Elliot's Saturday Slate:

PANDEMONIUM REIGNS ON COLLEGE FOOTBALL'S BIGGEST WEEKEND

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It is official; this weekend marks the gauntlet of matchups for the season with six top-25 matchups, including multiple elimination games.

It is only the first week of November, but we already get to witness January football. This season continues to surprise us when, for the fourth week in a row, the No. 2 team fell to an unranked opponent. This unpredictability has made the playoff race even more riveting. Some elimination games take place this weekend, as two loss programs can't afford another slip-up. The playoffs may include 12 teams this season but there is only so little room for errors.

The biggest upset over the weekend came out west for Southern California, defeating previous No. 2 Ohio State. The Buckeyes just aren't the same without quarterback Julian Sayin. Their star remains out after suffering a right arm injury in last weekend's matchup against Indiana. Heisman favorite Jeremiah Smith could only do so much for the Big Ten powerhouse, collecting 10 receptions for 83 yards, including one score.

Ohio State fell to No. 11 in the AP poll after its second loss before November, the first time that has happened since 2011. The Buckeyes now host Oregon, who, despite their 5-3 record, have won over ranked USC and Northwestern this season. USC has since jumped into the rankings, sitting at No. 18 going into their bye week before facing No. 6 Indiana on the road.

Indiana nearly fell after trading late field goals with Minnesota. The Hoosiers went on to win 23-16 for their second straight overtime win. Indiana heads into their week off, resting before USC.

No. 1 Miami nearly gave up a late lead against North Carolina, narrowly escaping 38-35 in overtime. UNC marches north to face UConn this weekend in Bill Belichick's first return to New England since coaching the Patriots.

No. 3 Georgia trounced No. 17 Florida 27-8. The Bulldogs' defense forced four turnovers to defeat the Gators for their sixth consecutive win in the rivalry.

No. 19 SMU fell to Syracuse 30-27 courtesy of the Orange's tight end Noah Meyers scoring the game-winning touchdown with 17 seconds left. Unranked Iowa decimated No. 25 Wisconsin, shutting out the Badgers 30-0 for their fifth straight series win. The Buckeyes re-entered the poll at No. 21. Lastly, No. 13 Texas Tech bounced back after their first loss and defeated No. 22 Arizona 34-26. The Red Raiders face a stifling West Virginia side this weekend.



Syracuse Football playing in the Atlantic Coast Conference against the SMU Mustangs. Syracuse won 30-27 against the Mustangs.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @CUSEFOOTBALL ON INSTAGRAM

A slate of marquee matchups arrives Saturday, promising a day of high-stakes drama that no fans will want to miss — let's dive in.

No. 10 Texas travels to No. 19 Missouri in an elimination game for both sides. The pair simultaneously sits at 6-2 on the season, hoping to claim a top-10 spot with solid resumes. The two-loss column puts tremendous pressure on these two. Both teams also face tough opponents in the final stretch of the season, making each game a high-stakes test.

No. 7 BYU faces undefeated No. 3 Utah in the battle of the state. For the first time in history, the two square off while ranked inside the top 10. Utah looks to continue its unbeaten streak, taking down another ranked opponent as it stands alone in the Big 12. For BYU, there is a chance at redemption after the crushing loss to UCF two weeks ago hurt its ranking. Another loss for BYU could send the team out of the playoffs, but a win could propel the program into a top seed.

No. 9 Alabama travels to No. 15 LSU in an SEC clash for the ages. Both teams enter at 6-2, desperate to avoid a third defeat that would all but erase their playoff chances. LSU awaits a tougher path, facing two more ranked opponents before the end of the season, but either team slipping up almost certainly means falling short of the playoffs.

No. 16 Tennessee hosts No. 8 Kentucky in another SEC battle for the top. Kentucky's only loss this season came back in week two to Alabama before a six-game win streak, defeating teams such as Texas A&M, LSU and Oklahoma. The Wildcats now face three ranked opponents starting with the Volunteers. Both are coming off rest weeks, eager to get back on the field and prove why they belong in the postseason.

In the game of the week, No. 1 Miami travels to South Bend to take on No. 4 Notre Dame. Both programs have received a lot of controversy involving their favorable schedules, but the two now meet in a top-five showdown. The Hurricanes defeated the Irish last season in a nail-biter to open the season. Now, the two meet for a chance at the top spot with Miami facing their first and only ranked opponent of the season.

No. 2 Georgia clashes with No. 12 Ole Miss in the fourth SEC heavyweight battle. The Bulldogs hope to stay atop the conference, still needing to face Missouri and South Carolina before the season's closer against Georgia Tech. Ole Miss faces an easier end to the season with Oklahoma, Wofford and Mississippi State. The Rebels need a win against a top team to solidify their spot in the 12-team field as they remain on the cusp.

This weekend will not disappoint with an array of playoff matchups featured in the month of November. Although four weeks still remain in the season, playoff football is already on our screens. It will be a weekend for the ages as these matchups solidify certain teams' spots while eliminating others.

Start of Men's College Basketball season means a yearly dose of lopsided affairs

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The first week of college basketball is underway and the NCAA has given us some great matchups to look forward to on the men's side such as No. 7 ranked Texas vs. Gardner-Webb and No. 1 ranked Florida vs. Jacksonville.

Now, obviously, this is nothing new. There are a plethora of mismatches like these at the beginning of every college basketball season, and this is because Power Five conference schools want to warm up and get some wins before having to take on the top-level teams.

But just how lopsided can these early-season matchups really get? The answer is: very.

Many of these early-season matchups feature Power Five schools like Duke and Kansas facing off against schools whose home arenas are the size of a high school gym.

Last year, No. 4 ranked UConn took on UMass Lowell at home in their second game of the season. While UConn's on-campus arena holds over 10,000 people, UMass Lowell's home gym has a capacity of just 957. UConn handily defeated UMass Lowell 110-47.

Surely 63 points was the largest margin of victory in any game last season, right? Unfortunately, no.

In a matchup between No. 13 ranked Gonzaga and Southern Utah, Gonzaga walked out of their home arena with a 122-50 victory, defeating Southern Utah by an astounding 72 points.

Believe it or not, many of these smaller schools actually want to play top-tier powerhouses. High-major programs pay smaller schools to travel to the high-major home arena and play them.

In theory, this sounds like a great trade-off; the smaller schools get funding, and the high majors get in the win column, while giving their players a chance to warm up playing against low-level competition. However, going into a game knowing you're going to lose can take a psychological toll on players, especially when you know that you're going to lose by a lot.

Nov. 8, 2019, most definitely took a mental toll on every single player for Mississippi Valley State when they faced Utah in their second game of the season. Utah put up 70 points in the first half but decided that was not enough, as they went on to score 73 in the second half and win the game by a whopping 95 points, 143-49.

If we look at No. 3 ranked Illinois this season, we can see that they have a total of seven "cupcake" games, or matchups against low-major programs that they are heavily favored to win in. Thus, seven out of Illinois' first 13 games are essentially automatic wins for the Fighting Illini.

However, sometimes these "cupcake" games don't turn out to be automatic wins for the heavily favored team.

In 2019, No.1 ranked Duke invited Stephen F. Austin State University



UConn Men's Basketball defeated UMass Lowell 110-47 at PeoplesBank Arena in Hartford, CT, on Nov. 7, 2025. The Friday night game showcased UConn's great offense, with impressive plays for the win.
FILE PHOTO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

to their home arena expecting to dominate the Lumberjacks, as the Blue Devils were favored to win by 27.5 points over Stephen F. Austin going into the matchup. Regardless of the spread, the Lumberjacks would take the Blue Devils to overtime where they would make a game-winning fast break layup at the buzzer to defeat Duke.

What makes this loss even more embarrassing for Duke is that they paid Stephen F. Austin $85,000 to come and play them at their home arena, just to lose.

Every year, regardless of the final score, it is cool to see small schools from conferences like the Ivy League and Patriot League play against the top teams in the country. I mean, when else are you going to have a chance to watch the No. 3 ranked team in the country, Illinois, take on the University of Pennsylvania, the number one business school in the country?