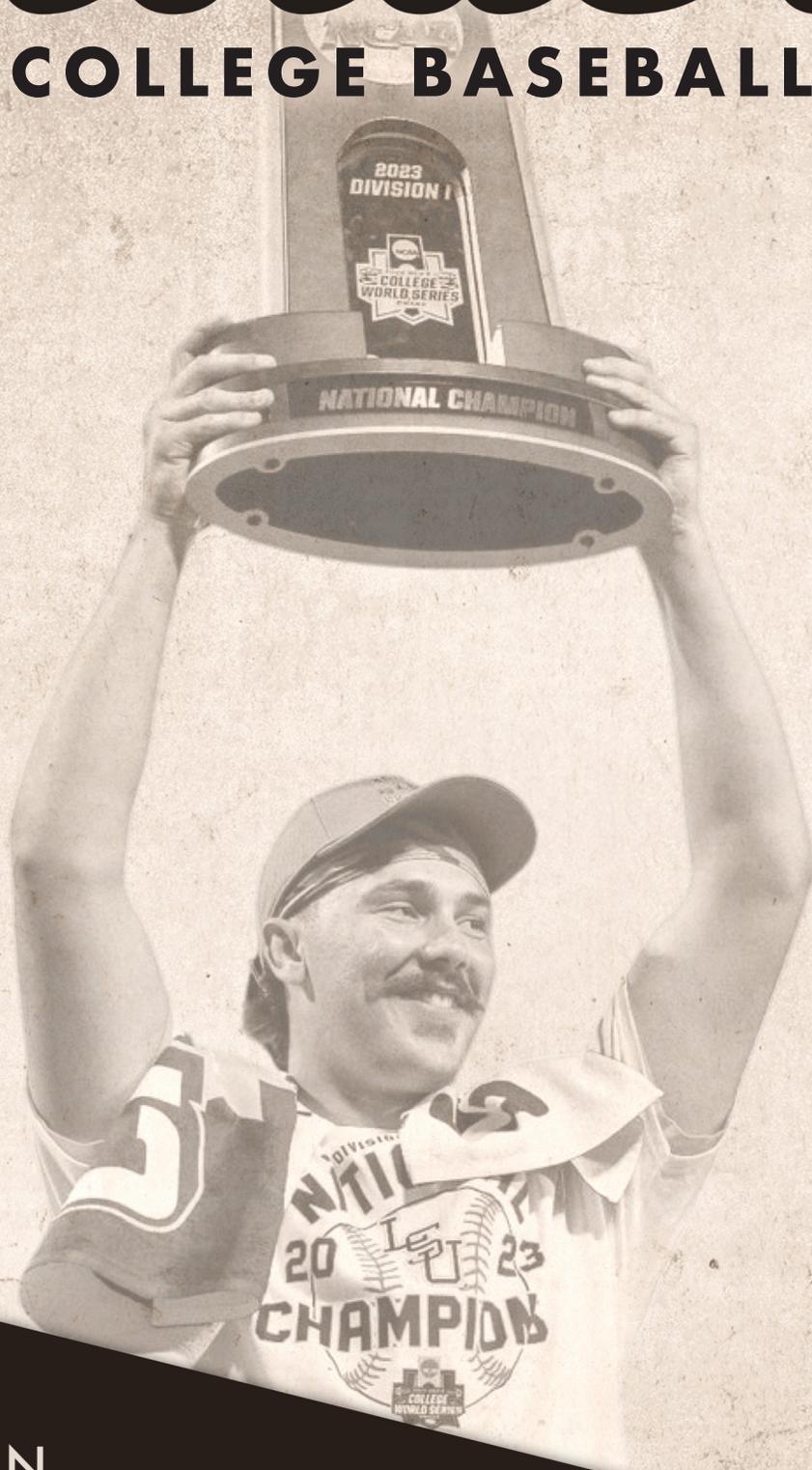


NCAA



# *Insiders*

- COLLEGE BASEBALL -



**2024**

**PRESEASON**

**BETTING GUIDE**

# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Welcome to the 2024 College Baseball Season.

For those who followed our postseason guides, you know we pack them full of team and player stats, etc. This preseason guide will be a little different, as we don't have any season stats yet. That said, I'm hoping you can still utilize this guide to help you plan out your futures bets. We've compiled a plethora of information on the teams you need to know heading into the 2024 season.

Throughout this guide, you'll see everything from D1Baseball's Top 25 Rankings, to their team grades, along with team previews from the best college baseball handicappers around. As you read the grades for each team, keep in mind that they use the same method that scouts use to grade prospects, which is on the 20-80 scouting scale. If you haven't checked out D1Baseball.com, this is the place for the best college baseball coverage when it comes to scores, stats, and schedules. They are a great resource for us as college baseball fans and bettors to gain an edge over the books, so we're very grateful for their work to grow the game.

Also, PLEASE keep in mind before you start firing away at futures bets, that many of the odds you see now on a team to win the CWS will be similar come postseason time. So please don't start taking the heavy favorites in this market. This is the time you want to be studying teams that may start off slow, but eventually get it together in time for the postseason.

Sit back, enjoy the guide, and get ready for the most exciting time of the college baseball season... The Road to Omaha starts now!

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# BETTING NCAA BASEBALL FUTURES

This likely goes without saying, but the main thing to remember before firing away at futures bets is to find value on teams that will exceed regular season expectations. Yes, you can bet the favorites if you want, but the key is to put yourself in a position where you've got a good mix of favorites and long-shots when they head into the College World Series in Omaha.

The best of 8 field, as we saw last year, can be full of surprises. Take for instance last years Oral Roberts team, who had an improbable and very exciting run into Omaha. You want to find those diamonds in the rough that have a legitimate shot at making it to Omaha so you can put yourself in a position to hedge or cash a bet once they get there. The odds of the favorites will fluctuate throughout the season, but not as drastically as the longer shots. So my advice is to bet the big dogs early and the favorites later as their odds get better throughout the season.

Now, the caveat to that is to make sure you're not betting on a team that is going to have worse odds the closer to the CWS we get. For instance, last year, Wake Forest's odds continued to drop throughout the season, so the best number you could've gotten them at was in the preseason, whereas LSU started as the consensus preseason #1 and their odds reflected that. It wasn't until the season went on until their odds were more favorable.

Lastly, there are three ways you can bet on a team in the college baseball futures market, which you'll see all of them throughout this guide:

1. To Win the College World Series = Pretty self explanatory, must win it all.
2. To Make the College World Series = One of the Final 8 that make it to Omaha
3. To Win the Conference Regular Season = Best Regular Season Conf. Record

In closing, if you can pinpoint the shorter shot teams that you feel will be a lock to be a regional and super regional host, paired with a couple of longer shots that have the talent and depth to win a regional or super regional that they might not host, you've put yourself in a position to cash or hedge a large ticket in the CWS.

## **One final thing before we get started, here are important dates to remember:**

 **Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup> - Opening Day of College Baseball**

 **Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> - Conference Tournaments Begin**

 **Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup> - Regionals Begin**

 **Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> - Super Regionals Begin**

 **Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup> - College World Series in Omaha Begins**

# PRESEASON RANKINGS

TOP 25 BY D1BASEBALL.COM | ODDS BY @BETRIVERS



OFF = OFFENSIVE GRADE | DEF = DEFENSIVE GRADE | PITCH = PITCHING STAFF GRADE

#	TEAM NAME	OFF	DEF	PITCH	WIN CONF	MAKE CWS	WIN CWS
1	WAKE FOREST*	A-	A+	A+	+100	-125	+650
2	FLORIDA*	A+	A-	A-	+475	+100	+825
3	ARKANSAS*	A-	A	A+	+500	+110	+1000
4	LSU*	A	A-	A	+450	-110	+725
5	TCU	A-	A+	A-	+375	+115	+1600
6	VANDERBILT*	B	A+	A	+750	+125	+1800
7	OREGON STATE	A	A	B	+115	+145	+2200
8	TEXAS A&M	A+	A-	B	+700	+130	+1800
9	TENNESSEE	A	B	B-	+800	+120	+1600
10	CLEMSON*	A-	A	B+	+475	+140	+2100
11	EAST CAROLINA*	B	A	A-	N/A	+325	+5500
12	DUKE	C+	A	A	+1500	+300	+5000
13	NC STATE	A-	A	B+	+1250	+215	+4000
14	VIRGINIA*	A-	B+	B	+600	+170	+2400
15	NORTH CAROLINA	A-	A-	B	+900	+200	+3400
16	TEXAS	B	A	A-	+400	+135	+2000
17	UC SANTA BARBARA	B+	A	A+	N/A	+625	+9000
18	COASTAL CAROLINA*	A-	B+	C	N/A	+550	+7000
19	ALABAMA*	B	A	A-	+1800	+600	+7500
20	IOWA	B	A-	B	+300	+700	+7000
21	TEXAS TECH	A-	B	B-	+625	+315	+5000
22	UCLA	B+	A-	B	+750	+200	+3200
23	NORTHEASTERN	A	B+	B+	N/A	+1200	+12500
24	KANSAS STATE	A-	A-	C+	+750	+625	+8000
25	SOUTH CAROLINA*	A-	B	C+	+950	+180	+2500

ODDS UPDATED AS OF 01/26/24 | CONF. FUTURES ARE TO WIN REG. SEASON | \* = WAS A T16 HOST IN 2023

TEAMS THAT HOSTED A REGIONAL IN 2023, NOT RANKED IN THE PRESEASON T25 FOR 2024:  
AUBURN, MIAMI, OKLAHOMA STATE, KENTUCKY, STANFORD, and INDIANA STATE

# #1 WAKE FOREST



*Demon Deacons*

X @WakeBaseball

'23 REC  
54-12

STAGE OF ELIM  
CWS

WIN CONF  
+100

MAKE CWS  
-125

WIN CWS  
+650

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

55



SPEED

60



DEFENSE

60



PITCHING

70



BULLPEN

60



EXPERIENCE

60

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Josh Hartle	SP1	2.81	17	140-24
Chase Burns (TEN)	SP2	4.25	8	114-22
Michael Massey	SP3	2.59	1	76-16

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Nick Kurtz	1B	.353	24	1.311
Seaver King (WIN)	CF	.381	4	1.089
Cameron Gill	C	.368	2	1.372

## *Team Preview* By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

Wake Forest and a solid pitching staff have been synonymous with each other for a few years now and if the Deacs want to get back to Omaha in 2024, they've got the pitching staff to do it. Incoming transfer, Chase Burns, really elevated his game near the end of '23 for Tennessee with an impressive outing vs Southern Miss in the Super Regionals. He'll look to use the Wake Forest pitching lab to improve his skillset. Last years Sunday starter, Josh Hartle, will build off a successful '23 as well, coming in with a very impressive 2.81 ERA. The pitching alone is going to win Wake Forest games, but let's be real.. They lost A LOT of production on offense.

Which brings me to my downfall for this team. They're going to have to try to replace a lot of guys from their lineup. Losing guys like Adam Cecere, Brock Wilken, Tommy Hawke, and more will bode a tough test for Tom Walter. We'll see if he can build a construct a new lineup around Nick Kurtz and Seaver King. I look for the Demon Deacons to find their way back to Omaha behind their solid pitching and could be a real threat to win it all if they can find some magic in their new-look lineup.

# #2 FLORIDA



Gators

X @GatorsBB

'23 REC  
54-17

STAGE OF ELIM  
CWS FINAL

WIN CONF  
+475

MAKE CWS  
+100

WIN CWS  
+825

## By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

70



POWER

80



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

50



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

70



EXPERIENCE

60

## Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Cade Fisher	SP1	3.10	49.1	48-13
Jac Caglianone	SP3	4.34	75	87-55
Brandon Neely	CL	3.58	55.1	72-22

## Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Jac Caglianone	1B/SP	.322	33	1.123
Colby Shelton	SS	.299	25	1.143
Cade Kurland	2B	.297	17	0.959

## Team Preview By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

The 2024 Gators team will look a bit different with Langford, Sproat, and Waldrep no longer in Gainesville, but never doubt O'Sullivan, as he made sure to reload with an elite freshman class as well as a top tier portal haul. The Gators have bolstered their offensive lineup by adding Alabama freshman All American, Colby Shelton and Virginia Tech power hitting Catcher, Brody Donay, who many say has as much raw power as Caglianone. Both Shelton and Donay will join a lineup that already features Cade Kurland, Jac Caglianone, Luke Heyman, and Tyler Shelnut, giving them one of the most powerful lineups in the country.

On the mound, Cade Fisher will assume the Friday night role, followed by freshman Liam Peterson on Saturday, who is projected to be one of the top freshman arms in baseball. Caglianone will stay in his normal Sunday role. It's noted that Caglianone struggled with command last year, but O'Sullivan stated that Jac has worked hard in the offseason to change his arm angle and delivery for better control and has already shown improvement. As for the Gator bullpen, a ton of key arms have returned from the '23 team, so I expect Florida to boast one of the better pens in the SEC. Even after key departures, Florida has reloaded its squad with elite talent, making them one of the best teams in the country yet again. I expect this Gators team back in Omaha with a mission to finish the job this year.

# #3 ARKANSAS



*Razorbacks*

X @RazorbackBSB

'23 REC  
43-18

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL (HOST)

WIN CONF  
+500

MAKE CWS  
+110

WIN CWS  
+1000

## By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

65



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

50



PITCHING

70



BULLPEN

65



EXPERIENCE

60

## Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Hagen Smith	SP1	3.64	71.2	109-42
Brady Tygart	SP2	3.20	25.1	31-8
Mason Molina	SP3	3.67	83.1	108-35

## Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Kendall Diggs	RF	.297	12	0.981
Wehiwa Aloy (SACST)	SS	.376	14	1.089
Jack Wagner (TRST)	1B	.337	15	1.143

## Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Razorbacks have a lot to be excited about this season after their Omaha dreams were cut short at the hands of TCU in the Fayetteville Regional last year. This will be a new look lineup with a couple of key transfers as the Hogs lose some veteran guys. It'll be interesting to see how Dave Van Horn puts the pieces together within the lineup to get everyone he wants out there, because Arkansas has a lot of dudes, but not "the dude" when it comes to their lineup. You'll want to get to know Wehiwa Aloy and Jack Wagner, as I believe they'll become household names along with Peyton Holt, Peyton Stovall, and Kendall Diggs.

One guy we know where he'll be in every start is Arkansas ace, Hagen Smith. The lefty has improved his velocity and learned a new pitch or two, DVH indicated in the fall camp interview. Hagen is due for an impressive season, as is presumable day two starter, Brady Tygart. Tygart missed the bulk of last season with an injury, but is back to 100% and ready to assume the starter role. The starting group rounds out with incoming transfer, Mason Molina, from Texas Tech, who started 16 games for the Red Raiders in 2023. So long as pitching can stay healthy and Dave Van Horn can work his magic with the batting lineup to get the one that clicks, the Hogs are once again on track for an Omaha run.

# #4 LSU

## Tigers



X @LSUBaseball

'23 REC  
54-17

STAGE OF ELIM  
CWS CHAMPION

WIN CONF  
+450

MAKE CWS  
-110

WIN CWS  
+725

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

65



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

45



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

70



EXPERIENCE

65

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Thatcher Hurd	SP1	5.68	63.1	84-40
Luke Holman (BAMA)	SP2	3.67	81.0	87-31
Gage Jump (UCLA)	SP3	DNP - Injury		

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Tommy White	3B	.377	24	1.164
Hayden Travinski	DH	.356	10	1.157
Mac Bingham (ASU)	LF	.360	10	1.005

### Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Tigers are coming off a dream season which left them holding the trophy as the last team standing in Omaha. Jay Johnson will look to get the Tigers back there, although this time, without a couple of superstars in Paul Skenes and Dylan Crews. The Tigers proved last season that their bullpen was up for the challenge and they'll head into the 2024 season with that being their strongest area. The lineup will be anchored by Tommy White, but will also boast some new faces such as Arizona State transfer, Mac Bingham.

When it comes to the mound, Alabama transfer Luke Holman will likely pair with Thatcher Hurd as your Friday/Saturday starter. Rounded out with Gage Jump, who transferred in from UCLA off an injury that kept him out of play for the 2023 season. I think at this point we know what Thatcher Hurd is as a pitcher, so I think Luke Holman will ultimately be their Friday night starter. If Holman can emulate just half of the success that Paul Skenes had last season, the Tigers should be fine. But without that designated Friday night ace that you can count on to get you the first win a weekend series, I believe the Tigers will struggle to repeat as champs, with a possibility of missing Omaha all together.

# #5 TCU

## Horned Frogs



X @TCU\_Baseball

'23 REC  
44-24

STAGE OF ELIM  
CWS

WIN CONF  
+375

MAKE CWS  
+115

WIN CWS  
+1600

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

55



POWER

60



SPEED

60



DEFENSE

70



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

60



EXPERIENCE

60

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Kole Klecker	SP1	3.72	96.2	72-30
Peyton Tolle (WICH)	SP3	4.62	85.2	97-19
Ben Abeldt	CL	3.60	55.0	71-24

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Anthony Silva	SS	.330	7	0.887
Payton Tolle (WICH)	DH/SP	.311	13	0.889
Karson Bowen	C	.350	6	0.922

### Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Frogs had the improbable hot, cold, hot run last season as they found themselves in Omaha as one of the hottest hitting teams in the country. That may have eventually cooled down, but the threat of this TCU offense was real. They may have lost some key pieces on offense, but their pitching should be better this year than it was last season. Led by Kole Klecker and two-way-player, Peyton Tolle, who transferred in from Wichita State, the Frogs should once again be the top team in the Big 12. One name to keep in mind is Ben Abeldt, who is listed as the closer. Abeldt really shined in the regionals, keeping Arkansas at bay offensively. I think he could dominate his role as a closer / relief pitcher this season.

As for the offense, they return Anthony Silva and Karson Bowen, but lost big time guys like Cole Fontenelle and Brayden Taylor. Overall, the Big 12 is down this season, so I still like the Frogs to win it, but they may go through some growing pains as they get this lineup sorted out. The benefit to TCU is that a lot of the top teams are going to experience those same growing pains within their own teams.

# #6 VANDERBILT



*Commodores*

X @VandyBoys

'23 REC  
42-20

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL (HOST)

WIN CONF  
+750

MAKE CWS  
+125

WIN CWS  
+1800

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

**55**



POWER

**45**



SPEED

**60**



DEFENSE

**65**



PITCHING

**65**



BULLPEN

**60**



EXPERIENCE

**60**

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Carter Holton	SP1	4.11	50.1	56-24
Andrew Dutkanych IV	SP2	2.84	6.1	6-9
Devin Futrell	SP3	3.44	83.2	72-20

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Chris Maldonado	1B	.310	8	0.953
Jonathan Vastine	SS	.287	5	0.803
Jayden Davis (STAN)	DH	.358	9	0.993

## *Team Preview* By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

2024 will be a pivotal season for Tim Corbin and the Commodores to try and bounce back from last year's lack luster showing. Carter Holton missed most of last year but is back to 100% health and will be a major piece for Vanderbilts success. Vandy will have a top tier starting rotation in Holton, Futrell and either Dutkanych or Greyson Carter to hold down the weekends, followed along by an elite bullpen featuring names like Bryce Cunningham and highly touted Freshman Ethan McElvain. If Vanderbilt can avoid the injury bug tormenting the pitching room, they will have the arms to make a run.

Offensively I have a lot of questions for Vanderbilt heading into this season. Last year they boasted the SEC's highest batting average but the stat on paper and the reality on the field were opposites. Tim Corbin was unable to bolster the lineup with a power bat, which proved to be a major issue for this team last season. Jonathan Vastine will anchor the Vandy lineup, followed by Chris Maldonado, RJ Austin, and Davis Diaz. Last year these names struggled to hit consistently and for power, and I'm concerned the same will happen this year. The SEC is no place for teams that struggle to hit, so it's imperative they find the sticks early and often.

Tim Corbin has the arms to make a run in June, the question lies on whether the offense can take the next step toward success; if not, Vandy will possibly find another troubling season.

# #7 OREGON ST

*Beavers*



X @BeaverBaseball

'23 REC  
41-20

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONALS

WIN CONF  
+115

MAKE CWS  
+145

WIN CWS  
+2200

## By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

65



POWER

55



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

55



EXPERIENCE

70

## Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Aiden May	SP1	6.33	75.1	77-33
Jacob Kmatz	SP2	4.71	72.2	61-26
Jaren Hunter	SP3	3.03	32.2	28-7

## Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Travis Bazzana	2B	.374	11	1.122
Gavin Tuley	LF	.309	14	1.102
Elijah Hainline	SS	.337	12	1.045

## Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Beavers are going to be a fun team to follow this season, led by superstar second baseman, Travis Bazzana, and other glue guys like Gavin Tuley and Brady Kasper. This team should be able to put up runs with the best of them and fortunately for the Beavers, there aren't a lot of teams in the PAC 12 that are a real threat to take it from them. The only question mark for the Beavers will be on their pitching staff. None of the returning starters have particularly low ERA's, but they have experience, so one would have to believe they've improved in the off-season.

If Oregon State can get serviceable innings out of their starters while the offense lives up to their run potential, they should be able to win the PAC 12 pretty easily and find themselves back in the College World Series. I'd even go as far to say if they hadn't gotten the draw of playing LSU in the Baton Rouge Regional last season, they probably would've made it last year too. The Beavers will have an exciting early season test when they travel to Globe Life in Arlington to play in the College Baseball Series against Arkansas, Michigan, and Oklahoma State, so this will tell us very quickly whether or not this Oregon State team is for real.

# #8 TEXAS A&M



## Aggies

X @AggieBaseball

'23 REC  
38-27

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONALS

WIN CONF  
+700

MAKE CWS  
+130

WIN CWS  
+1800

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

65



POWER

70



SPEED

60



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

55



EXPERIENCE

60

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Justin Lampkin	SP1	5.92	59.1	74-32
Tanner Jones (JAXST)	SP2	4.67	79.0	84-28
Zane Badmaev (TRST)	CL	2.81	32.0	46-7

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
B. Montgomery (STAN)	RF/P	.336	17	1.072
Jace Laviolette	CF	.288	21	1.049
Ali Camarillo (CSUN)	SS	.371	7	1.032

### Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Aggies fell short of an Omaha run after a disappointing 2023, but with Jim Schlossnagle at the helm, I expect the Aggies to bounce back strong. Their biggest question mark is the pitching rotation, but they've got the talent to produce wins.

Their strength will be in their lineup, led by Jace Laviolette and Stanford transfer, Braden Montgomery. If A&M can find their groove on the mound, their offense should do their part in securing wins for this squad. There's no shortage of power hitters either, as their lineup will be built around guys like returning second baseman, Ryan Targac, Michigan transfer, Ted Burton, and Columbia transfer, Hayden Schott, who all hit into the double digits in home runs last season.

Overall, the Aggies definitely have the firepower offensively to make it to Omaha, but like I've stated, could struggle on the mound until they get some consistency.

# #9 TENNESSEE

## Volunteers



X @Vol\_Baseball

'23 REC  
44-22

STAGE OF ELIM  
CWS

WIN CONF  
+800

MAKE CWS  
+120

WIN CWS  
+1600

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

65



POWER

70



SPEED

45



DEFENSE

45



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

55



EXPERIENCE

60

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Drew Beam	SP1	3.63	84.0	88-23
AJ Russell	SP2	0.89	30.1	47-7
Zander Sechrist	SP/R	2.05	30.2	32-5

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Cann. Peebles (NCST)	C	.352	12	1.153
Christian Moore	2B	.304	17	1.047
Billy Amick (CLEM)	3B	.413	13	1.236

### Team Preview By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

Tony Vitello looked like a master class coach last year with all the up and downs the Vols had, still finding a way to get them to Omaha. Although Vitello nerves some critics with his edgy personality, the guy can coach and I expect him to once again find success in '24.

2023's team boasted one of the best starting rotations, but things will look much different this year on the mound. Drew Beam will anchor the rotation followed by transfer standout AJ Russell and Zander Sechrist. Beam has shown success in a weekend rotation and looks to provide the same in 2024, but Russell and Sechrist will have to prove they can pitch at a high level against the SEC's best on the weekend. Offensively, 2023's team had so much talent, the production just came in a roller coaster ride of high's and lows. The Vols returned a ton of key bats like Christian Moore and Blake Burke. Vitello also lured in standout transfers Billy Amick and Cannon Peebles. With Burke having some of the country's most raw power, and a lineup featuring the names above, there's no question that Tennessee should have one of the best offenses in the country; the question is can they change last year's narrative and do it consistently. If Tennessee's starters can continue the success of recent years and the offense can stay awake all season, expect to see the Vols in Omaha, as they've built a championship caliber roster.

# #10 CLEMSON

*Tigers*



X @ClemsonBaseball

'23 REC  
44-19

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL (HOST)

WIN CONF  
+475

MAKE CWS  
+140

WIN CWS  
+2100

## By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

55



SPEED

65



DEFENSE

60



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

65



EXPERIENCE

55

## Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Austin Gordon	SP1	4.28	84.0	76-22
Tristan Smith	SP2	4.65	31.2	43-25
Rob Hughes	CL	1.56	17.1	21-3

## Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Will Taylor	LF	.361	5	1.009
Cam Cannarella	CF	.388	7	1.022
Alden Mathes (RICH)	RF	.296	9	0.932

## Team Preview By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

Erik Bakich has a history of turning programs around as he did with Maryland and Michigan before his magical work with Clemson last year as he and the Tigers started 2-8 in ACC play before going on an 18-2 run, an ACC tourney championship, and a regional host spot. I do expect Bakich to have his hands full with Clemson this year as they lost some key talent with notable names Billy Amick transferring to Tennessee, and Caden Grice heading to the pros. Clemson did however return most of their pitchers from last year's team which should solidify the bullpen as they figure out who the starting rotation will be.

Offensively the Tigers will be led by stars Cam Cannarella and Will Taylor, who I expect to have massive seasons. Clemson has a ton of transfers and young talent coming into this season so it will be interesting to see how they start the season after the scorching run, they had to end the 2023 campaign. I expect a slight drop off for the Clemson Tigers to start the year as it will take some time for this young team to find their groove. By the end of ACC play, I expect them to be in the top half of the conference rankings which will be more than enough for postseason play where they'll more than likely be competing for a top 16 seed.

# #11 E CAROLINA



*Pirates*

X @ECUBaseball

'23 REC  
47-19

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
N/A

MAKE CWS  
+325

WIN CWS  
+5500

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

50



POWER

50



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

60



EXPERIENCE

60

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Carter Spivey	SP1	2.83	76.1	76-19
Josh Grosz	SP2	5.65	57.1	61-19
Trey Yesavage	SP3	4.50	26.0	45-19

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Jacob Jenkins-Cowart	CF	.330	13	0.916
Alec Makarewicz	3B	.270	11	0.810
Lane Hoover	LF	.341	0	0.839

## *Team Preview* By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

Cliff Godwin enters every season with one standout goal: Make Omaha for the first time in program history. Will this be the year?

East Carolina enters the 2024 season with a strong set of arms to solidify the starting rotation; Preseason All American Trey Yesavage and Zach Root will anchor the weekend series, leaving Sunday's role up for grabs between multiple quality arms. Whoever doesn't get the Sunday or midweek role will slide into the bullpen giving ECU a strong middle relief core before handing the ball to stud closer Danny Beal to lock things down. Pitching looks to be the biggest strength for this Pirate squad entering the 2024 schedule. Offensively, ECU lost some power from the 2023 season but brings back an extremely balanced and battle tested lineup featuring elite Catcher Justin Wilcoxon, Carter Cunningham, Jacob Jenkins-Cowart, and others. While the home-run production may drop this year, this lineup will churn out quality base hits all year long.

As long as Yesavage and Root stay healthy, the offense continues their history of quality and clutch hitting, this Pirates team just might reach their goal of Omaha for the first time ever with the right bracket placement.

# #12 DUKE

*Blue Devils*



X @DukeBase

'23 REC  
39-23

STAGE OF ELIM  
SUPER REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+1500

MAKE CWS  
+300

WIN CWS  
+5000

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

45



POWER

50



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

50



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

75



EXPERIENCE

55

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Jonathan Santucci	SP1	4.30	29.1	50-16
Andrew Healy	SP2	2.32	42.2	45-7
Fran Oschell	SP3	0.69	39.1	66-18

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Alex Stone	C	.315	17	0.958
Ben Miller (PENN)	3B	.319	7	0.913
Zac Morris (VMI)	SS	.309	10	0.937

## *Team Preview* By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

Before Chris Pollard arrived in Durham, Duke baseball was all but irrelevant... Now he's there and they're being talked about like a top tier program within the ACC. Last year's Super Regional appearance without their top two pitchers, showed us that Duke isn't messing around and they are here to stay atop of the ACC. Heading into this season, Duke is excited to have Friday night Ace Jonathan Santucci back, along with Andrew Healy likely going on Saturdays, and Aidan Weaver or Fran Oschell occupying the Sunday role. It's without question that Duke has the second-best pitching room in the ACC and among the best in all of baseball.

The biggest question on this ball club will be on offense, as they lost several key pieces from the 2023 squad. Alex Stone is a monster returnee that will anchor this lineup and Ben Miller will be transferring in as immediate help in the starting nine. If Duke can find success at the plate outside of those two names mentioned, they may find their way in a deep postseason run, as they have the arms to get them there and make more than a splash.

# #13 NC STATE

*Wolfpack*



X @NCStateBaseball

'23 REC  
36-21

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+1250

MAKE CWS  
+215

WIN CWS  
+4000

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

60



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

65



EXPERIENCE

60

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Dominic Fritton	SP1	3.59	62.2	75-24
Matt Willadsen	SP2	3.78	81.0	86-31
Sam Highfill	SP3	4.83	54.1	48-22

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Jacob Cozart	C	.301	10	0.938
Alec Makarewicz (ECU)	3B	.258	11	0.832
G. Pennington (WICH)	1B	.307	15	0.932

## *Team Preview* By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

Elliot Avent has done a fantastic job over the years of producing some of college baseball's best hitters. The problem is that they leave his program and use those talents to benefit other programs. In 2023, the Pack had quality pitching and a lineup that could hit well, the issue was lining those two pieces up at the same time and for a continued period. In 2024, the Wolfpack do return a solid pitching room thanks to returners Fritton, Highfill, Willadsen and others who should anchor the weekend starting roles, with everyone else falling back into the pen providing quality late inning stability.

Offensively I can't say the same, as they lost their top 4 hitters. They do bring back Jacob Cozart who's in the discussion as one of baseball's best catchers and snagged ECU transfer Makarewics from the portal to help get this lineup going. All in all, I expect NC State to be in every game from a pitching standpoint, I just lack confidence in the offense to take them from "in the game" to "win the game". If the Pack can find success at the plate, this team will be dangerous, I just don't believe it's going to happen, contrary to many other experts beliefs'.

# #14 VIRGINIA

*Cavaliers*



X @UVABaseball

'23 REC  
50-15

STAGE OF ELIM  
CWS

WIN CONF  
+600

MAKE CWS  
+170

WIN CWS  
+2400

## By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

65



POWER

60



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

55



EXPERIENCE

55

## Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Jack O'Connor	SP1	3.52	65.1	64-25
Brad Hodges	SP2	3.66	33.2	40-23
Jay Woolfolk	SP3	2.91	34.0	38-20

## Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Ethan Anderson	C	.375	15	1.118
Griff O'Ferrall	SS	.394	1	0.945
Jacob FERENCE (TSFR)	DH	.364	14	1.233

## Team Preview By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

After a 2023 College World Series run, the Virginia Cavaliers are heading into the 2024 season with their eyes set on Omaha, as it has become the standard under head coach Brian O'Conner. O'Conner will have his hands full in 2024, figuring out how to win games with Kyle Teel, Jake Gelof, and Ethan O' Donnell all gone to the professional ranks.

As we look in to the 2024 Cavaliers, expect another solid team overall with a chance to make another run in June, if the pitching staff can rise to the occasion. It looks as if Jack O'Conner will be tasked with being the ace on Friday nights so that will be a name to watch. Another interesting situation will be how UVA elects to use former closer Jay Woolfolk; last year Woolfolk was predominately used late in games but has worked on extending his arm this fall for a possibility to become a starter this season. With multiple pitchers returning from the 2023 team, UVA should have a pretty solid bullpen to lean on throughout the season. Offensively I don't have too much concern as Griff O'Ferrall, Ethan Anderson, and Casey Saucke all return to anchor the Cavaliers lineup. The Cavs may miss some of the power that O'Donnell and Gelof brought to the lineup, but they should have good success moving runners around the bases with sound hitting. Overall, I expect Virginia to be a well-rounded hitting ball club that will focus on stout defense and consistent pitching, keeping them in position to win games, and be a top team out of the ACC heading into regionals.

# #15 N CAROLINA

*Tar Heels*



X @DiamondHeels

'23 REC  
36-24

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+900

MAKE CWS  
+200

WIN CWS  
+3400

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

60



SPEED

60



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

50



BULLPEN

65



EXPERIENCE

55

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Jake Knapp	SP1	5.04	64.1	65-36
Shea Sprague (ELON)	SP	2.69	90.1	82-19
Dalton Pence	CL	3.33	48.2	50-19

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Vance Honeycutt	CF	.257	12	0.910
Jackson Van De Brake	2B	.307	8	0.925
An. Donofrio (QUIN)	RF	.364	16	1.116

## *Team Preview* By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

Scott Forbes has a very intriguing Tar Heel team this year, that's coming off a lackluster regional performance in part because star CF Vance Honeycutt was unable to play due to injury. UNC's biggest issue last year was pitching, so Forbes went out and recruited one of the best freshman pitching classes in 2024. Conner Bovair does return for the Heels, looking to find more consistency and success in the 2024 campaign. Jake Knapp looks to be UNC's best Friday night option, but outside of Knapp it will be interesting to see who fills in the other two spots. Shea Sprague looks to be a quality transfer from Elon, which should help the weekend rotation immensely if he can adjust well to ACC baseball.

Offensively, the Tar Heels look to be in good shape with Honeycutt, Van De Brake and Cooke all returning along with incoming transfer Anthony Donofrio. If Forbes's squad can find success on the mound, this club has the talent in place to make a serious run in June. My only concern is in order for that to happen, the veterans will need to make major strides from last year to this year, or the freshman class coming in will have to be immediate impact pitchers which is a ton of pressure. The Heels should have no issues making the regional round, I just can't confidently predict they'll advance much farther.

# #16 TEXAS

*Longhorns*



X @TexasBaseball

'23 REC  
42-22

STAGE OF ELIM  
SUPER REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+400

MAKE CWS  
+135

WIN CWS  
+2000

## By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

55



POWER

55



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

60



PITCHING

65



BULLPEN

50



EXPERIENCE

55

## Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Lebarron Johnson Jr.	SP1	2.91	86.2	98-38
Tanner Witt	SP2	10.97	10.2	8-8
Charlie Hurley	SP3	4.42	55.0	45-27

## Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Peyton Powell	3B	.339	10	0.979
Porter Brown	LF	.322	12	0.966
Luke Storm (DUKE)	1B	.258	13	0.846

## Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

Texas seemingly reloads their Friday night guy year in and year out and that's no different this year as Lebarron Johnson Jr. takes over the role of their ace. While I expect LBJ to do just as well as Pete Hansen and Lucas Gordon did in the past, after Friday, the Longhorns may have a tough time finding success on the mound. All things will likely hinge on the success of Tanner Witt, who came back from Tommy John's last season and didn't seem to have it. If he can get back to his expectations, I expect Texas to be a real contender for the Big 12, with a good chance of winning it.

On the other side of the ball, the Longhorns return two studs in Peyton Powell and Porter Brown, along with snagging Duke first baseman, Luke Storm from the transfer portal. Together, this lineup should be able to exploit some flaws in the pitching staff of its opponents, but time will tell whether or not the Longhorns bullpen is enough to get them to the College World Series.

# #17 UCSB

## Gauchos



@UCSB\_Baseball

'23 REC  
35-20

STAGE OF ELIM  
REG SEASON

WIN CONF  
N/A

MAKE CWS  
+625

WIN CWS  
+9000

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

55



POWER

55



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

70



BULLPEN

65



EXPERIENCE

60

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Matt Ager	SP1	3.12	92.1	115-26
Mike Gutierrez	SP2	2.54	46.0	57-13
Hudson Barrett	CL	1.92	61.0	82-32

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Aaron Parker	C	.317	10	0.951
Jonah Sebring	RF	.330	4	0.904
Ivan Brethowr	LF	.305	11	0.968

### Team Preview By Todd Smith of NCAA Insiders

Coming off a 35-20 season, 18-12 in conference play, spirits are high for the Gauchos. Their strength is in their pitching rotation, led by a one-two punch in Matt Ager and southpaw, Mike Gutierrez. Together, these two starters bring in a combined ERA of 2.83 from last season. There's also a cast of arms that can follow the starters with more elite stuff, such as their closer, Hudson Barrett, who is a big frame, that can bring the heat.

On offense, UC Santa Barbara returns several starters from the 2023 squad, such as Aaron Parker and Ivan Brethowr, who are two guys that will be relied upon to spark the Gaucho offense. If the bats can give their solid pitchers run support, they will be a dangerous team in the Big West. The Gauchos have a long history of being an elite program, with their last appearance in Omaha coming in 2016. If you like rooting for the underdog, UC Santa Barbara shows all the signs of a Mid-Major Cinderella that could be dancing in June.

# #18 CO CAROLINA

## Chanticleers



@CoastalBaseball

'23 REC  
42-21

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL (HOST)

WIN CONF  
N/A

MAKE CWS  
+550

WIN CWS  
+7000

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

55



POWER

65



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

45



BULLPEN

50



EXPERIENCE

65

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Riley Eikhoff	SP1	4.43	42.2	39-10
Alexander Meckley	SP2	JC TSFR - NO STATS		
Darin Horn	CL	5.60	64.0	85-29

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Caden Bodine	C	.366	11	1.060
Zack Beach	1B	.320	13	1.065
Derek Bender	DH	.341	19	1.034

### Team Preview By Todd Smith of NCAA Insiders

After a successful '23 season, the Chanticleers have their eyes set on returning to Omaha for their first time since 2016. Coastal should be the favorites in a very hard Sun Belt Division. With head coach Gary Gilmore set to retire after 28 seasons, this should be a very motivated baseball team. Offense will be their strength, with plenty of returning power in their lineup, such as Caden Bodine and Derek Bender. This is an offense that ranked 18th in the country with 108 home runs last year, so queue the fireworks.

The pitching staff is the question mark. They brought in two transfers, Alexander Meckley and Trevor Hinkel to help with the weekend staff that returns Riley Eikhoff and Darin Horn, as their closer. I expect this Coastal Carolina team will continue to mash the cover off the baseball, but to make that Omaha run, the pitchers really need to step up. If you like betting overs, this might be your team to follow.

# #19 ALABAMA



*Crimson Tide*

X @AlabamaBSB

'23 REC  
43-21

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL (HOST)

WIN CONF  
+1800

MAKE CWS  
+600

WIN CWS  
+7500

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

55



POWER

50



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

65



EXPERIENCE

60

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Ben Hess	SP1	3.22	36.1	49-8
Aidan Moza	SP2	3.09	23.1	23-9
Riley Quick	SP3	3.68	22.0	26-21

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Evan Sleight (RUTG)	RF	.315	12	1.006
TJ McCants (MISS)	CF	.232	9	0.780
Ian Petruz (MARY)	LF	.270	14	0.920

## *Team Preview* By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

Alabama was a bit of a surprise last season with the success that their starting rotation had with Luke Holman and Ben Hess. But their season was halted by a mid-season controversy that ultimately led them to fire their coach, Brad Bohannon. The Tide were able to put the noise aside on their way to hosting a regional in Tuscaloosa. Unfortunately, that's where their season ended in 2023. But onto 2024 with a returning pitcher in Ben Hess that can be the anchor of this rotation. Luke Holman is off to LSU, so insert Moza and Quick as your presumable Saturday and Sunday starters.

If it seems like I'm talking way too much about the Crimson Tide pitching staff, part of that is because that may be all they have to rely on this season. Their lineup is going to look predominately brand new, with only two guys returning that had 100+ plate appearances last season. Their lineup will also be made up of five transfers, so it'll be interesting to see how Rob Vaughn pieces this lineup together to try and find their way back into a hosting spot in 2024, only this time, without a mid-season betting scandal, hopefully.

# #20 IOWA

## Hawkeyes



@UIBaseball

'23 REC  
44-16

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+300

MAKE CWS  
+700

WIN CWS  
+7000

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

55



POWER

55



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

60



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

50



EXPERIENCE

55

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Brody Brecht	SP1	3.74	77.0	109-61
Marcus Morgan	SP2	3.72	65.1	72-51
Zach Voelker	CL	6.18	43.2	31-22

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Sam Petersen	LF	.319	11	1.033
Michael Seegers	SS	.322	4	0.877
Davis Cop (UTAH)	DH	.300	10	0.874

### Team Preview By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Hawkeyes come into the 2024 season with a lot of hype regarding their pitching staff. Led by an electric ace in Brody Brecht, the hard throwing righty that gave up football to focus on his baseball career and Saturday starter, Marcus Morgan, who, combined with Brecht, will make for the best one-two tandem in the Big Ten. The Hawkeyes should be able to dominate an otherwise down Big Ten and be your eventual conference champ.

Their offense, however, will need to get clicking. They have the bats to be competitive in case the pitching struggles, but they're not going to jump off the page when it comes to their stats. Outside of their offensive makeup, the biggest thing for me and this Hawkeyes team is how Brody Brecht improved in the offseason. At times last season, Brecht struggled with his command, but if he can get those issues cleaned up, he will be one of the best pitchers in college baseball this season. If you can get long innings out of Brecht and Morgan's starts, mixed with consistency at the plate, the Hawkeyes could be Omaha bound. Which would end a drought for the Big Ten, as they haven't had a College World Series appearance since Michigan made it all the way to the championship series before losing to Vanderbilt in 2019.

# #21 TEXAS TECH



*Red Raiders*

X @TTU\_Baseball

'23 REC  
41-23

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+625

MAKE CWS  
+315

WIN CWS  
+5000

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

60



SPEED

55



DEFENSE

50



PITCHING

50



BULLPEN

60



EXPERIENCE

55

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Kyle Robinson	SP1	5.36	45.1	45-19
Zane Petty	SP2	5.68	38.0	32-15
Jacob Rogers	CL	5.48	23.0	25-13

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Gavin Kash	1B	.326	26	1.086
Kevin Bazzell	C	.348	10	1.024
Austin Green	RF	.287	12	0.952

## *Team Preview* By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

Tim Tadlock's Red Raiders will bring the bats in 2024, led by Gavin Kash, the hard hitting first baseman, along with other big bats like Kevin Bazzell and Gage Harrelson. Their combination of great hitters makes this lineup a tough task for any pitcher to slow down. While the lineup should be able to put runs on the board, it's the pitching staff that concerns me most for the Red Raiders success.

Returning several arms that didn't have a ton of innings last year will be the biggest hurdle for Tech as they try to once again get back to the College World Series. Led by presumable Friday night starter, Kyle Robinson, they'll look to take advantage of an early season test as they travel to Globe Life to take on Oregon, Tennessee, and Nebraska in the College Baseball Showdown. This will be a good early season test for their pitching staff to work out any kinks, while relying heavily on their batting lineup to simply outscore their opponents. If the Red Raiders can string together some consistency from their starters, mixed with their depth in the pen and big time bats, you could be seeing this team in Omaha come June.

# #22 UCLA

*Bruins*



X @UCLABaseball

'23 REC  
28-24-1

STAGE OF ELIM  
REG SEASON

WIN CONF  
+750

MAKE CWS  
+200

WIN CWS  
+3200

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

55



SPEED

50



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

55



BULLPEN

55



EXPERIENCE

60

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Luke Jewett	SP1	5.31	20.1	21-1
Finn McIlroy	SP2	4.50	18.0	22-5
Michael Barnett	SP3	3.97	45.1	31-12

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Duce Gourson	2B	.319	10	1.002
Cody Schrier	SS	.278	6	0.847
Jack Holman	1B	.262	13	0.856

## *Team Preview* By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

The Bruins enter 2024 with a lot of depth, but no real superstar on their roster. One guy that can earn that role is Duce Gourson, who played for Team USA last summer. News from camp is that this kid has done nothing but produce since he stepped foot on campus, so the Bruins will rely heavily on his success if they want to get into the postseason.

The pitching staff is a question mark for me, but as we've seen in the previous years, doesn't have to be elite to contend for the PAC 12. I think if the pitching rotation between Jewett and McIlroy can be consistent, they should be able to win enough games to remain in the conversation of the College World Series.

At the end of the day, you have to start separating the contenders from the pretenders and I just don't think this Bruins team will have enough surrounding Gourson, nor enough talent on the mound to get them to Omaha, so it could be another mediocre year for the Bruins.

# #23 N'EASTERN

## Huskies

NORTHEASTERN



X @GoNUBaseball

'23 REC  
44-16

STAGE OF ELIM  
REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
N/A

MAKE CWS  
+1200

WIN CWS  
+12500

### By the Numbers Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

60



SPEED

65



DEFENSE

55



PITCHING

60



BULLPEN

50



EXPERIENCE

55

### Impact Pitchers Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Aiven Cabral	SP1	2.58	83.2	69-14
Wyatt Scotti	SP2	3.91	76.0	57-13
Jake Gigliotti	SP3	3.24	66.2	65-17

### Impact Hitters Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Mike Sirota	CF	.346	18	1.150
Cam Maldonado	RF	.353	13	1.076
Tyler MacGregor	1B	.332	18	1.040

### Team Preview By Todd Smith of NCAA Insiders

The Northeastern Huskies are poised to make another post-season run after a great '23 season. That said, this team might be even stronger than last year, with expectations to get back to Omaha for the first time since 1966.

They are bringing back a lot of experience. This is a versatile team that can hit the long ball or they can beat you with their speed on the bases. They also have a very solid pitching staff that was ranked as one of the best team ERA's in the nation.

Northeastern has a very solid lineup that includes Mike Sirota, who has potential to be a star and a high draft pick, and Cam Maldonado who is a big-time bat in this powerful lineup. Aiven Cabral and Wyatt Scotti are a dangerous one-two punch at the top of a strong pitching staff. The question mark for this staff could be their bullpen. This team needs a few guys to step up outside of the starters. If they can find their groove, they will be a very dangerous team. Don't sleep on this mid major giant, because they might be a profitable cash machine on their way to Omaha.

# #24 KANSAS ST



Wildcats

@KStateBSB

'23 REC  
35-24

STAGE OF ELIM  
REG SEASON

WIN CONF  
+750

MAKE CWS  
+625

WIN CWS  
+8000

## By the Numbers

Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

55



SPEED

65



DEFENSE

60



PITCHING

45



BULLPEN

60



EXPERIENCE

55

## Impact Pitchers

Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Owen Boerema	SP1	5.06	85.1	95-34
Tyler Ruhl	SP2	5.31	61.0	51-22
Tyson Neighbors	CL	1.85	48.2	86-16

## Impact Hitters

Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Brady Day	2B	.356	3	0.951
Kaelen Culpepper	SS	.325	10	0.999
Chuck Ingram (WICH)	LF	.362	9	1.016

## Team Preview

By Matt Grissom of NCAA Insiders

Kansas State returns one of the best closers in college baseball in Tyson Neighbors, but the Wildcats success will rely heavily on their starting rotation, consisting of Owen Boerema and Tyler Ruhl. I believe the Wildcats have a true ace in Boerema, who shows all of the signs of a veteran lefty, ready to make the push into one of the best starters in the Big 12.

As for their bats, they should be consistent, especially through the middle of their lineup. The key will be not letting the starting pitching be a liability like it was last season, while their offense scores enough runs to keep it close, in order to capitalize on their star closer in Neighbors to come in and slam the door.

The Wildcats also benefit from a pretty weak schedule to start the season, before traveling to Tennessee and Clemson for a couple of midweek games in March. These are always fun throw away games that can be a test to see where your ball club stacks up against some other good competition. I'll be looking at spots to back the Wildcats throughout the season and if I see that they're getting production out of Boerema like I think they will, the Wildcats will be a fun dog to bet along the way.

# #25 S CAROLINA



*Gamecocks*

X @GamecockBaseball

'23 REC  
42-21

STAGE OF ELIM  
SUPER REGIONAL

WIN CONF  
+950

MAKE CWS  
+180

WIN CWS  
+2500

## *By the Numbers* Featuring D1Baseball's 20-80 Scouting Scale



HITTING

60



POWER

65



SPEED

45



DEFENSE

50



PITCHING

45



BULLPEN

60



EXPERIENCE

60

## *Impact Pitchers* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	ERA	IP	K-BB
Eli Jones	SP1	3.95	55.0	63-17
Matthew Becker	SP2	4.83	54.0	71-26
Chris Veach	CL	3.33	26.0	32-15

## *Impact Hitters* Statistics from '23 Season

PLAYER NAME	POS	BA	HR's	OPS
Cole Messina	C	.306	17	1.039
Gavin Casas	1B	.259	19	0.976
Ethan Petry	RF	.376	23	1.204

## *Team Preview* By Quentin Mills of NCAA Insiders

At one point in the 2023 season, South Carolina was flirting with the conversation as best team in the country, until the team became victim of the injury bug, leading to a roller coaster finish. The Gamecocks will be returning a ton of that 2023 offensive talent which propelled them to a Super Regional appearance in Gainesville. Notable names like Cole Messina, Ethan Petry, and Gavin Casas will be headlining this South Carolina offense which is sure to put up some gaudy numbers. As one of the biggest power hitting teams in the country, I expect this team to have no issue scoring runs throughout the season. My questions with this team lie in the pitching room. Veterans Eli Jones and Matthew Becker look to anchor the weekend rotation, with the third spot still up for grabs. Chris Veach is back healthy as a lights out closer. In terms of other arms filling out the starting and middle inning roles, there's a lot of uncertainty with this squad. The arm talent on paper is there, it's more of a question as to whether they can stay healthy and produces winning results.

With a power lineup like Kingston has built, offense won't be an issue for the 2024 season; If South Carolina's pitching staff can prove to be effective and find a way to stay healthy, South Carolina has the makeup to be an Omaha bound team. Will they? Time will tell.

# ACC

## *Conference Preview with Quentin Mills*

The ACC was well represented in last year's College World Series run with Virginia and Wake Forest both taking the trip to Omaha before eventually losing to LSU and Florida and I expect this year to have a similar run.

### **The Short-Shots:**

As I look at each team heading into opening weekend, I see the same few teams running through the conference with a big drop off from the top to mid tiers. Wake Forest (+100) will boast one of NCAA's top pitching rotations and batting lineups, and I expect another Omaha appearance for the Deacs, with a real shot to win it all. Outside of Wake, there is always Virginia (+600) hanging around the top under legendary coach Brian O'Conner. Virginia will be poised for another postseason run after several key producers return to their lineup as well as several pitchers who had ample appearances in 2023. Clemson (+475) is another team that should have success in the conference after returning stars Cam Cannarella and Will Taylor to anchor a young but bright lineup. Erik Bakich knows how to get the most out of teams, so I expect him to figure out how to possibly host another regional as we enter tournament ball. Duke (+1500) rounds out my top tier teams as they return a very solid pitching rotation who should have a bad taste in their mouth as they lost at the hands of the Cavs in Supers with a trip to Omaha on the line. Duke has great coaching that should be able to keep momentum on the rise with a real shot to make some noise in June if they can stay healthy and find consistency at the plate.

### **The Dark-Horse:**

North Carolina (+900) lands itself in a weird spot this season as a team that could make a run if the lineup can find consistent production from guys not named Vance Honeycutt or Jackson Van De Brake. Pitching also had flashes last year but couldn't string together any rhythm. On paper UNC has a team that can make Omaha, it's more of a "will they" play to that level rather than "can they". However this team shakes out, it will be interesting to see their path unfold. Another team I'll have my eye on is the Louisville Cardinals (+3000) coming off a weird year in 2023 where it seemed like they had a team that could go far, they simply just couldn't find a groove and stay in it. Top pitcher Carson Liggett returns and should anchor their pitching staff with several quality wins on Friday nights. Offensively Louisville doesn't have a major power bat, they have built their 2024 to just be solid all around, similar to the UVA approach. Louisville has a quality team on paper and will do damage if they can find a groove through conference play.

# BIG TEN

## *Conference Preview with Noah Bieniek*

When 90% of the country thinks of the Big Ten playing baseball in Omaha they think of the Conference Tournament that is held at Charles Schwab Field. However, this year there are one or two teams that could stumble into the College World Series. When discussing the conference there is a clear cream of the crop and than the rest.

### **The Short-Shots:**

The top candidate to do that would be the Iowa Hawkeyes (+300). If Rick Heller's weekend rotation performs to their ceiling, it should be feared nationally. Brody Brecht is being heralded as a Top 5 arm and sure-fire 1st round 2024 MLB Draft pick. He'll be the Ace of the Hawkeyes' pitching staff coming off a 109 strikeouts in 77 innings campaign. Brecht lights up the radar gun with triple digits consistently and will look to improve his command this Spring. Marcus Morgan is projected to be the Saturday starter. Morgan is the most reliable arm on the staff and possesses a higher floor than Brecht. Cade Obermueller, son of former MLBer Wes Obermueller, is exceeding the mid-90s with his fastball and can flash some filth with his offspeed. Iowa's offense will be the X-factor in determining how far the Hawkeyes can go. This lineup has much more of an on-base/baserunning archetype than slugging. The duo of Michael Seegers and Sam Petersen both return after above .315 with 17 steals last season.

Indiana (+500) will be nipping at Iowa's heels all season. The Hoosiers' lineup provides much more pop than the Hawkeyes' which makes it that much more criminal that we won't be seeing the two squads duke it out against each other in a weekend series. Devin Taylor is the name to know for IU. Taylor broke the Indiana program's Freshman RBI record (59) last season. The Sophomore is one of four Hoosiers returning that had double digit 4baggers in 2023. The three others were Brock Tibbitts, Carter Mathison, and Tyler Cerny. On the bump the Hoosiers will miss Luke Sinnard, who's out for the year after elbow surgery. Indy used the "by committee" approach with their hurlers last season, often operating with Openers and Piggybackers. Their two top arms on this year's staff are Connor Foley and Brayden Risedorph.

### **The Dark-Horse:**

Back to back regular season champions Maryland (+400) are dealing with some turnover after losing their head coach, Rob Vaughn, to Alabama. The Terrapins promoted Matt Swope from within the coaching staff who played for the Terps back in the early 2000s. It was labeled as a "dream job" for Swope but I am expecting a slight step back.

One of the B1G's best infields can be found in Piscataway, NJ. Head Coach Steve Owens has given Rutgers (+1100) momentum. Christian Coppola pitched for Team USA in the summer and will give the Knights a great chance at starting every weekend series 1-0.

Michigan (+425) is the most recent program from the B1G to appear in Omaha (2019). The Wolverines' head coach Tracy Smith is also the most recent (current) B1G skipper to lead a B1G team to Omaha when he was the head man at Indiana in 2013. Smith and Michigan hit the transfer portal hard while building upon a handful of 2023's big contributors.

# BIG 12

## *Preview with Cameron Brock & Matt Grissom*

The Big 12 Conference is always a fun and interesting conference to watch for. After a wild and exciting 2023 season that saw a tie for the regular season championship, TCU won the Big 12 Tournament and advanced all the way to the College World Series. Will they repeat?

### **The Short-Shots:**

TCU (+375) is the favorite to win the conference this season. This team doesn't rebuild. It reloads. The Horned Frogs always bring out the bats regardless of who is in the lineup. Returners from last season include two Big 12 All-Freshman Team selections in Anthony Silva and Karson Bowen. Silva made a massive impact in 2023, posting a .375 average and belting four homers in 22 starts. Bowen manufactures runs like crazy as he led TCU with 23 RBI's during conference play. Pitching is also well staffed for the season. Kole Klecker was the only pitcher to make a full eight rotational starts in Big 12 play, and he was just a freshman last season. Kirk Saarloss bolstered his rotation by bringing in West Virginia's Ben Hampton. Hampton was a member of the All-Big 12 Conference First Team. Look for Ben Abeldt to also make a larger impact this season. Looking his most dominant self in the post-season, Abeldt could be a key cog in the Frogs success in 2024.

Texas (+400) is another short-shot that I have my eye on. They return one of the best arms in the Big 12 in Lebarron Johnson Jr and if Tanner Witt can shake off last season and play to his potential, I could make the case that the Longhorns have the best starting pitching staff in the Big 12. They'll have no shortage of hitters with guys like Luke Storm from Duke adding to a lineup that already consisted of two big bats in Peyton Powell and Porter Brown. I expect the conference to come down to TCU or Texas, but I'd give Texas the slight edge with the caveat that Tanner Witt is back to his normal self.

### **The Dark-Horse:**

Kansas (+1300) went through some growing pains last season and while the Jayhawks have never particularly been known as a baseball school, there is reason for optimism this season. Dan Fitzgerald could've cut much of his roster, but decided to bring them all back for year two. The team is led by Big 12 Co-Freshman of the Year, Kodey Shojinaga, who produced a .418 average and scored 20 runs in '23. KU returns nearly its entire lineup, which means Fitzgerald has had an offseason to work on their mechanics and experiment with team chemistry. To bolster their pitching staff, the Jayhawks bring in Grant Adler from Wichita State. With the Shockers, Adler posted a 2.55 ERA and tossed a complete game shutout against the #7 ranked ECU Pirates. With the experience coming back on offense and a bolstered up rotation, this 25-win Kansas team has the schedule in its favor and could utilize it to its advantage. After opening at home against TCU, they face three newcomers before welcoming West Virginia to Lawrence. I wouldn't be surprised if they sweep all three, building up momentum. Without Oklahoma or Oklahoma State on the schedule, if KU takes care of business early, they could be heading to Austin at the end of the season with the Big 12 title on the line.

# PAC 12

## *Preview with Matt Grissom*

The PAC 12 is usually well represented in Omaha, but the conference as a whole has taken a dip over the last few seasons. With only Stanford hosting a regional last season, the PAC 12 looks to gain some parity this year as a few other teams look to dethrone the back-to-back PAC 12 champ, Stanford.

### **The Short-Shots:**

Coming into the season, the Oregon State Beavers (+115) are your clearcut favorite to win the PAC 12, but can the Beavers live up to the hype? They definitely have the bats to compete with anyone, but their pitching is their biggest question mark for me. When you're talking about the next shortest shot being Stanford (+400), who will be without their saving grace from last season, Quinn Mathews, nothing really gets me excited about betting anyone here. If anything, I like the Oregon Ducks (+800) as a shorter-shot to win it, based on their returning pitching staff alone. If you've followed my stuff for very long, you know that I anchor every handicap around good arms, and Oregon has some of the best in the conference in Logan Mercado and Turner Spoljaric, who combined to go 12-1 in starts last season. If the Ducks can stay healthy, I think they're a threat to win the conference.

### **The Dark-Horse:**

As I previously stated above, Oregon (+800) returns one of the best pitching staffs in the PAC 12, therefore, I like their chances to compete with Oregon State as your regular season PAC 12 champ. However, there's one team that seems so underpriced for this market, and that's the USC Trojans (+2200). Andy Stankiewicz took over this squad last season and looks to build off that 17-13 PAC 12 record. The unfortunate thing for the Trojans is that they're undergoing construction of a new stadium, so they'll be without a home field for practices or games. Instead, they will travel approximately an hour to Irvine's Orange County Great Park to play their games. This obstacle could definitely play a part in their numbers being so high, but with the return of Caden Aoki, Tyler Stromborg, and Eric Hammond, the Trojans have a pitching staff that is a very legitimate threat to slow down their opponents bats.

So if you want to bet the safe pick, take Oregon State (+115). It's not sexy, but they're the short-shot for a reason. But if you want a fun ticket to sweat out down the stretch, take an Oregon (+800) or a USC (+2200) and root for chaos.

# SEC

## *Preview with Matt Grissom*

The road to Omaha typically runs through a regional at an SEC school and this season should be much of the same. With the SEC owning six of the Top Ten spots in the preseason polls, this is a hard conference to cover in a short preview, but I'll give it a try.

### **The Short-Shots:**

The LSU Tigers (+450) may be the shortest shot to win the SEC, but I think you have the wrong team favored in this scenario. When handicapping the regular season winner, you want to look at pitching first. Which rotation will likely go the entire season without losing a series? Which team has the grit on the mound to edge out the gauntlet that is the SEC schedule? When I think of those requirements, LSU isn't the team that comes to mind first. I look at there being value on Florida, who'd be my preseason #1 team on account they're going to absolutely rake this season. But when it comes to the mound.. They may not be the best. Moving over to the third shortest shot, let's talk about Arkansas. Boasting perhaps the best Friday night ace in college baseball in Hagen Smith, followed by a Saturday of Brady Tygart and his filthy curveball, all for another lefty in Mason Molina to come clean it up for a series sweep. Call me a homer all you want, but when it comes to the Razorbacks, they have the kind of depth I'm looking for when I'm betting futures. At the end of the day, you're the one hitting the "Place Bet" button, so I'll leave you with this: If you favor hitting, bet Florida (+475). If you favor pitching, bet Arkansas (+500). If you want a decent mixture of both, without being elite at either one, look at Tennessee (+800).

### **The Dark-Horse:**

To find a dark-horse in the SEC, you really have to dig deep for value. So similarly to why I like Arkansas, I'm down the board to look at backing another team that has a very solid pitching staff. That's the Alabama Crimson Tide. The combination of returning starter, Ben Hess, along with Aiden Moza and Riley Quick, the Tide have assembled a low ERA pitching staff that could be sneaky good this year. While it may seem like a donation to the books due to a stacked SEC, Alabama is the beneficiary of a schedule that doesn't have Florida or Vanderbilt, while getting Arkansas, Tennessee, and LSU all at home. So getting the Crimson Tide (+1800), is worth a small bet. If you want to look at a team not even in the Preseason Top 25, I'd look at a team like the Auburn Tigers (+1500). The Tigers return three great hitters in Ike Irish, Cooper McMurray, and Bobby Pierce, but their question mark is pitching. They're a long shot for a reason, but with shorter odds than the Tide, despite the worse preseason ranking, the Tigers are another team that may be worth a look.

# SUN BELT

## *Preview with Noah Bieniek*

The Sun Belt is full of passionate fans and talented players, which in turn is growing the conference into one of the best in the country. In 2023, the Belt finished 5th in conference RPI ahead of the Big Ten. I'm all for the Sun Belt's come-up because the atmospheres at these ballparks are tough to duplicate outside of the southeastern region of the country. Although we haven't seen odds on the Sun Belt Champ, here are some teams to watch in 2024:

**Coastal Carolina** is the defending regular season champ and return much of their lineup from '23. I'd say the Chanticleers should be favored once again to win the SBC however they're really weak on the mound again. Last year CCU needed to put up 10+ runs to win many games, they're going to have to do that again in '24, but have the necessary pieces to repeat Coastal returns 4 players that hit double digit bombs, led by Derek Bender, who headlines the embarrassment of riches coming off an 83 RBI campaign. Caden Bodine also returns. Both Bodine and Bender should be great help for the pitching staff which will require all hands on deck. The best returning arm for the Chants is Riley Eikhoff. Last but not least, Head Coach Gary Gilmore has announced that he will be retiring this summer after his 29th season. Gilmore has taken Coastal to 18 Regionals, and Omaha once, where they won it all in 2016. It would be one helluva story if Gilmore was able to get his final sendoff in Omaha one last time.

**Troy** is going to be one of my darlings this year. Skylar Meade's program has some true momentum as their facilities have seen some really nice upgrades and have been attracting some P5 transfers because of it. The Trojans have a super balanced roster when it applies to hitting and pitching. Grayson Stewart is the best returning pitcher in the conference and will get the ball on Friday nights. Stewart possessed an outstanding 94 K to 25 walk ratio. Logan Ross and Clemson transfer Jay Dill are expected to fill out the weekend rotation. Dill's statline is ugly, but by transferring down a level, should allow his breaking balls and low 90s fastball to play a little better. Sun Belt Player of the Year Shane Lewis and his 27 home runs, along with Ethan Kavanagh and Tremayne Cobb Jr return for the Trojans after +.300 average campaigns.

**Southern Miss's** legendary head coach, Scott Berry, retired last season after spending 23 years with the baseball program. The Golden Eagles also lose many key cogs from their program's identity over last couple years. Ace, Tanner Hall, and practically the entire lineup have all moved on from their playing days at USM. Southern Miss' strength remains their pitching staff as the pitching coach Christian Ostrander takes over as the Skipper. Billy Oldham and Niko Mazza make up one of the best 1-2 weekend punches in the Sun Belt.

**Texas State's** offense will be loaded in '24, returning 5 of the top 6 bats for this season, three of which all recorded double digit homers in '23. Davis Powell is also coming back along with a nice transfer portal grab in Alec Patino from Ohio. If Coastal can win games in the Sun Belt without much pitching, Texas State will look to deploy the same gameplan.

**Louisiana's** middle infield tandem of Kyle DeBarge and John Taylor returns from their '23 Regional appearance. Add in Carson Fluno who finished strong last Spring and the Ragin' Cajuns have the beginnings of a recipe to become a dark horse in the conference race.

# SHOOT YOUR LONG-SHOT

## *with Johnny V*

A sport like College Baseball is probably the only game on the planet that can have a nobody from nowhere sneak up and win the whole damn thing. I use the "nobody from nowhere" phrase in honor of my real 2023 dark horse, the Campbell Camels. After falling in love with them in 2022, I decided '23 was when I would hit them hard. First, it was a 300/1 bet on Caesars in March, then a couple smashes at 100/1 in April. Before I knew it I racked up about 80K in equity on them. Although they got clipped, leaving me heartbroken, the point is to capture early value on formidable teams that fly under the radar while books are uninformed and still sleeping because they're paying attention to the NFL.

With that said, here are my three favorite Mid-Major sleepers/long-shots of 2024:

### **#23 Northeastern Huskies +20000 (DraftKings)**

I didn't really start boning up on my favorites pick for the 2024 season until about the first weekend of January. In my research, I came across a Northeastern team that won 44 games a season ago, leading them to a Regional berth. Obviously they ran into the buzzsaw Wake Forest (my 2023 preseason pick). Still, they left an impactful impression as a team that could do some serious damage for this year.

The main reason is blue-chip prospect OF Mike Sirota, a projected top 10 pick in July. There's not much this kid can't do, so with him anchoring this lineup that returns almost their entire team from a year ago, it's difficult imagining this squad can't reach higher limits this time. Joining Sirota will be playmakers Cam Maldonado and Tyler MacGregor who combined to smash 31 taters, 99 RBI's, and average .341 at the plate. The Huskies' lineup returns 90 of their 106 round-trippers, as well as 94 of their 133 stolen bases.

On the bumpski, the big guns will be back too. The staff that compiled a 3.75 ERA (9th best in NCAA) should once again be led by the dynamic strike-throwing duo of Aiven Cabral and Wyatt Scotti. An unproven bullpen could be the teams' biggest weakness, something that is usually not kind for teams trying to make a deep run in June. With that being said, there are some key arms returning from injury and a few coming in via the transfer portal.

In what is a winnable Colonial Athletic division, the biggest threat to this Northeastern team is likely the newcomers in Campbell (formerly of the Big South). Nevertheless, I have a lot of confidence in the Huskies to reign supreme in 2024. The current number is by far the best across any book, and still worth a bet despite a quick and dramatic odds shift. With a ton of equity on this team, thanks to a wildly inaccurate 2500/1 price (a number I hit at Caesars on 1/12), I believe they can certainly challenge the top dogs in late June.

# SHOOT YOUR LONG-SHOT

## *with Johnny V – Continued*

### **#18 Coastal Carolina Chanticleers +9000 (DraftKings)**

While I didn't have quite as much on Coastal as I did Campbell a season ago, I still nabbed them at 200/1 in the middle of the year. Like Campbell, they left me highly disappointed by choking in the Super Regionals. Although the outrageously long odds might be a thing of the past with this team, 90/1 still seems like a strong price for me in what will be Head Coach Gary Gilmore's final season. The bludgeoning offense loses two of their best players from 2023, Nick Lucky and Peyton Eeles (combined for 61 of the team's 91 stolen bases, and only 17 of 108 homers). However, they return two of their best players in Derek Bender and Caden Bodine, along with five other starters. With a couple transfers in Sam Antonacci and Corey Zientek joining the club, the offense should be able to continue to do damage with power and speed in 2024.

Like 2023, the question mark with this team comes on the mound. It was far from good last year with a team 6.25 ERA and 1.61 WHIP, but players like Riley Eikhoff and Darin Horn have to step up this season. Coastal brought in a lot of transfers/freshman to try and secure some real pitching in the rotation, but Horn will likely be asked to replace the best pitcher from a season ago in closer Teddy Sharkey. As always, one of the biggest components of a team making a deep run is their postseason draw. If the offense continues to rake and the pitching improves, we'll see the Chants in June. It's a team I see making the CWS in 2024.

### **#11 East Carolina Pirates +7500 (DraftKings)**

I never get tired of watching this ECU squad led by skipper Cliff Godwin. Every time I see them play, I think to myself how they are the picture of resiliency. Just when you think they're out of the game, they find a way to claw right back in it. As my long-shot with the shortest odds on this list, don't overlook the Pirates. This is one of the few teams outside the top 14 favorites that has a great balance of hitting and pitching. The staff is led by one of my favorite arms in the country, projected 2024 first-rounder, Trey Yesavage. ECU's hopes and dreams flow through him. If he can at least replicate last year's 2.61 ERA and 105 K/23 BB ratio across 76 innings, then it will set the tone for the Saturday arm, Zach Root to shine. If those two are a strong duo this year, then the rest of the rotation can help them become great.

The offense is multidimensional with Jacob Starling leading the way. Although they lost their top two home run hitters in Moyland and Makarewicz, I'll expect guys like Jacob Jenkins-Cowart, Justin Wilcoxon, and Carter Cunningham to pick up the slack. ECU is keen on finding ways to win, and while it doesn't always make sense, they usually get the job done. There likely won't be a team in the AAC to challenge their position, so if they rack up wins and stay high enough in the top 25, they could be hosting the Regionals and Supers at the Jungle like they did in '22. They should absolutely be pushing for a spot in Omaha.

# PICK'EM

*Reg. Season Winner of each P5 Conference*

	ACC	BIG TEN	BIG 12	PAC 12	SEC
GRISSOM	 +200	 +350	 +400	 +800	 +550
MILLS	 +200	 +350	 +375	 +300	 +550
SMITTY	 +200	 +350	 +400	 +300	 +475
JOHNNY V	 +550	 +700	 +375	 +175	 +550
NOAH	 +100	 +700	 +375	 +175	 +800

# BEST BETS

## Preseason Futures

\* = TO WIN CWS | \*\* = TO WIN CONF | \*\*\* = MAKE CWS

<b>GRISSOM</b> 						
	11/1*	+350**	+170***	+100***	+110***	
	<b>MILLS</b> 					
		10/1*	+100***	+100***	+300**	+350**
		<b>SMITTY</b> 				
10/1*			+475**	12/1***	+625***	+700***
<b>JOHNNY V</b> 						
	11/1*		14/1***	175/1*	+600***	100/1*
	<b>NOAH</b> 					
		+375**	+800**	+625***	12/1***	22/1***

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