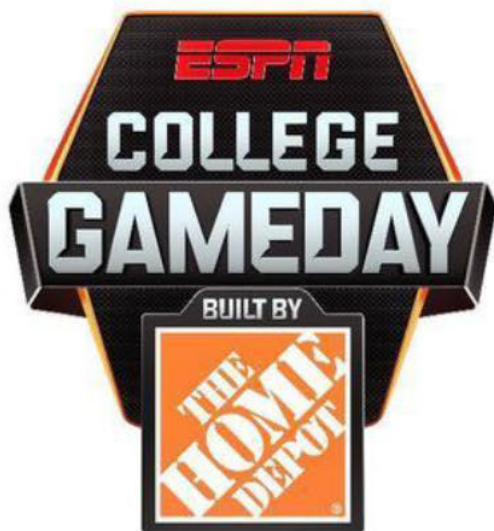


# 2017 College Football Guidelines and Coverage Plan



COLLEGE FOOTBALL  
**PLAYOFF**

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# Top Things to Know

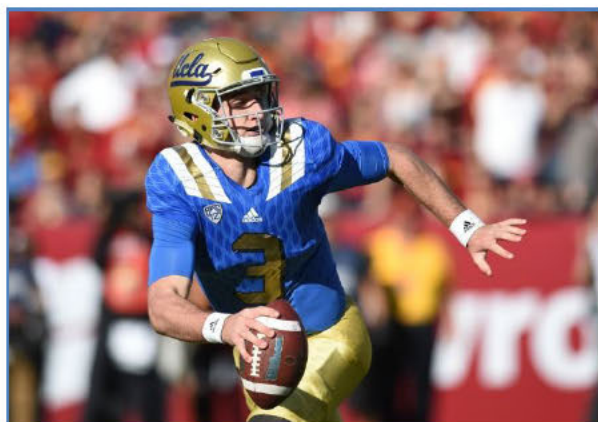
## Season Storylines

Louisville QB Lamar Jackson returns as the defending Heisman Trophy winner. After his landslide victory in 2016, Jackson could join Ohio State's Archie Griffin as the only 2-time Heisman winners in college football history.



In addition to Jackson, there is plenty of talent returning at quarterback for Power 5 programs this season.

Heisman finalist Oklahoma QB Baker Mayfield headlines that list, which includes Oklahoma State QB Mason Rudolph, Ohio State QB J.T. Barrett, Florida State QB Deondre Francois, Washington QB Jake Browning, USC QB Sam Darnold, UCLA QB Josh Rosen, Alabama QB Jalen Hurts and Auburn transfer QB Jarrett Stidham.



Rosen and Darnold are widely considered the top QB prospects for the 2018 NFL Draft, along with Wyoming QB Josh Allen.

Several major programs have new head coaches this season, including Texas (Tom Herman), Oregon (Willie Taggart), Baylor (Matt Rhule) and Minnesota (P.J. Fleck).

Other notable coaching news includes Lane Kiffin's hiring at FAU and Charlie Strong's move to South Florida.

# Top Things to Know

## Key Dates

We're entering the 4th year of the College Football Playoff. The committee's weekly Top 25 poll release will begin Tuesday, Oct. 31. Selection Day and the announcement of the semifinal matchups is Sunday, Dec. 3. The Rose Bowl and Sugar Bowl will serve as the semifinals this year, with the CFP National Championship Game to follow on Monday, Jan. 8 from the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

**Monday, Aug. 21** – Preseason AP Poll released

**Saturday, Aug. 26** – First college football games of the season

**Thursday, Aug. 31** – Official start of season per ESPN Programming

**Tuesday, Oct. 31** – First release of College Football Playoff rankings

**Sunday, Dec. 3** – Selection Day for College Football Playoff

**Monday, Dec. 4** – Heisman Trophy finalists announced

**Saturday, Dec. 9** – Heisman Trophy presentation

**Monday, Jan. 1** – Rose Bowl Game (playoff semifinal)

**Monday, Jan. 1** – Sugar Bowl (playoff semifinal)

**Monday, Jan. 8** – CFP National Championship Game



# Poll Treatment

## Rankings

All references to ranked teams will align with the AP Poll from the preseason release until the announcement of the playoff committee's first rankings on Oct. 31. From that point on, we will only reference the CFP Top 25 rankings. We can still use AP Poll-based research notes, but the active team ranks will be CFP.

## AP Poll

Until the first CFP release, we will load queries for the AP Top 25 and AP Top 10 in one rotation each week in NCAA 1+2. The AP Poll comes out every Sunday, with the exception of opening weekend when it is released on Tuesday.

<http://collegefootball.ap.org/poll>

## CFP Top 25

The College Football Playoff Top 25 will be announced every Tuesday night on ESPN starting Oct. 31. For the first week of CFP, we will lead all scoreboard categories with a note specifying the switch to CFP rankings.

We will promote the CFP rankings release in both rotations each Tuesday in a PLAYOFF category (there will be expanded coverage for first and final polls). All scoreboard categories on Tuesdays must be blocked for the start of the CFP release show and can be turned back on once the new rankings are transmitted and scoreboards are re-ordered.

During the show, we will send CFP RANKINGS alerts. There will be two separate alerts, one with the full Top 25 sent nearly continuously under the release show on ESPN, and another with the Top 5 and navigation to ESPN on all other networks (excluding SEC/LHN and Pac Rim 1).

After the rankings are updated in the scrolls, we should run notable commentary from the CFP chairman under CHAIRMAN subhead. We should also run standout research notes when available. *Example content is included in Appendix.*

<http://www.collegefootballplayoff.com/about-the-rankings>

# Midweek Setup

## Sunday

NCAAF ALL, 1+2 for news with AP Top 25 and AP Top 10 queries loaded in one rotation a piece until we begin using CFP Rankings.

## Monday

NCAAF ALL, 1+2 for news. NCAAF T25 loaded in one rotation with the week's Top 25 scoreboards in rank order. Network tags for the week must be confirmed.

## Tuesday

NCAAF ALL, 1+2 for news. PLAYOFF 1+2 for CFP Rankings release promo and content starting Oct. 31.

Any games loaded in NCAAF categories, [REDACTED] (if non-Power 5), [REDACTED] (if unranked Power 5) and [REDACTED] (if ranked). All games blocked for start of CFP show and turned back on after new CFP rankings are transmitted and scoreboards are re-ordered. FCS games [REDACTED] [REDACTED] after kickoff.

NCAAF T25 loaded with the week's Top 25 scoreboards in rank order. Category timed out for start of CFP show and turned back on after new CFP rankings are transmitted and scoreboards are re-ordered.

HEISMAN category loaded for ESPN Experts' weekly Top 5 rankings.

## Wednesday - Friday

NCAAF ALL, 1+2 for news. Any games loaded in NCAAF categories, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (if non-Power 5), [REDACTED] (if unranked Power 5) and [REDACTED] (if ranked). All games unblocked except for FCS [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

NCAAF T25 loaded with the week's Top 25 scoreboards in rank order. Saturday's tidbits should be loaded starting Thursday. We don't need a note for every game.

# Midweek Setup

## Thursday - Friday

A second NCAAF T25 category will be loaded with scoreboards for CFB Odds and FPI Forecast, timed to show on ESPN/ESPN2 from [REDACTED], and from [REDACTED]. All Odds/FPI content should be set to Scheduled. *Example content is included in Appendix.*

Under game windows on Thursday and Friday, we will run a CFB Window playlist, which is [REDACTED]. Each conference category should include the week's respective games sorted by Rank, Game Date and then Start Time.

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# Saturday Setup

## Generic Playlist

We will [REDACTED] every Saturday. For non-NCAAF content, this amounts to a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (i.e., NBA ALL four times, NBA 1+2 twice each). We will load NCAAF 1+2 for news.

All ranked games will have [REDACTED] in the playlist (NCAAF T25 SCORES+STATS and the respective Conference/FBS category).

Every ranked game will get [REDACTED]. All neutral site games get Scoreboard Message with game location (i.e., Game in Arlington, TX).

## Categories

[NCAAF T25 SCORES](#) has every Saturday game in ranked order. This category appears once per rotation. Only teams with [REDACTED].

[NCAAF T25 STATS](#) has every Saturday game in ranked order. This category appears in 2 rotations. Every game will get [REDACTED]. Non-Power 5 [REDACTED]. Low-level Power 5 [REDACTED] with editorial judgment.

Power 5 categories for [SEC](#), [BIG TEN](#), [BIG 12](#), [ACC](#) and [PAC-12](#) games will be loaded once per playlist. Only teams with [REDACTED].

[NCAA FBS](#) categories will be loaded for all unranked games. FBS “BIG” (twice per playlist) will include [REDACTED] as necessary. FBS “SMALL” (once per playlist) will include [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (if unranked). [REDACTED]. All games should be loaded by conference and then ordered by Start Time.

[NCAA FCS](#) categories will be loaded once per rotation. FCS-vs-FCS games should be ordered by time and spread [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] We will not run [REDACTED] [REDACTED]



# Saturday Setup

## Categories

[GAMEDAY](#) category loaded in 2 rotations for the announcement of the following week's College GameDay location. This can be carried over to Sunday's playlist if the announcement is late.

[NCAAF NOW](#) category loaded in 2 rotations with the full Top 25 and all ESPN network games featuring unranked Power 5 teams, [REDACTED]. This category does not require [REDACTED].

[ABC](#) categories timed to show under ABC windows with text promos from BottomLine Insertion Guidelines email.

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# Alert Content

## Score Alerts

We will run Score Alerts across all networks for [REDACTED] on ESPN networks. On Saturdays, we will also set up alert “windows” [REDACTED]. For example, when Ohio State is playing on ABC at Noon ET, we will set up every Big Ten game in that window to run alerts under ABC.

All Score Alerts should be sent to Goal Line and all Big 12 alerts sent to Longhorn Network. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] does not populate properly for college football, so key plays (i.e., long TDs, scoring by notable players) should be entered manually. Given the sheer volume of alerts, we should have a fairly high bar. [REDACTED]

Certain Score Alerts will be sponsored on some days. Additional information will be sent when these sponsored windows are determined.

## Midweek Navigation Alerts

During game windows Thursday and Friday nights, we will send GAME NOTES promoting the biggest games on our air that weekend with research. We will also send CFB SCHEDULE alerts with the full Saturday schedule for relevant Power 5 conferences (i.e., full Pac-12 slate during Thursday night Stanford-Oregon State). The schedule alerts do not require research. GAME NOTES should be sent [REDACTED] [REDACTED], with CFB SCHEDULE in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

## Other Alerts

Every Saturday, we will run periodic text alerts including CFB HEADLINES and GAME NOTES alerts. CFB HEADLINES should run at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] GAME NOTES should run around [REDACTED]

We will also run GAME RECAP alerts for marquee matchups on our networks.

# College GameDay

## GameDay Playlist

We will create a [REDACTED] every Saturday to show under the College GameDay window on ESPN.

The playlist will have several categories [REDACTED], including NCAAF ALL, MLB/NBA/NHL Scores categories (when appropriate), [REDACTED] NCAAF T25 and the ESPN APP.

## Categories

GameDay specific categories below. *Example content is included in Appendix.*

[THE LEAD](#) (2 rotations) with CFB promo notes.

[RESULTS](#) (2 rotations), load scoreboards from all FBS midweek games (Tuesday-Friday). Add notable stats/notes from CFB Stats archive.

[SEC](#), [BIG TEN](#), [BIG 12](#), [ACC](#) and [PAC-12](#) categories (1 per playlist) with respective Saturday scoreboards. Begin loading [REDACTED] in mid-October.

[HEISMAN](#) (2 rotations) with ESPN Experts' weekly Top 5 Heisman rankings and accompanying research notes.

[PASS](#) (2 rotations), [RUSH](#) (1 rotation) and [REC](#) (1 rotation) starting in Week 4. [REDACTED] on Saturday morning.

[POWER 5](#) (1 rotation), lead category with "Notable Power 5 games on Saturday" and include biggest games of the day.

[NCAA FBS](#) (1 rotation), lead category with "Notable unranked games on Saturday" and include biggest unranked games of the day. For Group of 5 games, we should include a tidbit highlighting the games' importance (i.e., conference title implications or divisional races).

# College GameDay

## Categories

[NCAA FCS](#) (1 rotation), run FCS Coaches' Poll under TOP 10 subhead starting in October, followed by scoreboards loaded in manual rank order for FCS top 10.

[RECRUIT](#) (unlinked in each rotation), [COMMITTS](#) subhead in one rotation with "Notable commitments of the week" [REDACTED] and [CLASSES](#) subhead in one rotation with "ESPN RecruitingNation class rankings".

[DRAFT](#) (unlinked in each rotation), run Todd McShay's Top 5 prospects by position when available, or use Mel Kiper Jr.'s Big Board.

[RIVALRY](#) (1 rotation), load scoreboards for notable rivalries each week using editorial judgment and include tidbits when available.

[FPI](#) (1 rotation), run Top 10 teams according to ESPN's Football Power Index.

[TOTAL QBR](#) (1 rotation), run Top 10 in Total QBR under [LEADERS](#) subhead.

[NCAAF](#) (1 rotation), run ESPN's Strength of Record Top 10 starting in October.

## GameDay Bullets

We will run GameDay "bullets" with promotional content under the window on ESPN. The text for these alerts is provided by a producer, along with which block of the show it should run for. The rundown can be accessed on ENPS.

*Example content is included in Appendix.*

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# Miscellaneous

## Special Categories

Special categories will be created on a case-by-case basis for the marquee games each week, like FSU-ALA on opening weekend. Some weeks we may have multiple special categories and other weeks none. These will be loaded starting Monday and should include fresh research notes in the scoreboard each day.

## Reverse Mirrors

For a few games per season, we have a “reverse mirror” with ABC and ESPN or ESPN2 for regionalized game broadcasts. Every game involved in the reverse mirror should be [REDACTED] and blocked for [REDACTED] during the game window. The game going to a majority of ABC affiliates will use [REDACTED] and the game going to a minority of ABC affiliates gets [REDACTED]. This information is provided in our weekly ABC Sports Controls emails.

Tagging for reverse mirror games should have [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Score Alerts will have to be set up accordingly.

## SEC Alternates

A handful of SEC games per season will air on the SEC Alternate network(s). Similar to a reverse mirror, scoreboards will be [REDACTED] and blocked for [REDACTED] during the game window. This information is provided in the CFB Confirmed Games list email.

Score Alerts will have to be set up accordingly, but tagging [REDACTED] [REDACTED] including alternates.

## SIG DataCenter

We will promote the SIG DataCenter on the ESPN app with [REDACTED] in respective Thursday night games and the College Football Playoff.

# Appendix

## CFP Show Promos

### PLAYOFF

College Football Playoff Top 25 rankings will be released tonight at 7 ET on ESPN and streaming live on ESPN app.

### CFP RANKINGS (Alert)

College Football Playoff Rankings 1. Alabama 2. Ohio State 3. Michigan 4. Clemson 5. Washington College Football Playoff Top 25 rankings show – Now on ESPN and ESPN app

## CFP Poll Release

### PLAYOFF

### RANKINGS

College Football Playoff Rankings 1. Alabama (11-0) 2. Ohio State (10-1) 3. Michigan (10-1) 4. Clemson (10-1) 5. Washington (10-1) 6. Wisconsin (9-2) 7. Penn State (9-2) 8. Oklahoma (9-2) 9. Colorado (9-2) 10. Oklahoma State (9-2) 11. Louisville (9-2) 12. USC (8-3) 13. Auburn (8-3) 14. Florida State (8-3) 15. Florida (8-2) 16. Nebraska (9-2) 17. Tennessee (8-3) 18. West Virginia (8-2) 19. Boise State (10-1) 20. Houston (9-2) 21. Western Michigan (11-0) 22. Utah (8-3) 23. Washington State (8-3) 24. Stanford (8-3) 25. Navy (8-2)

Selection committee will release its new rankings on Tuesday nights and will announce the 4 teams for the College Football Playoff on Sunday, Dec. 3 at Noon ET on ESPN.

### PLAYOFF 1+2

### PLAYOFF

### CHAIRMAN

College Football Playoff selection committee chairman Kirby Hocutt on Texas A&M: “Simply stated, the committee, in our mind believes that Texas A&M has played a stronger schedule at this point in time of the season over Washington.”

### PLAYOFF 1

### PLAYOFF

### TOP 10

1. Alabama (11-0) – 71% chance to win out Next: vs Auburn
2. Ohio State (10-1) – 57% chance to win out Next: vs Michigan
3. Michigan (10-1) – 31% chance to win out Next: at Ohio State
4. Clemson (10-1) – 81% chance to win out Next: vs South Carolina
5. Washington (10-1) – 39% chance to win out Next: at Washington State
6. Wisconsin (9-2) – 35% chance to win out Next: vs Minnesota
7. Penn State (9-2) – 56% chance to win out Next: vs Michigan State
8. Oklahoma (9-2) – 74% chance to win out Next: vs Oklahoma State
9. Colorado (9-2) – 33% chance to win out Next: vs Utah
10. Oklahoma State (9-2) – 27% chance to win out Next: at Oklahoma

### PLAYOFF 2

# Appendix

## CFB Odds/FPI Forecast

### NCAAF T25

#### Mississippi State at (1)Alabama

Alabama favored by 30 ESPN FPI forecast: Alabama has 96% chance to win O/U: 54.5

#### Pitt at (2)Clemson

Clemson favored by 20.5 ESPN FPI forecast: Clemson has 92% chance to win O/U: 65.5

#### (3)Michigan at Iowa

Michigan favored by 21.5 ESPN FPI forecast: Michigan has 92% chance to win O/U: 50.5

#### (20)USC at (4)Washington

Washington favored by 8.5 ESPN FPI forecast: Washington has 79% chance to win O/U: 62.5

#### (5)Ohio State at Maryland

Ohio State favored by 29 ESPN FPI forecast: Ohio State has 94% chance to win O/U: 57.5

## College GameDay Content

### HEISMAN

ESPN Heismanology results (entering this week) 1. Lamar Jackson (QB/Louisville) 2. Baker Mayfield (QB/Oklahoma) 3. Deshaun Watson (QB/Clemson) 4. Dede Westbrook (WR/Oklahoma) 5. Jalen Hurts (QB/Alabama)

1. L. Jackson (LOU): 47 TD Responsible for in a season is T-most in ACC history
2. B. Mayfield (OKLA): 2+ Pass TD in 11 straight games is tied for 3<sup>rd</sup>-longest streak in Big 12 in last 10 seasons (Bradford – 14, Petty – 13)
3. D. Watson (CLEM): Needs 2 Rush TD to become 3<sup>rd</sup> player in ACC history to be Resp for 100 career TD (Tajh Boyd – 133, Philip Rivers – 112)
4. D. Westbrook (OKLA): 4 games with 150+ Rec yds and 2+ Rec TD this season (most in FBS)
5. J. Hurts (ALA): 30 TD Responsible for this season (3<sup>rd</sup>-highest and 5 TD shy of most all-time in school history)

### FCS

#### TOP 10

FCS Coaches' Poll 1. Sam Houston State 2. Jacksonville State 3. North Dakota State 4. Eastern Washington 5. James Madison 6. The Citadel 7. South Dakota State 8. North Dakota 9. Chattanooga 10. Charleston Southern

# Appendix

## College GameDay Content

### RECRUIT COMMITTS

Notable commitments of the week

Four-star RB Cam Akers (No. 24 in the ESPN 300; Clinton, MS) verbally commits to Florida State. Akers originally committed to Alabama.

Four-star G Jordan Agasiva (No. 17 in ESPN JC 50; Mililani, HI/Pima C.C.) verbally commits to Utah.

Four-star CB Yusuf Corker (No. 221 in ESPN 300; Stockbridge, GA/Woodland) verbally commits to Kentucky.

### CLASSES

ESPN RecruitingNation 2017 class rankings

1. Alabama (17 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: RB Najee Harris (No. 3 overall)
2. Georgia (15 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: OT Isaiah Wilson (No. 2 overall)
3. Ohio State (15 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: CB Shaun Wade (No. 13 overall)
4. Michigan (16 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: WR Donovan Peoples-Jones (No. 27 overall)
5. LSU (12 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: OT Austin Deculus (No. 14 overall)
6. Oklahoma (10 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: RB Trey Sermon (No. 80 overall)
7. Florida State (10 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: DE Joshua Kaindoh (No. 16 overall)
8. Texas A&M (6 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: QB Kellen Mond (No. 58 overall)
9. Notre Dame (10 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: TE Brock Wright (No. 34 overall)
10. Auburn (8 ESPN 300 commits) Top Recruit: OT Calvin Ashley (No. 22 overall)

### DRAFT

ESPN's Mel Kiper Jr.'s Big Board 1. Myles Garrett (DE/Texas A&M) 2. Jonathan Allen (DE/Alabama) 3. Reuben Foster (LB/Alabama) 4. Leonard Fournette (RB/LSU) 5. Jabrill Peppers (S/Michigan) 6. Jamal Adams (S/LSU) 7. Tim Williams (LB/Alabama) 8. Dalvin Cook (RB/Florida State) 9. Derek Barnett (DE/Tennessee) 10. Marshon Lattimore (CB/Ohio State)

### QB PROSPECTS

ESPN's Todd McShay's Top 5 QB Prospects 1. Mitch Trubisky (North Carolina) 2. Deshaun Watson (Clemson) 3. Brad Kaaya (Miami) 4. DeShone Kizer (Notre Dame) 5. Luke Falk (Washington State)

### RB PROSPECTS

ESPN's Todd McShay's Top 5 RB Prospects 1. Leonard Fournette (LSU) 2. Dalvin Cook (Florida State) 3. Christian McCaffrey (Stanford) 4. Wayne Gallman (Clemson) 5. Samaje Perine (Oklahoma)



# Appendix

## College GameDay Content

### FPI

Top 10 teams according to ESPN's Football Power Index 1. Alabama 2. Ohio State 3. Michigan 4. Clemson 5. Washington 6. Louisville 7. LSU 8. Oklahoma 9. Florida State 10. USC

### TOTAL QBR

#### LEADERS

Top 10 Total QBR in FBS this season 1. Baker Mayfield (OKLA): 91.1 Total QBR 2. Sam Darnold (USC): 87.0 Total QBR 3. Lamar Jackson (LOU): 86.7 Total QBR 4. Quinton Flowers (USF): 85.9 Total QBR 5. Mitch Trubisky (UNC): 84.7 Total QBR 6. Jake Browning (WASH): 84.0 Total QBR 7. Patrick Mahomes II (TTU): 83.7 Total QBR 8. Nathan Peterman (PITT): 82.1 Total QBR 9. Zach Terrell (WMU): 82.1 Total QBR 10. Brandon Dawkins (ARIZ): 80.7 Total QBR

### NCAAF

Top 10 teams according to ESPN's Strength of Record rankings 1. Alabama (12-0) 2. Ohio State (11-1) 3. Clemson (11-1) 4. Washington (12-1) 5. Wisconsin (10-2) 6. Colorado (10-3) 7. Penn State (10-2) 8. Michigan (10-2) 9. Oklahoma (9-2) 10. Western Michigan (13-0)

ESPN's Strength of Record ranking reflects how impressive a team's W-L record is given its schedule.

## GameDay Bullets

### A's

Coming up on College GameDay Nick Saban Interview AND Tebow Talks Urban Meyer PLUS Urban Meyer Conversation ALSO Dabo Swinney Interview

### B's

Coming up on College GameDay Tebow Talks Urban Meyer AND Urban Meyer Conversation PLUS Dabo Swinney Interview ALSO Players Skipping Bowl Games Debate

### C's

Coming up on College GameDay Ed Orgeron Interview AND Players Skipping Bowl Games Debate PLUS Ohio State's Longest Yard ALSO The Secret to Chris Petersen's Success