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Weekly



**PGA TOUR Player
of the Year**

Dec. 13 - Dec. 19, 2024

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SMU BASKETBALL
2024-25

DATE	HOME	AWAY
DECEMBER 7	VIRGINIA	
DECEMBER 21	BOSTON COLLEGE	
JANUARY 4	DUKE	
JANUARY 7	NORTH CAROLINA	
JANUARY 11	GEORGIA TECH	
JANUARY 15	VIRGINIA	
JANUARY 18	MIAMI	
JANUARY 21	LOUISVILLE	
JANUARY 25	NC STATE	
JANUARY 29	CALIFORNIA	
FEBRUARY 1	STANFORD	
FEBRUARY 5	VIRGINIA TECH	
FEBRUARY 11	PITT	
FEBRUARY 15	WAKE FOREST	
FEBRUARY 19	NOTRE DAME	
FEBRUARY 22	CLEMSON	
FEBRUARY 26	CALIFORNIA	
MARCH 1	STANFORD	
MARCH 4	SYRACUSE	
MARCH 8	FLORIDA STATE	

COWBOYS HSOs

DARYL JOHNSTON
TUESDAY AT 5:30 PM

TROY AIKMAN
THURSDAY AT 7:55 AM

WWUGAME.COM

TOYOTA STADIUM | FRISCO, TX
DEC. 17 | 9:00 PM ET | ESPN

BATTLE READY.



VS.



OKLAHOMA (6-6)

NAVY (8-3)



12.27.24 | BOWL FOR THE BRAVE | **ESPN**

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AROUND THE AREA

LOCAL NEWS OF INTEREST

Rangers bring back Nathan Eovaldi



Rangers agree on \$75 million, 3-year deal to keep right-hander Nathan Eovaldi

Bringing back the 34-year-old Eovaldi was one of the primary goals for the Rangers this offseason.

The Texas Rangers and right-hander Nathan Eovaldi have agreed on a \$75 million. The deal was subject to a successful physical for the two-time World Series champion.

Bringing back the 34-year-old Eovaldi was one of the primary goals for the Rangers this offseason. He became a free agent on Nov. 4 after declining a vested \$20 million player option for the 2025 season. The two-time All-Star also got a \$2 million buyout from that option earned by throwing more than 300 innings over his two years with the Rangers after joining them in free agency.

Eovaldi was the winning pitcher in their World Series-clinching game at Arizona in 2023 when he was 5-0 with a 2.95 ERA in six postseason starts. He was also part of Boston's 2018 title.

The Rangers had expected Eovaldi to decline the option but had said it was one

of their priorities to re-sign the Texas native.



Rangers acquire 1B/3B Jake Burger in trade with Miami

The Rangers entered the offseason looking to upgrade their offense. And that's exactly what they did late Tuesday night.

Texas acquired Miami Marlins corner infielder Jake Burger in exchange for three prospects. The Rangers will send infield prospects Max Acosta, Echedry Vargas and pitching prospect Brayan Mendoza to Miami in the deal.

Burger, 28, will bring some much-needed pop to the Rangers lineup as the right-handed hitter slugged 63 home runs between the Marlins and the Chicago White Sox over the past two seasons.

Burger, who is controllable for the next four seasons, hit .251/.305/.483/.789 in 278 career games. He can play first and third base, giving the Rangers depth behind third baseman Josh Jung and first baseman Nathaniel Lowe. Barring a trade of Lowe, whose name has been mentioned in trade rumors at times, Burger will slot in as the club's designated hitter.

Vargas is the Rangers' No. 17 prospect, according to MLB.com's rankings of the club's farm system. Acosta was previously among the top 30 prospects list before

falling off last season. The shortstop had a strong season for Double-A Frisco in 2023, hitting .288 with 8 home runs and 58 RBI.

SMU quarterback Preston Stone plans to enter NCAA Transfer Portal

SMU Mustangs quarterback Preston Stone plans to enter the NCAA Transfer Portal. Stone began the season as the starting quarterback for SMU, but that all changed when head coach Rhett Lashlee opted to start Kevin Jennings due to his dual-threat abilities. The move certainly worked out for the Mustangs, but Stone will be moving on from the program to make a name for himself elsewhere.

The quarterback spent four seasons with SMU. Over that time, Stone accumulated 4,030 passing yards, 35 touchdowns and eight interceptions. Additionally, he rushed for 287 yards and six touchdowns..

Moreover, Preston Stone played high school football at the Parish Episcopal School, where he was a four-star prospect. He was the No. 123 overall recruit in the 2021 cycle, a weighted average that utilizes all four major recruiting media companies.

Wherever Preston Stone ends up, he'll certainly be a hot commodity in the transfer portal. Quarterbacks are valued at a premium, and someone with as much experience and success as him would be welcomed at a myriad of different schools.

Time will tell where he ends up, but he did receive interest from some big-name programs during his recruitment, including Alabama, Ohio State and Georgia.

NCAA Football Poll
Coaches Poll Week 16 AP Poll

1. Oregon	1. Oregon
2. Georgia	2. Georgia
3. Texas	3. Notre Dame
4. Penn State	4. Texas
5. Notre Dame	5. Penn State
6. Ohio State	6. Ohio State
7. Tennessee	7. Tennessee
8. Indiana	8. Boise State
9. Boise State	9. Indiana
10. SMU	10. Arizona State
11. Alabama	11. Alabama
12. Arizona State	12. SMU
13. Miami	13. Clemson
14. Ole Miss	14. South Carolina
15. South Carolina	15. Miami
16. Clemson	16. Ole Miss
17. BYU	17. BYU
18. Iowa State	18. Iowa State
19. Missouri	19. Army
20. Illinois	20. Colorado
21. Syracuse	21. Illinois
22. Army	22. Syracuse
23. Colorado	23. Missouri
24. UNLV	24. UNLV
25. Memphis	25. Memphis

WEEKLY CALENDAR

	DECEMBER 13 FRIDAY	DECEMBER 14 SATURDAY	DECEMBER 15 SUNDAY	DECEMBER 16 MONDAY	DECEMBER 17 TUESDAY	DECEMBER 18 WEDNESDAY	DECEMBER 19 THURSDAY
			Dallas at Carolina 12:00 / FOX				
							Mavs vs LA Clippers 7:30 / 97.1
		Stars vs St Louis 7:00 / ESPN+		Stars vs Washington 7:00 / ESPN+		Stars vs Toronto 6:30 / ESPN+	
	Allen at Indy 7:00	Allen at Fort Wayne 7:00	Allen at Fort Wayne 4:00			Allen vs Wichita 7:10	
		NEXT: Dec. 21 at Penn State 11:00 / TNT					

Who has best, worst path to title game?



By Staff

The CFP selection committee released its final rankings Sunday after making several important decisions. It gave SMU the final at-large berth over Alabama, put Boise State ahead of Arizona State among conference champions receiving automatic bids into the field, and designated Texas, Penn State, Notre Dame and Ohio State as the four teams that will host first-round games in less than two weeks.

But the path each team faces to make the national championship game in Atlanta on Jan. 20 is not necessarily according to the seed received. So who has the easiest path to a title, and who has the hardest? Here's a breakdown of what the bracket presents for every team that made the College Football Playoff field:

CFP bracket: Easiest path to national championship

1. Georgia Bulldogs

The team with the toughest strength of schedule in the country this year got rewarded for winning the SEC championship game with perhaps the best path to the national championship game – which is also being played down the road in Atlanta this season. Georgia received a bye in the first round and then faces either Notre Dame or Indiana at the Sugar Bowl in the CFP quarterfinals. If Georgia advances to the semifinals, a matchup with Boise State, Penn State or SMU awaits.

2. Texas Longhorns

The SEC didn't get four teams in the field, but the Longhorns only lost to one team this year (Georgia), and they've got a very reasonable path to the semifinals as the highest-ranked at-large team. Texas has a home game against the lowest-ranked team in the field (Clemson) in the CFP first round, and Big 12 champion Arizona State would await at the Peach Bowl in the CFP quarterfinals. Undefeated Oregon, Ohio State or Tennessee would be the Longhorns' opponent in the CFP semifinals.

3. Boise State Broncos

The Mountain West champions get a first-round bye and wound up as the third-highest ranked conference champion in the field ahead of both Arizona State and Clemson. That distinction gives Boise State a CFP quarterfinal game against either Penn State or SMU at the Fiesta Bowl, instead of having to travel to Atlanta for the Peach Bowl. Georgia, Notre Dame or Indiana would loom in the CFP semifinals.

4. Penn State Nitney Lions

The Big Ten runner-up looks to have an easier path to the championship than the Big Ten champ, a potential flaw to be addressed in the wake of this year's bracket reveal. Penn State has a home game against the final at-large team in the field (SMU)

in the first round and Group of Five conference representative Boise State awaits the winner at the Fiesta Bowl in the CFP quarterfinals.

5. Oregon Ducks

The only undefeated team got a firstround bye, but the seeding imbalance created by requiring the top four conference champions to be the top four seeds appears to have affected the Ducks more than others. Oregon will play Ohio State or Tennessee in the Rose Bowl and then would have Arizona State, Texas or Clemson awaiting in the semifinals.

6. Arizona State Sun Devils

The Sun Devils had an argument to be the No. 3 seed, which would have presented a more favorable route through the bracket. Arizona State has a firstround bye but must travel across the country to play either Texas or Clemson in the Peach Bowl in the quarterfinals.

CFP bracket: Hardest path to national championship

1. Indiana Hoosiers

The Hoosiers would address any lingering concerns about their strength of schedule if they make it to the CFP national championship game. They've got arguably the toughest road to the title. Indiana would have to win at Notre Dame, beat Georgia in the Sugar Bowl, and then defeat Boise State, Penn State or SMU in the CFP semifinals.

2. Tennessee Volunteers

The Vols just missed out on hosting a first-round home game and now must win at Ohio State and beat Oregon at the Rose Bowl just to qualify for the CFP semifinals. Both of Tennessee's losses this season came on the road.

3. Clemson Tigers

The Tigers were the last team to make the field as the No. 12 seed, and it would be quite the feat for them to make the national championship game. Clemson has a road game at Texas in the first round just to reach the CFP quarterfinals against Arizona State, and topseeded Oregon would potentially be awaiting in the CFP semifinals.

4. SMU Mustangs

The biggest debate in this 12-team bracket revolved around SMU's inclusion over Alabama, but the Mustangs' place in the bracket leaves some opportunity to make a run. SMU will have to beat Penn State on the road in the first round, and Boise State would be its quarterfinal opponent.

5. Ohio State Buckeyes

The Buckeyes are still licking their wounds after losing to Michigan to close the season, but they still have a chance to win a national championship with a first-round home game against Tennessee. The top-seeded Ducks, whom Ohio State nearly beat in Oregon in October, looms as a potential quarterfinal foe.

6. Notre Dame Fighting Irish

The Fighting Irish wound up behind Texas and Penn State but ahead of Ohio State in the CFP seeding, and its path is commensurate with that.

Notre Dame hosts Indiana in an instate rivalry game in the CFP first round, and the winner gets Georgia in the quarterfinals.

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This week: Final Stage of PGA Q-School



The PGA TOUR Q-School finale is this weekend and PGA TOUR cards are once again on the line

Final Stage of PGA TOUR Q-School
December 12 - 15, 2024
TPC Sawgrass and Sawgrass C.C
Ponte Vedra, Florida

By Adam Stanley

With the ultimate respect to April in Georgia, the holiday season in northeast Florida is a tradition unlike any other. It's time for the finale of PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry, where PGA TOUR cards are once again on the line – and lives are set to change. The field varies wildly from international stars looking to earn TOUR status for the first time, to NCAA studs keen to take the next step, to guys who have been there and done that but are eager to lock in playing privileges in 2025. Here's everything else you need to know about Final Stage of PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry, set for Dec. 12-15 (Thursday-Sunday) across TPC Sawgrass' Dye's Valley Course and Sawgrass Country Club. **FIELD NOTABLES:** Pierceson Coody was the top-ranked player on the PGA TOUR University Ranking in spring 2022. He recorded three wins on the Korn Ferry Tour across two years and finished No. 131 in the FedExCup Fall standings. He'll look to improve on his conditional TOUR status at Final Stage ... Austin Greaser had a celebrated campaign at the University of North Carolina and finished No. 3 on the 2024 PGA TOUR University Ranking to earn Korn Ferry Tour status. He had just

five made cuts in 13 starts but a highlight came at the Memorial Health Championship presented by LRS where he finished T4 ... Christo Lamprecht finished No. 2 on the 2024 PGA TOUR University Ranking but placed No. 140 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List (and made three starts in the FedExCup Fall). He was previously No. 1 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking and, of course, won The Amateur Championship in Lancashire, England. Perhaps this week will be a big breakout for the long-hitting South African as a pro ... Hayden Springer earned TOUR status via his finish at Final Stage last year and came agonizingly close to regaining his TOUR card, finishing No. 127 in the FedExCup Fall standings. He notched four top-10s as a TOUR rookie and fired a 59 at the John Deere Classic ... Takumi Kanaya, formerly the world's No. 1-ranked amateur, has won seven times on the Japan Golf Tour. He won the Asia-Pacific Amateur in 2018 to earn starts in the Masters and The Open Championship and has made 25 TOUR starts (including 11 at majors). He advanced via Second Stage in California ... Sam Bennett was the bubble boy heading into the Korn Ferry Tour season finale this year, sitting at No. 30 in the standings. He fired a final-round 78, however, and was knocked outside the magic number. Bennett, who won the U.S. Amateur in 2022 and made a spirited run at the 2023 Masters, is fully exempt on the Korn Ferry Tour for 2025 after notching 10 top-25 results in 24 starts this year ... Eleven

players made it all the way to Final Stage after starting the process at pre-Qualifying: Luke Gifford, Jake Hall, John Houchin, John Houk, Cameron Huss, Dawson Jones, Owen Stamper, Andi Xu, Lance Yates, and Runchanapong Youprayong. Here are the medalists from each Second Stage site, who have each secured eight guaranteed starts on the 2025 Korn Ferry Tour.

NAME	SITE
Samuel Anderson	Valdosta, GA
Petr Hruby	Valencia, CA
Marcelo Roza	Savannah, GA
Ashton Van Horne	Dothan, AL
Owen Stamper	Dothan, AL
Luke Guthrie	Palm Coast, FL

WHAT THEY ARE PLAYING FOR:

- Top five finishers (and ties) will earn PGA TOUR cards
- The next 40 finishers (and ties) will earn exempt status through multiple reshuffles of the 2025 Korn Ferry Tour season.
- The first 25 finishers and ties are subject to the third reshuffle (12 guaranteed starts) and any remaining finishers within the category are subject to the second reshuffle (eight guaranteed starts)
- The next 20 finishers (and ties) at Final Stage will earn exempt status for the Latin America Swing of the 2025 PGA TOUR Americas season, while also earning conditional Korn Ferry Tour membership
- All remaining finishers at Final Stage earn conditional status for the 2025 Korn Ferry Tour season, in addition to being exempt through the Latin America Swing

of the 2025 PGA TOUR Americas season Final Stage medalist(s) will join a heady company. Major champions Mike Weir (1998), Paul Azinger (1984), Fuzzy Zoeller (1974), and Ben Crenshaw (1973) were all past field-toppers. **HOW IT WORKS:** The 171-player field will play two rounds at TPC Sawgrass' Dye's Valley Course and two rounds at Sawgrass Country Club. Players will compete in the same groups for the first two rounds before being re-paired for the third round and again for the final round. The top half of the field (through 36 holes) will play the third round at Sawgrass Country Club and the fourth at Dye's Valley, while the bottom half will play the opposite layouts. There is no cut. Ninety-one players advanced via Second Stage, while the remainder of the field earned direct access to Final Stage via various exemption categories.

COURSES:
TPC Sawgrass (Dye's Valley), par 70, 6,850 yards. Sawgrass Country Club (East/West Course), par 70, 7,054 yards.

- Sawgrass Country Club – Hosted THE PLAYERS Championship on its East/West Course from 1977-1981.
- Dye's Valley – Designed by Pete Dye, Bobby Weed, and player consultant Jerry Pate (who won THE PLAYERS in 1982), it opened in 1987 and has hosted several Korn Ferry Tour events through the years, including the Korn Ferry Tour Championship from 2013-15. Expect plenty of water and plenty of Pete Dye's trademarks to challenge some of the game's best.

LAST TIME: Harrison Endycott earned medalist honors after carding four rounds in the 60s to finish at 15-under 265. He topped the field by four shots. The Australian opened with a birdie on his opening hole in the final round and stayed steady enough through the balance of the day, adding three birdies on his back nine. A bogey on the closing 18th meant little, and Endycott earned the first-place prize. Trace Crowe finished second at 11-under, while Blaine Hale Jr. finished at 9-under and in third. Raul Pereda and Hayden Springer finished T4 and rounded out the group to earn PGA TOUR cards for 2024.

How to follow
(all times ET)

Television

- Saturday: 1-3 p.m. (Golf Channel digital), 3-5 p.m. (Golf Channel)
- Sunday: Noon-2 p.m. (Golf Channel digital), 2-4 p.m. (Golf Channel)

Power Rankings: Grant Thornton Invit.



Tony Finau & Nelly Korda walk-and-talk at 2023 Grant Thornton

By Rob Bolton

The holidays have a way of bringing people together. So, too, does the Grant Thornton Invitational.

For the second consecutive year, the annual gathering at Tiburón Golf Club at The Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida, showcases 16 teams consisting of one member each of the PGA TOUR and the LPGA. The three-day competition begins on Friday and features a different format in every round.

16. Mel Reid-Cameron Champ

Both are back this year, albeit with different partners. Reid went just 2-for-6 in 2024 and sits 400th in the world. Champ went 7-for-26 and is outside the top 400 in the OWGR. As a result, they're the most likely (and dangerous) to feed off each other.

15. Patty Tavatanakit-Jake Knapp

This is a connection of two first-timers who made their headlines early in 2024 and since have faded overall. Tavatanakit won in consecutive weeks worldwide in February. Knapp broke through as a rookie in the second half of that fortnight.

14. Gabriela Ruffels-Nick Dunlap

A pair of rookies on their respective circuits, Ruffels rose to as high as 40th in the world but she had only two top 30s in her last 13 starts. The 20-year-old Dunlap has lived a year beyond belief with two wins. He's been as high as 30th in the world.

13. Lilia Vu-Luke List

It's been a long roller coaster ride of a 2024 for Vu, the former world No. 1 who placed T9 (with Joel Dahmen) here last year. Captured her lone victory immediately after a 10-week break for a sore back. Her balance can cover List's weaknesses and so-so form.

12. Lauren Coughlin-Cameron Young

Coughlin connected for eight top 10s on the LPGA this year, but it was a four-start blitz across six weeks over the summer that resonates. It included her first two victories. Young's inconsistency probably can benefit from having a teammate.

11. Celine Boutier-Matthieu Pavon

The all-French duo effectively is led by Boutier. Since a win on the LET two months ago, she has four top 10s and a pair of T12 in six starts, including her fifth straight top 20 at Tiburón. Also T12 here in last year's inaugural. Pavon hasn't made noise in months.

10. Lexi Thompson-Rickie Fowler

Of the four reunions, this duo was worst among them last year at T6. Thompson just ended her full-time role with a T49 at Tiburón but she's done damage here with a win and a T2 among six top 10s. Fowler was fourth in his last start at the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP.

9. Andrea Lee-Max Greyserman

Lee entered last year's edition in scuffling form similar to her current. She and Billy Horschel settled for T14. Although having just wrapped his rookie year,

Greyserman offers an elixir with red-hot form. Three seconds and a fourth in his last six starts.

8. Maja Stark-J.T. Poston

Stark had three podiums and a T4 this year but she's without a top 40 in three tries at Tiburón. Drawing the unflappable Poston ain't too shabby, especially since he recently won the Shriners Children's Open. He was T2 in his only prior try here (in 2019).

7. Jennifer Kupcho-Akshay Bhatia

Kupcho is two years removed from her career year of 2022 during which she won three times, including a major. She's been a regular at Tiburón but didn't wrangle a top 25 until a T12 two weeks ago. Bhatia is soaring and in terrific form with a T2-fourth burst.

6. Allisen Corpuz-Sahith Theegala

Although Corpuz has been quieted since winning the U.S. Women's Open last year, she's tops on her tour in hitting fairways and 10th in greens hit. That can free Theegala to do his thing as he feels. Both pegged it here last year and neither threatened.

5. Megan Khang-Matt Kuchar

After finishing T4 (with Denny McCarthy) last year, Khang now joins forces with the all-time earnings leader at Tiburón. In a dozen starts at the QBE Shootout, Kuchar won thrice among eight top-threes. Both are sharpshooters with good recent form.

4. Jeeno Thitikul-Tom Kim

Somehow the 22-year-old Kim has a younger partner. Thitikul, 21, just won at Tiburón for her seventh straight top 10 upon arrival. She led the LPGA in greens hit, putting and scoring. Kim just took solo second at the Hero World Challenge. Expect fireworks.

3. Brooke Henderson-Corey Connors

The Canadian connection checked up one shot shy for solo silver here last year, so there is unfinished business. Neither won in 2024 but Henderson hung up nine top 10s among 12 top 25s. Connors' totals were four and 13, respectively. Eerily similar profiles.

2. Nelly Korda-Tony Finau

Korda has seven wins in 2024, including her second major that punctuated a run of five straight victories at the time. She is the Rolex Player of the Year. Finau has rested since surgery on his left knee on Oct. 15. They were T4 here last year.

1. Lydia Ko-Jason Day

All of the other tandems will need to go through the defending champions. Ko also is a two-time winner here on the LPGA. She qualified for the LPGA Hall of Fame this year with the gold medal at the Olympics and won a major. Day is also on

the team.

Last year's return to the co-ed competition on the Gold Course at Tiburón was the first of its kind pairing representatives of the PGA TOUR and LPGA since the JCPenney Classic in 1999. Lydia Ko and Jason Day prevailed by one stroke at 26-under 190. Although each wasn't in tiptop form upon arrival, course familiarity and success could not be ruled out as a weapon. Both previously had lifted trophies on the course. Ko is a two-time winner of the CME Group Tour Championship, which is an official stop on the LPGA, while Day was on the winning team in the 2014 edition of what was then the QBE Shootout consisting only of PGA TOUR golfers. Ko and Day comprise one of this week's four teams carried over from 2023. Two of the other 12 teams consist of golfers with new partners who competed last year – Allisen Corpuz and Sahith Theegala; Mel Reid and Cameron Champ. And among the remaining 10 squads, four of the LPGA members have returned – Celine Boutier, Megan Khang, Andrea Lee and Lilia Vu.

The Gold Course is set up to tip at 7,382 yards for the guys and 6,788 yards for the ladies, but it's a stock par 72 for all. The entire track is blanketed with Bermuda-grass and there is no traditional rough framing holes, so fairways are quite wide. Native grass trimmed to four inches and waste bunkers consisting of coquina shells await the most wayward of misses. The putting surfaces are sizable and prepped to reach 12? feet on the Stimpmeter.

The format for all three rounds follows the same schedule as last year.

The tournament will open with a traditional Scramble on Friday. This gives every team a jolt of confidence to hit the ground running. Nelly Korda and Tony Finau led outright after last year's first round with a 56.

Foursomes (alternate shot) will guide the second round with partners splitting tee balls via odd and even holes. Ko and Day paced last year's field in this format with a 66.

Sunday's close is a modified Four-ball in which both teammates will tee off on every hole. From those landing spots, they will finish each hole with their partner's ball. The Swedish duo of Madelene Sagström and Ludvig Åberg carded a field-low 60 in this format a year ago. (Neither is competing this week.)

Of the \$4 million purse, the winning team will split \$1 million evenly.

Fantastic weather is expected throughout the tournament. Sun-soaked days will accompany highs in the 70s. The constant of wind in south Florida should only be a mild nuisance on Friday midday.

Scheffler named TOUR Player of the Year



Scheffler won seven PGA TOUR events in 2024, the gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics and the season-long FedExCup title

FedExCup champion Scottie Scheffler named PGA TOUR Player of the Year
Receives Jack Nicklaus Award for third straight season

By Staff

The PGA TOUR announced Tuesday this week that 2024 FedExCup champion and world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler has won the Jack Nicklaus Award as the PGA TOUR Player of the Year for the 2024 season. Scheffler won seven PGA TOUR events in 2024, the gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics and the season-long FedExCup title.

Scheffler joins Woods as the only players to win the Jack Nicklaus Award in three consecutive seasons (est. 1990). Woods won Player of the Year in consecutive seasons from 1999-2003 (five straight) and 2005-07 (three straight). Scheffler (2022-24), Woods (11 times, most recent 2013) and McIlroy (2012, 2014, 2019) are the only players to win the award three or more times. Since the inception of the FedExCup in 2007, nine players have won the FedExCup and PGA TOUR Player of the Year in the same season.

“On behalf of the PGA TOUR, congratulations to Scottie Scheffler on a truly historic season, capped off with his first FedExCup title and today a third consecutive Jack Nicklaus Award as PGA TOUR Player of the Year,” said PGA TOUR Commissioner Jay Monahan. “Scottie took on challenges from the best players in the world on the biggest stages all season, and being honored as PGA TOUR Player of the Year is the ultimate sign of respect from his peers.”

Player of the Year is determined by a member vote, with PGA TOUR members who played in at least 15 events during the 2024 season eligible to vote. The voting period ran from Nov. 25 through Dec. 4. Scheffler received 91 percent of the vote for the Jack Nicklaus Award and was selected over two other nominees: Xander Schauffele and McIlroy.

Scheffler won the FedExCup for the first time on the strength of seven PGA TOUR victories in 2024, bringing his career total to 13 wins. He became the first player to successfully defend his title at THE PLAYERS Championship and won the Masters Tournament for the second

time (2022, 2024), becoming the first player to win THE PLAYERS, a major championship and the FedExCup in the same season. In addition to wins at THE PLAYERS, Masters Tournament and TOUR Championship, he captured four titles at Signature Events: Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard, RBC Heritage, the Memorial Tournament presented by Workday and Travelers Championship.

His seven-win season marked the first time a player won seven or more times in a single season since Woods in 2007. Throughout the entire season, Scheffler maintained his No. 1 spot in the Official World Golf Ranking, a position he has occupied since May 21, 2023 (82 straight weeks). In total, Scheffler recorded a TOUR-best 16 top-10s in 19 starts and did not miss a cut.

Scheffler’s season also included a gold medal, winning the men’s Olympic golf competition in his Olympic debut, and a victory for the United States at the Presidents Cup in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, his fourth international team competition appearance (Presidents Cup: 2022,

2024; Ryder Cup: 2020, 2023). After the conclusion of the FedExCup Fall, Scheffler successfully defended his title at the Hero World Challenge, winning the Tiger Woods-hosted event by six strokes.

For the second consecutive season, Scheffler also received the Byron Nelson Award for recording the lowest Scoring Average on TOUR in 2024 (68.65).

Scheffler was surprised with the Jack Nicklaus Award trophy at a FedEx charity event at the PGA TOUR Superstore in Plano, Texas. Scheffler and his wife, Meredith, joined FedEx to help students from the charity Behind Every Door shop for holiday presents with PGA TOUR Superstore gift cards. In addition, the FedEx charity event marked the debut of limited-edition “Scheffler Shuffle” t-shirts, available for purchase throughout December at Dallas PGA TOUR Superstores and at pgatoursuperstore.com. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Behind Every Door.

The PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year for the 2024 season will be announced before the end of 2024.

A look back a Scheffler's crazy season



Scheffler has won the Jack Nicklaus Award three years in a row, joining Tiger Woods as the only two golfers to do this

The Five: Crazy statistics that tell story of Scottie Scheffler's award-winning season

By Paul Hodowanic

Scottie Scheffler is the 2024 Player of the Year.

Was there ever any doubt?

Scheffler was announced as the Jack Nicklaus Award winner Tuesday night. He's won the award three years in a row, joining Tiger Woods as the only two golfers to accomplish the feat. He's the first player to win THE PLAYERS Championship, Masters and TOUR Championship all in one season. He spent three-quarters of the year at No. 1 in the FedExCup and strung together 13 consecutive top-20 finishes to begin the season, tied for most in the TOUR's modern era.

None of those stats cracked this list, however. As we look back at Scheffler's dominant 2024, countless crazy stats explain his award-winning year. Here are five absurd stats that do the job of telling Scheffler's season.

1. Scheffler won more than any golfer since 2007

Counting wins can sometimes feel simplistic, a 1 or 0 outcome in a sport that is full of gray areas and margins, where 0.1 shots per round add up in massive ways throughout a season.

But wins are still the measuring stick, the way pros and fans evaluate a season. And Scheffler was more prolific at stacking wins than anyone in more than a decade. His seven official PGA TOUR wins are the most since Tiger Woods in 2007. If you

count the Hero World Challenge and Olympics victories, his nine wins are the most since Woods in '06. Nine victories, however, you come by them, are rivaled only by Woods and Vijay Singh in the modern era.

Not impressed enough? Let's compare Scheffler to others in the top five of the Official World Golf Ranking. Scheffler won nine times in 2024; world No. 2 Xander Schauffele has 10 wins in his TOUR career. World No. 3 Rory McIlroy has won 10 times worldwide (PGA TOUR and DP World Tour) in the last five years. World No. 4 Collin Morikawa has seven career victories, or in other words, Scheffler won more in one season than Collin Morikawa has in six seasons.

World No. 5 Ludvig Åberg and world No. 6 Wyndham Clark have a combined five career worldwide victories.

So it's not a stretch to say Scheffler achieved a career's worth of victories in a season, and that of an elite pro.

2. Scheffler's scoring average was lowest in the modern era

The PGA TOUR's "modern era" is defined from the year 1983 onward, when the organization adopted the "All-Exempt Tour" that exempted anyone in the top 125 of the FedExCup (then the money list) at the end of a season for the next year.

Scheffler's 2024 scoring average (actual) was 68.01, not only lower than anyone this season but also the lowest in the modern era, better than any season by Woods, Singh, McIlroy, Phil Mickelson, Justin Thomas or any other player you care to compare Scheffler to.

Put another way, Morikawa ranks No. 3 in scoring average at 69.05, more than a shot worse than Scheffler. By those numbers, on average, Scheffler beat Morikawa by four strokes in every event. TOUR average was 70.29, meaning Scheffler beat the average TOUR pro by more than eight shots in every tournament.

3. Scheffler's last below-average performance was 30 months ago

There's no denying Scheffler's ceiling is as good or better than any pro golfer. But what truly separates him is how high his floor is and how rarely we see him fall through it.

It held true in 2024, but the consistency has been there since the summer of 2022. Since Scheffler was cut from the 2022 Genesis Scottish Open, he has not lost strokes to the field in any tournament. He's had a bad round, or two, sure, and even battled extensive struggles on the greens but it never sustained over four days or, in the case of his putting, corroded other parts of his game.

That streak extends across 50 tournaments and nearly 900 days. It's been that long since Scheffler has walked off the golf course and empirically played below the TOUR average.

That consistency is most notably driven by his impressive ball-striking. There was only one week this season where he lost strokes to the field off the tee (AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am) and one week where he lost strokes on approach (BMW Championship). In both cases, the rest of Scheffler's game rose to the challenge.

4. Scheffler was No. 1 in the world for the entire year ... and will be for the considerable future

Scheffler has spent the last 82 weeks at No. 1 in the world a streak extending well into 2023 and it's unlikely he's going to give it up at all in 2025.

Scheffler earned the fourth-most ranking points in a calendar year since the Official World Golf Ranking's inception, per world ranking expert Nosferatu. Woods was responsible for the only three seasons better than Scheffler's 2024.

In January, Scheffler will pass Rory McIlroy for the fourth-most weeks ever spent at No. 1. Scheffler is likely to pass No. 3 Dustin Johnson later in 2025, though he remains far away from No. 1 Tiger Woods and No. 2 Greg Norman.

Because of Scheffler's record-setting season, it's unlikely any player will pass him in 2025. It would take Schauffele or McIlroy rattling off a similar season to Scheffler to unseat him.

5. Scheffler made the most birdies and second-fewest bogeys

This one is pretty simple, but it paints a straightforward picture of Scheffler's domination. The Texan led the TOUR in birdie average, 4.88 per round, while he made the second-fewest bogeys, trailing only Schauffele.

It bucks the thinking that those who make the most birdies are bound for bogeys because of the aggressive play-style you have to implement. For some, that's true. When you're Scheffler, your conservative golf is still good enough to get close to the hole and convert on the chances.

That's how you end up a staggering 239-under-par for the entire season, by far the best mark on TOUR.



2024 Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl



Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl
#25 Memphis (10-2) vs. West Virginia (6-6)
December 17, 8:00 p.m. / ESPN
Toyota Stadium, Frisco, TX
Line: Memphis -4.5 / 58.5

By Troy Phillips

First, a little trivia. Spotify's most-streamed vocalists in the U.S. for 2024 include – at No. 5 – a former Scooter's Coffee employee from her pre-superstar days. Yes, it's possible Chappell Roan once handed you a steaming Turtle Latte if you lived in Missouri.

As degrees of separation go, this pop music-to-college football one is loose at best. But, as one Chappell Roan mega-hit goes, this year's Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl is "Hot To Go."

No. 25 Memphis (10-2) and West Virginia (6-6) are set to kick off the 7th Frisco Bowl on December 17 at 8 p.m. (CST) at Toyota Stadium. ESPN will have the call. Scooter's Coffee is in its second year as the bowl's title sponsor.

The Tigers and Mountaineers might serve up one of the hotter matchups in Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl history. West Virginia (Big 12) is the first Power 4 conference participant in the event, while Memphis is the second-ranked one, following UTSA (No. 24) in 2021.

Memphis is making its 11th straight bowl appearance and knocked off another Big 12 opponent, Iowa State, in last year's AutoZone Liberty Bowl. West Virginia will make its 41st all-time bowl appearance and fourth in the past five years.

As college football moves into its post-

season, a crowded calendar includes bowls, signing day and the opening of the transfer portal. Bowls now staged earlier on the schedule, such as the Frisco Bowl, can benefit from higher player participation with additional time before the portal closes on December 28.

"We were hoping to play in an earlier bowl game," West Virginia athletic director Wren Baker said. "With signing day and the portal open on the 9th (of December), our players are excited to stay together and play again. With a later game, the portal becomes a bigger factor. We have a chance for better participation."

Three Mountaineers were named to the All-Big 12 team, including senior offensive tackle Wyatt Milum, senior defensive end T.J. Jackson II, and freshman linebacker Josiah Trotter. The latter was named Big 12 Defensive Freshman of the Year.

Milum is an Outland Trophy (best interior lineman) semifinalist and hasn't allowed a sack the past two seasons. He's credited with helping WVU rank 9th in the FBS in rushing this season at 192.7 yards per game. Jackson has 38 tackles this season after transferring from Troy, including 20 solo tackles, 6.5 sacks, and 13.5 tackles for losses.

WVU's defense, particularly in the secondary, should have its hands full with Memphis senior quarterback Seth Henigan. He'll be almost home in Frisco with friends and family in attendance, having played high school ball at nearby Denton Ryan High School. Frisco straddles the line between Collin and Denton Counties.

Henigan is 16 yards shy of throwing for

14,000 career yards, and is the American Conference's career passing yards leader. His 102 career touchdown passes make him one of three active FBS passers (Dillon Gabriel, Oregon; Will Rogers, Washington) with 100 career TDs. Memphis is 20-5 the past two seasons with Henigan taking snaps.

To its credit, Memphis knocked off Tulane 34-24 to end the regular season.

Going in, Tulane had a two-game lead in the American standings and still advanced to the conference championship game, which Army won 35-14. Still, Memphis can cap its 2024 season with four consecutive victories.

"I'm very excited about the future of our program," Memphis coach Ryan Silverfield said on December 4 after signing 22 new recruits to a class ranked as the AAC's best.

"We're excited to be in Frisco against a great West Virginia team. What an awesome opportunity to be able to play on a national spotlight against a Power 4 team and see if we can find a way to get our 11th win of the season."

Losses to bowl teams Navy and UTSA kept Memphis from knocking at the College Football Playoff door this season and its new 12-team bracket.

"It's a great day to be a Memphis Tiger," Silverfield said. "I saw that we've been mentioned in the Top 25 for the College Football Playoff. That's great. It just means our name continues to come across that bottom line on a national stage."

Overcoming the physical, run-heavy Mountaineers would be a step in that direction for Memphis. As an early-winter chill sets in Texas, either team will gladly take a Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl victory, to go.

Hot, not iced, please.



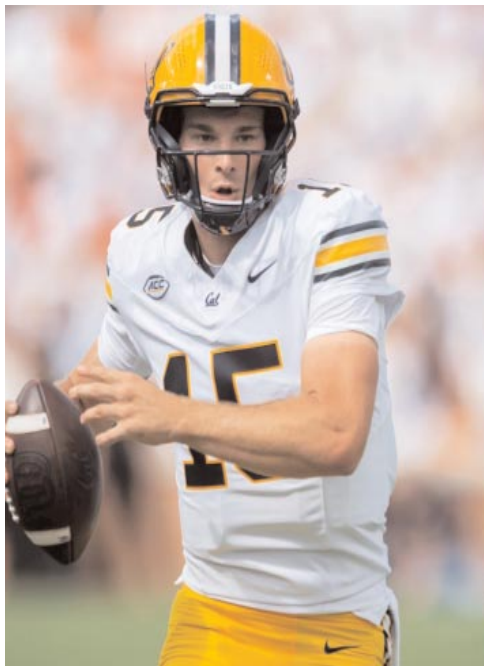
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College football bowl game storylines



Cal has not had a winning season since 2019



College football bowl preview: Storylines to know and players to watch

By Jon Thomas

The 2024-25 bowl season is right around the corner, kicking off with the Cricket Celebration Bowl (Jackson State vs. South Carolina State) on Dec. 14.

In a span of 19 days, 36 bowl games will be played -- on top of the College Football Playoff.

We will provide our thoughts on all 36 bowl matchups, including key storylines to follow and a player to keep an eye on in every game.

Cricket Celebration Bowl Atlanta, Georgia

Jackson St. (11-2) at S. Carolina St. (9-2)
Dec. 14, noon / (ABC)

Line: Jackson State -1.5 / 52

The Jackson State Tigers, who were picked third in the SWAC East preseason poll, won their third conference championship in four years, and the first for coach T.C. Taylor. Jackson State overcame adversity in the title game after quarterback Jacobian Morgan was injured just before halftime. Zy McDonald came off the bench and rushed for 95 yards and passed for 75, accounting for two total touchdowns.

Player to watch: RB Irv Mulligan, the 2024 SWAC Player of the Year. The 5-foot-10, 205-pound back and Walter Payton Award finalist had 116 yards rushing in the SWAC championship against Southern and was named first-team All-SWAC at running back. Mulligan passed Jackson State and NFL great Walter Payton's single-season

rushing yards record (1,139), which Payton set in 1973.

South Carolina State

Season storyline: Replacing a legend like Buddy Pugh isn't a small task, and Chennis Berry and his South Carolina State Bulldogs performed up to that task in 2024. The Bulldogs went 5-0 in MEAC play, en route to a 9-2 season overall after being picked fourth in the preseason poll. South Carolina State played spoiler in Deion Sanders' first year as Jackson State's head coach in 2021, defeating them in the Celebration Bowl 31-10. Now, Berry will have an opportunity to do the same in T.C. Taylor's first appearance as head coach. **Player to watch:** QB Eric Phoenix. He has a successful transfer story after coming in from Murray State and being named first-team All-MEAC. Prior to his time at Murray, he was with Berry at Benedict College. At Benedict, Berry and Phoenix won the SIAC championship and reached the NCAA Division II playoffs for the first time in school history. His dynamic play has translated nicely in his grad transfer season and could culminate in a Cricket Celebration Bowl victory.

Pick: JSU 35 SCSU 30

IS4S Salute to Veterans Bowl Montgomery, Alabama

S. Alabama (6-6) vs W. Michigan (6-6)
December 14, 8 p.m. / (ESPN)

Line: South Alabama -8 / 57.5

South Alabama

Season storyline: Remember that team that dropped 87 points in a game this year? That was South Alabama. In its first year

under coach Major Applewhite, the Jaguars have had some explosive offensive performances. Don't let their 6-6 record fool you, this team played well down the stretch, winning four of its last six games, including a victory over Sun Belt West winner Louisiana on the road just a few weeks ago.

Player to watch: QB Gio Lopez. When the South Alabama offense is humming, Lopez is at his best. With star freshman running back Fluff Bothwell transferring, Lopez will have to do even more against Western Michigan. Bothwell opened up a lot for the USA offense, averaging 7.5 yards per carry this season with his explosive play. Lopez was third on the team in rushing this season with 463 yards.

Western Michigan

Season storyline: With losses to Wisconsin and Ohio State, Western Michigan has some scars from the first couple of weeks of the season. The Broncos went on to win five of their next six games, but then lost three straight before finishing the season with a win against Eastern Michigan. Despite the ups and downs, Lance Taylor gets his first bowl team at WMU, led by quarterback Hayden Wolff and running back Jaden Nixon. A bowl victory would mark Western Michigan's first since 2021.

Player to watch: Wolff had the best season of his collegiate career in his second year at Western Michigan. He's one of the oldest veterans in the sport, having played his first season in 2019 at Old Dominion, before transferring to Kalamazoo in 2023. He posted a career-best completion percentage (67), along with 2,214 passing yards and 17 touchdowns with seven interceptions. He also led the conference in passer rating
Pick: SAU 37 WMU 24

Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl Frisco, Texas

Memphis (10-2) vs West Virginia (6-6)
December 17, 8 p.m. / ESPN
Line: Memphis -4.5 / 58.5

Memphis

Season storyline: After a 10-3 finish last year and a Liberty Bowl win over Iowa State, this season was highly anticipated with the expansion of the 12-team College Football Playoff. For the first time ever, Memphis was the preseason pick to win the AAC and for much of the season looked like it might be the Group of 5 representative in the CFP. A 56-44 loss to Navy in September was a setback, then a 44-36 loss at UTSA in November was the knockout blow for those hopes. The Tigers rebounded to finish strong with a win over

Tulane and ended the season at No. 25 in the CFP rankings.

Player to watch: All-everything Memphis quarterback Seth Henigan will return to the Dallas area to play in Frisco, about 20 miles from his high school. Henigan, who threw for 3,208 yards with 23 touchdowns and six INTs this year, is the Tigers' all-time leading passer with 13,972 yards, the winningest quarterback in the program's history and, along with Oregon's Dillon Gabriel and Washington's Will Rogers, is one of just three active QBs to surpass 100 TD passes in his career.



West Virginia

Season storyline: West Virginia entered the season with modest expectations after last season's 9-4 finish, including a victory in the Duke's Mayo Bowl, a year after finishing 5-7. The Mountaineers opened the season with a home loss to Penn State, then lost two weeks later at Pitt. Embattled coach Neal Brown was fired after a 52-15 loss to Texas Tech on Nov. 30, with the Mountaineers ranking 106th nationally in total defense. Brown ended his six-year run at WVU with a 37-35 record and four bowl appearances. Offensive coordinator Chad Scott will coach the bowl game.

Player to watch: Senior quarterback Garrett Greene has earned admiration from opposing coaches for his toughness, but he struggled at times this year in the passing game, going 9-of-19 for 85 yards with a TD and two INTs in a blowout loss to Kansas State. His legs make him a threat (he had 22 carries for 129 yards and two TDs against Baylor), but as Greene goes, so goes the WVU offense. He will finish his career in the top 10 in several categories in West Virginia history, throwing for 5,042 yards with 34 TDs and 18 INTs and running for 2,032 more with 27

Pick: Memphis 43 West Virginia 40

Boca Raton Bowl

Boca Raton, Florida

W. Kentucky (8-5) vs James Madison (8-4)
Dec. 18, 4:30 p.m. / (ESPN)

Line: James Madison -9.5 / 52.5

Western Kentucky

Season storyline: The Hilltoppers began the year with a not entirely surprising drubbing (63-0) at the hands of Alabama, but they bounced back and went 7-3 over their next 10 games. Then came Jacksonville State, which WKU edged 19-17 in the season finale, only to lose to them in the Conference USA championship game by a shocking 52-12 result. The Hilltoppers' defense has been a sieve at times this year (they are one of the five worst teams in the country at stopping the run) and it reared its head against JSU, which totaled 386 rushing yards on the night and a whopping 562 total yards as a team. For the fourth year in a row, WKU heads into a bowl game with five losses.

Player to watch: QB Caden Veltkamp. The sophomore replaced TJ Finley, who sustained a leg injury in early September and was never able to win the job back. Veltkamp became the Hilltoppers' starter, and though he had an up-and-down season that included a five-touchdown game against Middle Tennessee and a three-interception game against Liberty, he was able to lead the team to a conference title game. Head coach Tyson Helton clearly felt that Veltkamp was WKU's best option in the present and near future. Case in point: Finley announced his decision to enter the portal shortly after the season ended. The growing pains are still there for Veltkamp, but he did throw for 23 touchdowns this season and has shown potential to be a

capable, efficient option under center for WKU going forward.

James Madison

Season storyline: After a historic season last year in which the Dukes entered the FBS, won 11 games, quickly earned an AP poll ranking and found themselves in a bowl game, the second year could have easily been a regression. Instead, JMU lost coach Curt Cignetti to Indiana and stayed well above water under Bob Chesney, going 8-4 (losing two of those games by just two points each) and making another bowl. The Dukes have not only proved that they belong in the FBS, but their defense is among the best in the nation. JMU ranks 11th in stop rate, allowing 1.57 points per drive, which is better than playoff teams Penn State, Oregon, Clemson and SMU. In other words, good luck trying to score on the Dukes.

Player to watch: CB Terrence Spence. The senior from New Jersey has been a fixture of the Dukes' impressive pass defense. In 12 games, Spence has 25 solo tackles, seven pass deflections, a forced fumble and five interceptions (tied for third among FBS players). James Madison leads the nation in turnover margin, having forced 26, including 17 interceptions, and Spence has been a crucial part of its pass defense, which has allowed an average of 198 passing yards per game.

Pick: JMU 30 WKU 20

Art of Sport L.A Bowl

Inglewood, California

Cal (6-6) vs UNLV (10-3)

Dec. 18, 8 p.m. / (ESPN)

Line: Cal -1.5 / 50.5

California

Season storyline: The Golden Bears' season had its highs ("College GameDay" in Berkeley and Cal nearly taking down then-undefeated Miami) and its lows (a four-game losing streak that included Florida State) but it was never boring. A 6-6 season, however, placed them 14th out of 17 teams in the ACC. Though coach Justin Wilcox has helped the program make some strides, the Bears have not had a winning season since 2019, and this year felt like a squandered opportunity. Only one of Cal's losses (to SMU) was by a margin bigger than eight points, and three of its losses were by a combined four points. Though the Golden Bears are heading to a bowl game, this was a year of missed opportunities for the new ACC members.

Player to watch: QB Fernando Mendoza. When Wilcox informed the media last week that Mendoza would be returning to the team for his junior year and wouldn't enter the portal as some expected, Cal fans breathed a sigh of relief, and for good reason. Mendoza was a bright spot for the Golden Bears, throwing for over 3,000 yards, completing nearly 69% of his passes and adding 16 touchdowns too. Mendoza proved his worth throughout the year, especially when he couldn't suit up in the season finale against SMU because of illness.

The offense scored only six points and the Mustangs handed Cal their worst loss of the year.

UNLV

Season storyline: Had it not been for Boise State, who beat the Rebels twice, including in the Mountain West title game, UNLV may be preparing for a first-round College Football Playoff game in a few weeks. Instead, the Rebels will go into their bowl game looking for a moral victory without their coach, Barry Odom, who took the Purdue head coaching job Sunday. For those who remain, this season had its share of drama (remember Matthew Sluka's NIL demands?) but also success: With quarterback Hajj-Malik Williams taking over for Sluka, the Rebels handled inferior opponents with relative ease and lost to Syracuse by only a field goal. The season may have been devoid of signature wins but had plenty of highlights for the program to hang its hat on.

Player to watch: WR Ricky White. The senior may have been stifled against the Broncos, but he remains an electric figure on the field who is oozing with more talent than perhaps any other player in UNLV colors. This season, White caught 79 passes for 1,041 yards and added 11 touchdowns -- tied for fifth in the country. If White opts to return to school for another year and plays in the bowl game, he'll be a must-watch. If not, the NFL should be getting a good one.

Pick: UNLV 42 Cal 35

R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl

New Orleans, Louisiana

Georgia Southern (8-4) vs Sam Houston State (9-3)

Dec. 19, 6 p.m. / (ESPN2)

Line: Georgia Southern -6.5 / 48.5

Georgia Southern

Season storyline: Georgia Southern delivered its best season under third-year coach Clay Helton, going 6-2 in Sun Belt play with wins over league champion Marshall as well as James Madison and South Alabama. The Eagles challenged themselves early with games against Boise State and Ole Miss. They won six of their final eight games, leaning on an offense with a diverse passing attack. Derwin Burgess Jr. and Dalen Cobb combined for 103 receptions and four others have 24 or more, as quarterback JC French spread the ball around the field. Linebacker Marques Watson-Trent, the Sun Belt Defensive Player of the Year, leads a unit that performed well in wins over James Madison, Coastal Carolina and others.

Player to watch: Linebacker Marques Watson-Trent earned first-team All-Sun Belt honors for the second straight season after leading the league with 110 tackles. He reached the 110-tackle mark for the third straight season and had at least seven stops in every game and 10 or more five times. Watson-Trent also forced three fumbles during a two-game span. The 5-11, 225-pound Pittsburgh native returned from

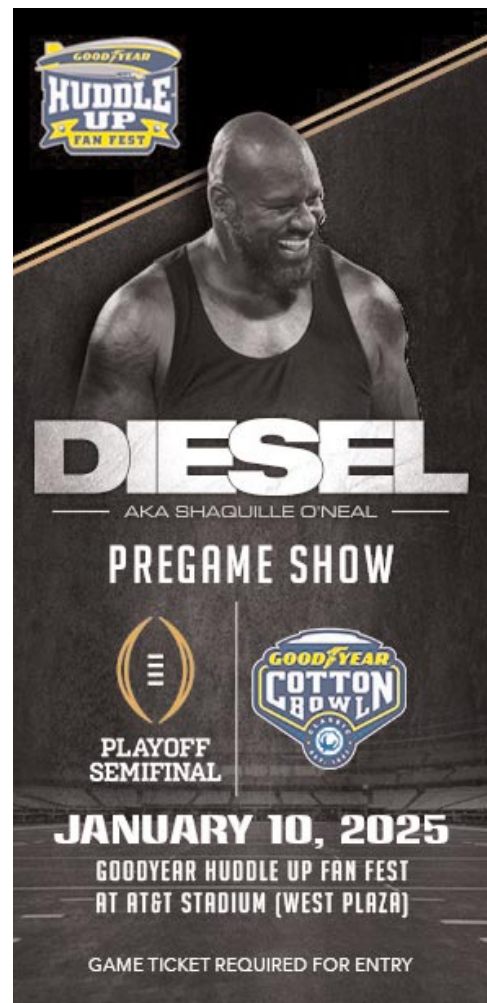
an ACL injury in 2021 to earn second-team All-Sun Belt honors in 2022. Since the start of the 2022 season, Watson-Trent is tied for fourth nationally in total tackles.

Sam Houston

Season storyline: The Bearkats flipped their record from 3-9 in 2023 to 9-3 thanks to a defense that led Conference USA in fewest points allowed. Sam Houston surrendered 21 points or fewer in each of its past five games, recording consecutive wins of 10-7 over FIU and 9-3 over Louisiana Tech. A loss to Western Kentucky kept Sam Houston out of the Conference USA title game, and Bearkats coach K.C. Keeler immediately left to take the top job at Temple. Sam Houston had a flurry of players enter the transfer portal last week, including star safety Caleb Weaver, and will have significant personnel challenges for the bowl game.

Player to watch: Quarterback Hunter Watson. He will need a big performance to give Sam Houston a chance after all the portal departures. Watson is a capable dual threat, averaging 4.1 yards per carry with seven rushing touchdowns to go along with 11 passing touchdowns. He and Jay Ducker will lead Sam Houston's offense, which must stay on the field and help a defense that will be undermanned after the portal departures. Watson had three 100-yard rushing performances and three games with multiple rushing touchdowns. He also increased his volume of passes late in the regular season, averaging 30 attempts in the final three games.

Pick: GSU 47 SMSU 45



NFL picks, predictions for Week 15



The Eagles are on a nine-game winning streak

Eagles top Steelers, Lions take down Bills in potential Super Bowl previews

By Bill Bender

The Steelers have been an elite underdog this season under Mike Tomlin. Pittsburgh is 4-0 as an underdog in 2024, and Russell Wilson is 6-1 overall as the starter. That includes upset victories against the Commanders and Bengals. Now, Pittsburgh can take this season to the next level.

The Eagles are on a nine-game winning streak, and Saquon Barkley leads the NFL with 1,623 rushing yards. Philadelphia has won four straight home games since a Week 2 loss against Atlanta, and the in-state matchup is a chance to continue a streak against the Steelers. Philadelphia has won 10 straight home matchups between Veterans Stadium and Lincoln Financial Field against Pittsburgh — a streak that dates back to 1965 when the teams played twice a year.

Can the Steelers break that streak? Each week, we will pick NFL matchups straight up and against the spread. A look at our track record this season:

- Straight up: 150-58 (11-2 in Week 14)
- ATS: 119-83-6 (5-8 in Week 14)

Here are our picks for Week 15:

L.A Rams (7-6) at San Francisco (6-7)

Thursday, 7:15 p.m. / Prime Video

Line: 49ers -3 / 43.5

Here's another key NFC West showdown with playoff implications. The Rams are 1-3 S/U and 1-3 ATS as an underdog of three points or more, but they won the first meeting 27-24. Los Angeles' running game has perked up the past two weeks with 146.5 yards per game. Isaac Guerendo had 15 carries for 78 yards and two TDs as the starter for the 49ers, and if he plays through his foot injury, he should have success against a Rams' defense that ranks 28th against the run.

Pick: 49ers 27, Rams 24

Kansas City (12-1) at Cleveland (3-10)

Sunday, 12 p.m. / CBS

Line: Chiefs -4.5 / 43.5

The Chiefs have failed to cover in their past six games as a favorite. Cleveland has committed three turnovers in each of its past three games, but the Browns have home upsets against Pittsburgh and Baltimore this season. The Chiefs take advantage of turnovers again, but the Browns hang around at home.

Pick: Chiefs 23, Browns 19

Cincinnati (5-8) at Tennessee (3-10)

Sunday, 12 p.m. / Fox

Line: Bengals -5 / 46.5

The Titans have scored just 12.5 points

per game in their past two losses, and Will Levis is dealing with a shoulder injury. Levis has been sacked 24 times in his past five games. Expect Cincinnati to turn up the pressure with Trey Hendrickson, who is due for another huge game. Joe Burrow will do the rest.

Pick: Bengals 30, Titans 20

Washington (8-5) at New Orleans (5-8)

Sunday, 12 p.m. / Fox

Line: Commanders -7.5 / 43.5

The Saints have scored 14 points in their past two games, which won't be enough to keep up with the Commanders' offense, led by Jayden Daniels. The rookie quarterback has an impressive 109.5 passer rating on the road this season, too. New Orleans is 3-4 S/U at home, but the LSU Heisman Trophy winner will impress in a homecoming of sorts.

Pick: Commanders 28, Saints 16

Baltimore (8-5) at N.Y Giants (2-10)

Sunday, 12 p.m. / CBS

Line: Ravens -16.5 / 42.5

The Ravens are huge favorites against the Giants, who have averaged 12.7 points per game since the bye week. Drew Lock is averaging 202.5 passing yards per game, but he has no TDs and two interceptions in two starts. It's still a huge spread knowing the Ravens are 1-3 ATS when favored by seven points or more this season. Baltimore is coming off a bye week, so expect a healthy dose of Derrick Henry against a Giants' defense that allows 141.7 rushing yards per game.

Pick: Ravens 30, Giants 17

Dallas (5-8) at Carolina (3-10)

Sunday, 12 p.m. / Fox

Line: Panthers -3 / 43.5

The Cowboys are working off a short week. Carolina has three straight one-score losses since its bye week. Bryce Young has just one interception and three sacks in those games, but there will be more pres

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sure coming from the Cowboys. These are the two worst run defenses in the league this season, meaning Young and Cooper Rush should both be comfortable.
Pick: Cowboys 28, Panthers 24

N.Y Jets (3-10) at Jacksonville (3-10)
Sunday, 12 p.m. / Fox
Line: Jets -3.5 / 40.5

This could be the ugliest game of the week between teams already looking to next year. The Jaguars will stick with a high-percentage passing game to avoid turnovers from Mac Jones. Aaron Rodgers has five TDs and one interception in his past three games. We trust him a little more in this matchup. New York wins a defensive struggle on the road.
Pick: Jets 17, Jaguars 13

Miami (6-7) at Houston (8-5)
Sunday, 12 p.m. / CBS
Line: Texans -3 / 46.5

The Dolphins are on the outskirts of the AFC playoff hunt, and Houston is coming off a bye week. That adds up to a close game. The Texans need to get Joe Mixon on track. The Texans are 3-3 S/U when he rushes for 100 yards or less, and Miami is seventh in the NFL in run defense. Miami is also 2-4 S/U on the road this season.
Pick: Texans 23, Dolphins 21

Indianapolis (6-7) at Denver (8-5)
Sunday, 3:25 p.m., / CBS
Line: Broncos -4 / 44.5

The Colts are coming out of a bye week, and this will be a test for Anthony Richardson. He is 2-2 S/U in road starts this season with a 49.2-percent completion percentage, five TDs, and six interceptions. Denver is 4-2 at home this season, where they have allowed 19.2 points per game. The Broncos are 6-1 ATS as a favorite, too.
Pick: Broncos 27, Colts 19

Buffalo (10-3) at Detroit Lions (12-1)
Sunday, 3:25 p.m. / CBS
Line: Lions -2.5 / 53.5

Is this a Super Bowl preview? The Lions (32.1 ppg) and Bills (30.5 ppg) are the only teams in the NFL averaging more than 30 points per game. Josh Allen should have success against an aggressive Detroit defense that has played well despite numerous injuries. Jared Goff has a 111.9 passer rating at home. Dan Campbell absolutely will go for it in crunch time, but so will the Bills. They have an 86.8-percent conversion percentage on fourth down. Who makes the game-changing play?
Pick: Lions 33, Bills 30

Pittsburgh (10-3) at Philadelphia (11-2)
Sunday, 3:25 p.m. / Fox
Line: Eagles -5.5 / 41.5

Maybe this is the Super Bowl preview of the week? The Eagles are on a nine-game winning streak, and this is a strength-on-strength matchup. How much success will Barkley have against the Steelers' run defense? Russell Wilson will match Jalen

Hurts in the passing game in the first half, and the Steelers will keep this one close. We still like the Eagles to keep it rolling.
Pick: Eagles 24, Steelers 20

New England (3-10) at Arizona (6-7)
Sunday, 3:25 p.m. / Fox
Line: Cardinals -6 / 45.5

Arizona is 4-3 S/U at home this season, and they are looking to snap a three-game losing streak. The Patriots have been a hit-or-miss play on the road this season, but they have covered in four of their past six games. Drake Maye continues to improve with each start, and that maturation will continue in another close call on the road.
Pick: Cardinals 20, Patriots 19

Tampa Bay (7-6) at L.A Chargers (8-5)
Sunday, 3:25 p.m., / CBS
Line: Chargers -3 / 45.5

The Chargers have scored 17 points each of the past two weeks, and they have averaged 77.6 rushing yards per game over the past three weeks. JK Dobbins' absence has clearly impacted the offense. Tampa Bay has won three in a row with a running game that averages 181.7 rushing yards per game. That will be the difference.
Pick: Buccaneers 24, Chargers 21

Green Bay (9-4) at Seattle (8-5)
Sunday, 7:20 p.m. / NBC/Peacock
Line: Packers -3 / 45.5

This is a tricky game for the Packers in a possible NFC wild-card preview. The Seahawks got a spark from running back Zach Charbonnet, who had 193 total yards and two TDs in Week 14. If Seattle can get off to a fast start, that will put more pressure on Jordan Love, who has a 59.6-percent completion percentage on the road this season. Green Bay breaks a four-game losing streak at Seattle, but it will be close.
Pick: Packers 26, Seahawks 19

Chicago (4-9) at Minnesota (11-2)
Monday, 7:00 p.m. / ABC
Line: Vikings -7 / 43.5

The Vikings are keeping pace with Detroit in the NFC North race, and Sam Darnold has 11 TDs and no interceptions in his past four games. Minnesota has a plus-4 turnover ratio in those games and is 5-1 S/U and 4-2 ATS at home. Caleb Williams hasn't thrown an interception in seven games, but he's also taken an average of five sacks per game.
Pick: Vikings 34, Bears 21

Atlanta (6-7) at Las Vegas Raiders (2-11)
Monday, 7:30 p.m. / ESPN
Line: Falcons -4 / 44.5

When will Kirk Cousins get right? The Falcons quarterback has no TDs and eight interceptions in his past four games. The Raiders are shuffling quarterbacks, and former Falcons quarterback Desmond Ridder could get the start with Aidan O'Connell (knee) banged up. Will Atlanta break its three-game road losing streak here?
Pick: Falcons 23, Raiders 20



A promotional graphic for Dallas Mavericks 2024-25 season tickets. It features four players in their blue and white jerseys: Luka Dončić (top left), Kyrie Irving (top right), Jalen Brunson (bottom left), and Jason Kidd (bottom right). The text "2024-25" is written in a stylized blue font. Below it, "TICKETS ON SALE" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom, "BEST SEATS & PRICES @ MAVS.COM" is written in white capital letters. The background is a dark blue with a subtle pattern.



A promotional graphic for the Marconi Radio Awards. The top left features the "Marconi RADIO AWARDS PRESENTED BY NAB" logo. The top right says "2024 FINALIST" in bold white letters on a yellow background. Below this, "MAJOR MARKET STATION OF THE YEAR" and "SPORTS STATION OF THE YEAR" are written in bold yellow letters. In the center, "KTCK-AM/FM DALLAS-FORT WORTH, TX" is written in white. Below the text is a group photo of the station's staff. At the bottom, there is a large "30" logo with "THE TICKET" and "30th ANNIVERSARY" written around it.

College Football News and Notes



BO CARTER

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The 2024 College Football Playoff committee finished its selection business with twin rankings last week and with the record 12 teams set for the expanded College Football Playoff, the No. 1 seed is Oregon while the 2-12 seeds are Georgia, Boise State, Arizona State (conference champs of Power Four leagues received Top Four seeds), Texas, Penn State, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Tennessee, Indiana, SMU, and Clemson.

Please see full schedule below:

Oregon has been No. 1 in each of the first four CFP Top 25s while Ohio State and Texas have occupied the No. 2 role to date.

Making the CFP field is very advantageous to all FBS conferences. Each circuit will have a payout of \$4 million for teams playing in the first round and an additional \$2 million apiece for quarterfinals and semifinals advancements.

Ohio State (66 consecutive CFP rankings and the final eight BCS Top 25 worksheets – total of 74 weeks and Alabama with a record 114 straight appearances (all 66 CFP and the final 48 BCS rankings) have the current longest skeins of occupying places in the national rankings through Dec. 8. Interestingly, the two former CFP

champions did not play in their conference championship games this season after a rash of late-season upsets throughout the FBS ranks Clemson is the most “experienced” school in the 2024 CFP with its seventh appearance while Ohio State has played in six.

The 66th NFF Awards Dinner is set for Tuesday, in Las Vegas with sponsorship by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau. For ticketing, scheduling information and special discount hotel and flight arrangements, please access Football Foundation.org. Famed NCAA national broadcaster and former Tennessee football standout Charles Davis will emcee the event for the first time.

The NFF & College Hall of Fame also for the first time will have a partnership with the Pacific Club IMPACT® Foundation to host an event awarding the 2024 Lott IMPACT® Trophy presented by Allied Universal as part of the festivities. The announcement of the winner of the 2024 Ronnie Lott IMPACT® Trophy will take place Monday, Dec. 9, at the Bellagio Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas one day before the NFF Annual Awards Dinner. Other major features in and around the 66th NFF Awards Dinner are 22 legends immortalized as 2024 College Football Hall of Fame inductees, the nation's top scholar-athlete to receive prestigious 35th annual William V. Campbell Trophy®, \$300,000 in postgraduate scholarships awarded to 16 elite student-athletes as Campbell Trophy finalists, 50-plus former NFF College Hall of Fame inductees already registered as special guests, ever-popular commentator Charles Davis as emcee, NFF College Football Trailblazers recognized for their contributions of the game, and comedian Josh Mancuso making his debut as ringleader of NFF social

media accounts.

Also on the NFF calendar:

Monday, Dec. 16 - Presentation of the Asa S. Bushnell Cup to the Ivy League Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year at the historic Rainbow Room at the NBC Rockefeller Center in New York City; January 2025 date TBD – Denotation of the 2025 College Football Hall of Fame Class.

The current longest NCAA FBS member streaks without a shutout through Dec. 9 are Florida with a NCAA-record 461 since 1988, TCU with 406 since 1991, Georgia with 386 since 1995, Virginia Tech with 384 since 1995, Nebraska with 363 since 1996 (the only Big Ten Conference team that has scored in every game in the 21st Century), Boise State with 352 since 1997, Alabama with 302 since 2001, and Clemson with 294 since 2003.

The American Heart Association Paul “Bear” Bryant National Coach of the Year sponsored by Accenture public voting is now available online through Jan. 10, 2025, via the URL: <https://bryantawards.org/fan-vote/>. Some of the latter season leaders in the public balloting have been Curt Cignetti of Indiana, Spencer Danielson of Boise State, Bob Chesney of James Madison, Dan Lanning of Oregon, Kirby Smart of Georgia, Rhett Lashlee of SMU, James Franklin of Penn State, and Steve Sarkisian of Texas.

Notable: prior to the Heisman Trophy revelation Saturday, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, and USC have featured the most recipients with seven apiece.

NFF College Hall of Fame Facts:

Some notable birthdates in NFF College Hall of Fame annals in the Dec. 10-16 time period are Dec. 10 (1883) Jesse Harper, Paw Paw, Ill.; (1916) Parker Hall, Tunica, Miss.; (1933) Larry Morris, Decatur, Ga.; Dec. 11 (1910) George Sauer, Stratton, Neb.; (1924) Doc Blanchard, McColl, S.C.; (1949) Murry Bowden, Colorado City, Texas; Dec. 12 (1881) Zora Clevenger, Muncie, Ind.; (1900) Lloyd Jordan, Punxsutawney, Pa.; (1904) John Smith, Hartford, Conn.; (1914) Bob Herwig, Pomona, Calif.; (1930) Steve Meilinger, Bethlehem, Pa.; (1962) Brad Calip, Hobart, Okla.; (1967) John Randle, Hearne, Texas; Dec. 13 (1911) Buzz Borries, Louisville, Ky.; (1955) Brad Crawford, Logansport, Ind.; Dec. 14 (1921) Charlie Trippi, Pittston, Pa.; (1939) Ernie Davis, New Salem, Pa.; Dec. 16 (1913) Gust Zarnas, Ikaris, Greece; (1914) Steve Reid, Chicago, Ill.; (1916) Jess Dow, Tona, Texas; (1955) Chris Ward, Dayton, Ohio; (1962) Jerry Gray, Lubbock, Texas; (1963) Tim Green, Liverpool, N.Y.

Notable anniversaries of passings of

NFF College Hall of Fame members are Dec. 10 (1933) Bill Roper, Philadelphia, Pa.; (1944) Joe Routt, In Combat in Belgium; (2007) – George Morris, Highlands, N.C.; Dec. 11 (1960) Mike Donahue, Baton Rouge, La.; Dec. 13 (1979) Edgar Garbisch, Cambridge, Md.; (1983) John Merritt, Nashville, Tenn.; (2017) Tommy Nobis, Marietta, Ga.; (2018) Bill Fralic, Alpharetta, Ga.; Dec. 14 (1920) George Gipp, South Bend, Ind.; (1983) Johnny Bright, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; (1985) Charlie Bachman, Port Charlotte, Fla.; (2004) Alex Sarkisian, East Chicago, Ind.; Dec. 15 (1973) Emil “Red” Sitko, Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Happy birthdays to NFF Hall of Fame members born Dec. 11 Murry Bowden, Dec. 12 Brad Calip, John Randle, Dec. 13 Brad Crawford, Dec. 16 Chris Ward

Schedules:

A possible Army West Point-Navy season rematch this week was avoided when Tulane downed Navy to advance to the American Athletic Conference championship last Saturday at West Point, N.Y., with the Black Knights taking their first AAC football crown. The two power service academies will face off for the 125th time Saturday in Landover, Md., after Army set a school record with its 11th regular-season victory in the AAC climax...Utah Tech will start its 2025 campaign on Aug. 30 against UC Davis....

...North Alabama visits Conference USA FBS power WKU on Aug. 30, 2025, in the season lidlifter for both squads...Central Arkansas will travel to Sacramento State and Lamar as part of its newly-released '25 slate.

Good Works:

The Goodyear Cotton Bowl Foundation distributed \$425,000 to nine different organizations associated with football and youth sports last week...Several former and current football student-athletes joined PepsiCo employees in food bank and home repair volunteer service from October-December in the Dallas-Fort Worth area...With dozens of donations from college fans throughout the nation the U.S. Navy Seal Foundation achieved \$318,000 on National Giving Day last week...The ECHL Allen (Texas) American hockey club has been donating tickets to educators in all areas and college students to recent matches...Auburn hosted its popular holiday tree lighting and decorations' revelation last week, but the traditional oak trees at Toomers Corner are being preserved for future victory papering.

Football Coaches:

Arkansas head coach Sam Pittman underwent hip replacement surgery last

week and is reported to be in excellent post-operation condition. Good news for Pittman's UA health insurance – he is set to return as head coach in 2025...Boise State head coach Spencer Danielson was named Mountain West Conference Coach of the Year...Ball State tabbed Mike Uremovich as head coach...Kennesaw State named Jerry Mack head coach...Arizona State head coach Kenny Dillingham is the Big 12 Conference Coach of the Year. Dillingham is the youngest head coach in FBS this fall at 34...SMU head coach Rhett Lashlee nabbed Atlantic Coast Conference Coach of the Year laurels in the Mustangs first year in this circuit...Chad Scott will serve as interim head coach for West Virginia in the Scooter's Coffee Frisco Bowl Tuesday, Dec. 17...LSU head coach Brian Kelly is approaching the NCAA transfer portal with various needs while also looking at top freshmen prospects to develop into college all-stars...Akron head coach Joe Moorhead spoke about the momentum gained by the Zips winning the final two games of the season...Nicholls head coach Tim Rebowe is retiring after 10 seasons, and Tommy Rybacki will become the Colonels new mentor...UAB head coach Trent Dilfer is being retained for the '25 campaign...Arizona head coach Brent Brennan is set to be back for a second season at UA after replacing current Washington head coach Jedd Fisch...Purdue head coach Ryan Walters is not returning for the 2025 season...Appalachian State head coach Shawn Clark has finished his association with ASU after five seasons. The Mountaineers were forced to cancel a game with Liberty due to Hurricane Helene damage and ended at 5-6 in 2024 – one win short of bowl eligibility...Mike MacIntyre is no longer head coach at FIU after previously heading the Colorado gridiron program...Former West Virginia and Troy head coach Neal Brown is anticipating an approximate \$9 million buyout from WVU after qualifying seven teams for bowl over the last nine years with the two programs...Delaware State and Stetson have joined the ranks of schools seeking new head coaches for 2025...One major news agency reported that future Pro Football Hall of Fame NFL coach Bill Belichick was interviewed for the North Carolina vacancy. Of note, Belichick was born at Vanderbilt Medical Center while his father was an assistant coach at Vandy under NFF College Hall of Fame coach Bill Edwards, and outgoing North Carolina mentor and NFF College Hall of Fame member spent two-plus years competing for the nearby Commodores as an undergraduate running back from 1969-71...Longtime college head coach and current Arkansas offensive coordinator Bobby Petrino has been identified as a leading candidate for the Charlotte 49ers head coaching job...Florida State is making major changes to its assistant coaching staff along with the hiring of offensive

coordinator Gus Malzahn....Nebraska's Tony White has moved to FSU as defensive coordinator...The 15 semifinalist for the Frank Broyles FBS Assistant Coach of the Year Award are Marcus Arroyo, Arizona State; Nate Woody, Army West Point; Dirk Koetter, Boise State; Robert Livingston, Colorado; Bryant Haines, Indiana; Shannon Dawson, Miami (Fla.); Al Golden, Notre Dame; Jim Knowles, Ohio State; Tosh Lupoi, Oregon; Tom Allen, Penn State; Scott Symons, SMU; Clayton White, South Carolina; Tim Banks, Tennessee; Pete Kwiatkowski, Texas; and Tim Beck, Vanderbilt...Michigan let go offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Kirk Campbell and replaced him with interim OC Steve Casula.

Hometowns of more 2024 college head coaches – Samford: Chris Hatcher, Valdosta, Ga.; Sam Houston: K.C. Keeler, Emmaus, Pa.; U. of San Diego: Brandon Moore, Baldwin, N.Y.; San Diego State: Sean Lewis, Oak Lawn, Ill.; San Jose State: Ken Niumatalolo, Laie, Hawai'i.

Directors of Athletics:

South Carolina named Jeremiah Donati director of athletics after he served at TCU for seven years...Georgia Tech director of athletics J Batt has netted a five-year contract extension through December 2029...Delaware State AD Alecia Shields Gadson is leaving her post Dec. 31 after three seasons at DSU...Louisiana Tech AD Ryan Ivey has given Bulldogs head coach Sonny Cumbie a vote of 2025 confidence....Temple AD Arthur Johnson was saluted for the hiring of Owls head coach K.C. Keeler who has a 31-year college head coaching record of 271-112-1 at Rowan, Delaware and Sam Houston while guiding SH to a 9-3 record and bowl berth in the college's first year of bowl eligibility...Purdue AD Mike Bobinski has called for total focus on developing a College Football Playoff contending program such as the Boilers chief rival Indiana...West Virginia AD Wren Baker recalled how working as a NCAA Division II is great preparation for moving up to DI assignments and how a nationwide talent drain, of sorts, during the pandemic caused some disjunction in college athletics. He added that post-COVID 19 conditions have improved drastically but that there are different financial challenges in these days of NIL, the transfer portal and nationwide jurisprudence involving college athletics...Massachusetts AD Ryan Bamford has definite ideas about the qualifications for the Minutemen's new football head coach, the current marketplace and dealing with agents when contract terms are discussed. UMass is using the TurnkeyZRG Group to help locate top candidates...Miami (Fla.) AD Dan Radakovich threw full support to his Hurricanes program for a CFP berth after UM had been ranked as high as fourth in that group's national surveys this autumn...Iowa State AD Jamie Pollard and SMU AD Rick Hart had differing opinions about the value of strength of scheduling

both on a non-conference and conference basis as the final College Football Playoff rankings were revealed Sunday...North Carolina AD Bubba Cunningham is moving quickly to locate an successor head coach after the departure of NFF College Hall of Fame head coach Mack Brown, who needs 12 victories to reach 300 for his career...Omaha selected Ellie Brecht as associate AD for development...George Mason AD Marvin Lewis celebrated his first full year with the Patriots and acknowledged some innovations such as a campus-wide survey about wants and needs, strategies needed to enhance the GMU culture, and a possible executive coach acquisition to utilize in decision making...Kentucky AD Mitch Barnhart and head coach Mark Stoops have had several discussions about multiple solutions for revenue-sharing among football student-athletes when the House v. NCAA settlement is finalized...Kristen Keller was chosen as associate AD for sports brands and communications...Arkansas AD Hunter Yurachek denied rumors that he had an interest in the South Carolina AD's post before TCU's Jeremiah Donati gained that honor. Georgia Tech's J Batt also was a possibility before he signed a five-year contract extension with the Yellow Jackets...Memphis senior associate AD Marlon Dechausay has been fighting health problems and is working with area specialists in the recovery process....UC Santa Barbara's Nick Mathey now is interim associate AD for communications and digital strategy...Louisiana Tech senior associate AD for championship resources and revenue Wally Crittenden related how models for revenue production at Tech, Nebraska and Stephen F. Austin are similar in design but tailored to fit the scope and financing of each program...Hofstra's Stephen Gorchov is the new HU senior associate AD for marketing and communications...UIC senior deputy AD and chief revenue officer Sherard Clinkscales is seeking another fulltime assignment in athletics...TCU chancellor Dr. Victor Boschini is retiring in July 2025 after 20-plus years in this leadership position....Rutgers Board of Governors chair Amy L. Towers and School of Engineering Dean Alberto Cuitiño are co-chairing the committee for the university's next president who will take office July 1, 2025...The latest position openings in athletics on D1Ticker.com are at Utah State, FGCU, UCF, Akron, Cleveland State, Illinois State, Lehigh, Marquette, Mississippi Valley State, U. of New Orleans, Rutgers, South Carolina, and The Citadel.

The Conferences:

FBS conference championship winners last week were AAC – Army West Point; ACC – Clemson (ACC record 22nd title); Big Ten – Oregon; Big 12 – Arizona State (winner of a school-record 11 games in 2024 and its first trophy in a designated conference championship battle); Conference USA – Jacksonville State (in

its second season in CUSA); MAC – Ohio; MWC – Boise State;; SEC – Georgia (sweeping Texas in two 2024 showdowns – the winners of repeat games from regular seasons are now 6-2 in SEC football championships since 1992 – first overtime game in SEC title test annals); Sun Belt – Marshall (in a clutch win in rainy conditions at Louisiana)...Michigan AD and CFP selection committee chair Warde Manuel received several questions earlier last week about losses by Boise State or SMU in their conference championship games could vault teams such as Alabama or Ole Miss with three overall losses into the 12-team CFP field under certain win-loss conditions. Boise State certified its place in the field with a 21-7 win over now-10-3 UNLV in the Mountain West Conference championship tussle...Arizona State is the 10th different Big 12 Conference member to capture or share the loop's football championship over 29 seasons. Oklahoma leads all schools with 14 Big 12 titles while Texas is next with four. By comparison, the Southeastern Conference has had six different titlists since that circuit started championship contests in 1992...The Penn State-Oregon Big Ten matchup was the fifth meeting between the schools. Penn State still holds a 3-2 all-time advantage after the Ducks took the loop crown...Paced by Sun Belt Conference Offensive Player of the Year Ben Wooldridge and Coach of the Year Michael Desormeaux, Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns had a SBC-most 15 players on the 2024 all-conference squad...Atlantic Coast Conference commissioner Jim Phillips and SEC commissioner Greg Sankey agreed that nationwide regulations and fines must be applied for future field chargings, flag planting on rival fields and postgame alterations to help supplant recent tendencies and to protect student-athletes and spectators...Phillips also gave his insight into the new, 12-team College Football Playoff selection process and believes any team ranked among the Top 12 in the Dec. 3 survey – in this case SMU at No. 8 and Miami (Fla.) from the ACC – should receive first consideration for the field denoted last Sunday even after the conference championship tilts last weekend...Jim Phillips was excited about SMU's No. 8 placement but expressed surprise that ACC member Miami (Fla.) dropped to No. 12...Clemson and SMU played for the first time in a combined 240 seasons between the programs last week in the ACC grid championship bout...Clemson is now 9-1 in ACC football championship skirmishes...Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference commissioner Sonja Stills gave some handy tips about long-range planning and frequent changes in NCAA DI and DII circuits over the last 10-15 years...Jim Phillips was excited about SMU's No. 8 placement but expressed surprise that ACC member Miami (Fla.) dropped to No. 12....Clemson and SMU

(continued on page 18)

played for the first time in a combined 240 seasons between the programs last week in the ACC grid championship bout...Clemson is now 9-1 in ACC football championship skirmishes...Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference commissioner Sonja Stills gave some handy tips about long-range planning and frequent changes in NCAA DI and DII circuits over the last 10-15 years... Amanda Brooks is the new Southland Conference senior associate commissioner of business operations...Several Big 12 and ACC presidents and CEOs met last week in Dallas to gain information on models for future FBS alignment and playoff proposals from the College Sports Tomorrow and SMASH Capital's Project Rudy groups... The Big Ten Conference levied sportsmanship penalties on Michigan and Ohio State for a postgame fracas in Columbus, Ohio.

The Bowls:

There were 82 FBS schools with the minimum six victories required for post-2024 bowl eligibility through and 82 total invitations forthcoming, including the 12 College Football Playoff competitors)... There currently is just one unbeaten school – Oregon – entering the post-2024 bowl outing, and this is the first time since Cincinnati (2021) that just one school was unbeaten prior to FBS conference crown decisions...The first postseason bowl opponents' certified for the 2024-25 outing was the Dec. 24 Easy Post Hawai'i Bowl in Honolulu between San Jose State (7-5) and USF (6-6), which will making its first trek to the Island State in football via its Tampa, Fla., base...The Scooter's Coffee Frisco (Texas) Bowl followed with the selection of American power Memphis (10-2) meeting Big 12 contender West Virginia (6-6) initially the both schools' annals...The way-too-early Salute to Veterans Bowl (formerly the Camellia Bowl), pitting South Alabama and Western Michigan at the historic Cramton Bowl in Montgomery, Ala., Saturday on ESPN kicks off the 123-year anniversary of the bowl seasons at 8 p.m. (CST) along with the HBCU spectacular Cricket Celebration Bowl from Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta between SWAC champion Jackson State and MEAC winner South Carolina State...Programs with the most bowl appearances entering the Dec. 14-Jan. 20 postseason bashes are (including this season's bowls) are Alabama with 78, Georgia with 63, Texas with 60, Oklahoma with 58, Tennessee with 57, LSU, Ohio State and USC with 56 each, and Nebraska and Penn State with 54 apiece...New Hall of Fame nooks, revamped skyboxes and numerous cosmetic changes to Rose Bowl Stadium have been approved for a five-year renovation plan starting in 2030. The Rose Bowl and Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation financed the campaign for the estimated \$80 in upgrades. Stadium seating capacity is expected to drop from 89,000 to 72,000 after the renovations...Goodyear Cotton Bowl season ticketholders were treated to

an educational webinar with College Football executive director Rich Clark about the GCB semifinals' importance on Jan. 10, 2025. The GCB and AT&T Stadium also have advance ticketing available for the AC/DC music tour stop at the facility on April 14, 2025.

The Players:

Army West Point QB Bryson Daily rushed for four touchdowns and 126 yards to lead the Black Knights to the American title in their first season in this circuit with a 35-14 win over Tulane last Friday at West Point, N.Y. Daily now holds the AAC season record for touchdowns and rushing TDs with 29 and at least two more games on the menu...Jacksonville State QB and 2023 FWAA Armed Forces Merit Award recipient Jared Huff nailed down MVP honors in leading JSU to a 52-12 triumph for the Gamecocks first Conference USA crown and 9-3 record...The Big 12's final weekly accolades have been won by the Baylor duo of Sawyer Robertson (co-offensive) and Bryson Washington (newcomer), the Texas Tech tandem of Tahj Brooks (co-offensive) and Gino Garcia (co-special teams), Arizona State's Cam Skattebo (co-offensive), Colorado's Travis Hunter (co-offensive), BYU's Talan Alfrej (co-special teams), TCU's Ethan Crow (co-special teams) and Utah's Zemaiah Vaughn (defensive)...Mississippi State gained another verbal commitment for '25 from WR Isaiah Mitchell while Bulldogs QB Chris Parson has entered the NCAA transfer portal... Some of the Davey O'Brien Award Great 8 recognitions for Nov. 28-30 were Micah Alejandro of Hawai'i with 523 yards of total offense against New Mexico, Carson Beck of Georgia with 28-of-43 passing for 297 yards and five TDs in the Bulldogs eight overtime thriller over Georgia Tech, Bryson Daily of Army West Point with 190 passing yards and 147 rushing yards and three touchdowns' accountability against UTSA, and Brayden Fowler-Nicolosi of Colorado State with 31-of-46 passing for 370 yards and four TDs in a comeback win over Utah State...Syracuse's Kyle McCord captured the Davey O'Brien National Quarterback of the Week for Week 14 with a sterling showing in SU's 42-38 upset over then-No. 6 Miami (Fla.) ...The Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award Player of the Week was Texas RB Quintrevion "Tre" Wisner for his 33-carry, 186-yard rushing night at Texas A&M... Arizona State RB Cam Skattebo rushed for 170 yards and two TDs and caught a pair of passes for 38 yards and another score for 208 tandem yards in the Sun Devils Big 12 championship win over Iowa State...Walter Camp Award Player of the Week was Boise State RB Ashton Jeanty with 226 yards and a career-most 37 attempts in a key victory over Oregon State. He enters the bowl season with a NCAA-best 344 carries for 2,497 net rushing yards, 7.3 yard per carry, and 29 TD to tie Army West Point's Bryson Daily for FBS leadership in six-point scores

...Jacksonville State RB Tre Stewart rushed for 201 yards in the Gamecocks CUSA title victory...Arkansas inked one of the top freshman QB prospects in the Southwest last week in Grayson Wilson... Former Texas A&M QB Connor Weigmann was a hot topic and prospect in last week's transfer portal reports...Baylor nabbed a prize prospect in Carrollton (Texas) Hebron HS safety Bo Onu.... Oklahoma QB Jackson Arnold will enter the transfer portal Monday. OU incoming freshman QB Jett Niu was rated the No. 1 prospect in the state for the '25 signing class...Add Big 12 Conference Players of the Year included Colorado's Shedeur Sanders (offensive), CU's Travis Hunter (defensive), Arizona State's Jordyn Tyson (offensive newcomer), CU's BJ Green II (defensive newcomer), Arizona State's Sam Leavitt (offensive freshman), and West Virginia's Josiah Trotter (defensive newcomer)...Popular BYU quarterback Jake Retzlaff, the first Jewish faith QB in Cougars football history, has a new, lucrative NIL agreement with nationally-marketed Manischewitz wine just in time for the Hanukkah feast later this month...EJ Warner, son of former NFL UNI and Pro Football Hall of Fame member Kurt Warner, has entered the transfer portal after previous stops with the Owls – Temple and Rice...Mississippi State has 15 members of the '24 squad applying for the transfer portal with safety Ja'Kobi Albert, OL Leon Bell, LB Ty Cooper, WR Antonio Harmon, and WR JJ Harrell among the prominent departures. Connecticut women's basketball student-athlete Paige Bueckers has become Nike's first NIL client to design and issue a Nike Player Edition basketball shoe.

Around the Campus:

Murray State tallied a \$250,000 anonymous pledge for strategic initiatives and other key components of MSU athletics... North Texas, SMU, Texas A&M, and Vanderbilt were among colleges offering special Cyber Monday ticket and apparel pricing for the annual largest online sales day worldwide on Dec. 2...Thousands of fans and enthusiasts participated in December Giving Tuesday last week to assist scholarships and other key financial needs in college athletics...The West Virginia Planned Giving Office has new income tax-friendly contribution plans for alumni and fans who are 70.5 years or older...Pittsburgh's Panther Club is revamping the Athletic Director's Fund with several visionary projects and possible scholarship aid for dozens of other student-athletes. Thos subscribing also receive points toward Panther Club memberships and priorities and tax-deductible advantages...Vanderbilt's continued campus facility update and expansion plans now call for the demolition of historic Stevenson Science Center Building 6 and the Branscomb Quadrangle – VU's first modern (at the time) women's residence halls built in 1962...The BPS Foundation,

a nonprofit organization to NIL collective operator Blueprint Sports, will cease operations by Dec. 31. Primary clients have been Alabama and Notre Dame...Virginia Tech and hundreds of other colleges are preparing for early football signing days in the Dec. 20-23 period with National Letter of Intent no longer part of the process per the NCAA and Division I conferences.... The Players Era Men's Basketball Festival paid \$9 million in NIL compensation in one of the most unique NIL salaried events in college sports to date... There were 400-plus donors and a matching gift that netted \$320,000 for multiple areas of Vanderbilt on National Giving Day Dec. 3. Vandy also is providing a Tuesday deadline for priority ticket purchasing for its bowl contest...The Citadel is employing the Parker Executive Search firm to locate solid candidates for its AD opening...Tennessee State is requesting state assistance to help reduce a university-wide \$46 million budget deficit due partially to falling enrollment figures...The University of Denver has cut some faculty and staff position due to an enrollment shortfall and projected \$11 million deficit to conclude 2024. It is not clear how Bears athletics will be affected, but DU athletics is restyling its hiring practices and vetting procedures for incoming talent through the CollegeSports.jobs Group...The Marquette Academic Senate has requested a "stronger voice" in everyday communications with new MU president Dr. Kimo Ah Yun and respect for the Roman Catholic and Jesuit traditions that are the backbone of the university...SMU and Vanderbilt are featuring officially licensed holiday gift guide ideas and continued Black Friday ticket discounts as long as the supplies last...Boise State rolled to 10 consecutive wins to close the regular season after falling to Oregon State 37-34 in Game 2... Binghamton's new baseball fieldhouse is ready for January workouts and year-round activity by BU diamondmen...San Jose State eventful women's volleyball season ended with a 3-1 loss in the Mountain West Conference title match and a 14-7 overall slate...Washington athletics and the the33rdTeam Group have signed a cooperative agreement for future football revenue-sharing and student-athletes; NIL negotiations...BYU cross country and track contingents have a new secret weapon – olive oil. Team coaches and athletics trainers have been using the concoction to ward off cold conditions and keep muscles loose – especially with the BYU double men's and women's NCAA Cross country team titles in Madison, Wis.

Other Notables:

The NFF Good in the Game video segment last week highlighted the NFF honoree and insightful college branding and licensing guru as well as head coach at Tennessee the late Bill Battle... More details have emerged about the large-scale role of NFF College Hall of Fame QB Andrew Luck of Stanford and his duties as

general manager of Cardinal football...
...LPGA commissioner and former Princeton AD Mollie Marcoux Samaan is leaving the LPGA...The CFL has designated Calgary, Alberta, Canada, as host site for the 113th Grey Cup league title bout on Nov. 15, 2026...Former Texas A&M Heisman Trophy QB Johnny Manziel feels that student-athletes know have the power and wherewithal to continue to leverage the traditional college football and NCAA systems to their advantage. He also believes that more and more student-athletes can make their personal opinions known in this more freewheeling atmosphere...

Media Musings:

USA Today's Steve Berkowitz outlined the latest number of head football coaches with bonus clauses kicking in for bowls and win totals. They were Ole Miss' Lane Kiffin, Colorado State's Jay Norvell, Colorado's NFF College Hall of Fame back Deion Sanders, and Minnesota's PJ Fleck...
...Sports Business Journal's Ben Portnoy looked at Allstate multiple agreements with the Allstate Sugar Bowl and the company's large commitment to television advertising on college athletics – 50 percent higher than nearest competitor Geico – plus, getting comments from Allstate administrators dismissing rumors about a possible Allstate-named Big 12 Conference...
Extra Points publisher Matt Brown wonders about the future of such events as the Maui Basketball Invitational, attendance-struggling bowl games and other traditional but somewhat fading events as college athletics faces more financial challenges...
CBS Sports columnist Matt Norlander also observed some of the difficulties surrounding the Maui Invitational as the rebuilding efforts continue around Lahaina after the tragic wildfires of 2023...
The Disney Co. continues to use multiple broadcast avenues for NFL Monday Night Football telecasts and has attracted the positive attention of the NFL communications and commissioners' offices...
The D1.ticker 2024-25 Comparative Men's Basketball Rankings are available and are updated Mondays-Fridays through the NCAA Championship...
The Associated Press' Ben Nuckols glanced at the impact of college football enthusiast and Texas Sen Ted Cruz (Rep-Texas) on NCAA and other dealings with the Senate Commerce Committee he chairs starting in January 2025...
Social sweepstakes companies and similar groups are having more of an impact on the outcomes of contests where sports wagering is legal and may outpace NFL teams-backed as FanDuel and DraftKings in areas of profit making – especially in the areas of emerging sports...
Sportico's Eben Novy-Williams examined the possible rises in costs of sports equipment and apparel if proposed tariffs on China and other countries take effect next year...
The Nov. 26 Duke-Kansas men's basketball contest in Las Vegas, Nev., posted the highest Nielsen Ratings of the season in this sport on

ESPN with 2-2.5 viewers at various times during the telecast...
Pac-12 Conference games this fall on the CW Network have produced equal or a bit higher Nielsen Ratings than key matchups involving Big 12 and ACC schools the same weekends...
...The Honolulu (Hawaii) Star-Advertiser newspaper exhorted four major areas of needs for UH athletics and its incoming AD with facilities for men's varsity volleyball, keeping some sports in the Big West Conference while Rainbows football stays with Mountain West, and the emergence of beach volleyball and women's water polo programs at the Honolulu university...
The D1.ticker FBS attendance trends database shows conference football leaders through games of Dec. 5 as Navy (39,825) to top The American, Liberty (20,345) atop Conference USA, Toledo (21,519) in first place in the Mid-American Conference, Fresno State (40,600) to pace the Mountain West, and Appalachian State (34,623) with the best home average in the Sun Belt...
Rolling Stone magazine's David Hill posted an examination of sports betting in the U.S. and found that the legal wagering industry has not produced the profits that were projected. He also looked at groups like Integrity that monitor legal wagering by certain groups and sends up red flags if necessary...
Sports Business Journal looked at some new IRS interpretations where some donors were making NIL payments and seeking to write off these monies as charitable contributions – not accepted in IRS rulings – or donating large sums to NIL collectives for general or specific compensation for student-athletes. The IRS addressed the issue in a specific memo to its offices for 2025 tax returns last week and may make a similar ruling for 2024 returns and NIL dealings...

FWAA, CSC, NCAA, Etc.:

Michigan was the FWAA Cheez-It National Team of the Week after downing Ohio State at Columbus on Nov. 30...
...South Carolina QB LaNorris Sellers' amazing scramble for the decisive touchdown in a win over rival Clemson was the FWAA Pop-Tarts Crazy Good Play of the Week...
Upcoming key FWAA dates and reminders to members are: (later today) Dec. 9: FWAA Bronko Nagurski Trophy Winner (Charlotte, N.C., Touchdown Club); Dec. 10: Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year presented by the Allstate Sugar Bowl Finalists...
NACDA has inked a multiyear sponsorship with Allstate to enhance community impact and financial resources for college athletics...
The 46th round of NCAA FCS playoffs completed Week 2 with these results: No. 6 seed UIW 13, No. 11 Villanova 6; No. 7 Mercer 17, No. 10 Rhode Island 10; No. 3 South Dakota State 35, No. 14 Montana 18; No. 4 South Dakota 42, No. 13 Tarleton State 31; No. 1 Montana State 49, UT Martin 17; No. 2 North Dakota State 51, No. 15 Abilene Christian 31; No. 5 UC Davis 42, No. 12 Illinois State 10; and No. 8 Idaho

34, Lehigh 13...
The 69th annual NAIA Football Championship is moving toward semifinal rounds later this week after Dec. 7 results: Benedictine (Kan.) 20, Indiana Wesleyan 9; Keiser 38, Georgetown (Ky.) 22; Grand View 17, Northwestern (Iowa) 0; Morningside (Iowa) 31, Montana Western 24...
...NCAA Division II and III postseason results in the third rounds last weekend were DII: No. 4 Slippery Rock 31, No. 3 California (Pa.) 13; No. 1 Valdosta State 49, Virginia Union 14; No. 1 Ferris State 41, Harding 7; Minnesota State 27, Bemidji State 23; and DIII: Springfield 48, Cortland 28; Johns Hopkins 14, DePauw 9; Salisbury 35, Randolph-Macon 14; Mount Union 24, Carnegie Mellon 19; Bethel (Minn.) 24, Wartburg 14; North Central (Ill.) 41, Hope 21; Susquehanna 41, Saint John's (Minn.) 38; Mary Hardin-Baylor 28, Linfield 18...
College Sports Communicators revealed its 30 Under 30 Class of 2024 with young up and coming publicists Harvard's Phil Tor, Ohio State's Maria Slovikovski, Conference USA's Jessica Radford, Mississippi State's Brian Ogden, UC Davis' JD Mico, Southern Miss' Jack MacDonald, Kansas City's Jerod Fox, DePaul's Courtney Day, Tarleton State's Grant Cohen, and South Dakota's Steve Carlson...
National College Sports Communicators featured in major online or social media posts in recent days are Jared Boggus of West Georgia, Kyle McRae of California, Nick Penkala of Merrimack, Samantha Carey of Sacred Heart (Conn.), and Chuck Sullivan of the American...
Florida, Kentucky, Louisville, LSU, Michigan State, Oregon, and UCLA are conferring with NCAA enforcement and compliance officials concerning possible challenges and probes at their respective schools...
The USCAH Group named former NCAA chief medical officer Dr. Brian Hainline as senior advisor...
NCAA national coordinator of football officials and secretary-rules editor Steve Shaw has returned with his weekly NCAA rules video observations...
The NCAA Women's Division I Volleyball Championship has started with 64 entries and Top Four seeds Pittsburgh, Nebraska, Penn State, and

Louisville with the semifinals and finals slated for Louisville, Ky., on Dec. 19 and 22...
The NCAA Women's Soccer College Cup found four ACC powers competing in Cary, N.C., for the trophy in Duke, North Carolina, Stanford, and Wake Forest.

2024-25 College Football Playoff Bowl Schedule
(All Games Televised by ESPN, ABC or TNT Sports, Eastern Standard Time Airtimes, Campus Sites For First Four Games)

Friday, Dec. 20
First Round (5-12 Seeds in CFP Over Two Days)
- Indiana at Notre Dame, 8 p.m., ABC/ESPN

Saturday, Dec. 21
- SMU at Penn State, 11:00 (TNT Sports)
Clemson at Texas, 4 p.m., ABC
Tennessee at Ohio State, 8 p.m., ABC

Quarterfinal Games
- Vrbo Fiesta Bowl (Tuesday, Dec. 31): Boise State vs. Penn State-SMU winner, Glendale, Ariz., 7:30 p.m., ABC
- Rose Bowl presented by Prudential (Wednesday, Jan. 1): Oregon vs. Ohio State-Tennessee winner, 5 p.m. Pasadena, Calif., ABC
- Allstate Sugar Bowl (Wednesday, Jan. 1): Georgia vs. Notre Dame-Indiana winner, New Orleans, La., 8:45 p.m., ABC

Thursday-Friday, Jan. 9-10, 2025
- Jan. 9 – Capital One Orange Bowl Miami Lakes, Florida, winners of quarterfinals, 7:30 p.m.
- Jan. 10 – Goodyear Cotton Bowl, Arlington, Texas, winners of quarterfinals, 7:30 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 20 – College Football Playoff National Championship Game, Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta, Ga., semifinal winners, 7:30 p.m.





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