ELLIOT'S SATURDAY SLATE:

WEEK ONE IN THE BOOKS, WHO DELIVERED AND WHO DISAPPOINTED?

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The opening weekend in college football wasted no time putting on a show. It was a mix of close games, last second winners, and some colossal blowouts. With that being said, some programs showed they still belong on top whereas others displayed early signs of struggle — and if anyone asks you, yes, every second in the game matters!

The teams at the top showed why they belong with schools such as Ohio State, LSU, Miami and Notre Dame dismantling their week one contender.

Ohio State entered the season ranked first in the nation and got right back to business, destroying Ball State 56-3. The celebration was one-and-done as they jump back into practices preparing for next week's potential game of the year when they travel to Austin to take on the Texas Longhorns. The Longhorns also thrived in week one, defeating Texas State 59-7.

LSU faced Clemson in Head Coach Lane Kiffin's debut with the new program routing the orange Tigers 51-10. Kiffin joined LSU near the end of last season after leaving Ole Miss. His return to Mississippi emerges in week three in a top 10 matchup between the SEC programs.

Miami also continued its winning ways as they look to repeat a National Championship appearance starting their campaign off with a 45-6 triumph over Stanford. Junior quarterback Darian Mensah put on a clinic, throwing for 400 yards and five touchdowns. A frightening offense could leave the Hurricanes destroying any defense in their path.

In response to every second being crucial in these games, the comment comes following No. 16 Michigan and Western Michigan's matchup over the weekend where controversy took over the internet. The Broncos were threatening Michigan with its biggest upset since Appalachian State in 2007. This game opened with the Wolverines as a 27.5-point favorite but would find themselves behind late in the fourth quarter 12-7. It came down to a final heave when quarterback Bryce Underwood launched a Hail Mary into the end zone but was caught by the opposing team, and the game was over — or so they thought.

After official review and Western Michigan already celebrating the enormous upset, the officials called it back and added one second to the game. This resulted in yet another last-ditch effort for a final throw which was converted, and Michigan won the game. The controversy rose to the top conversation of the weekend and if some teams are given these advantages because of their brand name or if the referees got it wrong originally. Either way, it counts as a win for Michigan, and they continue a tough road ahead of them.

With these games now behind it is important to note what lies ahead going into week two.

Michigan gets a chance to prove their week one controversy was a fluke when they take on No. 11 Oklahoma. Ohio State and Texas will be the other top 25 matchup to note with those two battling for the early season upper hand.

Other notable programs on display include Oregon, which is looking to redeem itself after a narrow Week 1 win over Boise State and now faces Oklahoma State. Looking further down the road for the Ducks, they challenge Ohio State followed by Michigan. A back-to-back weekend against the top of the Big Ten could give Oregon some separation ahead of the field.

Week 1 set the perfect stage for the college football calendar, but now the real contenders come out and only one can win. The hunt for the perfect season stays on these teams' minds as they head into Week 2 with key matchups already taking flight in the top 10.

The hype is here; contenders are emerging, and Week 2 could be the weekend where the true talent separates themselves from the rest. College football is back, and the race for perfection has officially begun.



Freshman cornerback, Legend Bey, of the Ohio State Buckeyes running with the ball during a game against the Ball State Cardinals. Ohio defeated Ball State 3-56 on Saturday, September 5, 2026.

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LOMBARDI LINEUP:

MEET THE TWO NEWEST FBS TEAMS

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Week 0 and Week 1 of college football gave us an early glimpse into the newest members of the Football Bowl Subdivision: North Dakota State and Sacramento State.

After two games each, it has become clear that the two will face completely different transitions: one looks like a legitimate Group of Six contender, while the other may face a steep learning curve adjusting to stronger competition.

For many college football fans, North Dakota State needs no introduction.

The Bison dominated the Football Championship Subdivision level for years, claiming 10 championships between 2011 and 2024. In the process, they produced multiple top five NFL draft picks, like Trey Lance and Carson Wentz, proving NDSU has been ahead of the curve well before their move to the Mountain West.

Their FBS introduction came in a sold out Fargodome, throttling Jacksonville State 33-7.

Senior quarterback Nathan Hayes went 14 for 22 for 160 yards and two touchdowns, including a 44-yard strike to Jordan McCants. A third quarter fumble return by defensive end Blake Schiltz all but sealed the game, capping off an impressive debut.

NDSU followed up in Week 1 by taking care of FCS foe Fordham to move to 2-0. With pre-season Mountain West favorites UNLV and Hawaii both dropping early games, the Bison have immediately emerged as a genuine conference title threat. ESPN's Football Power Index already projects them to be a nine-win team in year one.

Sacramento State, on the other hand, is far from the FCS dynasty of NDSU. The Hornets had few accolades to show prior to 2019, but over the past few years they saw rapid growth in the FCS. Three consecutive Big Sky championships capped off by an undefeated season in 2022 showed they had the makings of a winning program, despite falling short in the playoffs.

Their Week 0 matchup with Eastern Michigan revealed the growing pains you would expect in year one at the FBS level.

Sacramento State managed only 19 total yards and took 40 yards worth of penalties in a dismal first half. Their first FBS touchdown came on the defensive end, a fumble return by senior defensive lineman Xavier Williams near the end of the second quarter.

The Hornets' first game jitters seemed to subside in the second half, effectively holding EMU off defensively. However, continued offensive struggles kept the deficit out of reach in a 28-17 loss. The Hornets bounced back in Week 1 against lower-tier FCS opponent Mississippi Valley State 52-0, but their schedule will only get harder from here.

For both programs, the jump to FBS isn't cheap. Sacramento State was forced to pay $23 million in transition and conference fees, while NDSU paid $17.5 million. For such a hefty price, it brings up the question of whether the leap is worth the steep price tag.

NDSU has effectively traded FCS dominance for a chance to become a Group of Six contender, vying for the likely single bid to the College Football Playoff under recent rule changes. Despite being a massive underdog against powerhouses boasting future NFL talents, the access to major TV exposure and national attention may outweigh the comfort of FCS championships.

Meanwhile, Sacramento State is hoping to leverage their prime media market. Moving to the MAC conference presents awkward travel logistics, but Sacramento was previously the largest market without a single FBS program, representing a massive untapped well of potential. In the age of broadcast-driven realignment, the Hornets are betting on TV revenue to take them to the next level.

These two aren't alone in taking the FBS gamble, as this is the fifth consecutive season with at least one school moving up to the FBS, including Delaware and Missouri State last year, all the way back to James Madison making the move in 2022.

The Dukes are the blueprint for prospective newcomers, after their unprecedented success. Head Coach Curt Cignetti turned JMU into an immediate threat, earning a ranking in the AP Poll their very first season, followed by an 11-2 record the following year. Cignetti went on to win a national championship with Indiana, while James Madison reached the College Football Playoff in their fourth ever FBS season.

In fact, many of the recent transitions from FCS have been successful. Jacksonville State has boasted more than nine wins in each of its three FBS seasons and a Conference USA title. Kennesaw State followed that up with a CUSA championship of their own after a slow first few seasons. Sam Houston State has had its ups and downs but proved its potential with a 10-3 campaign in 2024.

The costs are high, but FCS programs are still rushing to join college football's top tier.

Whether it's an established powerhouse like NDSU or a growing program in a promising media market, their success may have a broader impact on future teams deciding to make the switch.



Safety, Taylen Eady, of the North Dakota State University Bison shouting excitedly. ND State defeated the Fordham Rams 38-0 on Saturday, September 5, 2026.

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