

fcs week #2: our bad



any fcs fan who saw montana state's week 0 upset over new mexico as a sign of things to come had to be sincerely disappointed during week 1. the fcs has lost the next 60 fbs games in succession. with over half of these money games in the books, the fcs stands at 1 win, 60 losses, and 1 heartfelt apology. the latter of those came from the sun belt conference to the central arkansas bears. their game ended under some controversy when arkansas state scored the game winning td on the final play from scrimmage on a pass originally ruled incomplete since the receiver never secured the ball. that call was overturned on review, but a post-game review of the review found that the officials forgot to check the end zone camera, which would have confirmed the original ruling. it was not the only close call. most notably, abilene christian's qb maverick mcivor racked up 500+ yards but was stopped just short of a would-be game winning 2 pointer in ot against texas tech. tennessee tech also gave up a td in their game's closing seconds with middle tennessee state, erasing what would have been an epic late comeback from 3 td deficit.

it is hard to look at 60 straight losses and not imagine that the transfer portal, nil, and the recent migration of elite fcs programs are all to blame. another potential villain might just be luck. this is a far cry from the record 16 fbs upsets in 2013, but the fcs last had double digit upsets just 2 years ago. the number of upsets has fluctuated without any seeming rhyme or reason over the past 25 years, probably indicative that it matters much more which fcs team is scheduled to play which fbs team than any cross subdivision factors. the all time lowest tally was 2, which with only 29 fbs contests remaining, is a record that could be snapped. that low water mark incidentally came in 2008, well before anyone ever heard of nil.

sidelines

- in the week's biggest shocker, st thomas was blown out by d2 sioux falls. the tommies had not lost a home game in 7 seasons, 3 of those on the fcs level.
- holy cross coach dan curran lost his debut against rhode island in heartbreaking fashion. the crusaders engineered a last minute drive to take the lead, only to see rhode island take it right back with a 30 yard td pass to end the game. bizarrely enough, the crusaders have never won a game in august (0 - 6).

fcs game of week



last week: montana griz (1 – 0) survive missouri state bears (0 – 1), 29 – 24

the griz won their 10th straight opener and 21st consecutive home opener but perhaps by a far squeekier margin than expected. the bears dueled the griz drive for drive, using a short range attack to control the field and the clock. they would outgain the griz and, most impressively, hold a 13 minute advantage in top. the griz, however, counterpunched with some big plays. last year's rice winner, rb eli gillman, scored twice, including a 40 yard td to give the griz their first lead. he basically carried the play on the ground thereafter. bear qb jacob clark was sensational moving the ball around but was on the run from an aggressive griz pass rush. the game ended with 3 consecutive sacks from the pressure combination of de hayden harris and lb vai kaho. the bears were also hampered by their inability to threaten deep, with one of the few homerun swings being picked off by s ryder meyer to kill an earlier scoring threat. still their defense, led by s todric mcgee, was good enough to keep the griz on the ropes most of the game. the bears are in their swan song fcs season before jumping to the fbs next season but were not expected to come so close. the griz did not exactly look like the frisco bound contender out of the gates. of course, they did not look that way last september either. coach hauck, who has surprisingly gone 11 - 0 in night games with the griz, consoled his players after the game saying, "any team can win when they play well." that was probably supposed to be motivational.



next week: incarnate word cardinals (1 – 0)

@ south dakota state jackrabbits

the jackrabbits' 29 game winning streak is now over, but the 2 time defending champs still have not lost to another fcs opponent in 33 months. the cardinals are

entering the season with a chip on their shoulder, having been kept out of the playoff field last year after a cancellation left them with one too few fcs opponents. in the 2022 playoffs, they pushed then defending champ north dakota state to the edge, so they are unlikely to be intimidated by the brookings crowd. much will be made of the qb matchup. former fbs star zach calzada returned from a multi-year injury to light up the southland for the cardinals, while jack qb mark gronowski is the defending payton winner on pace to set the all-time wins record. a better barometer for both teams will be the defense. the cardinal pair of mason chamber and ronald wilson ranked near the top in pass defense last year. the jackrabbits return one of the premier front 7s, highlighted once again by superstar lb adam bock and the run-stuffing play of dt jacob depriest. that means there will be an extreme amount of pressure on calzada to make plays. meanwhile, gronowski has the luxury of an elite o-line (c gus miller & g evan beerntem are both nfl prospects) and can hand off to the brothers johnson, amar & angel, all day long. the jacks won't have to worry about that fearsome secondary if they don't have to pass.



richmond spiders



last week: crushed by virginia cavaliers (fbs), 34 – 13

the spiders were caught in a storm both metaphorically and

literally. the cavaliers scored on each of their first 5 drives

of the game. the spiders would respond with a single td

drive in the opening half, but then the skies immediately

opened up triggering a 2+ hour delay. when the game resumed, the cavs

quickly responded with a pair of tds to keep the game out of hand. mostly, the

cavaliers prevailed with big plays. they would produce 6 plays of 30+ yards in just the first half.

the spiders would have only 1. qb anthony colandrea began the game with a 40 yard scramble and

then picked the spiders apart with a 300 yd passing performance. wr malachi fields was his top

target, who hauled in 5 catches including a 40 yard bomb. rb kobe pace broke free for both a 40

yard rush and a 50 yard reception. the spider d seemed to have a lot of trouble bringing those 3

to the ground, and the offensive scheme was far too conservative to threaten. things would

eventually normalize, particularly when the cavaliers started putting in subs, but the damage on

the scoreboard had already been done.



next week: vs wofford terriers (1 – 0)



wofford is the smallest school with a d1 football program, yet somehow the terriers

have always managed to punch above their weight class. the story goes that

longtime coach mike ayers decided to go all in on the triple option at a time

when the scheme had all but faded from existence. defenses did not know what

to make of it, and the terriers cruised to 7 socon titles and 10 playoff appearances

over a 16 year stretch. ayers, the triple option, and the socon titles are all distant

memories now. the terriers have been the floormats of the socon for several years in a row.

there are reasons for hope. after starting last season 0 - 9, they won the final 2 games including

stunning socon champ furman. they opened this season with another win over a conference

champ, big south ovc winner gardner webb. before anointing them a rising power, note that the

paladin team they saw last season had already clinched a playoff spot and was resting starters

while the runnin' bulldogs lost their coach and entire starting lineup this past offseason. still, it

won't be lost on the terriers that they have the opportunity to knock off 3 different defending

conference champions in consecutive games. if they are to threaten, it will likely be thanks to an

opportunistic pass d, highlighted by db maximus pilley. the spider d matches up well here.

jeremiah grant and the d-line should be able to generate pressure, and lbs wayne galloway and

carter glassmeyer should be able to contain the terrier rush attack. the terriers are more

balanced than the old days, but they are still not an over-the-top passing threat, so controlling

the line of scrimmage will create a big advantage. the spiders just need some early scores and a

clean game from the offense. even during the current 3 game win streak, the terriers are still

generating a meager 17 ppg.

northern arizona lumberjacks



last week: crush lincoln oaklanders, 66 – 6
the lumberjacks destroyed the oaklanders, scoring tds on 8 consecutive drives. of course, the oaklanders are not even ncaa affiliated, so this was little more than a practice in full pads. wr bj fleming made the biggest highlight, catching a simple crossing route then breaking free of would-be tacklers for a 60 yard td to put this out of ahnd early. some recognition was earned by oaklander db kobe jenkins who made the goal line pick in the 4th quarter that finally stopped the scoring. coach wright claims his first “win” but really took the opportunity to roll a lot of players into the game, checking for where they will fit when the real season begins.



next week: @ arizona wildcats (fbs)



the wildcats have become a nearly annual september opponent for the lumberjacks. they have made the trip to tucson 13 times in the last 20 years and gone 1 - 12 in those matchups. that one win was 2021, kicking off a season that was to be the wildcats’ worst ever showing in modern history. 2023 on the other hand was potentially their best, and they seemed to be getting better as the season went on. the wildcats have a new coach and are in a new conference, using this game essentially as a tune-up before big 12 play starts. their offense is top notch and likely way too much for the l-jacks to competently handle. qb noah fifia was rated the 3rd best in the fbs, and wr tetairoa mcmillan is a big target with unbelievable hands. true, the cats might be thin in the trenches and have a rebuilt defense, but it is hard that the dynamic duo alone will allow them fall but only so far.