

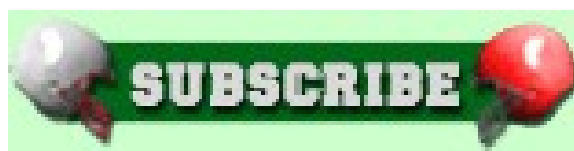


HOOPIRON GOLD SHEET

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Monday – February 16

BEST BET

Louisiana-Lafayette at Old Dominion

Old Dominion -6.5 | Total 136

This number is pricing Old Dominion as if clean separation is expected, but the matchup profile suggests something tighter. When spreads approach a full touchdown in games with modest totals, margin becomes harder to sustain. At 136, possessions are valuable. Fewer total trips naturally compress scoring gaps and make it more difficult for favorites to extend beyond two possessions.

For Old Dominion to cover comfortably, they must generate consistent scoring bursts — usually through transition or offensive rebounding. If Louisiana protects the ball and avoids giving up easy run-outs, the Monarchs are forced into half-court execution. That slows margin growth.

Conference games often tighten after the first 10 minutes. Once adjustments settle in, possessions become more deliberate and runs are shorter. In that structure, +6.5 becomes valuable because the underdog does not need control — only stability.

This shapes up as a competitive game where staying within two possessions for most of the night is enough to cash.

TAKE: Louisiana +6.5

QUICK PICKS

Syracuse at Duke

Duke -19.5 | Total 142

Large spreads require sustained dominance. Duke has the type of offensive efficiency and defensive depth that allows separation to build gradually rather than in one explosive run. That matters laying a big number — consistency is more important than volatility.

If Duke establishes control early, the game script becomes favorable for a cover. When favorites build multi-possession leads at home, they can dictate pace and force the underdog into lower-quality attempts. Long rebounds and defensive stops often snowball into extended scoring stretches.

The total also tells a story. At 142, the market expects reasonable pace. But if Duke controls the glass and forces Syracuse into contested half-court shots, scoring can come primarily from one side. That supports a comfortable margin without requiring an offensive shootout.

This is about sustained control, not drama late. If Duke builds and maintains separation through both halves, this number is reachable.

TAKE: Duke -19.5

Houston at Iowa State

Iowa State -2.5 | Total 134

Short spreads in lower-total games emphasize possession value. When totals sit in the mid-130s, every trip matters more. That makes points attractive in what profiles as a grind-style matchup.

With a spread under a possession, volatility increases late. One defensive stop, one offensive rebound, or one whistle can decide it. In tight, physical games, grabbing the points is often the sharper side.

TAKE: Houston +2.5



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