LSU)
2010: Auburn 56, South Carolina 17 (Cam Newton, Auburn)
2009: Alabama 32, Florida 13 (Greg McElroy, Alabama)
2008: Florida 31, Alabama 20 (Tim Tebow, Florida)
2007: LSU 21, Tennessee 14 (Ryan Perrilloux, LSU)
2006: Florida 38, Arkansas 28 (Percy Harvin, Florida)
2005: Georgia 34, LSU 14 (D.J. Shockley, Georgia)
2004: Auburn 38, Tennessee 28 (Jason Campbell, Auburn)
2003: LSU 34, Georgia 13 (Justin Vincent, LSU)
2002: Georgia 30, Arkansas 3 (David Greene, Georgia)

2001: LSU 31, Tennessee 20 (Matt Mauck, LSU)
2000: Florida 28, Auburn 6 (Rex Grossman, Florida)
1999: Alabama 34, Florida 7 (Freddie Milons, Alabama)
1998: Tennessee 24, Mississippi St. 14 (Peerless Price, Tennessee)
1997: Tennessee 30, Auburn 29 (Peyton Manning, Tennessee)
1996: Florida 45, Alabama 30 (Danny Wuerffel, Florida)
1995: Florida 34, Arkansas 3 (Danny Wuerffel, Florida)
1994: Florida 24, Alabama 23 (Ellis Johnson, Florida)
1993: Florida 28, Alabama 13 (Terry Dean, Florida)
1992: Alabama 28, Florida 21 (Antonio Langham, Alabama)

SEC CHAMPIONSHIP

Georgia vs. Texas

When: 3 p.m. Saturday

Where: Atlanta

TV: ABC

Records: No. 5 Georgia (10-2), No. 2 Texas (11-1)

The series: Texas leads 4-2.

Four-down territory

1. That was quick: Texas and Oklahoma joined the SEC this year and already the Longhorns are in the league title game. That has to be hard for Kentucky, Vanderbilt, Texas A&M and Ole Miss. Those four teams yet to play in the championship. The SEC title game started in 1992. Texas was a part of six Big 12 title games since 1996 and has 29 overall conference titles (Southwest, Big 12). Georgia is seeking its fifth SEC championship game win and 15th overall SEC title. The Bulldogs are playing in its fourth straight title game.

2. We meet again: The Bulldogs and Longhorns clashed in October with Georgia taking the 30-15 win. The 30 points is the most allowed by Texas this season. In some ways Georgia has improved since the win, in other ways it has not. "We have not put a complete game together," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "That's what we are trying to do now: play our best when our best is needed. Defensively they have played at a high level all year. That hasn't changed (since we played them)."

3. Familiar territory: With the game being in Atlanta, the Bulldogs seem to have the advantage. It's about an hour's drive from Athens. The Longhorns are 930 miles from Atlanta, but head coach Steve Sarkisian is used to playing in Mercedes-Benz Stadium. "Well, I was the coach for the Atlanta Falcons for a couple of years, so I have a pretty good feel for getting around that place," he said. Maybe, but what about the visitor's locker room? "No, I've only been in the home team locker room."

4. He's the Manning: Quarterback Quinn Ewers went down with an injury and missed two games this season. The Longhorns didn't miss a beat with his replacement, Arch Manning. But Manning hasn't gone away completely since Ewers returned. Texas utilizes Manning's speed and arm in key situations,



Georgia receiver Dominic Lovett and the Bulldogs are looking for their second win this season over Texas. [MIKE STEWART/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

like last week against Texas A&M when he scored on a 15-yard run. "He's what everybody thought he was," Smart said. "He can run their entire offense, while at the same time creating designed runs or off-schedule runs, which is scary to defend."

Key matchup

Texas QB Quinn Ewers vs. Georgia QB Carson Beck

This is an epic quarterback showdown. Ewers missed two games this season but is still sixth in the SEC in passing with 2,307 yards and 24 touchdowns. Beck is an outstanding pocket passer with 3,429 yards and a league-leading 28 touchdowns.

Player of the game

Quintrevion Wisner, Texas RB

In a game surrounded by great quarterbacks, this one will come down to the run game. Texas is better in that department and Wisner has the hot hand the last two games, running for 186 yards against Kentucky and 158 against Texas A&M.

By the numbers

1: Georgia has one win in its last five SEC title games.

5: Teams that won the regular-season game have won five of the seven SEC title game rematches.

8: The Texas defense didn't allow a touchdown in eight games, including

three where it didn't allow any.

17: Texas and Georgia have 17 players from four different high schools who were teammates.

Prediction

Texas 24, Georgia 21

It's hard to beat a team twice in the same year. There is more motivation for the losing team from the first go-around. Both teams are vying for an automatic bid to the college playoff and a first-round bye. Georgia backed into its win against Texas in the first meeting, taking advantage of turnovers. Texas will be better prepared this time.

— Edwin Stanton

Texas defense showing it's nation's best

By Jim Vertuno
The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas defensive tackle Alfred Collins surveyed the wreckage left by the No. 2 Longhorns' total domination of Texas A&M.

Then he summed up the message he believes it sent to the rest of college football about the Texas defense.

"We're the best in the nation," Collins said.

It's hard to argue with the evidence the No. 2 Longhorns (11-1, 7-1, No. 3 CFP) have produced week after week in earning a spot in the Southeastern Conference championship game Saturday against No. 6 Georgia (10-2, 6-2 No. 7 CFP). The winner also earns a first-round bye in the 12-team College Football Playoff.

Texas opened the season with a shut-out. Three more times the Longhorns did not surrender an offensive touchdown. The defense has surrendered a total of 17 points over the last three games. The Longhorns rank No. 3 nationally in total defense, No. 2 in scoring defense, No. 1 in passing yards allowed and No. 3 in total interceptions while allowing just six passing touchdowns.

Against Texas A&M, in the first game in the rivalry since 2011, Texas allowed just 248 total yards and made two critical touchdown-saving stands, one early and one late, that sealed a 17-7 victory. On the second one, Texas stuffed the Aggies on fourth-and-goal from the Texas 1 with less than five minutes left.

"We feel like nobody's getting in the end zone with us," Texas linebacker Anthony Hill Jr. said after the game. "If you think you're going to just run right at us for 1 yard, I feel like you've lost your mind. I feel like that's not going to happen."

Most notable against A&M was how the defense turned momentum and rescued a sputtering offense after the Aggies had scored their only touchdown on an interception return, and then blocked a punt. Backed inside their 5, the Texas defensive line mauled the Aggies and stuffed four consecutive run plays.

"It's just like a common theme at this point," Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers said after the game, "they continue to save our butts on offense."

The game against Georgia is a rematch of the Bulldogs' 30-15 win on Oct. 19.



Linebacker Anthony Hill Jr. is part of a Texas defense that ranks third in the nation in total defense, has one shutout and has three other games it didn't surrender an offensive touchdown. [MICHAEL THOMAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Texas will be playing in the title game in its first year in the league. The Bulldogs are in the championship game for the fourth consecutive year and for the seventh time since 2018.

The Bulldogs' 30 points was the most the Longhorns allowed all season. But even then, the Texas defense mostly excelled, holding Georgia under 300 total yards and intercepting three passes by Georgia quarterback Carson Beck.

Georgia ran out to a 23-0 lead after two Texas turnovers set up the Bulldogs with short drives for a pair of touchdowns.

Arguably the only time the Texas defense truly broke this season was a second half touchdown drive by the Bulldogs that put the game out of reach. The Longhorns had pulled within 23-15 when Georgia marched 89 yards in 11 plays for Trevor Etienne's fourth-down 1-yard TD run.

"Georgia had a bunch of short fields and took advantage of those," Texas coach Steve Sarkisian said Monday.

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CONFERENCE USA CHAMPIONSHIP

Western Kentucky at Jacksonville State

When: 6 p.m. Friday

TV: CBS Sports Network

Records: Western Kentucky (8-4), Jacksonville State (8-4)

The series: WKU leads 5-2.

Four-down territory

1. You again: The Gamecocks and Hilltoppers meet for the second straight week. WKU won the regular-season finale in thrilling fashion. Lucas Carneiro booted a 50-yard field goal with three seconds to play for a 19-17 victory. It sealed the Hilltoppers' rematch in the title game and snapped Jacksonville State's eight-game win streak.

2. What is that thing?: WKU's mascot is named Big Red. It's an amorphous blob with a giant mouth and eyes. It's meant to symbolize the spirit of WKU and the school's Hilltoppers nickname. The campus sits on a hill 232 feet above the Barren River, which runs through WKU's home city of Bowling Green. Big Red was created by WKU student Ralph Carey in 1979. When a WKU student who dons the Big Red costume graduates, they get to wear the Big Red gloves on graduation day to let people know they were a WKU mascot.

3. Double trouble: WKU and Jax State have a two-quarterback system they can employ when needed. Jax State's Tyler Huff is the starter, but Muscle Shoals' Logan Smothers is used in key situations. Likewise, WKU's Caden Veltkamp took over for TJ Finley earlier in the season, but Finley can be used in certain play calls. "We have two quality quarterbacks and they have two quality quarterbacks," Hilltoppers coach Tyson Helton said. "Both of their quarterbacks are fantastic players."

4. Ruling the roost: The Gamecocks are 6-0 at home this season and have a 79-18 mark in their last 96 games. Overall, Jax State is 306-109 at AmFirst Stadium, which opened in 1946. "It doesn't matter if we are playing in a parking lot, you just want to play the dang game," Helton said of Jax State's home-field advantage. "Jacksonville State is a good place to play and it will be a good atmosphere."

Key matchup

Jax State WR Cam Vaughn vs. WKU WR Kisean Johnson

Jax State boasts a strong run game,



Tyler Huff is one of two quarterbacks used by the Jacksonville State Gamecocks, who are seeking their first conference title since joining the FBS a year ago. [TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

but don't sleep on the passing game, particularly the receivers. Vaughn leads the Gamecocks with 529 yards on 24 receptions and three touchdowns. WKU thrives in the air with Johnson as the go-to receiver. He leads the team with 830 yards on 65 catches with six touchdowns.

Player of the game

Tre Stewart, JSU RB

Stewart can turn the momentum of a game quickly with his speed and explosive plays. He has six 100-yard games, including two games with over 200

yards. His 1,403 yards is No. 7 in the nation and he is a touchdown machine with 20, which is tied for sixth in FBS.

By the numbers

2: Jax State is one of two teams (Notre Dame) to have two players ranked in the top 25 in rushing touchdowns (Tre Stewart, 20; Tyler Huff, 12).

8: This season marks the eighth time Jax State has scored over 400 points (425).

15: Lucas Carneiro has made 15 straight field goals for WKU, a school record.

261: Jax State has 274 first downs this season, which ranks 19th in the nation.

Prediction

Jax State 28, WKU 17

The Gamecocks are vying for their first conference title since joining the FBS last season. That's a big enough incentive to win Friday. Add the home-field element and Jax State has all the advantages. It has a big run game, too. That will carry the Gamecocks to the Conference USA title more than anything.

— Edwin Stanton

Nittany Lions relying on defensive depth

By Travis Johnson
The Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Jaylen Reed’s hands were still dirty and his face smeared with eye black as he took a seat in the Beaver Stadium media room.

The hard-nosed veteran of nearly 50 college football games looked weary after Penn State pounded Maryland on Saturday, but lit up as he watched media members gather around teammate Audavion Collins next to him.

The sophomore was excitedly describing his first career interception. Reed grinned, his pride was evident.

One of Penn State’s captains, Reed loves when underclassmen earn playing time. He knows, especially on defense, the No. 3 Nittany Lions (11-1, 8-1 Big Ten, No. 4 CFP) will likely rely on them to make a run at their first national championship since 1986.

“Having that type of depth, having that type of guy that can step up and play the game every week, that’s something that’s going to help us down the stretch,” Reed said. “Having depth at all positions, I feel like that’s the main thing and I feel like we have huge depth.”

Reed knows Collins is far from the only reserve player who has been effective for



Linebacker Tony Rojas says Penn State’s defense “is top tier, if not the best.” [BARRY REEGER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Tom Allen’s defense this season.

Heading into Saturday’s Big Ten championship game against No. 1 Oregon in Indianapolis, Penn State has used 39 players on a defense that ranks seventh nationally against the run and pass.

Meanwhile, the Nittany Lions are fourth overall in total defense (266.8 yards) and sixth in scoring defense (14 points) entering the showdown with the Ducks’ 15th-ranked offense with a College Football Playoff first-round bye at stake.

It’s not just the starting 11 getting it done.

Since mid-October, Penn State has regularly rotated at least nine defensive linemen, six linebackers and nine defensive backs early and midway through games. As a result, seven players have snagged their first interceptions this season, while five others have recorded their first sacks.

“We believe in everybody coming in behind us,” linebacker Tony Rojas said. “Our defense, we know what we’re capable of and I feel like our defense is top tier, if not the best.”

The Nittany Lions have allowed just 445 yards on 125 third-quarter plays this season. Meanwhile, they’ve outscored opponents 192-55 in the second half and overtime and held 19 of their last 22 Big Ten opponents to fewer than 100 rushing yards.

Like Reed, senior Dvon J-Thomas spent much of the second half against Maryland cheering on his freshman teammates. Notably, tackle Ty Blanding who had his first career tackle for loss in his first defensive series.

“I’ve seen a tremendous leap in their attention to detail,” J-Thomas said. “There’s not a lot of moments or times in your career where you’ll have an opportunity like this and I think they realize that.”

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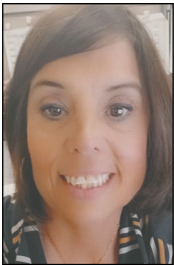
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CALEB
SUGGS

SEC: Texas vs. Georgia
Big Ten: Oregon vs. Penn State
CUSA: Western Ky. at Jacksonville State
ACC: SMU vs. Clemson
Big 12: Arizona State vs. Iowa State
American: Tulane at Army
MAC: Ohio vs. Miami (Ohio)
Mountain West: UNLV at Boise State
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SWAC: Southern at Jackson State

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Ohio
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Marshall
Jackson State

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Oregon
Western Kentucky
SMU
Arizona State
Tulane
Miami
Boise State
Louisiana-Lafayette
Southern

Last week
Season record

8-2
90-50

7-3
89-51

6-4
88-52

7-3
87-53

7-3
85-55

5-5
79-61

4-6
77-63

6-4
72-68



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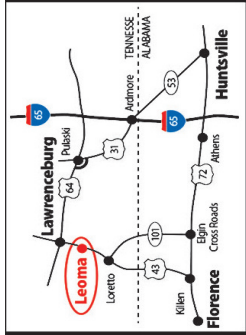
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