

fcs week #11: let the ivy in



a committee of players has successfully petitioned the ivy league to reconsider its decision to abstain from any type of football postseason. the ivy league has agreed to review and vote upon the proposal, though when and how that might look is still very much uncertain. the decision in the end comes down to the school presidents themselves, who have been historically reluctant to participate in the fcs playoffs.

the ivy's postseason ban dates back to the battle of the bulge. at the time, the need for student athletes at these elite schools to focus on studies was cited. gradually, the ivy has walked back that prohibition for each sport... except football. the ivy last put this stance up for debate 20 years ago, and at that time, it was allegedly a pretty close vote.

the reasons for the ivy's participation in the playoffs seem obvious. the league is certainly strong enough to receive an auto-bid and likely could claim an at-large bid most seasons too. while unlikely to ever contend with the elite programs from the power conferences, the non-scholarship-in-name-only ivy routinely ranks in the top 3 for out-of-conference record, so it would not exactly be overwhelmed by the 2nd tier of competitive programs. traditionalists remain skeptical. the ivy draws outsized media attention—even frequent national tv broadcasts—and fan engagement from its historic and insular presence, a limited season that culminates in some big thanksgiving week rivalries. could continuing past that point, only to fall prey to bigger programs, water down their brand? in that sense, it somewhat resembles the hbcu conferences, who of course opted out of the fcs playoffs in favor of setting up their own postseason. the working theory is better to be the big fish in the small pond than be a forgotten first round sacrifice in a more premier tournament.

sidelines

- fans saw 21 points scored in a 25 second span in florida a&m's victory over texas southern. following a texas souther td, each team returned the ensuing kickoff 90+ yards for the score.
- the fcs selection committee indicated that it will no longer consider any of the fcs polls in making its playoff field. instead, only a combo of data driven metrics will be considered. the decision was confirmed by this year's chair, matt larsen of north dakota state, which does his team no favors. the bison are ranked #1 in all the polls.

aps picture

<i>top dogs</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>aps</i>	<i>last week</i>	<i>next week</i>
<i>north dakota state bison</i>	9	0	592	crush northern iowa	bye
<i>missouri state bears</i>	7	1	414	overpower southern illinois for longest win streak since 1990	@ murray state
<i>rhode island rams</i>	8	0	408	outlast monmouth in a game they trailed for 3 quarters	@ #22 delaware (below)
<i>villanova wildcats</i>	7	1	401	persevere in defensive standoff with hampton	north carolina a&t
<i>in the hunt</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>aps</i>	<i>last week</i>	<i>next week</i>
<i>south dakota state jackrabbits</i>	6	1	361	blowout murray state	@ north dakota
<i>montana state bobcats</i>	8	0	349	take care of eastern washington	sacramento state
<i>southeastern missouri redbawks</i>	8	0	341	ride a 2 nd quarter explosion to slip past gardner webb	@ lindenwood
<i>mercer bears</i>	8	1	333	hang on against eastern tennessee thanks to 3 defensive tds	@ vmi
<i>tarleton state texans</i>	7	1	323	doomed by 3 picks in defensive slugfest with eastern kentucky	@ western georgia
<i>dark horses</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>aps</i>	<i>last week</i>	<i>next week</i>
<i>uc davis aggies</i>	8	0	301	dominate northern colorado	@ #16 montana
<i>incarnate word cardinals</i>	7	2	298	decimate houston christian	lamar
<i>dartmouth big green</i>	6	1	296	fall to #13 harvard (below)	@ princeton
<i>harvard crimson</i>	6	1	256	topple #12 dartmouth (below)	columbia
<i>florida a&m rattlers</i>	5	1	251	blowout texas southern	@ prairie view
<i>stony brook seawolves</i>	7	1	249	survive bryant comeback thanks to missed pat in ot	albany
<i>montana griz</i>	7	2	246	crush cal poly	#10 uc davis
<i>south dakota coyotes</i>	5	1	244	bye	indiana state

also rans: idaho vandals (5 – 2, 216), eastern kentucky colonels (5 – 2, 213), illinois state redbirds (6 – 2, 211), richmond spiders (7 – 1, 211), delaware blue hens (7 – 1, 208), ut martin skyhawks (5 – 2, 202)

dropping back: central arkansas suffered an inexplicable loss to otherwise winless utah tech, which may have all but doomed their chances to contend in the united. the bears were without star rb shunderrick powell but also turned the ball over 6 times. delaware and idaho had no such

drama they were simply off this past week and passed by teams with better records. both could easily be back with a win next week.

fcs game of week



next week: harvard crimson (6 – 1, 256, #13) topple dartmouth big green (6 – 1, 296, #12), 31 – 27

the crimson successfully came back with 2 tds in the final minutes to beat the big green. the crimson grabbed a 2 score lead early, but the middle part of the game was owned by the green. the crimson fueled their rally with big passing plays. qb jaden craig threw for over 300 yards. wr cooper barkate would account for 120 of those. while barkate himself was not on the scoreboard, his 7 catches were the most instrumental, including key catches during both td drives of the late rally. before the late breakout, the green seemed to have taken over the game defensively. lb micah green made a strip sack to initiate what would become a 20 point outburst, and when a simple crossing route turned into a 70 yard td to end the 3rd quarter, they seemed comfortably ahead. nevertheless, the crimson offense came alive with 170 yards on their final 2 drives to retake the lead.



next week: rhode island rams (8 – 0, 408, #3)

@ delaware blue hens (7 – 1, 208, #22)

could the rams actually win the caa? the rams gradual climb over the past year has put them in solid position to do just



that. unfortunately, they still have to make their way through the blue hens, likely for the last time. the blue hens are on their way to the fbs and ineligible for the post season, but they have been playing spoiler this year. the rams have prided themselves on their solid d up front, highlighted by lb aj pena, but they will be pressed by an up tempo hen run game that can certainly win the underneath battles. the hens also can pu up points in a hurry with wr phil lutz as a consummate deep threat. the hens have more of an advantage on d. their front 7 has surrendered the yards but not the points. lb ty davis and dl melkart abou jaoude have been effective disruptors. the rams have a lot riding on this game needing this marquee win to solidify their playoff ambitions. the hens have nothing on the line but pride.

richmond spiders (7 – 1, 211, #21)



last week: handle towson tigers (4 – 4, 116), 35 – 24
the spiders won the turnover battle and never trailed in a key matchup with the tigers. the d-line jumped all over the tigers, amssing 7 sacks. 3 of those belonged to dl jeremiah grant, the fcs sack leader. he was also able to force a pair of fumbles in tiger territory that the spiders quickly turned into field goals the other way. while the defense set up some short fields, there were also some pretty long ones for the spiders. 4 spider drives started in tiger territory.

4 more began in their own red zone. the spider offense was balanced and methodical. rb zach palmer smith was a workhorse, putting together another 100 yard game on the ground, albeit without an explosive breakout play. despite the turnovers, the tigers stayed in the game thanks to a big game from qb sean brown. the spiders finally got some distance on the scoreboard in the 4th when db jabril hayes made a pick in the shadow of his own endzone, then broke down the near sideline on a 90 yard td Gallup. the tigers found a response when wr john dunmore made a crazy one handed snag on a deep bomb that turned into an 80 yard td. despite those heroics, the spiders were able to dominated the top and run out the clock. the kicking game was a huge help. freshman pk sean o’haire went 5 for 5 on fgs, including one deep midfield boot, earning him fcs special teams player of the week. p aaron trusler nailed all 3 of his punts fr a 50 yard average, 2 landing in the red zone, with no returns. one of those directly contributed to one of o’haire’s 3 pointers, when the spiders would retake the ball immediately thereafter.

spider of week—jerry garcia

the spider wideout made the biggest catch of the game, hauling in a 50 yard deep out when the spiders were pinned back that would set up a td. he also made critical catches on 2 other scoring drives, including a key 3rd and long catch in the 4th to keep the clock running.

next week: @ campbell camels (3 – 5, -50)



the camels made their initial foray into the caa last season with mixed results. 2024 has not looked any better. the camels still have a dangerous pass attack. the spider coverage with hayes and quantraill morris walker have shown enough to feel good about keeping the camels in check, but

their receiving corps is deep and wr vj wilkins conintues to be a consummate threat. where the spiders have an advantage is in the trenches. the camels have not shown much ability to keep a rb the caliber of palmer smith in check. the camels also may have trouble containing grant and the d-line and will almost certainly have to manufacture enough of a passing threat to get lb wayne galloway off scrimmage. the camels are no pushover, but if the spiders want to turn this 7 game win streak into a playoff bid, it is a game they will want to claim.

northern arizona lumberjacks (4 – 3, 15)



last week: smash weber wildcats (3 – 5, -147), 27 – 6
it was seemingly over before it started. the lumberjacks jumped out to a 3 td lead in the opening minutes. on their very first snap, a qb draw resulted in a 75 yard td scramble. the next two wildcat drives both were quickly thwarted with interceptions in their own red zone, and the lumberjack offense easily cashed in the tds. as the game would settle in, the wildcats did move the ball on the ground behind rb damon bankston but never really threatened to break the plane. the cat d-line did step up with kemari munier bailey and brayden wilson being so disruptive that the l-jacks never manufactured a significant drive outside of that 1st play scramble. nevertheless, the damage had already been done, and the cats never would recover.



next week: @ cal poly mustangs (1 – 5, -138)



the mustangs have struggled as usual. the lumberjacks need this win to maintain relevance. the mustangs' primary advantage comes thanks to run stuffer extraordinaire de elijah ponder. his ability to contain at the line should give the mustangs a chance. that said, the l-jack defense has been no slouch either. db alex mclaughlin has been one of the biggest game changers in the fcs, and the rest of the secondary has been pretty lockdown in coverage. the lumberjacks have been the more disciplined team to date, while big mistakes have plagued the stangs. in a close game, a couple misplays are likely to loom large.

playoff outlook

if the season ended today. conference frontrunners in ().

near lock: north dakota state (mo valley)

looking good: rhode island (caa), villanova, south dakota state, montana state (big sky), southeastern missouri (big south ovc), mercer (socon), tarleton state (united), uc davis, incarnate word (southland)

bubbling in: stony brook, montana, south dakota, idaho, eastern kentucky, illinois state, richmond, ut martin, abilene christian, southeastern louisiana, drake (pioneer), chattanooga

other conference leader: robert morris (nec), lehigh (patriot)

potential party crashers: jackson state (likely to advance to swac championship instead)

bubbling out: central arkansas, east tennessee state, duquesne, new hampshire, western carolina, william & mary, north dakota, towson, maine, stephen f austin, tennessee state, tennessee tech, mcneese, northern arizona

