SPORTS

ELLIOT'S SATURDAY SLATE:



Tennessee wide-receiver Mike Matthews running the ball across the field. The Vols lost 20-17 against the Texas Longhorns on Sept. 26, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @VOL_FOOTBALL ON INSTAGRAM

The month of contenders or pretenders

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We are four weeks into the college football regular season; this is where the best teams separate themselves from the rest.

Looking back on Week 4, the highest number of ranked matchups we may see this season provided us with more shakeups in the standings. Six teams that were ranked inside the top 20 all fell on Saturday, giving us a brand-new AP poll.

Louisville was the first to fall short by a field goal to Wake Forest after the Cardinals suffered their second loss of the season, now sitting at 2-2. Their previous loss came to ranked Ole Miss, but with two losses already, they fell out of this week's rankings.

The biggest matchup of the week took place in Knoxville when Tennessee fell short in their late comeback against top-ranked Texas, proving they're the real "UT." Texas improves to 4-0 and remains atop the country enjoying their week off before taking on Oklahoma followed by five straight SEC ranked opponents.

As for Tennessee, they fell three spots to No. 17 and rebound against Auburn seeking their first SEC win.

Previous No. 21 Florida came away with the biggest shock on Saturday, with the Gators chomping the Rebels of Ole Miss 52-28. Ole Miss came off a big win against LSU rising in rankings before this brutal blow sent them down to No. 9.

No. 8 Florida prepares for No. 25 Missouri on the road after the Tigers fell to Mississippi State, dropping their first game of the season.

No 17. Iowa completed their comeback against No. 18 Michigan, winning it in the final second, and no, there was not any time added after this one. The touchdown completed the 13-point fourth quarter for the Hawkeyes, rising in rankings to No. 14. The question remains if they can pull off another shocker taking on No. 5 Ohio State this weekend in front of their home crowd.

Unranked Wisconsin also pulled off a huge rally trailing by 17 at one point before upsetting No. 13 Penn State in Beaver Stadium. Wisconsin quarterback Colton Joseph hit Jacob Harris on a 72-yard touchdown pass with 1:13 left to secure the four-point victory for the Badgers. Wisconsin remains out of the AP poll but brought the Nittany Lions with them as both programs sit just outside the top 25.

Oregon shocked Southern California 41-27 with a 28-point second half. The real action of this game happened in the second quarter when Ducks quarterback Dante Moore suffered a frightening injury that left him unconscious for roughly 10 minutes. The Heisman Trophy candidate and likely high NFL draft pick left the Coliseum field in an ambulance and received medical attention.

Looking ahead to Week 5, border rivals No. 7 Alabama and No. 16 Mississippi State will face off in Mississippi. Both squads remain undefeated this season and 2-0 in conference play. Their only common opponent so far is South Carolina with the Tide defeating the Gamecocks by 31, while the Bulldogs won by 7.

It is a real test for both programs before another tough matchup the following weekend with Alabama taking on Georgia and Mississippi State traveling to LSU.

Other important games include Miami hosting an unsteady Clemson team that hasn't found their footing. This game is potentially Clemson coach Dabo Swinney's last chance to prove he still has that spark and should remain with the program.

October is always an exciting time for college football as the brisk temperatures creates the feeling of prime football weather. Some programs stay consistent where others start to drop. As the leaves fall and the rankings change, sit back as contenders begin to emerge.



University of Tennessee players embrace with their coach. The team had lots of excitement as they played hard during their home game.
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