

Top 25 College Football Rankings are Meaningless!

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By Ron Dyer of Dyer's Sportsline at www.footballjunky.com

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What is he talking about? If you think Top 25 Rankings are a great way to handicap football games, let me lend some friendly advice. I have to admit that I would be hard pressed to name more than 20 of the Top 25 teams going into this weekends games and putting them in their order of ranking is a completely different story.

Sitting around watching football on Saturday with my Dad, who isn't a degenerate sports junky like most of us, he usually asks who's playing, what the spread is and who do I like. This past week, he asked me where each team was ranked and I couldn't tell him for sure, and that got me to thinking about this weeks handicapping tip.

When it comes to handicapping NCAA football games, a teams ranking in the Top 25 poll (or omission) should have no bearing on your handicapping of the games at all. I liken the Top 25 Rankings to a popularity poll in high school similar to the most likely to succeed from your graduating class. Isn't it ironic when you go back to your class reunion and find out that your classmate who was supposed to be a huge success rarely is. The same thing happens in College Football Rankings.

You are really limiting yourself if you handicap football based on a team's ranking, or include this in your decision making process of whether to play on a team or not. Teams in the Top 25 will obviously not lose as many games, but against the spread (ATS), over the course of a season, Top 25 teams will lose more games than they win because of the lack of line value with favorites. This is what you are concerned about in sports investing, finding winners.

Key elements of handicapping football are line movement, situational handicapping, match-up information and line value.

Line movement is tracking how a line moves throughout the week. College Football lines are up late Sunday afternoon. Movements early in the week are indicative of smart or sharp money. Line

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movements later in the week (Friday and Saturday morning) are caused in most cases by the Public.

Situational handicapping involves a teams performance the prior week, who is looming on the schedule the next week, a teams history with their opponent from a prior year and home/away records. A team coming off an emotional win the prior week will have a tendency to be flat, especially if they play an inferior opponent. Teams with a rival on the schedule the following week may look past whom they are playing this Saturday. Also, a revenge angle might be in play from a meeting the prior year. Don't concern yourself with revenge angles from games played longer than a season ago. Also, don't discount home field advantage.

Match-up handicapping involves comparing each teams strengths and weaknesses and taking into account any injuries.

Line value is determined by your own set of power ratings to determine what the point spread should be. As a courtesy, below I have listed my take on what the spread should be as compared to the actual spread that Vegas has for this weeks upcoming Top 25 games. Remember, this is only one component of handicapping college football games. Just because there is line value, it doesn't automatically make it a play.

Line Value – 9/23–9/25

Game, Vegas Home Line, Dyer Home Line, Value

Miami (4) @ Houston +30 +20.5 Houston 9.5

BYU @ Boise St (21) –22 –14.5 BYU 7.5

Purdue (15) @ Illinois +20.5 +17.5 Illinois 3

Maryland (23) @ Duke NL +5.5 NA

Mississippi St @ LSU (13) –29.5 –21.5 Miss St 8

Louisville (22) @ N. Car. +8.5 +4 N. Car 4.5

Air Force @ Utah (14) –21 –21 NA

Clemson @ Florida St (11) –17 –17.5 Florida St .5

Syracuse @ Virginia (12) –25.5 –19 Syracuse 6.5

Iowa (24) @ Michigan (18) –13.5 –6.5 Iowa 7

Penn St @ Wisconsin (20) –3 –5.5 Wisconsin 2.5

Kentucky @ Florida (16) –19.5 –14.5 Kentucky 5

USC (1) @ Stanford 21.5 17.5 Stanford 4

Rice @ Texas (5) –33 –21.5 Rice 11.5

La Tech @ Tennessee (8) –23 –16 La Tech 7

N'western @ Minny (19) –15 –10.5 N'western 4.5

When you combine all four facets of handicapping, determining line value and playing on sides where there is value, not betting against smart money, playing on teams in favorable situations that have a definite matchup advantage, you will begin becoming more selective with your plays, avoid bad so-called "trap" games and see your winning percentage increase dramatically. You also will become a more sophisticated handicapper rather than concerning yourself with the Top 25 Popularity Poll!

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Ron Dyer is a documented professional handicapper. Jump on board and cash in with his other Clients. He has opened up his 2004 College Football season 12–5 (+1314 Units)!

As always, I wish you only good luck this weekend!

Ron Dyer
Dyer's Sportsline
www.footballjunky.com

None

The Cool Thing About Fantasy Football

By Chris Hinde

Everyone loves fantasy football and get very excited for the fantasy drafts. But, have you ever really thought about why? I mean, beyond the obvious.

Fantasy football is really the only place or way for you, an average person, to create a football team that you have control over. You choose which football player starts, and who is on the bench. You get to draft whatever players you want to your team based on their real life performance record. The really cool thing? Well, you don't have to worry about anything else. You don't have to deal with any money issues except for salary cap. That's it. You don't have to worry about how much money the fans are pulling in by purchasing tickets to your stadium, nor do you have to worry about purchasing the football equipment, such as football helmets like these:

that your team

will be using. Now, that my friends...is very cool indeed.

So you basically have free reign of a team of great football players (if you've done your homework), and now can decide who plays when. Obviously, it is not as in depth as Madden Football, but this is more of a player game. Meaning, you choose your players based on their record in the NFL and create your team and score your points that way instead of making plays, you are making a team.

Now, my question is: What about college football? The enormous fan base across the US would make fantasy college football a huge presence in the sports world. Sure, it would be a lot harder to predict what players to pick because although they are way better than I would ever be at football, they are not always as consistent as most NFL players are. Especially when you are drafting your defense. But, just imagine how much more varied and exciting the world of fantasy football would be if you could create your own college team too.

You could go off of the "experts" top college football picks, starting with the team and working your way down. Just think of the huge potential talent that is stuffed away at big 10 colleges because they've already got their star quarterback or wide receiver. This would give little known players a chance to get

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their name out there before even completing college. You could help them kick start their career!

Chris Hinde is an aspiring sports column writer. If you would like to read more of his articles, please visit:



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