

WEEK THIRTEEN FORECAST - Round 1 Playoffs

SOUTH DAKOTA ST AT (#1) MONTANA

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
South Dakota St	106	210	20	2
Montana	149	210	21	2

SDSt is making their first FCS playoff appearance (only 2nd yr of eligibility) and their first post-season appearance since 1979. Montana is making their continued record 20th appearance including their 17th straight. Montana leads the all-time series 6-0 (5 gms here). They have played twice since SDSt began their move up to Div I. In 2005 the Grizzlies won just 7-0 but in their last meeting in 2006, they won 36-7. Both teams played Cal Poly this year. The Jack-rabbit's lost 14-21, while a week later, the Grizzlies won 35-23. Montana was 2-0 vs playoff teams (WSU & EWU) TY, while SDSt was 0-1 (#3 seed SIU) but also handed Northern Iowa who only lost to FCS Iowa 16-17 and just missed out on a playoff spot their worst loss of the year 24-14. SDSt also only lost to FBS Minnesota by a late 4Q FG (16-13). Montana has the #8 scoring (34.6) and #9 total offense (431.7) (#15 pass, #25 rush) and while they have the #19 scoring (17.9) and #8 rush defense (87.1) they are #58 in total defense (341.18) as they are #108 on pass defense (254.1). SDSt is only #42 in scoring (25.9) and #57 in total offense (342.8) but are #5 in scoring (13.5) and #16 in total defense (280.4) (#23 rush D, #22 pass D). We'll lean with the playoff experience and the home field edge but expect a close one here, **FORECAST: Montana 24 South Dakota St 21**

EASTERN WASHINGTON AT S.F. AUSTIN

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Eastern Washington	101	340	29	1
SF Austin	124	370	30	3

This is just the 4th ever meeting between these schools and while SFA leads the series 2-1 they last met in 1989. The Eagles are very happy to be here as they started the season ineligible for the playoffs but finally won their appeal of the very stiff penalty on Oct 27th and had to win out to make their 4th playoff appearance in the last 6 years. SFA is coming off 4 straight losing seasons but won their first SLC Title since 1999. The Lumberjacks are making their first playoff appearance since 1995, when they made it to the semi-finals before falling to the eventual Champion, Montana. EWU was 0-2 vs playoff teams TY losing back-to-back gms to Montana and Weber St before winning their final 4. SFA was 1-0 vs playoff tms beating SLC co-Champ McNeese St, which gave them the SLC's auto-bid. EWU has the #9 scoring (33.7) and #4 total offense (450.1) (#4 pass, #56 rush) but have the #70 scoring (25.9) and #109 total defense (416.27) but are #9 in TO margin (+13). SFA has the #1 scoring (37.2) and #3 total offense (477.6) (#1 pass, #63 rush) along with the #27 scoring (19.4) and #32 total defense (312.2) but are #59 in TO margin (even). However some of those numbers misleading are due to a 92-0 win over NAIA Texas St where SFA had a 603-92 yd edge but still avg 31.7 ppg vs Div I foes. This game should be close and since many close games are decided by TO's, We will go with EWU to pull the upset as they have the definite TO edge. **FORECAST: Eastern Washington 28 SF Austin 27**

ELON AT (#4) RICHMOND

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Elon	21	265	20	2
Richmond	124	160	21	2

Richmond is 2-0 vs Elon and while the first meeting was in 1928, the last was a 28-10 win in the season opener last year, when the Spiders had a 452-235 yd edge. The Spiders are making their 3rd straight playoff appearance and their 8th overall and off course look to repeat as the Champion. This is Elon's 1st ever appearance in the FCS playoffs and their first postseason appearance since 1981 when they won the NAIA title. Richmond was 1-1 vs playoff teams (Villanova and W&M) but also beat FBS Duke 24-16 to open the season. Elon was 0-1 vs playoff teams (App St) but that was their only FCS loss as they only other loss was to Wake Forest (35-7). Richmond has the #22 scoring (31.1) and #49 total offense (350.0) (#41 rush, #56 pass) and have won with the #8 scoring (14.9) and #10 total defense (#3 rush, #56 pass) and are #17 in TO margin (+8). Elon has the #16 scoring (32.0) and #8 total offense (433.0) (#54 rush, #7 pass) along with the #2 scoring (12.9) and #2 total defense (234.6) (#9 rush, #5 pass) and are #20 in TO margin (+6). However some of that was weighted by wins over Davidson and Presbyterian by a combined 97-7 with a combined 1189-195 yd edge. The numbers look close so we will side with Richmond, who has the playoff experience, the more balanced offense and the home field edge. **FORECAST: Richmond 21 Elon 20**

SOUTH CAROLINA ST AT APPALACHIAN ST

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
South Carolina St	121	205	20	2
Appalachian St	219	290	35	2

This is a replay of last years opening round game that Appalachian St won 37-21. They lead the series 2-0 but the other meeting was in 1984. SC State is making their 4th playoff appearance and their 2nd straight as MEAC Champ. App St is making their 15th playoff appearance and 5th straight. SC State did not play a playoff team this year but their only loss was to FBS South Carolina 38-14. App St was 1-1 vs playoff teams but after starting the year with a 29-24 loss to FBS East Carolina and a 40-35 loss to McNeese St The Mountaineers have won 9 straight and are the SoCon Champ. The Bulldogs have the #16 scoring (32.0) and #28 total offense (378.4) (#34 rush, #33 pass) and have the #9 scoring (15.2) and #5 total defense (250.6) (#14 rush, #7 pass). App St has the #4 scoring (35.7) and #2 total offense (478.9) (#7 rush, #16 pass) but the #54 scoring (22.3) and #39 total defense (319.0) (#53 rush, #36 pass). App St has played the tougher schedule and will not look past SC State after they only led 24-21 in the 4Q LY before scoring 13 unanswered pts to pull away. **FORECAST: Appalachian St 35 South Carolina St 24**

HOLY CROSS AT (#2) VILLANOVA

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Holy Cross	1	335	12	3
Villanova	324	220	40	1

Holy Cross has won the last 2 meetings but Villanova leads the all-time series 12-9 but they have not met since 1989. This is only Holy Cross's 2nd FCS playoff appearance (first 1983) and their only other postseason appearance was in the 1946 Orange Bowl.

The Crusaders won their first Patriot League Title since 1991. While the Crusaders did not play any playoff teams this year they were 3-0 vs ranked teams. Villanova is making their 2nd straight FCS playoff appearance and their 8th overall. The Wildcats shared the CAA crown but won the conf auto-bid with an outright win over co-champ Richmond. They play in probably the toughest division in the FCS with 3 playoff teams and 2 others who just missed out. The Wildcats were 2-1 vs playoff teams (UR, W&M, NH) and started the season with a 27-24 win over FBS Temple. Holy Cross has the #14 scoring (32.6) and #7 total offense (437.3) (#3 pass, #76 rush) but have the #48 scoring (21.9) and #83 total defense (376.1) (#42 rush, #105 pass). Villanova has the #20 scoring (31.8) and #32 total offense (318.1) (#6 rush, #100 pass) with the #2 scoring (12.9) and #36 total defense (318.1) (#5 rush, #102 pass). While Villanova has been susceptible to the pass, the have the rushing attack to keep Holy Cross's QB Dominic Randolph, who leads the FCS in total offense (354.8), off the field. If Holy Cross can not find a way to stop the Wildcats rushing attack this could get ugly. However if Villanova can't slow Randolph it could be a shootout. **FORECAST: Villanova 42 Holy Cross 28**

NEW HAMPSHIRE AT MCNEESE ST

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
New Hampshire	161	185	38	2
McNeese St	189	210	30	3

This is the first meeting between these teams. New Hampshire is making their 6th straight FCS playoff appearance and their 8th overall. The Wildcats were 1-1 vs playoff teams (Villanova, W&M) and beat FBS Ball St 23-16. McNeese St is making their 14th FCS playoff appearance and their 3rd in the last 4 years. The Cowboys were 1-1 vs playoff teams (SFA, App St) and only lost to FBS Tulane 42-32. They were Southland co-Champs but made the playoffs as an at large team as SF Austin won the head-to-head and took the conf auto-bid. New Hampshire has the #14 scoring (32.6) and #46 total offense (352.8) (#37 rush, #55 pass) with the #30 scoring (19.6) and #31 total defense (309.9) (#24 rush, #59 pass) and are #5 in TO margin (+14). McNeese St has the #2 scoring (37.0) and #5 total offense (443.0) (#5 rush, #36 pass) with the #64 scoring (25.3) and #64 total defense (349.5) (#75 rush, #55 pass) and are #35 in TO margin (+4). Each team was involved in 6 games that were decided by 7 pts or less and this will probably be their 7th. This comes down who plays in the tougher conf and this year that is Wildcats. **FORECAST: New Hampshire 38 McNeese St 35**

EASTERN ILLINOIS AT (#3) SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Eastern Illinois	61	220	16	3
Southern Illinois	224	195	38	2

Southern Illinois leads the series 37-26-1 including the last two ('05 & '07) which were also both in the first round of the playoffs. Eastern Illinois is making their 13th FCS playoff appearance and their 7th in the last 10 years. The Panthers are the OVC champ, which is not necessarily a good thing as the OVC have not won a playoff game since 2000. While EIU did not play a playoff team they did hand a ranked Jacksonville St (ineligible for playoffs) their only FCS loss this year. SIU is making their 7th straight FCS playoff appearance and their 8th overall. The Salukis were 1-0 vs playoff teams, beating South Dakota St in the game which decided the MVFC championship and their only loss this year was to FBS Marshall 31-28. EIU has the #47 scoring (25.0) and #75 total offense (326.6) (#74 rush, #53 pass) with the #21 scoring (18.8) and #23 total defense (300.2) (#30 rush, #34 pass) but are #59 in TO Margin (even). SIU has the #5 scoring (35.6) and #15 total offense (414.8) (#4 rush, #63 pass) with the #11 scoring (16.0) and #50 total defense (332.8) (#25 rush, #89 pass) and are #9 in TO margin (+13). This looks to be an easy win for an SIU team that feels they should have been seeded higher. **FORECAST: Southern Illinois 42 Eastern Illinois 21**

WEBER ST AT WILLIAM & MARY

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Weber St	26	265	15	2
William & Mary	204	195	20	2

This is the first meeting between these teams. This is Weber St's 4th FCS playoff appearance and their 2nd straight. The Wildcats were 1-1 vs playoff teams (EW, Montana) but started the year with 2 close losses to FBS teams Wyoming (29-22) and Colorado St (24-23). This is William & Mary's 8th FCS playoff appearance and their first since 2004. While the Tribe was just 1-2 vs playoff teams (UR, NH, Villanova) they started the season with a 26-14 win over FBS Virginia. Weber St has the #25 scoring (30.7) and #13 total offense (419.8) (#73 rush, #6 pass) with the #32 scoring (20.2) and #79 total defense (372.9) (#66 rush, #92 pass) but are #75 in TO Margin (-3). The Tribe is #40 in scoring (26.5) and #36 in total offense (369.2) (#26 rush, #52 pass) but have the #7 scoring (13.8) and #3 total defense (236.6) (#1 rush, #35 pass) and #20 in TO Margin (+7). Last year Weber St open the playoffs on the road with a 49-35 win over #3 seed Cal Poly but this is a much longer trip and not the same team as last year. Look the Tribe's defense to hold onto this one the week after allowing Richmond to win on a last second FG 13-10, **FORECAST: William & Mary 21 Weber St 17**

NON-PLAYOFF GAMES

NORTH DAKOTA AT CENTRAL ARKANSAS

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
North Dakota	86	125	13	2
Central Arkansas	159	260	23	2

UCA should be able to end their 4 game losing streak, that turned a promising 5-2 season including a win over FCS WKU into a disappointment. However North Dakota is trying keep their streak of 19 straight winning seasons alive and should keep it close. **FORECAST: Central Arkansas 24 North Dakota 20**

GRAMBLING ST VS SOUTHERN

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Grambling St	180	190	37	3
Southern	130	275	34	3

These teams have met every year since 1959. LY Southern's QB Lee was lost in the 2Q

and Grambling after trailing 14-0 scored 29 unanswered pts. Look for Lee to make up for the disappointment of last year, as we'll call for the Jaguars in a close one.
FORECAST: Southern 35 Grambling St 31

TEXAS SOUTHERN VS ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF

	Rush	Pass	Pts	TOs
Texas Southern	155	260	31	4
Arkansas Pine Bluff	90	100	24	3

Texas Southern has lost 5 straight in this series but this year have a shot at their first winning season since 2000. We'll call for the Tigers to pull out a close one.
FORECAST: Texas Southern 31 Arkansas Pine Bluff 28