

**VSIN** **PRO**

# COLLEGE FOOTBALL

**BETTING GUIDE**

PRO EDITION



## INCLUDES:

- REGIONAL TEAM COVERAGE
- HEISMAN TROPHY BEST BETS
- TEAM POWER RATINGS



# PRESEASON TOP 25

---

---

It would be dumb to doubt Kirby Smart at this point. The Georgia coach has had a remarkable three-year run of success that includes two National Championships and a playoff snub that blocked his shot at three in a row last season.

The Bulldogs sat in the No. 1 spot in the VSiN preseason Top 25 a year ago and stayed there until a three-point loss to Alabama in the SEC Title Game. It was a costly setback that sent Georgia to the Orange Bowl while Michigan, Washington and Texas joined the Crimson Tide in the four-team playoff. The Wolverines claimed a breakthrough championship for the Big Ten.

Smart cried foul, feeling his team's exclusion was controversial. Georgia compiled a 42-2 record the past three seasons, falling twice to Alabama and Nick Saban, who was Smart's coaching mentor. Saban has retired to a TV job. Smart is coming back as strong as ever.

"I've got Georgia and Ohio State No. 1 and No. 1A," professional handicapper Paul Stone said, "but I gave the Bulldogs the top spot by an eyelash. One could make the argument that Smart had the top team in college football in each of the past three seasons."

Smart's team seems to be a near-unanimous pick as this season's No. 1.

"I have Georgia on top," Circa Sports college football oddsmaker Nick Bogdanovich said.

On the Circa futures board, Bogdanovich said, the Bulldogs and Buckeyes have attracted "a ton of money in the pool."

FoxSports analyst Chris "The Bear" Fallica recently bet the Georgia/Ohio State side at -110 in a National Championship prop against the rest of the field.

"I would rank Ohio State slightly ahead of Georgia. Those two teams are loaded," said Fallica, who ranks Oregon third, Texas fourth and Notre Dame fifth.

The conference landscape is changing dramatically this year with Oregon, Washington, UCLA and USC ditching the Pac-12 to join the Big Ten, which now totals 18 teams. Oklahoma and Texas moved from the Big 12 to the SEC.

"I don't think Texas is going to go to the SEC and become an 8-4 type team, nor are they going to be 12-0," Fallica said.

Bogdanovich said SEC contender Mississippi has received "sharp bets" at 25-1 in national title futures, and the same goes for Big 12 favorite Utah at 70-1.

"We are getting some sharp money on some longshots with people hoping to take advantage of the new playoff format," Bogdanovich said.

The four-team playoff was so restrictive that betting on longshots tended to be a fool's errand. The 12-team playoff implemented this season opens the door for more possibilities.

"Admittedly, I'm a hard-core traditionalist, so I'm typically averse to change," Stone said. "But I like the expansion to a 12-team playoff because it keeps more teams in the mix until the end of the regular season. I believe this gives us more pure betting opportunities since there will be more games where both teams are highly motivated."

Stone took his shot at predicting the playoff field: Georgia, Ohio State, Oregon, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Notre Dame, Penn State, Florida State, LSU, Miami and Liberty.

Stone provided his power rankings, which I combined with my own rankings to form the VSiN preseason Top 25.

# 1. GEORGIA

Carson Beck was somewhat of a question mark at quarterback going into last season, when he matured quickly and completed 72.4% of his passes with 24 touchdowns and six interceptions. Beck will miss tight end Brock Bowers, a first-round draft pick by the Raiders, but he will love the addition of Florida transfer running back Trevor Etienne. Four starters return on the offensive line. The defense loses a few stars, yet always reloads due to elite recruiting. The Bulldogs will be tested by road games against Alabama, Texas and Mississippi, so don't expect perfection.

## 2. OHIO STATE

After three consecutive losses to Michigan, it should be payback time for Buckeyes coach Ryan Day, who is 38-3 in Big Ten games. He catches a break by getting the Wolverines in Columbus, though Ohio State must face Oregon and Penn State on the road. Kansas State transfer Will Howard is the favorite to start at quarterback, and Ole Miss transfer Quinshon Judkins joins TreVeyon Henderson to form what could be the nation's top rushing attack for new offensive coordinator Chip Kelly. The defense welcomes Alabama transfer safety Caleb Downs.

## 3. OREGON

In 50 career games at Oklahoma and UCF, Dillion Gabriel has passed for 14,865 yards and 125 touchdowns, in addition to rushing for 1,060 yards and 26 TDs. He left the Sooners and transferred to Oregon, where the offense again will be explosive. Ducks coach Dan Lanning is 22-5 in two seasons, with three losses by exactly three points each to Washington. Oregon hosts the Huskies and Ohio State, so the schedule sets up for Lanning to make a run at Big Ten and national titles.

## 4. TEXAS

How far can junior quarterback Quinn Ewers lead the Longhorns? Texas reached the playoff semifinal last season, but came up short in a 37-31 loss to Washington. Ewers drove the offense to the 12-yard line with 15 seconds left before misfiring on three passes amid dubious play-calling by coach Steve Sarkisian. It remains to be seen if this team will be better. Sarkisian is a top-notch recruiter who lured Alabama transfer receiver Isaiah Bond and other impact players in an effort to reload after losing several stars to the NFL.

## 5. ALABAMA

Kalen DeBoer, who coached Washington to the national title game, takes over for retired legend Nick Saban. There are many other changes with the Crimson Tide, who lost more than 30 players to the NFL and transfer portal. DeBoer has assembled a strong coaching staff and he convinced quarterback Jalen Milroe to return. While Alabama does get to play Georgia and Missouri in Tuscaloosa, the schedule is not kind to DeBoer. The Tide face road games against Wisconsin, Tennessee, LSU and Oklahoma.

## 6. MISSISSIPPI

With 10 veterans slated to start on each side of the ball, the Rebels will make a run toward the top of the SEC standings and a playoff spot. Ole Miss, which finished 11-2 with a No. 9 ranking (its highest since 1969) last season, will close the gap after being outclassed in double-digit losses at Georgia and Alabama. Jaxson Dart is an experienced quarterback who will trigger coach Lane Kiffin's big-play offense, and the defense appears tougher. A manageable schedule should help Kiffin win 10 regular season games.

## 7. NOTRE DAME

Duke Leonard started against the Fighting Irish last season and is now their new quarterback. Leonard is one of several new faces on offense. The Notre Dame defense returns nine starters after allowing 15.9 PPG. Marcus Freeman, who went 10-3 in his second season as coach, is building momentum and recruiting at a high level. If the Irish can win their season opener at Texas A&M, a soft remaining schedule sets up for Freeman to reach at least 10 wins and get into the 12-team playoff.

## **8. PENN STATE**

James Franklin is a polarizing coach who recruits well yet can't get his talented teams over the hump, mostly because he can't beat Ohio State. The Nittany Lions, who have lost seven straight in the rivalry, host the Buckeyes on Nov. 2. Penn State avoids Michigan and Oregon on a favorable schedule. Junior quarterback Drew Allar had 25 touchdowns passes to two interceptions last season, and stud running backs Kaytron Allen and Nicholas Singleton also return. The defense shapes up as one of the nation's best.

## **9. FLORIDA STATE**

A leg injury to star quarterback Jordan Travis during a meaningless game against North Alabama wrecked playoff plans for the Seminoles, who were 13-0 before taking a humiliating 63-3 beating from Georgia in the Orange Bowl. Travis will be replaced by transfer DJ Uiagalelei, who played at Oregon State and Clemson. The offensive line is elite. The defense is rebuilt. Florida State should be fine until it gets real tests on the road against Miami and Notre Dame late in the season. Mike Norvell is an outstanding coach.

## **10. MICHIGAN**

With enthusiasm unknown to mankind, Jim Harbaugh coached the Wolverines to a 15-0 national-championship masterpiece. Now he's off to the NFL to energize the Chargers, and Michigan will look much different with a total of only seven starters returning. Running back Donovan Edwards and tight end Colston Loveland lead an offense that's searching for a quarterback to replace J.J. McCarthy — is Alex Orji the answer? New coach Sherrone Moore draws a tougher schedule that includes Texas, USC, Washington and Oregon.

## **11. LSU**

A trip to Las Vegas will tell a lot about the Tigers' fortunes and future, as LSU opens against USC on Sept. 1. The departure of quarterback Jayden Daniels is not doomsday. Garrett Nussmeier takes over after passing for 395 yards and three touchdowns in a bowl win against Wisconsin. Brian Kelly, who's 20-7 in two seasons in Baton Rouge, will put a good offense on the field. The run defense, even with star linebacker Harold Perkins leading the charge, could be a weakness. LSU will be happy to host Ole Miss, Alabama and Oklahoma.

## **12. OKLAHOMA**

It's time for sophomore quarterback Jackson Arnold to step up after a turnover-riddled Alamo Bowl loss. Arnold will lean on speed receiver Deion Burks, a Purdue transfer who starred in the spring game. Brent Venables is a defensive genius, but he remains a shaky head coach with much to prove. His back is to the wall while faced with a grueling schedule. The Sooners, who get only three SEC home games, will play Alabama, Texas, Ole Miss, LSU, Missouri, Tennessee and Auburn.

## **13. UTAH**

Cameron Rising is the definition of an upperclassman. The Utah quarterback missed all of last year with a knee injury and is headed into his seventh season of college football. Rising's ability to stay healthy and play without fear will be critical to the team's success. Kyle Whittingham is a rock-solid coach who creates a culture of toughness in his program. While the Utes are picked to win the Big 12, they draw tough road games against Oklahoma State, Colorado and UCF.

## **14. MIAMI**

The numerous game-management mistakes made by Mario Cristobal are impossible to overlook. Will the talented Hurricanes overcome their clumsy coach? Cam Ward is continuing a fascinating career that started at Incarnate Word in 2020 and continued at Washington State. Ward has made 44 career starts. The offense has big-time potential with wideout Xavier Restrepo returning and running back Damien Martinez transferring from Oregon State.

## **15. TEXAS A&M**

**Mike Elko arrives from Duke and represents a coaching upgrade after the disappointments of the Jimbo Fisher era. Elko will field a solid defense led by Nic Scourton, a Purdue transfer who led the Big Ten with 10 sacks. The offense will need a big boost from quarterback Conner Weigman, who's back from a foot injury. The Aggies catch some scheduling breaks by avoiding Georgia, Alabama and Ole Miss.**

## 16. CLEMSON

The Tigers have faded from national title contention the past two years, mainly because of mediocre quarterback play and coach Dabo Swinney's refusal to use the transfer portal like other elite programs. If junior quarterback Cade Klubnik lives up to his recruiting hype, and he has fallen well short of it so far, Clemson can win the ACC. Nine offensive starters return. It would be a very good sign for the Tigers if the opener against Georgia does not get ugly.

## 17. TENNESSEE

If redshirt freshman quarterback Nico Iamaleava is the real deal, the Volunteers could be hell on wheels. A five-star recruit who can run and throw, Iamaleava led Tennessee to a 35-0 victory over Iowa in the Citrus Bowl to jumpstart his career. Chris Brazzell, Bru McCoy and Squirrel White form a big-play receiver crew. Josh Heupel is an innovative offensive coach. The Vols' depleted defensive secondary could be a problem, however.

## 18. MISSOURI

It's wrong to call the Tigers sleepers in the SEC, but they do deserve more respect as legit contenders after an 11-2 season that ended with a Cotton Bowl win. Brady Cook is a quality quarterback and Luther Burden, who made 86 receptions for 1,212 yards, is a star for an offense that returns nine veterans. Running back Cody Schrader will be missed, and the defense is a question mark. Georgia, Texas, Ole Miss and LSU are not on the schedule.

## 19. OKLAHOMA STATE

Few teams boast the experience of the Cowboys, who bring back 19 starters. Ollie Gordon will drive the offense after rushing for 1,732 yards and 21 touchdowns. Alan Bowman is not a quarterback who instills a lot of confidence, but he's behind a big, veteran line and has an elite receiver to throw to in Brennan Presley. Mike Gundy, entering his 20th year as coach, hosts Utah and hits the road to Kansas State on consecutive Saturdays in late September.

## 20. KANSAS STATE

Avery Johnson, a promising dual-threat sophomore, takes over at quarterback. The Wildcats will try to run wild with Johnson, DJ Giddens, who rushed for 1,226 yards last season, and Colorado transfer Dylan Edwards. Chris Klieman is a dependable coach who wins with a ground attack and a gritty defense. Kansas State hosts Arizona, Oklahoma State and Kansas and should be a factor at the top of the Big 12.

## 21. LOUISVILLE

After coaching Purdue to the Big Ten title game and Louisville to the ACC title game in back-to-back years, Jeff Brohm is his own tough act to follow. The Cardinals, who took advantage of scheduling breaks last year, play Notre Dame and Clemson on the road. Brohm must get the most out of well-traveled quarterback Tyler Shough, formerly at Texas Tech and Oregon, to win 10 games again.

## 22. IOWA

Senior quarterback Cade McNamara returns from a knee injury to lead an offense that was the butt of jokes last season. The Hawkeyes were outscored 61-0 in season-ending losses to Michigan and Tennessee. New coordinator Tim Lester is promising to unleash an aggressive offense. Eighteen starters return for coach Kirk Ferentz, who offers no apologies for winning ugly with defense and special teams.

## 23. IOWA STATE

It appears the Cyclones have found another Brock Purdy. As a freshman, Rocco Becht passed for 3,120 yards and 23 touchdowns. Becht will get better behind a line that returns five starters and with an explosive group of receivers. Nine starters come back on defense for coach Matt Campbell, who could have the Cyclones in Big 12 title contention going into season-ending games against Utah and Kansas State.

## 24. USC

Is it Miller time for the Trojans? USC could replace star quarterback Caleb Williams with Miller Moss, who passed for six touchdowns in a Holiday Bowl victory over Louisville. UNLV transfer Jayden Maiava will compete with Moss for the starting job. Lincoln Riley will coach up the offense. A beleaguered defense will be much improved due to the hiring of coordinator D'Anton Lynn, who worked wonders last year at UCLA.

## 25. WISCONSIN

Luke Fickell went 7-6 in his first year coaching the Badgers, and he might not top that record this year unless Miami transfer quarterback Tyler Van Dyke triggers an improved offense. The Badgers will be typically strong on the offensive line, and Fickell's defense will be solid with eight starters back. The schedule presents only a few cupcakes and features Alabama, USC, Penn State, Iowa, Oregon and Nebraska.

# VSIN HEISMAN TROPHY

# BEST BETS

## **JONATHAN VON TOBEL**

### **DYLAN RAIOLA (500-1)**

This ties into my win total wager on Nebraska. The Cornhuskers have a very manageable schedule in front of them this season. If they take advantage of it, that means Raiola hits the ground running. It is a simple handicap, but should Nebraska win 10 games this season – an actual possibility – I'll take a flier on the high-profile freshman who is starting at quarterback for a brand like Nebraska.

### **ROCCO BECHT (1000-1)**

Rocco Becht was the fifth-best graded passer by PFF standards in the Big 12 last season, and he was tied for third in turnover-worthy play rate (2.6%). His top two receivers are back. Jayden Higgins (53 receptions, 983 yards) was named to the preseason All-Big 12 team. Jaylin Noel led the team in touchdown receptions (7). All five starters return along the offensive line. It's a great setup for Becht, and the Cyclones have a schedule they could run through. Becht also has his shot at an early, high-profile win against Iowa at the start of the season. Iowa State could be a 10-win Power Four champion this season. I'll take their starting quarterback at those odds.

## **MITCH MOSS**

### **JALEN MILROE (15-1)**

Betting the winner of this award in the 2024 preseason might be a bigger crapshoot than any year in recent memory, but 15-1 was too good to pass up on him. After not playing well in a Week 2 home loss to Texas last year, Milroe was benched in the following game. He came back in the Crimson Tide's fourth game of the season and helped beat 15th ranked Ole Miss 24-10. Starting with that game and ending with his SEC title winning performance over undefeated Georgia, the Alabama signal caller threw for 18 touchdowns, and ran for 10 more. I think Nick Saban is the best coach in the history of college football, and Bama will certainly miss him. But maybe not on offense. New coach Kalen DeBoer worked wonders with Michael Penix the previous two years at Washington, and I expect similar results with his new QB in the SEC. Milroe has two spots to shine before the end of September: Week 3 in Madison against the Wisconsin Badgers, and two weeks later at home in a rematch vs. Georgia. Watch out if he plays well in both of them and Alabama is 4-0 entering October.

### **MILLER MOSS (60-1)**

Number grab. Had to do it. At the time of print his number is the same at some shops as his teammate, UNLV transfer, Jayden Maiava. Moss replaced Caleb Williams as USC's QB in their 42-28 bowl game victory over Louisville last year, and proceeded to throw for 372 yards with six touchdowns in the process. Moss should put up phenomenal numbers in Lincoln Riley's offense IF he starts for the entire season. After all, every QB under Riley has done just that since he became a head coach in 2017. Here is a list of where Riley's former quarterbacks finished in Heisman voting since:

2017: Baker Mayfield (1st)

2018: Kyle Murray (1st)

2019: Jalen Hurts (2nd)

2020: Spencer Rattler didn't finish in the top 10

2021: Caleb Williams took over for Spencer Rattler a month into the season

2022: Caleb Williams (1st)

2023: Caleb Williams didn't finish in the top 10

Three firsts, one second, and three outside the top 10. Defense could catch some of the blame for last year. We've all been waiting for that unit to improve. Watch out if it ever does because Riley's offenses will always put points on the board.



Brady Cook

## TIM MURRAY

### KJ JEFFERSON (100-1)

“Physically, he’s the closest to Cam (Newton) that I’ve had.” That is quite the praise from UCF Gus Malzahn on his new quarterback. Malzahn was Newton’s offensive coordinator at Auburn in 2010 and will be calling plays this year for UCF. Jefferson spent five years at Arkansas before transferring to UCF for his sixth year.

The Knights have a loaded backfield with RB RJ Harvey (1,416 yards and 16 touchdowns) and Toledo transfer Penny Boone. Boone was MAC Offensive Player of the Year in 2023. If Jefferson can play like he did in 2021 and 2022 with Arkansas, UCF could compete for a Big 12 championship. Jefferson rushed for over 600 yards, completed over 67% of his passes, and threw just a total of nine interceptions over those two seasons. With the expanded playoff, if the Knights win the Big 12, Jefferson, a true dual-threat quarterback, could earn an invitation to New York City in December.

## DUSTIN SWEDLSON

### JAXSON DART (15-1)

Five of the last six QBs who have won the Heisman Trophy were transfers. The one outlier was Bryce Young in 2021 at Alabama. Of that group, four took the trophy home after being at their new school for at least one full season prior.

Both Baker Mayfield and Kyler Murray did it in their third seasons at Oklahoma. Joe Burrow and Jayden Daniels won in their second seasons at LSU. Last year’s Heisman Trophy voting ended with three multi-year, starting, transfer-QBs finishing 1-2-3 (Daniels-Michael Penix-Bo Nix).

What does that tell us? Two things:

1. Developed quarterbacks are now hired guns and are able to go out and find the systems and situations that fit their play best
2. Continuity matters at the QB position in a college football world that has embraced the chaos of the transfer portal

Following all of this info leads me to Dart. The former four-star recruit returns for his third season at Ole Miss in 2024. He has combined for 61 combined touchdowns with 21 interceptions over two seasons. Three of his top four passing targets are back this season plus the Rebels added Antwane Wells Jr. from South Carolina. He should have a chance for his “Heisman moment” on November 9th when Georgia comes to The Grove.

### AVERY JOHNSON (25-1)

This year, the Wildcats return one of the sexiest Heisman picks in Johnson. In a limited 2023 role, the true sophomore was able to make highlight reel plays while combining for 12 total touchdowns. He showed what he was capable of in a full-time starter role by beating NC State in the Pop-Tarts Bowl, throwing for 178 yards, rushing for 71 yards, and finishing with three total touchdowns. With the offense built around his ability to attack teams in the air and on the ground, Johnson should be able to find the end zone at a high clip. That could give him a season statline that will force voters to send him to the other Manhattan at season’s end.

### BRADY COOK (40-1)

Oftentimes we see the Heisman Trophy go to the QB on the best team. Or it goes to a QB that puts up monster numbers. At 40-1, it feels like Cook is worth a shot to see if he can make a run and get into both of those conversations. For starters, Missouri’s schedule is very manageable. No Georgia, no Texas, with visits to Texas A&M and Alabama the two tough spots. However, both programs are transitioning to new coaches, while Missouri has a lot of continuity on offense. Cook returns his top receivers from a year ago, including potential top-five draft pick Luther Burden III. and a great red zone threat in Theo Wease. And while the Tigers lost Cody Schrader at RB, Georgia State transfer Marcus Carroll and Appalachian State transfer Nate Noel will keep defenses honest versus Cook’s arm. Missouri’s defense lost a lot, so there could be more shootouts in their future. That will give Cook a chance to put up big numbers in his third year starting.

## JOE CERAULO

### JAXSON DART (15-1)

This year’s Heisman race is WIDE open, and I haven’t seen nearly enough from frontrunners like Dillon Gabriel or Carson Beck to think that there isn’t tremendous value by just looking down the board ever so slightly. Among Power Five quarterbacks with at least 275 attempts a year ago, Dart was top 10 in passer rating and top 12 in passing yards. He also boasted a sensational 23/5 TD/INT ratio, while adding eight scores on the ground. If the Rebels are serious contenders this season, an upset win in Baton Rouge or at home against Georgia could provide Dart the signature “Heisman moment” he’d need to win this award. Ryan Kramer

### KYRON DRONES (100-1)

A couple of truths about the current college football landscape. One, we are seeing more player movement at the top level of College Football today than we ever have. Two, Drones COMPLETELY transformed the Virginia Tech offense starting in Week 3 when coach Brent Pry inserted him into the lineup. Now we look forward to 2024 where the Hokies return the most production (opposite of player movement) on the offensive side of the ball in the country. For a dual-threat QB who has shown he can lead an offense to 50 burgers on a team that many feel will contend for a ACC championship and spot in the playoff, 100-1 is flat out insulting. Pick up a pizza bet and enjoy the ride down to +1500 by Week 3.

### KJ JEFFERSON (100-1)

Very simple handicap here. Jefferson was everything for the Razorback team over the last couple years. Now he heads to Central Florida, coached by Gus Malzahn. The same Malzahn who happened to be the offensive coordinator for Heisman Trophy winning QB Cam Newton at Auburn. The Big 12 is as open of a conference as there is and as we saw last year preseason 50-1 shot Oklahoma State made their way into the championship game. I love UCF as a dark horse led by Jefferson, and if that happens I am certain he will be in the Heisman mix.

# STEVE MAKINEN'S POWER RATINGS

TEAM	POWER RATING	TEAM	POWER RATING	TEAM	POWER RATING
GEORGIA	73.5	ARKANSAS	46.5	SAM HOUSTON ST	36.0
OHIO ST	69.0	RUTGERS	46.5	WESTERN KENTUCKY	36.0
OREGON	69.0	APPALACHIAN ST	46.0	AIR FORCE	35.5
TEXAS	69.0	GEORGIA TECH	46.0	ARKANSAS ST	35.5
ALABAMA	65.0	LIBERTY	46.0	COLORADO ST	35.0
PENN ST	64.0	MEMPHIS	46.0	MARSHALL	35.0
MICHIGAN	63.0	UCLA	46.0	EAST CAROLINA	34.5
NOTRE DAME	61.5	BAYLOR	44.5	FLA ATLANTIC	34.5
LSU	61.0	MINNESOTA	44.5	UTAH ST	34.5
FLORIDA ST	60.5	MISSISSIPPI ST	44.5	SAN JOSE ST	34.0
OLE MISS	60.5	SYRACUSE	44.5	UAB	34.0
OKLAHOMA	60.0	OREGON ST	44.0	COASTAL CAROLINA	33.5
MISSOURI	59.5	TULANE	44.0	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	33.5
CLEMSON	58.5	FRESNO ST	43.5	GEORGIA SOUTHERN	33.0
TEXAS A&M	58.5	NORTHWESTERN	43.5	SAN DIEGO ST	33.0
TENNESSEE	57.5	CINCINNATI	43.0	ARMY	32.0
MIAMI FL	57.0	HOUSTON	43.0	NORTH TEXAS	32.0
KANSAS ST	56.5	TX-SAN ANTONIO	43.0	OLD DOMINION	32.0
UTAH	56.5	BOSTON COLLEGE	42.5	WESTERN MICHIGAN	32.0
USC	55.5	DUKE	42.5	GEORGIA ST	31.5
LOUISVILLE	54.5	INDIANA	42.5	HAWAII	31.5
OKLAHOMA ST	54.5	JAMES MADISON	42.5	NAVY	31.5
IOWA ST	54.0	PITTSBURGH	42.0	OHIO U	31.5
KANSAS	54.0	BYU	41.5	CHARLOTTE	30.5
ARIZONA	53.5	TEXAS ST UNIV	41.5	SOUTHERN MISS	29.5
FLORIDA	53.5	WASHINGTON ST	41.5	TULSA	29.5
SMU	53.5	MIAMI OHIO	41.0	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	29.0
WASHINGTON	53.5	PURDUE	41.0	MIDDLE TENN ST	28.0
AUBURN	53.0	ILLINOIS	40.5	BALL ST	27.0
IOWA	53.0	MICHIGAN ST	40.5	CONNECTICUT	27.0
WEST VIRGINIA	52.0	ARIZONA ST	40.0	NEW MEXICO ST	26.5
WISCONSIN	52.0	SOUTH FLORIDA	40.0	EASTERN MICHIGAN	25.5
NC STATE	51.5	VIRGINIA	40.0	NEVADA	25.5
KENTUCKY	50.5	WAKE FOREST	40.0	NEW MEXICO	25.5
VIRGINIA TECH	50.0	STANFORD	39.5	BUFFALO	24.0
SOUTH CAROLINA	49.5	UNLV	39.5	AKRON	23.5
BOISE ST	49.0	LA LAFAYETTE	39.0	FLA INTERNATIONAL	23.5
UCF	49.0	RICE	38.5	LOUISIANA TECH	23.5
COLORADO	48.5	TROY	38.5	MASSACHUSETTS	23.0
NORTH CAROLINA	48.5	WYOMING	38.0	UTEP	22.5
TCU	48.5	JACKSONVILLE ST	37.5	LA MONROE	21.0
CALIFORNIA	48.0	TOLEDO	37.0	TEMPLE	20.0
TEXAS TECH	48.0	VANDERBILT	37.0	KENT ST	18.5
NEBRASKA	47.5	BOWLING GREEN	36.5	KENNESAW ST	17.5
MARYLAND	47.0	SOUTH ALABAMA	36.5		



— \$175 FOOTBALL SPECIAL —



GET FULL VSIN.COM ACCESS ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE SUPER BOWL

## DAILY PRO PICKS

Picks from the VSIN experts with a leaderboard to see who has the hot hand

## BET SYSTEMS

Documented handicapping approaches using our proprietary database of betting insights

## BETTING SPLITS

Splits updated every five minutes to help you follow where the public and sharp money is going

## PRO ANALYSIS

Exclusive insight from oddsmakers and VSIN insiders including Michael Lombardi, Steve Makinen and more

## BETTING GUIDES

Pro handicapper projections, futures analysis, and extensive picks and breakdowns

## PRO TOOLS

Power ratings used by the pros to handicap games, estimated scores and lines, and advanced betting stats for major sports

SIGN UP NOW FOR \$175 AND GET EVERYTHING VSIN HAS TO OFFER  
ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE SUPER BOWL

[VSIN.COM/SUBSCRIBE](https://vsin.com/subscribe)

# OREGON DUCKS

2023 Record: 12-2 SU & 10-3-1 ATS  
Head Coach: Dan Lanning (3rd)

Dan Lanning was a candidate to replace Nick Saban at Alabama, but the 38-year-old rising star realized he has a great thing going at Oregon. Lanning is 22-5 in two seasons, with three losses by exactly three points each to Washington. The Ducks will host the Huskies and Big Ten favorite Ohio State this season, so the schedule sets up for Lanning to make a run at a national title. He's got the quarterback to do it.

### OFFENSE

Bo Nix departed for the NFL after posting incredible numbers (77.5% completions, 45 touchdown passes, three interceptions) in the Oregon offense last season. Don't expect a decline at the position because Oklahoma transfer Dillon Gabriel is a Heisman Trophy frontrunner. Gabriel has an NIL deal worth a reported \$1.4 million. In 50 games at Oklahoma and UCF, Gabriel passed for 14,865 yards and 125 touchdowns, in addition to rushing for 1,060 yards and 26 TDs. Tez Johnson and Evan Stewart will be big-play receivers for Gabriel, who also can lean on tight end Terrance Ferguson and running back Jordan James. While the line has a new look, it does feature three senior starters. It will be tough to top last year's production (44.2 points and 531 yards per game), but the offense should be similarly explosive.

### DEFENSE

A former defensive coordinator at Georgia, Lanning will have this unit ready to compete in the Big Ten, a more physical conference than the Pac-12. The Ducks have an impressive mix of returnees, led by linebackers Jeffrey Bassa and Justin Jacobs, and transfer portal additions. Jabbar Muhammad (Washington) and Kobe Savage (Kansas State) will start in the secondary. The defensive front is not as strong on paper as Ohio State's front, but Lanning has recruited so well that the talent should not be doubted. The Ducks, who allowed only 16.5 PPG last season, will fit into a league full of rugged defenses.

### OUTLOOK

Oregon projects as the favorite in all 12 regular-season games. There are five big-time games on the schedule — Ohio State, Washington and Boise State at home, plus Michigan and Wisconsin on the road — and the Ducks will win three or four of those to get to 10 wins and a playoff spot. If Gabriel stays healthy (his backup is UCLA transfer Dante Moore), Oregon can win 11, but that's a risky bet. The October showdown with the Buckeyes is as big as it gets.

## 2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	ESTIMATED LINE	OPPONENT'S POWER RATING
8/31	IDAHO	-37.5	34.5
9/7	BOISE STATE	-23	49
9/14	at OREGON STATE	-22	44
9/28	at UCLA	-20.5	46
10/4	MICHIGAN STATE	-31.5	40.5
10/12	OHIO STATE	-3	69
10/18	at PURDUE	-26	41
10/26	ILLINOIS	-31.5	40.5
11/2	at MICHIGAN	-3	63
11/9	MARYLAND	-25.5	47
11/16	at WISCONSIN	-14.5	52
11/30	WASHINGTON	-19	53.5

**SCHEDULE STRENGTH 47.63**  
#21 TOUGHEST OF 134

**FIELD RATINGS 3.2/0.1**  
(HOME/ROAD)

**RETURNING 16 STARTERS**

OFFENSIVE: 7  
DEFENSIVE: 9

## 2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	RANK	DEFENSE STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	41.4	4	17.2	10
YARDS PER POINT	12.5	19	19	6
PLAYS PER GAME	68	78		
TIME OF POSSESSION	31:01	43		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	51.4%	3	36.6%	39
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	516.2	2	327.5	21
YARDS PER PLAY	7.6	2	4.9	22
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	31	106		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	171.9	40	99.1	10
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	5.5	5	3.5	23
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	36.6	18		
COMPLETION %	76.5%	1	61.0%	71
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	344.3	1	228.5	65
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	9.4	5	6.3	10
TURNOVERS	0.5	3	1.3	81

## 2024 ODDS

CONFERENCE

**+215**

MAKE PLAYOFF

**-290**

CFP CHAMPION

**8-1**

**WIN TOTAL PREDICTION  
OVER 10.5**



# OREGON STATE BEAVERS

2023 Record: 8-5 SU & 6-7 ATS  
Head Coach: Trent Bray (1st)

Oregon State enters a complete rebuild after a pair of strong seasons that saw the program win 18 games. Jonathan Smith left for Michigan State in the offseason, and most of the team that went 8-5 departed in some form or fashion. Trent Bray – last season’s defensive coordinator – has just five players back from last season. Needless to say, the Beavers are building from the ground up in 2024.

### OFFENSE

The Beavers will be a complete enigma in 2024. The top two from each major offensive category – passing, rushing and receiving – are gone. Ben Gulbranson returns at quarterback after a season in which he attempted five passes for Oregon State. He will compete with transfers Gabarri Johnson (Missouri) and Gevani McCoy (Idaho) for the starting job.

Bray hit the portal at almost every position. At running back he brought in Anthony Hankerson from Colorado. Hankerson ran for 319 yards and averaged 4.1 yards per attempt in his time at Colorado and will likely take the starting job. The top four receivers departed in the offseason as well. Michigan transfer Darrius Clemons is expected to be the team’s top target.

Oregon State was a top 30 offense last season. It finished 28th in EPA per play (0.171) and 18th in EPA per rush. New offensive coordinator Ryan Gunderson does not have much at his disposal, and it is safe to assume a massive dropoff from Oregon State this season.

### DEFENSE

The defense was not as effective as the offense last season, but the Beavers still finished 43rd in opponent EPA per play. While the architect of that unit remains on as head coach, the personnel does not. In fact, only a single starter from that group returns this season.

Defensive line is being completely rebuilt. Bray brought in five transfers to bolster the position. Josh Griffis, Tevita Pome'e and Tygee Hill are the high-profile names that come in from Power Five programs. The same goes for the linebacker position, which lost its four starters from last season as well. An entirely new front seven does not bode well for this team’s rush defense in 2024.

Noble Thomas is the lone returning player in the secondary for Oregon State. The nickel corner posted a 63.8 PFF coverage grade last season. He is the only piece with familiarity of Bray’s system.

### OUTLOOK

Things are not always as bad as they seem in college football, but the state of Oregon State’s football program seems bleak. The Beavers could be better than expected though, and that is due to their schedule. They do face Oregon, UNLV and Boise State, but two of the three – Oregon and UNLV – will make the trip to Corvallis. Road trips for the team are at San Diego State, Nevada, Cal and Air Force as well. If Bray can get the most out of this squad a bowl is possible. However, eight wins seems like a big ask for a team with this many changes on the roster.

## 2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	ESTIMATED LINE	OPPONENT'S POWER RATING
8/31	IDAHO STATE	-36	12
9/7	at SAN DIEGO STATE	-8.5	33
9/14	OREGON	22	69
9/21	PURDUE	-6	41
10/5	COLORADO STATE	-12.5	35
10/12	at NEVADA	-15.5	25.5
10/19	UNLV	-7.5	39.5
10/26	at CALIFORNIA	6.5	48
11/9	SAN JOSE STATE	-13	34
11/16	at AIR FORCE	-5	35.5
11/23	WASHINGTON STATE	-5.5	41.5
11/29	at BOISE STATE	8	49

**SCHEDULE STRENGTH 37.88**  
#74 TOUGHEST OF 134

**FIELD RATINGS 3.3/0.1**  
(HOME/ROAD)

**RETURNING 5 STARTERS**

OFFENSIVE: 4  
DEFENSIVE: 1

## 2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	29.9	39	24.3	49
YARDS PER POINT	13.6	42	15	50
PLAYS PER GAME	65.1	104		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:27	55		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	37.7%	69	40.1%	77
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	405.8	42	364.4	46
YARDS PER PLAY	6.2	20	5.4	55
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	34	84		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	158.6	62	119.6	24
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.7	34	3.7	33
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	29.5	79		
COMPLETION %	57.9%	87	62.4%	92
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	247.3	51	244.8	90
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	8.4	22	7.4	72
TURNOVERS	1.1	26	1.4	58

## 2024 ODDS

CONFERENCE

NA

MAKE PLAYOFF

20-1

CFP CHAMPION

500-1

**WIN TOTAL PREDICTION  
UNDER 7.5**

# WASHINGTON HUSKIES

2023 Record: 14-1 SU & 7-7-1 ATS  
Head Coach: Jedd Fisch (1st)

A run to the national championship game ended with a loss to Michigan and then an avalanche of coach and players losses for Washington. That's the price often paid for great success, and the Wolverines are paying it, too. Jedd Fisch, the artist of an incredible turnaround at Arizona, takes over for Alabama-bound coach Kalen DeBoer. The Huskies have only a few full-time starters returning and several stars to replace, but Fisch dipped into the transfer-portal pool to hook some impact players.

### OFFENSE

The voids left by quarterback Michael Penix Jr., wideout Rome Odunze and the entire line are immense. Penix led the nation with 4,903 passing yards. Will Rogers, who transferred from Mississippi State, is a suitable replacement with 12,315 passing yards, 94 touchdowns and 40 starts in his career. All 11 starters are history, but Fisch added some transfer reinforcements by bringing in running back Jonah Coleman (Arizona) and wideout Jeremiah Hunter (California) among many others. Running back Cameron Davis, who missed last year with a knee injury, returns to form a potent backfield with Coleman. An all-new line is a major concern.

### DEFENSE

DeBoer took the majority of his staff to Tuscaloosa, leaving Fisch to assemble his own crew of assistants. Steve Belichick, a linebackers coach with the Patriots, is the new coordinator. Fisch is a former New England assistant himself and has close ties to Bill Belichick. There is some experience returning on this side of the ball, most notably senior linebackers Carson Bruener and Alphonzo Tuputala and junior corner Elijah Jackson, all of whom ranked in the team's top five in tackles. Fisch also brought along a few promising Arizona transfers.

### OUTLOOK

Fisch was the ideal hire for a rebuilding project. He went 1-11 in his first season in Tucson and followed with records of 5-7 and 10-3. He will win sooner in Seattle. The Huskies open with Weber State, Eastern Michigan, Washington State and Northwestern, so a 4-0 start is anticipated. Michigan, UCLA and USC are winnable home games, as well. Nothing will be easy in the Big Ten this season, but a veteran quarterback could help Fisch coach his way to at least six wins and seven is not a stretch. While it's a long fall from 14-1 and a playoff appearance, this new-look Washington team should be a little better than expected.

## 2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	ESTIMATED LINE	OPPONENT'S POWER RATING
8/31	WEBER STATE	-29	26.5
9/7	EASTERN MICHIGAN	-30	25.5
9/14	vs WASHINGTON STATE	-11.5	41.5
9/21	NORTHWESTERN	-13	43.5
9/27	at RUTGERS	-5	46.5
10/5	MICHIGAN	7.5	63
10/12	at IOWA	2.5	53
10/26	at INDIANA	-8.5	42.5
11/2	USC	-0.5	55.5
11/9	at PENN STATE	13	64
11/15	UCLA	-9.5	46
11/30	at OREGON	19	69

**SCHEDULE STRENGTH 48.06**  
#19 TOUGHEST OF 134

**FIELD RATINGS 2.6/0.2**  
(HOME/ROAD)

**RETURNING 5 STARTERS**

OFFENSIVE: 1  
DEFENSIVE: 4

## 2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE STAT	OFFENSE RANK	DEFENSE STAT	DEFENSE RANK
POINTS PER GAME	36	11	24.8	54
YARDS PER POINT	12.8	20	16.4	22
PLAYS PER GAME	66.5	89		
TIME OF POSSESSION	30:08	64		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	43.9%	24	38.5%	59
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	462.1	12	406.9	92
YARDS PER PLAY	7	7	5.7	78
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	27.3	130		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	118.5	102	148.3	49
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	4.3	58	4.7	98
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	38.3	12		
COMPLETION %	65.4%	23	59.3%	43
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	343.7	2	258.6	114
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	9	13	6.7	25
TURNOVERS	1.3	60	1.3	74

## 2024 ODDS

CONFERENCE  
**80-1**

MAKE PLAYOFF  
**11-1**

CFP CHAMPION  
**300-1**

**WIN TOTAL PREDICTION  
OVER 6.5**

# WASHINGTON STATE COUGARS

2023 Record: 5-7 SU & 6-6 ATS  
Head Coach: Jake Dickert (3rd)

Jake Dickert does not enter 2024 on a hot seat, but the chair could start to get warm if the season gets away from Washington State. The Cougars are just 15-14 under Dickert and they have not won more than seven games in a season. This year, only 10 starters are back and a competition is underway at quarterback. Washington State plays a Mountain West schedule, but it is not far and away better than the competition it faces this season.

### OFFENSE

Cam Ward transferred to Miami, leaving a hole at the most important position. Last year's backup – John Mateer – will compete with Bryant transfer Zevi Eckhaus for the job. Mateer appeared in six contests last season for the Cougars. He threw for 235 yards on 20 dropbacks and averaged 13.8 yards per attempt. Eckhaus accounted for 3,260 total yards and 28 touchdowns last season at Bryant. Neither had a real lead for the job coming out of spring, according to local media.

The strength of this unit will be the offensive line with four starters back at the position. It is the position group with the most continuity. The top two receivers from last season and the leading rusher departed in the offseason.

Despite having a coveted quarterback like Ward under center this team was very poor on offense last season. The Cougars ranked 100th in EPA per play and averaged 5.9 yards per play. Their running game was non-existent, as the team totaled less than 800 yards rushing for the season. Given the loss of production from that group, it is hard to see much improvement from Washington State on this side of the ball in 2024.

### DEFENSE

Washington State quietly put together a strong season in 2023 on defense. The team finished 42nd in opponent EPA per play and 25th in opponent EPA per dropback. This year figures to be a down year for the Cougars, as only four starters are back.

The biggest weakness for Washington State this season is most likely going to be its pass defense. The team's two best pass rushers – Brennan Jackson and Ron Stone – are gone. So too is the entire starting secondary. Dickert added some pass rushers in the portal, but what was this team's biggest strength last season will take a massive step back.

Five of the top six players at linebacker return, but with the losses along the defensive line this team won't improve much – if at all – against the run. Washington State allowed 4.3 yards per carry and 151 yards per game in 2023 and will likely give up similar figures this season.

### OUTLOOK

The win total for Washington State is 7.5 shaded to the Over, but that seems strong for a team losing as much as it did from a five-win team a season ago. The Cougars are playing a Mountain West schedule, but this schedule is hardly a cakewalk. Washington State must host Texas Tech and go to Seattle to face Washington in the non-conference portion of its schedule. The Cougars also draw road trips to Boise State, Fresno State and Oregon State. They must also host Wyoming. Perhaps the market perceives a gap between the former Pac-12 team and the Mountain West, but if it does that would be a flawed way to look at this season for Wazzu.

## 2024 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	ESTIMATED LINE	OPPONENT'S POWER RATING
8/31	PORTLAND STATE	-26	19
9/7	TEXAS TECH	3	48
9/14	vs WASHINGTON	11.5	53.5
9/20	SAN JOSE STATE	-10.5	34
9/28	at BOISE STATE	10.5	49
10/12	at FRESNO STATE	4	43.5
10/19	HAWAII	-13.5	31.5
10/26	at SAN DIEGO STATE	-6.5	33
11/9	UTAH STATE	-10	34.5
11/16	at NEW MEXICO	-14	25.5
11/23	at OREGON STATE	5.5	44
11/30	WYOMING	-7	38

SCHEDULE STRENGTH **37.13**  
#79 TOUGHEST OF 134

FIELD RATINGS **3/0.3**  
(HOME/ROAD)

RETURNING **10**  
STARTERS

OFFENSIVE: 6  
DEFENSIVE: 4

## 2023 STATS AND RANKS

	OFFENSE		DEFENSE	
	STAT	RANK	STAT	RANK
POINTS PER GAME	28.7	53	28.7	78
YARDS PER POINT	13.8	47	13.6	84
PLAYS PER GAME	74	19		
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:33	72		
3RD DOWN CONV. %	40.0%	51	41.4%	91
TOTAL YARDS PER GAME	395.2	50	391.5	68
YARDS PER PLAY	5.3	72	5.5	64
RUSH ATTEMPTS PER GAME	27.5	129		
RUSH YARDS PER GAME	72.5	132	150.2	56
YARDS PER RUSH ATTEMPT	2.6	131	4.2	61
PASS ATTEMPTS PER GAME	43	3		
COMPLETION %	66.0%	21	60.4%	58
PASSING YARDS PER GAME	322.6	6	241.4	85
YARDS PER PASS ATTEMPT	7.5	55	7.2	60
TURNOVERS	1.8	113	1.4	65

## 2024 ODDS

CONFERENCE  
**NA**

MAKE PLAYOFF  
**40-1**

CFP CHAMPION  
**800-1**

WIN TOTAL PREDICTION  
**UNDER 7.5**