

Gridiron Gold Sheet Football Newsletter

Dennis Stagliano's Gridiron Gold Sheet
An Award Winning Football Newsletter Since 1981



For the first time ever a sports service went the entire season without a single losing week. Ron Sataloff, President Sports Features Syndicate

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**NCAA MAJOR MATCHUP GAMES FEATURED:
WASHINGTON @ UCLA, ALABAMA @ ARKANSAS,
LSU @ AUBURN, GEORGIA @ MISSOURI,
NORTH CAROLINA ST @ CLEMSON**

College Football Landscape

College Football: Winners and Losers from Week 4

In the noon slate, No. 4 Clemson barely got past No. 21 Wake Forest, needing double overtime to win 51-45. Meanwhile, Kansas moved to 4-0 by beating Duke at home.

In the 3:30 slot, No. 25 Miami fell 45-31 to C-USA's Middle Tennessee State at home, giving the 'Canes their second consecutive loss of the season. No. 11 Tennessee took care of division rival No. 20 Florida and won 38-33. Appalachian State's magical run was stopped, as James Madison scored 29 unanswered points to win 32-28.

No. 22 Texas fell on the road to Texas Tech in overtime. Longhorns running back Bijan Robinson fumbled on the opening possession of overtime, which allowed the Red Raiders to kick a game-winning field goal to win 37-34.

Losers: Syracuse or Kansas Doubters

No, this is not a college basketball article you're reading. How great is this for schools that are traditionally basketball powerhouses? It seemed unlikely at the start of the season, but through four weeks, both Kansas and Syracuse are perfect.

Syracuse maintained its unblemished record on Friday night with a 22-20 win over Virginia. With the victory, the Orange are now 3-0 at home.

'Cuse still has some tough games remaining on its schedule, including road games vs. Clemson, Pitt, Wake Forest and Boston College, but they look like a much more improved squad from the team that finished 5-7 last season.

The biggest reason for the improvement looks to be on offense, as head coach Dino Babers hired Robert Anae from Virginia as the Orange's offensive coordinator. Quarterback Garrett Shrader is thriving in the new system, completing 66.4 percent of his passes for 986 yards and eight touchdowns with just one interception.

And how about Kansas? In front of the Jayhawks' first sellout crowd since Nov. 2019, Kansas beat Duke 35-27. With the victory, the Jayhawks are now 4-0 for the first time since 2009.

As long as quarterback Jalon Daniels keeps playing like he has been, Kansas should keep winning. Against the Blue Devils defense on Saturday, he threw for 324 yards and four touchdowns. He rushed for another 83 yards and a score, too.

Both of these teams were far from favorites to win their respective conferences. And while the good times will likely come to an end, both programs have plenty of opportunities to show that their starts have not been a fluke.

Aside from games against Clemson, Pitt and Wake Forest, Syracuse will have a chance to beat NC State and Notre Dame. Kansas has Oklahoma, Baylor, Oklahoma State and Texas remaining. Don't be surprised if one of those teams goes down to these basketball schools.

Winner: Hendon Hooker and the Tennessee Offense

As long as Tennessee's offense keeps playing like it has, the Vols look like the only team that could threaten Georgia in the SEC East. During No. 11 Tennessee's 38-33 win over the No. 20 Florida Gators, the Vols' offense looked virtually unstoppable. Florida managed to stay in this one late though, and even recovered an onside kick in the game's final seconds to attempt a Hail Mary.

Tennessee finished with 576 yards of offense, including 349 yards and two touchdowns from quarterback Hendon Hooker. Hooker added another 112 yards and a touchdown on the ground, too. Receiver Bru McCoy led the Vols' receiving corps with 102 yards and a touchdown. Tennessee was 6-of-9 on third down and averaged 12.5 yards per pass.

What's even more impressive is that Tennessee only had 25:04 of ball possession and still put up 38 points. The longest drive of the day? A 10-play, 87-yard scoring series that took 4:39 off the clock to put the Vols up 38-21 with 7:55 left in the game.

Tennessee will play at LSU after a bye on Oct. 8, followed by a home game against Alabama a week later. The biggest remaining games on Tennessee's schedule appear to be at home vs. No. 8 Kentucky on Oct. 29 followed by a road trip to Athens to face Georgia the week after.

Through four weeks (including Week 0), the Vols are fourth nationally in scoring offense, averaging 52 points per game. If Tennessee can put up similar numbers like it has been all season, it's hard not to pick the Vols to give Georgia a run for its money in the East.

Loser: Oklahoma's CFB Playoff Resume

Well, it looks like Oklahoma won't be making it into the playoff in Brent Venables' first season in Lincoln. That's because the Sooners went into Kansas State and got upset by the Wildcats, a team that had lost to Southern Miss the week prior.

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Although Oklahoma was a 13.5-point favorite heading into this one, K-State looked in control of this game throughout. The Wildcats took a 14-0 lead in the first quarter, and scored another 10 points to lead 24-17 at halftime.

Late in the game, Oklahoma tried to complete a comeback. The Sooners scored a touchdown to make it a 34-27 game with 4:36 left. All Oklahoma's defense needed was a stop on defense to get the ball back.

But K-State quarterback Adrian Martinez, who transferred this offseason after playing four seasons at Nebraska, had other ideas. Martinez put together a seven-play, 75-yard touchdown drive capped off by a Martinez rushing touchdown to take a 41-24 lead. He had a crucial 55-yard run on 3rd and 16, and was downed inside Oklahoma's five on the drive.

Oklahoma countered with a late touchdown drive to make it a one-score game yet again, and attempted an onside kick which K-State recovered. Martinez finished with 234 yards passing and two touchdowns, including another 148 yards and four rushing touchdowns on the ground.

The loss for No. 6 Oklahoma is incredibly costly, especially considering that the Sooners have much harder opponents remaining on their schedule. Still remaining for OU includes games against Texas, Baylor and Oklahoma State.

Winner: Middle Tennessee's Defense

Things are not going well for Miami. Coming off a 17-9 loss on the road to Texas A&M, the 'Canes looked to rebound at home against Middle Tennessee State.

Although it entered as 25.5-point favorites, Miami struggled significantly against the Blue Raiders. In fact, MTSU had a 24-10 lead at halftime and ultimately shocked the Hurricanes on the road 45-31.

Miami had some life early in the fourth quarter, as Key'Shawn Smith returned a kickoff 91 yards for a touchdown to make it 38-24. But Middle Tennessee put together a 12-play, 75-yards scoring play to put the game on ice with 8:42 left.

The biggest reason Middle Tennessee won? Defense. The Blue Raiders had three takeaways on the day, including two picks off Tyler Van Dyke, as well as a fumble recovered in the first quarter.

For first-year Miami head coach Mario Cristobal, this could be a long season. It's a bit surprising, given that Miami was considered a team to compete for an ACC Coastal title. Instead, the Canes are 2-2 and still have to play games against North Carolina, Virginia Tech, Duke, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Clemson and Pitt.

Loser: Anyone Who Thought Clemson Wasn't Vulnerable

Clemson remains undefeated, but Wake Forest gave the Tigers quite the scare. The Tigers needed double overtime to hold off the Demon Deacons, winning in a 51-45 shootout. It's not too surprising that this game was close—Clemson was just a 7.5-point favorite on the road. But Clemson had a whopping 10 penalties for 120 yards on the day, which helped keep Wake in this game. Looking at the rest of Clemson's schedule, this might not be the last time the Tigers get close to losing.

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Next week, Clemson plays No. 12 NC State, followed by back-to-back road trips against Boston College and Florida State before playing Syracuse on Oct. 22. Clemson gets a bye before going on the road to play Notre Dame on Nov. 5, then finish the year at home against Louisville, Miami and South Carolina.

The good news is that Clemson can probably drop a game and still handily win the ACC to make it into the playoff. But Wake's performance proved that Clemson might not be as unbeatable as some thought at the start of the season. Some good news for Clemson fans? Tigers QB DJ Uiagalelei had a big day, finishing with 371 yards and five touchdowns.

Winner: Wild Scoop-N-Score for Texas A&M

We had ourselves a good game in Jerry World between Arkansas and Texas A&M. Although the No. 10 Razorbacks led 14-0 in the first quarter, the No. 23 Aggies found themselves back in this one thanks to an unbelievable scoop-n-score returned for a touchdown.

Arkansas was knocking on the door on TAMU's 3-yard line, looking like it would score another touchdown. Razorbacks quarterback KJ Jefferson tried to extend the ball over the pile but fumbled the ball. Aggies defender Tyreek Chappell recovered it and began returning it the other way. As he was about to get tackled, he somehow had the presence of mind to hand it off to Demani Richardson, who took it to the house for the score. The Aggies' two-point conversion failed, so Arkansas still led 14-13. Still, it completely shifted the dynamic of the game.

This might be the wildest play we've seen thus far all season. The Aggies scored 10 more points in the second half, and the defense held Arkansas to just one touchdown in the fourth quarter. Texas A&M won 23-21, so this play certainly gave the Aggies a lot of momentum heading into the second half.

Loser: Washington State's Fourth Quarter Defense

What a fourth-quarter collapse from Washington State. In a game that the Cougars led in its entirety through the first 56 minutes, Oregon scored 21 points late in the fourth to win 44-41.

Those three touchdowns came over a period of just two minutes and 49 seconds. Wazzu led 27-15 heading into the final frame, but the Ducks scored a touchdown in the opening seconds of the quarter to make it a 27-22 game. The Cougars scored off a Cameron Ward one-yard touchdown pass with 6:41 left to go up two scores again.

But this is when things got out of hand for Wazzu. Oregon countered first with an 11-play, 75-yard scoring drive to make it 34-29 with 3:50 left. A Wazzu three-and-out gave Oregon the ball back with 2:35 left.

Then, the Ducks needed just five plays to score a touchdown as quarterback Bo Nix found Troy Franklin for a 50-yard score. Nix ran it in for a two-point conversion to take a 37-34 lead.

Washington State had a chance to get a game-tying field goal, getting the ball back with 1:21 left. But on second down, Ward's pass was intercepted and returned for a touchdown to give Oregon a 44-34 lead. Wazzu managed to score a touchdown in the final minute, but it came in vain after the Cougars failed to recover the ensuing onside kick.

This Oregon team has drastically improved from the thrashing it took from Georgia in Week 1. The Ducks upset then-No. 12 BYU 41-20 last week, and to follow that up with a come-from-behind win on the road is big. Nix, who threw for 222 yards and two touchdowns last week against BYU, finished with 428 yards passing and three touchdowns. Next up, Oregon faces Stanford at home.

Winner: The Iowa Over

Anyone who took the over in Saturday night's Iowa-Rutgers game can thank Hawkeyes freshman kicker Drew Stevens.

Iowa took a 17-3 lead at halftime and didn't really let off the gas for the rest of the game, leading 24-3 at the end of the third. Rutgers scored a touchdown with 11:15 left in the fourth to make it 24-10. This was important because the over/under for this game was set at 34.5.

Following the Rutgers touchdown, Iowa's offense drove down to Rutgers' 33-yard line. Stevens lined up for a 51-yard field goal attempt, which bounced off left upright before going through, giving anyone who bet the over a victory.

Stevens has hit both of his field goal attempts so far, with his latest becoming his new season-long. During last week's 27-0 win over Nevada, he made a 43-yarder. Congrats, those of you who took the over for Iowa-Rutgers. Grrrr we had the under in a free pick article.

Loser: Arkansas' Field Goal Doink

What a horrible way to lose a football game if you're Arkansas. Trailing by 23-21 with 6:30 left, the Razorbacks got the ball back with a chance to take the lead with either a field goal or touchdown.

Quarterback KJ Jefferson and the Arkansas offense drove down to the Texas A&M 24-yard line. With 1:30 remaining, Razorbacks kicker Cam Little lined up for a 42-yard attempt. Amazingly, the kick bounced off of the top of the right upright and was no good.

Before the miss against the Aggies, Little had made both of his two field goals on the season. Last year, he made 83.3 percent of his field goals.

You never want to put a game's win or loss on the shoulders of a single player, and we're not trying to do that here. But this is an incredibly rough way to lose a football game against a rival like Texas A&M. Luckily for us we bet Arkansas early in the week at +2.5.

Winner: The Florida State is Finally Back

Florida State is 4-0 on the season. It sure looks like Mike Norvell, who is in his third season in Tallahassee, has things figured out this year. The 'Noles went on the road to face Boston College this week, and this one was over in the first quarter.

Florida State jumped out to a 21-0 lead by the time the first quarter was over, and the 'Noles went to the locker room with a 31-0 lead. FSU's defense gave up just two touchdowns on the night, one at the end of the third and one in the fourth. FSU won by a final score of 44-14. Through four games, Florida State is averaging 37.5 points per game.

Florida State quarterback Jordan Travis finished with 321 yards passing and a touchdown on the night. 'Nole running back Trey Benson added 78 yards and two scores, too. The win moves Florida State to 4-0, and the 'Noles join just two other 2-0 ACC teams, in Syracuse and Clemson.

The next few games for FSU should show us just how for real this team is, however. Next week, the 'Noles face a Wake Forest team at home—the Demon Deacons gave Clemson a scare on Saturday, losing in double-overtime. Then FSU plays at NC State before meeting Clemson at home on Oct. 15.

Florida State may not win all of those games, but starting 4-0 is a drastic improvement from the last two seasons. FSU finished below-.500 in both 2020 and last season.

Loser: Defense After Stephen F. Austin Puts up 98 Points

NAIA Warner was part of some history on Saturday, but on the wrong end of it. Stephen F. Austin defeated the Royals 98-0 on Saturday, with the Lumberjacks setting a WAC record for most points scored in the process. Amazingly, it was only the third most points scored in school history.

Stephen F. Austin also fell just short of eclipsing some other incredible benchmarks. According to ESPN, the FCS record for points scored in a game by a single team came when Portland State beat Delaware State 105-0 in 1980. The FBS record for points scored was 103, set by Wyoming vs. Northern Colorado in 1949. The 103-0 win by the Cowboys is the largest margin of victory in FBS history.

The Lumberjacks also had four quarterbacks play in the blowout win, combining for 478 yards in the air. Meanwhile, Warner had just 141 yards of offense on the night and had to punt eight times.

Winner: USC Survives

The Pac12 After Dark game came down to the wire, as No. 7 USC needed a game-winning drive late to avoid the upset against Oregon State in Corvallis.

The Trojans' offense, which came into this one averaging 50.7 points per game, struggled throughout. USC trailed 7-3 at halftime and didn't find the end zone until early in the fourth quarter on a Travis Dye seven-yard rushing touchdown.

It was the defense that kept the Trojans in this game. Oregon State quarterback Chance Nolan threw four interceptions on the night, with zero touchdowns. USC also held Oregon State to just 18 first downs and allowed the Beavers to go 5-of-13 on third down.

USC's offense came alive late. Caleb Williams put together an 11-play, 84-yard touchdown drive. The drive was capped off by a 21-yard touchdown pass to receiver Jordan Addison to go up 17-14 with 1:13 left. USC's defense sealed the victory on Oregon State's ensuing drive, intercepting Nolan for the fourth time.

The Trojans still have games against Washington State, Utah, Notre Dame and UCLA. Utah is on the road, so we'll see if the Utes can give USC a scare like Oregon State did. Still, a win is a win, so USC's playoff hopes remain intact.

Winner: Run-Through-A-Brick-Wall Locker Room Speeches

Texas Tech improved to 3-1 on Saturday, and it did so by upsetting No. 22 Texas 37-34 in overtime. The win broke a four-year losing streak for the Red Raiders against Texas, and handed the Longhorns their first loss in Big 12 play.

Although Texas Tech lost 27-14 last week to NC State, credit to Red Raiders' first-year head Joey McGuire for resetting his team heading into conference play. It was an impressive come-from-behind victory for Tech. The Red Raiders trailed 24-14 at halftime, and scored 17 unanswered points from late in the third quarter through the fourth to get back in it.

The win for Tech gave the Red Raiders their first win over an AP Top 25 Texas team since 2008. That year, Texas Tech defeated then-No. 1 Texas 39-33 in Lubbock. Next up for Tech is a road game against Kansas State. It should be a good one, as the Wildcats upset Oklahoma on Saturday.

Top Teams

Michigan is ranked No. 4 but still has a pair of games against top teams, including the Buckeyes on Nov. 26. No. 5, 4-0 Clemson is also a contender. It was tested in its last game against Wake Forest but survived with an overtime win. USC is ranked No. 6 and is also 4-0 but still has a matchup against Utah, while a pair of SEC Teams round out the top eight in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Currently, 21 teams are still unbeaten this year. Following its win against Boston College, Florida State jumped into the rankings for the first time this year. It is ranked No. 23. Oklahoma State, Penn State, Ole Miss, Washington and Minnesota are the other ranked teams undefeated.

Last Week's Top Performers

Last Week's Top Performers		Last Week's Passing Leaders	
Adrian Martinez (KSU vs. OKLA): 21/34, 234 yds, 1 TD			Cmp/Att Yds TD
Jalon Daniels (KU vs. DUKE): 19/23, 324 yds, 4 TD		Kurtis Rourke (OHIO)	41/50, 537 yds, 4TD
Jaydn Ott (CAL vs. ARIZ): 19 rush, 274 yds, 3 TD		Anthony Richardson (FLA)	24/44, 453 yds, 2TD
Israel Abanikanda (PITT vs. URI): 19 rush, 177 yds, 4 TD		Bo Nix (ORE)	33/44, 428 yds, 3TD
A. Richardson (FLA vs. TENN): 24/44, 453 yds, 2 TD		Will Rogers (MSST)	39/50, 409 yds, 6TD
Will Rogers (MSST vs. BGSU): 39/50, 409 yds, 6 TD		Chase Cunningham (MTSU)	16/25, 408 yds, 3TD
D.J. Uiagalelei (CLEM vs. WAKE): 26/41, 371 yds, 5 TD			
Hendon Hooker (TENN vs. FLA): 22/28, 349 yds, 2 TD			
Malik Cunningham (LOU vs. USF): 14/22, 186 yds, 1 TD			
Kurtis Rourke (OHIO vs. FOR): 41/50, 537 yds, 4 TD			
Last Week's Rushing Leaders		Last Week's Receiving Leaders	
	Att/Yds/TD		Rec/Yds/TD
Jaydn Ott (CAL)	19 att 274 yds, 3TD	De'Corian Clark (UTSA)	9 rec 217 yds, 3TD
Blake Corum (MICH)	30 att 243 yds, 2TD	Tyler Scott (CIN)	10 rec 185 yds, 3TD
Israel Abanikanda (PITT)	19 att 177 yds, 4TD	Michael Wilson (STAN)	6 rec 176 yds, 2TD
Keyon Mozee (M-OH)	21 att 171 yds, 0TD	DJ England-Chisolm (MTSU)	2 rec 169 yds, 2TD
Marshawn Lloyd (SCAR)	15 att 169 yds, 3TD	Jake Bailey (SMU)	8 rec 163 yds, 1TD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Washington - 3 Over UCLA by 10

The Washington Huskies come to the Rose Bowl to take on the UCLA Bruins in a **Friday Night Pac-12 showdown**. These teams both being undefeated adds a little extra glitz to this conference battle, as each squad enters this game at 4-0. Last week, they both scored conference wins, with the Huskies beating Stanford 40-22, covering their fourth straight spread to open the campaign. The Bruins, meanwhile, return home after beating Colorado in Boulder, 45-17.

Washington faces some challenges in this spot against a plucky UCLA bunch, as this is the first time they are leaving their stomping grounds, somewhat of an anomaly for it being week five. They've been winning and covering the spread, but we'll see if that holds up against an unbeaten conference team on the road. If looking to quantify which of these 4-0 teams has more of an air of quality to it, the nod would go to Washington, at least from a quality of opponent standpoint. They may have had a couple of softies to open the season, and Stanford might not qualify as a high-quality win. But their 39-28 win over Michigan State still looms large, as does the play of their QB Michael Penix, Jr., a slew of offensive talent, and a defense that has more than done its share in making this all work through the first third of the season. The real works start now, though.

With UCLA, a 4-0 start is all Chip Kelly's team should be thinking about as they try to resurrect this program after a long spell of not being in the big-time. Still, they would be the team with more to prove at this point. They took care of business in their conference opener, as did the Huskies, but Colorado is toward the bottom end of the conference. The prior week, they barely edged South Alabama, 32-31. They have scored 45 in each of their other three games but wins over Alabama State and Bowling Green, in addition to their other wins, fail to excite.

The Bruins offense is stewarded by familiar face Dorian Thompson-Robinson, who has ten total TDs. We saw Bruins' back Zach Charbonnet run for three TDs last week, with DTR and a nice supporting cast of backs chipping in. Aerially, we see Jake Bobo taking a hand in things. Measuring their offense against who they've faced and assuming it will all transfer well against a higher-level entity in the Huskies could be a mistake. The receivers might not be quite as open, and they have more menace up front. This easily looks to be the toughest challenge the Washington defense has seen thus far.

Still, this is a Washington "D" that in the last two weeks, with the opposition kicking up a notch, has allowed the Huskies to win by a combined 29 points and cover the spread with ease. They have their usual talent in the secondary, a package that is beyond what the UCLA receivers have seen by a fairly-large measure. They also have an attacking defense, and mayhem coming from all areas of this defense. And we'll see how the Bruins' offensive line holds up to a robust Huskies' pass-rush, with Alphonzo Tuputala and Bralen Trice really getting after opposing quarterbacks.

One could say that there are positive signs with a Bruins' defense that has long undermined the efforts of this team. They have made some strides. They've been pretty good against the run, and other than the too-close-for-comfort win over South Alabama, they've allowed 44 combined points in their other three games. But this is where we start to see if they're for real or not. And if South Alabama is giving the Bruins a run for their money at the Rose Bowl, there's no reason to think Penix, Jr., and Company won't. This UCLA run-defense will be tested with the multi-pronged approach of Wayne Taulapapa and Cameron Davis. Penix, Jr. has been precise and looks to connect with what's becoming a nice three-headed monster at receiver with Jalen McMillan, Ja'Lynn Polk, and Rome Odunze. It's unclear how rigid the UCLA secondary will be against this versatile Washington offense.

For a Washington team that was able to dig in at home for all spring and summer while getting their first four games in their stadium, this road spot might be a bit more of a factor. Combine that with last year's 24-17 win by UCLA, where Thompson-Robinson and Charbonnet each had big games, and it's not that hard to make a case for UCLA. I think the steady and experienced hand of Penix, Jr. should register, as will a greater overall spirit and form we've seen from the Huskies this season compared to last. I picture a well-rounded performance on both sides of the ball being enough to get the Huskies to the finish line with the cover. Lay the 3 points.

Projected Score: Washington 37, UCLA 27

Alabama - 15½ Over ARKANSAS by 21

The 2nd ranked Alabama Crimson Tide will embark on their 2nd road trip of the season when they go into Fayetteville for a showdown with the no. 20 Arkansas Razorbacks at Razorback Stadium.

The Crimson Tide were nearly upset in the first road trip of the season in Austin but came away with a 20-19 victory. Since that win, the Crimson Tide has compiled two straight victories by a combined score of 118-10 over UL Monroe and Vanderbilt. In the wake of those big victories, the Crimson Tide will be 15.5 point favorites when they roll into Fayetteville on Saturday.

The Razorbacks suffered their first loss of the season last week in a 23-21 defeat to no. 23 Texas A&M. The Aggies were in desperate need of a bounce-back performance, and Arkansas could only muster 21 points despite racking up 415 yards of total offense against the Aggies' premier defense. However, it is the Razorbacks' offense that could give the home team some appetizing value this week. The Razorbacks have played really well on the offensive side of the football, averaging 33.5 points per game against pretty solid competition. As 15.5-point underdogs, Arkansas could have some value if they can sustain that offensive success this week against the Alabama defense.

Before you jump on the Razorbacks and the points, let's first discuss why the betting spread is over two touchdowns and what we should expect from a match-up perspective. First and foremost, the Razorbacks' defense has not played well this season. Despite giving up 23 points to an anemic Texas A&M offense, the Razorbacks also gave up totals of 24 points to Cincinnati, 30 points to South Carolina, and another 27 points to Missouri State.

The main struggle for Arkansas's defense has been defending the pass. The Razorbacks have been shredded for more than 300 yards per game through the air. Needless to say, that is a frightening statistic for a team that is about to go against the defending Heisman Trophy winner in QB Bryce Young who has tossed 13 touchdowns, with just two picks, already this season. Granted, Alabama does not have the elite homerun threats in the passing game that we witnessed last year with Jameson Williams and John Metchie III. However, the Crimson Tide still has a ton of talent in their receiving corps with an excellent quarterback at the helm to attack an inferior pass defense.

Alabama has won 15 straight against Arkansas straight-up. Arkansas is 6-0 SU in the last six games at home. While this is not the all-world type of Alabama defense that we have seen throughout the Nick Saban era, I do like the Crimson Tide's defensive match-up against Arkansas this week. The Razorbacks' offense is centered around the running ability of QB KJ Jefferson and RB Raheim Sanders.

Head Coach Nick Saban has been tremendous at strategic game planning against run-first quarterbacks in his career, and I expect this Alabama defense to focus on taking the run away. If the Alabama offense delivers, I believe they win comfortably.

Projected Score: Alabama 41, Arkansas 20

LSU - 7 Over AUBURN by 16

The LSU Tigers and the Auburn Tigers meet Saturday in college football action from Jordan-Hare. LSU is fresh off a Saturday evening matchup versus New Mexico. In that one the Tigers cruised to a blowout win. As for Auburn, they took on Missouri in their last game. Auburn ended up eking out an overtime victory.

LSU had a tense matchup versus Florida State in their opener, ultimately falling 24-23 in a tough result. The Tigers were able to get their first win in week two 65-17 over Southern, and another victory came the next weekend with a 31-16 result over Mississippi State.

In the New Mexico matchup, LSU scored in every quarter and cruised to an eventual 38-0 shutout win. QB Jayden Daniels finished with 279 yards on 24-of-29 passing. Noah Cain was the top rusher with his 94 yards and two scores off 11 carries.

Over on the Auburn side, they blew out Mercer in their 2022 opener by a score of 42-16. The Tigers had a tougher time versus San Jose State but still escaped 24-16. Auburn would take their first loss in week three versus Penn State with a 41-12 blowout result.

Back on Saturday versus Missouri, Auburn blew an early 14-0 lead but eventually held on for the 17-14 overtime victory. Quarterback Robby Ashford managed 127 yards passing and also led the rush with 46 yards and a score from 15 carries.

LSU is 3-0-1 ATS in their last four conference games and 4-0 ATS in their last four on grass. LSU is 5-2-1 ATS versus a team with a winning record.

Meanwhile, Auburn is 5-1 ATS in their last six in October and 1-4 ATS in their last five conference games. Auburn is 0-5 ATS in their last five overall.

The LSU Tigers put on a clinic in the New Mexico game, bagging 633 total yards (414 passing), 7.9 yards per play and 28 first downs. LSU held the Lobos to just 88 total yards and two first downs on the other side. The Tigers have been rolling over the last three games.

As for Auburn, they posted just 217 total yards with 3.3 yards per play against a tricky Missouri team in their overtime win. The Tigers have just 26 combined points over the last two weeks, and they've only scored more than 24 points once this year.

The LSU Tigers are quicker and stronger, and they've got the firepower to cover in this one. In the battle of SEC Tigers, I'll take the Tigers from Baton Rouge.

Projected Score: LSU 30, Auburn 14

Georgia - 27 Over MISSOURI by 35

The Georgia Bulldogs look for their fifth 5-0 start in the last 5 years. The Missouri Tigers look to get a game above a .500 record. The Georgia Bulldogs haven't lost a road game since October 2020. Stetson Bennett is completing 74.2 percent of his passes for 1,224 yards, 5 touchdowns and 1 interception. Brock Bowers and Ladd McConkey have combined for 503 receiving yards and 3 touchdowns, while Kenny McIntosh has 21 receptions. The Georgia Bulldogs ground game is averaging 181.3 yards per contest, and Kendall Milton leads the way with 208 yards and 3 touchdowns. Defensively, Georgia is allowing 8 points and 257 ypg. Smael Mondon Jr. leads the Bulldogs with 17 tackles, Jamon Dumas-Johnson has 2 sacks and Malaki Starks has 2 interceptions.

The Missouri Tigers have won their last 4 home games. Brady Cook is completing 63.3 percent of his passes for 805 yards, 4 touchdowns and 4 interceptions. Dominic Lovett and Barrett Banister have combined for 490 receiving yards and 2 touchdowns, while Luther Burden II has 10 receptions. The Missouri Tigers ground game is averaging 186.3 yards per contest, and Nathaniel Peat leads the way with 225 yards and 1 touchdown. Defensively, Missouri is allowing 24.5 points and 302 yards per game. Ty'Ron Hopper leads the Missouri Tigers with 26 tackles, Isaiah McGuire has 3 sacks and Joseph Charleston has 1 interception.

The Bulldogs are 36-15 ATS in their last 51 road games and 7-3 ATS in their last 10 conference games. The Tigers are 3-8 ATS in their last 11 home games and 6-14 ATS in their last 20 games.

The Missouri Tigers could either be motivated and confident after last week's result against Auburn, or they could be depressed and setup for a letdown. The first few minutes should give you an idea of what to expect. With that said, Missouri hasn't been great on offense this season and things aren't going to change against this Georgia defense. There's just a big talent gap between these teams, and last year's 43-6 victory for the Bulldogs is probably a similar result here. Missouri will have issues putting points on the board. I'll lay the points with the Bulldogs.

.Projected Score: Georgia 42, Missouri 7

North Carolina St + 7 Over CLEMSON by 3

The NC State Wolfpack and Clemson Tigers meet Saturday in week 5 college football action at Memorial Stadium. The NC State Wolfpack look for their first 5-0 start since the 2018 season. The Clemson Tigers look for their seventh 5-0 start in their last 8 seasons.

The NC State Wolfpack have split their last 6 road games. Devin Leary is completing 64 percent of his passes for 890 yards, 9 touchdowns and 2 interceptions. Thayer Thomas and Devin Carter have combined for 334 receiving yards and 3 touchdowns, while Demie Sumo-Karngbaye has 6 receptions. The NC State Wolfpack ground game is averaging 157.5 yards per contest, and Sumo-Karngbaye leads the way with 252 yards and 3 touchdowns. Defensively, NC State is allowing 11.8 points and 261.5 yards per game. Drake Thomas leads the NC State Wolfpack with 24 tackles, C.J. Clark has 2 sacks and Tyler Baker-Williams has 2 interceptions.

The Clemson Tigers haven't lost a home game since November 2016. DJ Uiagalelei is completing 64.3 percent of his passes for 1,033 yards, 10 touchdowns and 1 interception. Beaux Collins and Joseph Ngata have combined for 407 receiving yards and 4 touchdowns, while Antonio Williams has 12 receptions. The Clemson Tigers ground game is averaging 183.5 yards per contest, and Will Shipley leads the way with 353 yards and 7 touchdowns. Defensively, Clemson is allowing 21.8 points and 349.8 yards per game. Trenton Simpson leads the Clemson Tigers with 27 tackles, Ruke Orhororo has 2 sacks and Andrew Mukuba has 1 interception.

The Wolfpack are 11-5 ATS in their last 16 conference games. The Tigers are 2-8 ATS in their last 10 home games. The Wolfpack are 5-2 ATS in their last 7 meetings in Clemson.

The Clemson Tigers haven't lost at home in forever. However, Clemson hasn't been all that impressive, nearly lost last week to Wake Forest and is 105th in passing defense. The NC State Wolfpack have been the more balanced team up to this point, they beat Clemson last year, and they have one of the better defenses in the country. NC State is a physical team that's 13th in total defense, 9th in run defense and 10th in scoring defense. This has a chance to be a classic ACC battle that comes down to the wire. Give me the dog and the points.

Projected Score: North Carolina St. 26, Clemson 23



NFL GUARANTEED PICKS WENT 10-0 AGAINST THE SPREAD LAST SUNDAY ONCE AGAIN, NFL PICKS GO 10-0 ATS!

NFL Football Landscape

Week 3 of the NFL season was very similar to each of the first two weeks of the season. The under didn't hit nearly as high as it did in the first two weeks of the season, but it did hit more than the over for the third consecutive week.

Six money line underdogs won outright in Week 2, and with the Monday night Cowboys win, seven underdogs won outright again on Sunday. And six teams entered Week 3 undefeated, but that number shrunk on Sunday.

Week 3 Notes:

Under on totals hit more than overs for third straight week.

The under didn't have a success rate of 60% like it did in each of the first two weeks of the season, but the under did hit more than the over for the third straight week.

The under hit in eight of the 16 games (50%) played last week, and has hit just under 62% (29/47) of the time overall. Six teams entered week three undefeated, but only two teams — Miami Dolphins and Philadelphia Eagles — improved to 3-0.

Home dogs, let me hear you! Ruff Ruff!

A season-high five home underdogs — Denver Broncos, Carolina Panthers, Miami Dolphins, Indianapolis Colts and Tennessee Titans — won outright on Sunday. Home underdogs are now 12-8-1 through the first three weeks of the season.

Las Vegas stands alone, unfortunately.

The Las Vegas Raiders are the only team yet to win a game after losing to the Tennessee Titans, 24-22, on Sunday. The Texans are technically winless, but they haven't lost all their games either.

Houston recorded a tie against Indianapolis in Week 1, leaving the Raiders as the only 0-3 team in the NFL. Las Vegas is also the only team 0-3 ATS this season.

Big Scores:

One bettor made just under \$3 million on a six-leg parlay last weekend. Denver's 11-10 fourth-quarter comeback win over San Francisco completed the bettor's \$65,000.00 bet. The wager included two college games and four NFL games.

One bettor won nearly \$8,500.00 on a \$100.00 Same-Game Parlay (SGP) bet on Sunday. The bettor correctly took Baltimore -2.5 vs. the Patriots, Lamar Jackson to score a touchdown, throw for at least

200 yards and rush for at least 40 yards, and for Mark Andrews to score two touchdowns and record at least 50 receiving yards. Cha-ching!

Heading into Week 4

Five teams are still undefeated against the spread — Miami, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston and New York Giants — and the under has hit in each of the first three weeks of the season.

Even though New Orleans is considered the home team, next week's Vikings vs. Saints in London is the first of five games to be played outside of the U.S.

Of the 16 games this week, only one over/under — Buffalo vs. Baltimore, 53.5 — is set at 50 or higher. And with the under hitting nearly 62% of the time, expect the total points numbers to continue to shrink across the NFL.

TOP PERFORMERS LAST WEEK

Last Week's Top Performers		Week 3 Passing Leaders	
Lamar Jackson* (BAL): 18/29, 218 yds, 4 TD			Cmp/Att Yds TD
Khalil Herbert* (CHI): 20 rush, 157 yds, 2 TD		Josh Allen (BUF)	42/63 400 yds, 2TD
Jalen Hurts* (PHI): 22/35, 340 yds, 3 TD		Jameis Winston (NOR)	25/41 353 yds, 1TD
DeVonta Smith* (PHI): 8 rec, 169 yds, 1 TD		Jalen Hurts (PHI)	22/35 340 yds, 3TD
Josh Allen* (BUF): 42/63, 400 yds, 2 TD		Geno Smith (SEA)	32/44 325 yds, 2TD
Mack Hollins (LVR): 8 rec, 158 yds, 1 TD		Mac Jones (NWE)	22/32 321 yds, 0TD
Trevor Lawrence (JAX): 28/39, 262 yds, 3 TD			
Mark Andrews (BAL): 8 rec, 89 yds, 2 TD			
Jamaal Williams (DET): 20 rush, 87 yds, 2 TD			
Joe Burrow (CIN): 23/36, 275 yds, 3 TD			
Week 3 Rushing Leaders		Week 3 Receiving Leaders	
	Att/Yds/TD		Rec/Yds/TD
Khalil Herbert (CHI)	20 att 157 yds, 2TD	DeVonta Smith (PHI)	8 rec 169 yds, 1TD
Cordarrelle Patterson (ATL)	17 att 141 yds, 1TD	Mack Hollins (LVR)	8 rec 158 yds, 1TD
Nick Chubb (CLE)	23 att 113 yds, 1TD	DeVante Parker (NWE)	5 rec 156 yds, 0TD
Christian McCaffrey (CAR)	25 att 108 yds, 0TD	Chris Olave (NOR)	9 rec 147 yds, 0TD
Lamar Jackson (BAL)	11 att 107 yds, 1TD	Marquise Brown (ARI)	14 rec 140 yds, 0TD

Guaranteed Picks

You don't pay unless you win!

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PRO FOOTBALL BEST BETS

Minnesota - 2½ Over New Orleans by 11

NFL Sunday gets off to an early start this week, with the Minnesota Vikings taking on the New Orleans Saints in London at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. The Vikings bounced back from an ugly loss to the Eagles to beat the Lions last Sunday, 28-24. At 2-1, they now turn their attention to a tricky road assignment in London.

The Saints have dropped two in a row since beating the Falcons by a point in week one, and last Sunday, lost to the Panthers, 22-14, in a winnable game undermined by mistakes. Somewhat in a funk, they now have to cross the pond and take on a tough Vikings team.

Dennis Allen's tenure is off to a rough start with a team that faces innumerable issues. It's not just the results, though those are distressing enough. With a good defense, they are relying too much on that part of their game, with only a combined 24 points scoring in their last two. The health quotient seems to be surfacing in a destructive way. QB Jameis Winston seems to be hurting and is hanging by a thread. Top receivers Jarvis Landry and Michael Thomas are already banged-up. With Alvin Kamara, it's always a health issue, and his positive contributions have become more sporadic in the last few seasons. And with Winston needing that line the most, they've been a bit leaky with the opposing pass-rush. A possible solution in Taysom Hill is also compromised with him being hurt.

It's not going to be easy to soldier forward with things the way they are. The Saints have seen a promising development in Chris Olave delivering at wide receiver, as the rookie is a rare bright spot in this Saints' offense. Winston can still connect with his receivers, but we're seeing a lot of mistakes and compromised mobility. Winston in ideal condition is a dicey enough proposition, but with him hurting and making even more mistakes than normal, a change might be imminent. The options are not great, especially if Hill isn't ready to go, with Andy Dalton waiting in the wings. They're going to need their defense to do a lot of the work and hope things can come around on offense. The thing is, though, against this Minnesota team, there's a chance you're going to need to put up points, and we're not sure this Saints team can do that readily.

At 2-1 and with two divisional wins already, the Vikes, on the surface, seem to be in decent working order. They mashed the Packers and got the measure of an upstart Lions team on Sunday, sandwiching a particularly ugly loss to Philly. There are still ample concerns with a team that can play with a wide range of form, as we've already seen this season through just three games. There will be days where Dalvin Cook is running wild, with Justin Jefferson eating up secondaries and running up and down the field. And seemingly, just as often, things don't click. Kirk Cousins is embarrassing himself. The defense can't stop a nosebleed on the ground. The line is allowing pass-rushers to get after Cousins and not springing the run game. Cousins isn't finding receivers. And when the ball starts rolling that way, you might as well rip up your ticket because it's just not going to work out with the Vikes some days. And why do spotlight games always seem to be where they play the worst, especially Cousins?

Games involving the Vikings can be great spots to take different kinds of stands. If the Vikings are in the equation, you can sometimes throw out things like recent form and the reads you might have on different teams. Like in this game, we see a struggling Saints offense that isn't very healthy. We also see no issues on the Vikes' offense, other than Dalvin Cook looking a little banged-up last game. But it's still a Minnesota offense that can generate a lot of production. It creates an image that is hard to shake where Minnesota is the vastly superior offensive force on paper.

First of all, the Minnesota best-case offensive scenario is far from automatic. This is a team that has been flexing this same offensive ability for a few seasons and has been kept out of the playoffs. Not scoring more than 28 points this season shows them to be less-than-electric overall on that side of the ball. Dalvin Cook has not looked himself this season, and that line seems to be a bit flimsy through three weeks. Aerially, there are options with guys like Adam Thielen and a perhaps emergent tight end, Irv Smith, Jr. But more often than not, you're not hearing much from any of these guys, with the offense a bit one-dimensional with Cousins looking for Jefferson.

For those who have watched the Saints the last few weeks, it's not easy to forecast them as a good candidate to do much against the Vikings. I'll lay the short number on the Vikings. Cheerio!

Projected Score: Minnesota 24, New Orleans 13

HOUSTON + 5 Over LA Chargers by 3

The Los Angeles Chargers come to Texas to face the Houston Texans in AFC action.

Houston has lost both games since a plucky opening-week tie and on Sunday it was Chicago who nipped them at Soldier Field, 23-20. While the team takes little solace in this, bettors can rejoice in their three covered spreads in three tries so far this season. The Chargers, meanwhile, were handed a distressing 38-10 hammering at home by the Jaguars. You want to extend them some credit with Justin Herbert hurting, but they face an important week at 1-2 where they need to right the ship.

The first thing they need is an off-key Chargers' team. If their opponent shows up in anything resembling top form, something they're maybe due to see happen, this won't be much of a contest. Not that the Texans are totally hopeless. It won't manifest on a weekly basis, but QB Davis Mills will throw a good game in there from time to time. Brandon Cooks can spring forth with a nice game. And maybe they found a rising commodity in RB Dameon Pierce who had 80 yards and a TD last week. But the sources for real optimism on this offense are few. And unless going against defenses with major flaws, this group can grind to a halt behind that shaky line.

After faring well to open the season with what were supposed to be decent aerial offenses in Indy and Denver by allowing a combined 36 points in those two games, the pattern continued as the Texans shut down the hapless Chicago pass-offense. But we also saw Bears' backup back Khalil Herbert go hog-wild on this defense and this is a week where the Bolts can get their run game turned up a click. But what seems to be a Houston secondary that is playing pretty well will be put to a steeper test this week.

With an improved defensive line, this is a spot where the Texans can maybe go to work on a compromised Chargers' O-line that is already feeling the crunch from injuries. We're seeing them have trouble running the ball in spots, an equation that might not improve with LT Rashawn Slater lost for the season, along with C Corey Linsley also being questionable. It doesn't seem like Austin Ekeler is being put in the best spots to succeed. Herbert is putting up big yards, but the Chargers' offense hasn't really taken flight with just 53 total points in 3 games. Their vaunted pass-rush has cooled off some after a fast start. The Chargers might be urgent this week, but they aren't seeing things click well and maybe the Texans are in a better position that they otherwise would be.

On the surface, that would appear to be the case, especially offensively. If someone told you that Gerald Everett and DeAndre Carter would be their leading receivers through three games, you'd have thought they were crazy. Add into that equation Austin Ekeler's 80 rushing yards and there are a lot of things that look askew. Not that there's anything wrong with building depth and diversifying, but the roles are a little bit of a mish-mosh as they look to get to .500 through the first quarter of the season.

The thing that's most concerning other than an uneven three-game patch is how the injury bug is already putting a hurt on this team. Herbert is hurting. Keenan Allen has missed time. The line is compromised. And now, the defense is under siege with Joey Bosa already out of action. Maybe they get corner Justin Jackson back this week. Needless to say, this represents a game where the Chargers need to show something or the alarm bells will really be sounding.

Certain aspects of the Chargers' recipe for success has soured. It seems like Keenan Allen is old, Mike Williams is back to the one good game and 3-4 bad games pattern, Ekeler can't run the ball, the O-line is bad again, the defensive front is compromised big-time without Bosa, and an injury-prone secondary is already getting hit. If some or all of those things turn out to be true, the Chargers might turn out to be vastly overrated and back to where they were a few years ago. And that's not the type of team where you want to be laying points on the road. It's not a given that even a diminished Chargers' team would even be something the Texans can take full advantage of, not to mention that it's far from established after a few bad games that the Chargers are going to recede to the rest of the pack.

I'm not sure the Chargers can just snap out of this one. They have legitimate issues that don't magically go away amidst the component of extra urgency. The winless Texans have an agenda of their own, namely to get a "W" to show something for what has been strong effort through three weeks. Against this Houston defense, this is certainly a spot where Herbert and the rest of this offense can shake it off and get cooking again. But with them suddenly being more-compromised along both lines of scrimmage and their other personnel issues, I think a more-intact Texans team can hang in there and win this game. I'll take the Texans plus the points at home.

Projected Score: Houston 26, LA Chargers 23

Arizona + 2 Over CAROLINA by 13

The Carolina Panthers snapped a 9-game losing streak last week with a 22-14 victory over the New Orleans Saints and perhaps extended Head Coach Matt Rhule's tenure for another couple of weeks at least.

By no stretch of the imagination was last week's victory pretty. That said, the Panthers got a big defensive effort, and WR Laviska Shenault took a short pass 67 yards for a touchdown to put the game out of reach. At 1-2 SU and 1-2 ATS, the Panthers will have the luxury of hosting the Arizona Cardinals this Sunday at Bank of America Stadium as mere 2-point favorites.

The Cardinals (1-2 SU, 1-2 ATS) share the same record as the Panthers in what can only be described as a disappointing start to the 2022 campaign. Most recently, the Cardinals suffered a 20-12 loss at home to the Rams despite QB Kyler Murray attempting 58 passes and throwing for more than 300 yards.

As many are aware, the Cardinals have been riddled with injuries. RB James Conner returned last week after an ankle injury but did not appear to be 100%. WR Rondale Moore has missed several weeks with a hamstring injury, and WR DeAndre Hopkins continues to serve a six-game suspension. Needless to say, the Cardinals' offense is trying to hang on until they can get all of their playmakers back and healthy. However, if the Cardinals fall into a bigger hole, their playoff hopes will start getting grim.

Despite the Panthers' win last week, I remain convinced that they are still the bottom three of the worst teams in the NFC. Even with the victory against the Saints, QB Baker Mayfield looked awful, hitting just 12 of 25 passing for 170 yards with a touchdown, and keep in mind the lone touchdown

was a short sideline pass that Shenault took the distance. The fact remains that Mayfield has been incapable of stretching the field and utilizing his wide receivers. As a result, defenses can solely focus on limiting the big play ability of RB Christian McCaffrey, and if they accomplish that feat, then it is a likely path to victory.

While Arizona is not exactly playing good football at the moment, I still think they are a much better team than Carolina. More importantly, mobile quarterbacks have been kryptonite for Carolina's defense over the last few seasons, and this offense will be glad to put the game on Murray's shoulders, as they proved last week with nearly 60 passing attempts. The good news for Arizona is that WR Rondale Moore is slated to return this week, and RB James Conner should be closer to 100% to bring some firepower back to the lineup. While the Cardinals' defense is a concern, Baker Mayfield has proved that he cannot be trusted. As a result, I think this is the Cardinals' game to lose.

This is a prime bounce-back spot for the Arizona offense in a plus-side match-up. If the Cardinals' defense plays well, this will be an easy cover. Even if they don't, I believe Murray will do enough to get the job done as opposed to the pathetic Panthers offense. Note that the Cardinals are road warriors, going 9-2 ATS in the last 11 games on the road. Conversely, the Panthers are 1-9 ATS in the last 10 games. Cards get the win.

Projected Score: Arizona 30, Carolina 17

GREEN BAY - 10 Over New England by 17

Aaron Rodgers took down Tom Brady in a heavyweight QB brawl last week, and now the Packers will face another legendary foe in the form of Bill Belichick.

The New England Patriots will face the Packers in Lambeau this Sunday, and this matchup is fresh with just three previous meetings in the Rodgers era. Both offenses have struggled out of the gates, and the Patriots are now without QB Mac Jones after he suffered a high ankle sprain at the end of last week's game. New England is still waiting for word on Jones' treatment options, and he is officially listed as day-to-day, but it is hard to imagine any scenario where he suits up on Sunday. Brian Hoyer will likely get the start, and the veteran has a 16-23 career record as a starter. Belichick has routinely found ways to confuse and frustrate opposing quarterbacks over his hall-of-fame coaching career, but Aaron Rodgers is arguably the hardest QB to successfully scheme against.

New England is winless against the spread in their last five overall and also 0-5 ATS in the last five on the road. Conversely, Green Bay is 8-2 against the spread in their last ten at Lambeau Field, and they have a nice 14-6 ATS mark in the last 20 games overall. The Under has hit in each of the last four Green Bay games overall, but the Over is 4-0 in the last four when the Pack plays an opponent with a losing record. The Under has paid in six of the last eight when New England is on the road. With both offenses ranked outside the top-25 in points scored, you might think the Under is the way to go this week, but a relatively small total has encouraged 63% of the public bets to come in on the Over so far. About 55% of the public money is on Green Bay at -10, and this line is bouncing around a bit with the opening line at 9.5 points, and you can find New England at +11 at certain sportsbooks right now.

New England has had no troubles moving the ball as they enter the week ranked 10th in total yards per game, but they have committed the second-most turnovers, and Mac Jones is tied for the league lead in interceptions with five. Without those miscues, the Patriots would undoubtedly be averaging more than their current 16.7 points per game. The running game is 12th in the league, with Damien Harris and Rhamondre Stevenson both north of 4.5 yards per carry. That duo has seen a near 50-50 split in carries through three games, and they will get to run against Green Bay's 18th-ranked run defense.

Brian Hoyer has always played the role of a game manager, so this running game will have to do the heavy lifting for New England if they want to stay in this game. Davante Parker has only six catches on the season, but he is the big play threat in this passing game and is averaging 27.5 yards per reception. Nelson Agholor and Jakobi Meyers have been serviceable targets, but New England has just one WR touchdown on the season, and the homerun play has been decidedly absent from this offense.

Outside of the 36 points allowed to Baltimore last week, the Pats' defense has been stout with the 9th-ranked passing defense and the 11th-fewest total yards allowed. Deatrich Wise Jr. has four of the team's nine sacks thus far, and while David Bakhtiari has returned to action for Green Bay, the Packers are 23rd in sacks allowed and are again shuffling their line with C Josh Meyers listed as questionable for Sunday.

Replacing Davante Adams was something the Packers knew they couldn't do with one WR. Perhaps that is why they didn't make a big free-agent signing or move up to take a high-profile receiver in the draft, but this offense is still figuring out life without a #1 playmaker. Green Bay's passing game is ranked 19th at 228 yards per game, and only Randall Cobb and Sammy Watkins are averaging more than ten yards per catch. Romeo Doubs has shown some chemistry with Rodgers and leads the team with 14 catches and 137 yards, but this is suddenly a grind-it-out passing game, something we are not used to seeing in Green Bay.

Aaron Jones is the best playmaker on this offense, and he averages 6.8 yards per carry. AJ Dillon leads the backfield in total touches and is tasked with carrying the ball inside while Jones has been working the edges. Both are alive in the passing game with 17 catches between them, and they should be the focal point for the offense this weekend, with New England ranked 20th in rushing defense.

The Green Bay defense earned the game ball for holding down Brady and the Bucs last week, and they have given up just 24 points over the last two weeks after letting Justin Jefferson run wild in Week 1. Green Bay is top-10 in total yards allowed and passing defense and giving up just 15 points per game. A typically ball-hungry secondary has produced just one interception through three games, but teams have found it difficult to sustain drives, and Green Bay ranks 2nd in third-down defense, allowing a conversion just 22% of the time.

Swallowing the double-digit line against Chicago in Week 2 was a somewhat easy call given the offensive limitations of the Bears offense, and it feels like a similar situation this week with another limited offense coming to Lambeau. Hoyer is a capable backup who fully understands the Belichick offense, but it is hard to see how New England is going to get enough points on the board. Tampa has a top-end defense, so don't overvalue Green Bay going cold for three-quarters last week. If anything, they proved they have a top-end defense of their own, and they don't have to face Tom Brady this Sunday. Rodgers will continue to develop his raw receiving group, and Matt LaFleur will find spots for Aaron Jones to do his thing. This is a relatively comfortable game for Green Bay throughout, and they get the 30-13 win and cover.

Projected Score: Green Bay 30, New England 13

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	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet	Best Bet
CFB	Washington - 3	Alabama -15½	LSU - 7	Georgia - 27	N Caro St + 7
NFL	Vikings - 2½	Texans + 5	Cardinals + 2	Packers - 10	

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