

fcs week #13: what still remains

last weekend, it got weird. many teams that seemed like locks to claim their postseason seats fell short. many more upsets were in the works only to see the favorites prevail late. several top teams saw their games come down to the final minute, and in more than one case, the final play.



some things did get resolved. montana state did win the big sky. the bobcats were up 22 points entering the 4th, only to surrender 20 back to uc davis and needing to stop their 2 point attempt in the final minute to win the game. richmond did win the caa. it had a 4 team traffic jam entering the week, but two of those teams—villanova and stony brook—fell apart. the other team in the mix, rhode island, fell apart too, but pulled ahead with a late rally and hung on thanks to stifling two red zone drives in the final minutes. the game ended on a blocked field goal. of course, the rams were the one team that definitely would not have a tie-breaking edge over the spiders, so the point was moot.

incarnate word did win the southland, but needed a desperate 2nd half rally to do so. abilene christian did win the united. they gave up the go-ahead score to tarleton state with less than 2 minutes to spare, but that is all the time they needed for their game winning td drive. several other playoff hopefuls—southeastern missouri, eastern kentucky, idaho, south dakota—kept their aspirations alive but only after uncharacteristically wild finishes. finally, though no playoffs were on the line, harvard kept its ivy title ambitions alive with an as-time-expired field goal.

some things did not enter the final week of the fcs season. 5 auto-bids are still outstanding. one is simple. the winner of duquesne vs central connecticut claims the nec title. the rest get interesting. southeastern missouri could claim the big south ovc outright with a win, but failing that, the 4 way cluster at the top of standings will be resolved by the outcome of ut martin's game, which is a little ironic since no matter what they do this weekend, the skyhawks are the only team that never come out on top of these scenarios (again!). north dakota state also can wrap up the mo valley with a win over south dakota, but it gets complicated if they don't. the conference has decided to just hand out the bid to the team with the top sagarin rating after the dust settles, to be fair, all of the teams in the hunt are playoff bound, so fretting over which gets the auto-bid might be overkill. similarly, drake could claim the pioneer with a win, but if they fall short, a very lengthy series of tiebreakers go into effect. there's a strong chance officials will be drawing lots... literally...

the two longest running rivalries are going to determine championships. "the rivalry" is the most played clash, with 160 meetings over 140 seasons, dating back to the unveiling of the statue of liberty. this season, lehigh can claim the patriot crown with a win, but lafayette, as the defending champ, has even more pride at stake than usual. should the leopards upset the mountain hawks, the patriot path gets muddled and by rule may need to be settled by an emergency late night meeting of the league's athletic directors. "the game" is the longest running battle, with 140 meetings over 149 seasons, dating back to the first running of the

kentucky derby. harvard can claim an outright ivy title with a victory over yale. with a loss, there could be an unbreakable 3 way tie. of course, with the ivy, there is no postseason at stake, so there won't be any late night committee meetings or lotto ball drawings to resolve this one.

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>	10	0	654	trample #8 missouri state (below)	@ #14 south dakota
<i>south dakota state jackrabbits</i>	8	1	450	crush southern illinois	@ #8 missouri state (below)
<i>montana state bobcats</i>	10	0	432	build up an insurmountable lead against #5 uc davis thanks to turnovers, kick returns, and big plays only to see it whittled down to a final 2 point conversion attempt, which was intercepted. claim the big sky title.	#21 montana in brawl of the wild
<i>rhode island rams</i>	9	1	417	rally from down 3 scores to outgoing fcs champ albany thanks to 3 2 nd half tds from rb malik grant and 2 stops (interception & blocked fg) in their own red zone in the closing minutes.	@ bryant
<i>in the hunt</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>aps</i>	<i>last week</i>	<i>next week</i>
<i>uc davis aggies</i>	9	1	393	fall to #3 montana state despite rallying to score 3 tds in final 6 minutes when game-tying 2 point attempt is intercepted	@ sacramento state
<i>incarnate word cardinals</i>	9	2	391	survive a sloppy game and late surge against stephen f austin. clinch southland.	@ texas a&m commerce
<i>harvard crimson</i>	8	1	375	comeback to beat penn on a game ending fg	yale in the game
<i>missouri state bears</i>	8	2	361	fall to #1 north dakota state (below)	#2 south dakota state (below)
<i>delaware blue hens</i>	9	1	346	blowout campbell	@ #12 villanova
<i>dark horses</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>aps</i>	<i>last week</i>	<i>next week</i>
<i>tarleton state texans</i>	8	2	312	surrendered a game winning drive to #17 abilene christian after taking the lead with just 2 min to play	central arkansas
<i>mercer bears</i>	9	1	302	crushed by alabama (fbs)	last year's socon winner furman
<i>villanova wildcats</i>	8	2	298	fall in tight shootout to monmouth	#9 delaware
<i>southeastern missouri redbawks</i>	9	1	298	prevail in high scoring duel with western illinois	@ tennessee state
<i>south dakota coyotes</i>	7	1	298	outlast rival north dakota in see-saw game that saw 30 points in the final quarter	#1 north dakota state
<i>idaho vandals</i>	7	2	296	outlast weber state in back and forth game that saw 18 points in the final 4 minutes.	@ idaho state

<i>eastern kentucky colonels</i>	7	2	292	overcome early fumbles to knock off former united champ austin peay in ot. rb joshua carter has had a winning td run after the 2 min warning in each of the last 3 games.	north alabama
<i>abilene christian wildcats</i>	8	2	290	comeback over #10 tarleton state thanks to final minute rally by qb matt mcivor. lock up united crown.	@ stephen f austin
<i>richmond spiders</i>	9	1	283	beat hampton (below)	archrival william & mary (below)
<i>dartmouth big green</i>	7	2	282	undone by cornell	brown

also rans: new hampshire wildcats (7 – 3, 255), montana griz (8 – 3, 255), jackson state tigers (8 – 1, 238), illinois state redbirds (8 – 2, 235), stony brook seawolves (8 – 2, 231)

fcs game of week



last week: north dakota state bison (10 – 0, 654, #1) massacre missouri state bears (8 – 2, 361, #8), 59 – 21

the bison scored on 9 of their first 10 drives, literally running all over the bears to cement this win pretty easily. their two headed rushing monster of charmar brown and barika kpeenu combined for nearly 300 yards, including 3 td rushes from midfield. the bison would jump out to a 28 - 0 lead midway through the 2nd quarter. the bears' cb lemondre joe introduced some mild drama with a big interception that would score a td one play later, cutting that lead in half, but it would be the only stop the bears would make until the game's closing minutes. the bears are fbs bound but still could factor in the mo valley race. in this, likely their final meeting, the bison made clear who was the real top dog.



next week: south dakota state jackrabbits (8 – 1, 450, #2), @ missouri state bears (8 – 2, 361, #8)

it is the final week of the season, and the mo valley title is still up for grabs. this tout—combined with north dakota state vs south dakota—will settle which of the top 4 teams claim the title of the top conference in the fcs. while the bears remain in the mix for the title, ineligible for the postseason, this is the final game of the fcs tenure. their surprise success in this lameduck season has run through qb jacob clark, who has been electric picking opponents apart. the jackrabbits are defending national champs and unlikely to be intimidated. lb adam bock leads a dangerous front 7 that will be sure to create some tough situations for clark. moreover, the jacks can chew up the clock with the brother combo of rbs amar and angel johnson following the blocking of one of the fcs' best o-lines



(featuring not one but two nfl prospects in c gus miller and g evan beerstern). clark can do a lot with a little, but he probably gets even less from this highly motivated team that is still hoping for some mo valley hardware and a top playoff seeding.

richmond spiders (9 – 1, 283, #18)



last week: fend off hampton pirates (4 – 6, -82), 24 – 21

the spiders held off a resurgent pirates to claim their 9th win

in a row, their longest streak since 1998, and a caa

championship. the spiders built up an early lead thanks

to rb zach palmer smith, who broke free for a 50 yard run

to set up an early td and was able to push the pile pretty

consistently in the opening half. they were helped by a

bothced kick return that gave the spiders a short field for their 2nd td. the

pirates ever so slowly pulled back within striking distance, largely by converting on 3rd & 4th down.

the pirates were put in 3rd down 18 times and only failed to convert 3 times. db jabril hayes led a

spiders' team effort to wrap up pirates on off tackle runs and short passes. nevertheless, yard by

yard, the pirates were able to claw back into the game. the teams exchanged fumbles early in

the 3rd. then the pirates responded with a pair of long td drives to bring the score within a fg.

the spiders would drive within fg range, but took a chance on 4th & inches only to come up short.

the pirates tried to muster a response but ran out of gas at the spider 40.



spider of week—carter glassmyer

the spiders' leading tackler made a huge mark on this win. he led all players with

15 tackles and added a sack. the fumble he forced in the 3rd looms large, given

what happened after. the spider d did not have another stop until the final

drive.

next week: vs william & mary tribe (7 – 3, 69)



after 135 meetings over 126 seasons, the spiders have a mere 1 game

advantage in the capital cup. much more than tradition is hanging on this

year's rivalry weekend. the spiders have already claimed the caa title in their

final caa season but have a shot at a bye week with a win and some help. the

tribe are on the outside looking in but could work themselves back into the

playoff picture with a marquee win in the finale. the key to success for the tribe comes from

their multi-headed run game. rb bronson yoder is back to form after missing nearly all of last

season, and the guy who stepped up in his place, malachi imoh, forgot to step back down in his

return. plus qb darius wilson is an extremely dangerous 3rd running option. their gaudy numbers

are testament to an o-line, highlighted by charles grant and ryan mckenna, that cleans out those

rushing lanes arguably better than any other. the tribe loses their edge in passing situations,

when dbs jabril hayes and matthew traynor can tee off in coverage and the spiders' penchant for

forcing turnovers are more likely to come into play. the best way to get the tribe thinking about

passing the ball is to play with the lead. qb camden coleman has the big game potential to take the spiders downfield in a hurry, especially with the way wrs landon ellis and jerry garcia have played down the stretch. finishing on a few of the big plays, an element missing in recent weeks, would be just enough to push the spiders over the top. coleman is still a perfect 13 - 0 in games that he has started. this would be an excellent time to keep that streak going.

northern arizona lumberjacks (6 – 3, 70)



last week: smother northern colorado bears (1 – 9, - 278), 44 – 3

the lumberjacks pounced again and again, dominating this game with the final 44 points and putting up a 30 - 0 mark in the 2nd half. rb seth cromwell was the offensive star with 160 yards averaging nearly 10 yards per carry. the bears totaled less than that on offense, just 140 yards, and most of that came on the first drive of the game. lb tommy ellis was a fixture for the l-jack d in cementing the win. the bear d was left on the field a lot but did make some plays. db cam chapra interrupted the lumberjack scoring binge with an interception in the 2nd quarter, and db ezra elkuba made a lot of tackles to help set that up. alas, the bear d ran out of gas by the 3rd, and the bear o was overwhelmed pretty early on.



next week: vs eastern washington eagles (4 – 6, 19)



the once mighty eagles are looking at their 3rd consecutive losing season, a distinction that they have not been saddled with since the 1980s. there will almost certainly be a lot of deserved attention devoted to wr efton chism, the top receiver in the fcs by a large margin. db alex mclaughlin and the lumberjack secondary have been a dominant unit in coverage this season. moreover, the eagles' success this season has seemingly hinged on their ability to run the ball effectively. that will certainly put pressure on lb tommy ellis, though he has stepped up in a big way recently. the l-jacks win this game if they can limit the eagle scoring opportunities. the eagles are built to put up points, but they are not the scoring machine that they once were. the lumberjacks are already celebrating their first winning season since 2017, and with a 7th d1 win, they could still earn some playoff consideration.

playoff outlook

if the season ended today. conference frontrunners notes with ().

ticket punched: montana state (big sky), incarnate word (southland), mercer (socon), abilene christian (united), richmond (caa)

near locks: north dakota state (mo valley), south dakota state, rhode island, uc davis, tarleton state, villanova, south dakota, southeast missouri (big south ovc), idaho, eastern kentucky

looking good: new hampshire, montana, illinois state, stony brook, duquesne (nec), tennessee tech

bubbling in: drake (pioneer), southeastern louisiana

other conference leader: lehigh (patriot)

bubbling out: ut martin, towson, tennessee state