

# COLLEGE FOOTBALL WEEK 7 2026

Top Games, Matchup Analysis  
and Score Projections

## 17 SATURDAY MATCHUPS

October 17 | All times Eastern

Early-week edition: October 12, 2026



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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17 | ALL TIMES ET

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*A curated selection, not the full Saturday schedule.*

# OHIO STATE AT INDIANA

SAT OCT 17 | 12:00 PM ET | FOX

## THE CONTEXT

No. 4 visits No. 5 in a matchup with immediate national relevance.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Ohio State gets a narrow editorial lean, but Indiana deserves more than a reputation-based dismissal. The Buckeyes need early-down passing gains that prevent the home defense from dictating third down. Indiana can answer by sustaining drives and denying easy explosives outside. A possession game makes finishing opportunities more important than piling up empty yardage.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Track protection against four rushers. If Indiana can pressure without giving up extra coverage, the visitors will have fewer favorable one-on-one throws. My three-point margin assumes Ohio State creates just one more touchdown-quality drive.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Ohio State 27 - Indiana 24

Editorial lean: LOW

*Estimate, not a result or guarantee.*

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20



# ALABAMA AT TENNESSEE

SAT OCT 17 | 3:30 PM ET | ABC



## THE CONTEXT

Alabama lost 20-17 to Georgia last week.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

The Alabama lean is deliberately small after that setback. Knoxville adds a difficult road environment, and Tennessee can make this an uncomfortable possession game by winning early downs. Alabama needs balance rather than an immediate chase for big passing plays. A patient opening that avoids sacks would help keep the full playbook available.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch Tennessee quarterback availability as the week develops. The passing outlook is a material uncertainty, so check official updates before relying on this score. An efficient Tennessee passing game would weaken the road lean considerably.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Alabama 27 - Tennessee 24

Editorial lean: **PROVISIONAL**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

# NOTRE DAME AT BYU

SAT OCT 17 | 7:30 PM ET | ABC

## THE CONTEXT

Notre Dame is 6-0; BYU is 5-0. College GameDay is heading to Provo.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

This is a serious road test, not a routine extension of Notre Dame winning form. I favor the Irish to create more complete drives, while BYU has a clear route through long possessions and denying explosive gains. The atmosphere and mountain setting increase the value of clean communication, especially on the first two series.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch BYU first-down efficiency and Notre Dame red-zone finishes. If BYU repeatedly reaches short-yardage situations, it can keep the Irish offense on the sideline. The eight-point estimate assumes Notre Dame eventually converts one additional scoring chance into a touchdown.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Notre Dame 28 - BYU 20

Editorial lean: **MODERATE**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,4] | Method and links: page 20

# PENN STATE AT MICHIGAN

SAT OCT 17 | 3:30 PM ET | CBS / PARAMOUNT+

## THE CONTEXT

Penn State comes off a 31-23 loss to USC.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Michigan receives a small home-field lean in a game I expect to turn on protection and possession quality. Penn State can change the script by getting ahead of the chains and avoiding a stream of obvious passing downs. Michigan should value field position and controlled aggression instead of assuming a low-scoring game will decide itself.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch the interior line on short yardage and whether either offense finishes drives with touchdowns. A defensive stop inside the 20 can be as valuable as a long completion in this projected three-point contest.

## PROJECTED SCORE

### Michigan 23 - Penn State 20

Editorial lean: **LOW**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,3] | Method and links: page 20



# FLORIDA STATE AT MIAMI

SAT OCT 17 | 7:00 PM ET | ESPN

## THE CONTEXT

Miami enters Week 7 at No. 3 in the AP poll.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Miami is the editorial choice, but rivalry pressure can punish a favorite that starts carelessly. Florida State needs to limit possessions, tackle cleanly after short completions and make Miami execute long drives. For the home side, the priority is avoiding the giveaways that turn an apparent advantage into an emotional fourth-quarter game.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch Florida State ability to prevent explosive plays without surrendering easy rushing lanes. My two-touchdown projection assumes Miami forces the visitors to chase after halftime. If Florida State stays level through three quarters, that game script no longer applies.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Miami 34 - Florida State 20

Editorial lean: MODERATE

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20

# AUBURN AT GEORGIA

SAT OCT 17 | 3:30 PM ET | ESPN

## THE CONTEXT

Georgia moved to No. 1 after its win over Alabama.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Georgia is my choice in a rivalry where the favorite still has to reset emotionally after a major result. Auburn can make the contest awkward by creating manageable third downs and preventing Georgia from turning takeaways into short touchdown drives. Georgia should prioritize dependable possessions before looking for the spectacular play.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch Auburn opening two drives and Georgia response to defensive movement before the snap. A controlled Georgia rushing game would support this estimate; repeated stalled possessions would give Auburn a route to remain within one score.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Georgia 31 - Auburn 17

Editorial lean: **MODERATE**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20



# FLORIDA AT TEXAS

SAT OCT 17 | 12:00 PM ET | ABC

## THE CONTEXT

Texas lost 27-24 to Oklahoma;  
Florida fell 38-19 to South Carolina.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

The early window pairs two teams with an immediate need to respond. I lean Texas at home, while treating the margin as conditional on better ball security. Florida has an upset route if it keeps the game slow, wins field position and makes Texas sustain drives without a damaging mistake.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch how Texas handles third-and-medium instead of judging the response from one early highlight. Florida can reduce the projected gap by denying quick touchdowns and making the home crowd wait. This estimate assumes Texas converts its opportunities more consistently.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Texas 34 - Florida 21

**Editorial lean: MODERATE**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,3] | Method and links: page 20

# MISSOURI AT OLE MISS

SAT OCT 17 | 3:30 PM ET | SEC NETWORK

## THE CONTEXT

No. 13 Missouri visits No. 9 Ole Miss.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

This is one of the strongest afternoon alternatives to the headline games. I give Ole Miss a narrow home edge, while Missouri has enough standing in the current rankings to warrant a genuine upset discussion. The key editorial question is whether the visitors can stay balanced after the first scoring exchange.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch red-zone conversions and the cost of any early turnover. A shootout is not inevitable: if Missouri strings together patient possessions, Ole Miss may get fewer chances than expected. The four-point forecast reflects a close contest rather than a comfortable home win.

## PROJECTED SCORE

**Ole Miss 31 - Missouri 27**

Editorial lean: LOW

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20

# ARIZONA STATE AT TEXAS TECH

SAT OCT 17 | 3:30 PM ET | FOX

## THE CONTEXT

Texas Tech is No. 10 in the latest AP rankings.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Lubbock provides the setting for a Big 12 game with strong viewing appeal. Texas Tech is my lean, but the projected touchdown margin depends on turning possessions into touchdowns rather than settling for kicks. Arizona State can pull the game toward an upset by extending drives and forcing the home offense to restart from deep in its own territory.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch tackling in the open field and defensive communication after substitutions. If either team gives away cheap chunk plays, the game can accelerate quickly. A disciplined Arizona State defensive start would make the forecast less secure.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Texas Tech 34 - Arizona State 27

## Editorial lean: MODERATE

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20

# KENTUCKY AT OKLAHOMA

SAT OCT 17 | 7:30 PM ET | SEC NETWORK

## THE CONTEXT

Kentucky beat LSU 35-34 in overtime; Oklahoma defeated Texas.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Both teams arrive with a recent result that changes how this game feels. Oklahoma gets my small home lean, but Kentucky should not be treated as an easy opponent after its latest win. The challenge for both sides is reproducing the execution without relying on another dramatic finish.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch which offense avoids third-and-long after the opening scripts. A clean Kentucky start could quiet the crowd and turn the pressure back onto Oklahoma. The three-point estimate is fragile enough that a late injury update could change the preferred side.

## PROJECTED SCORE

### Oklahoma 27 - Kentucky 24

Editorial lean: LOW

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,3] | Method and links: page 20





# NEBRASKA AT OREGON

SAT OCT 17 | 11:00 PM ET | FOX

## THE CONTEXT

Nebraska lost 20-17 to Indiana; Oregon fell 17-15 to UCLA.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Both teams have reasons to feel the previous game was within reach. Oregon gets a cautious home lean, not a free pass based on preseason expectations. Nebraska can make the late window compelling by protecting the ball and turning steady early-down gains into sustained possessions. The visitors should welcome a close fourth quarter.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch Oregon response to its first setback within the game. If Nebraska creates pressure without repeated blitzes, it can challenge this projection. The 11:00 PM Eastern kickoff is confirmed; plan for a finish after midnight in the East.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Oregon 27 - Nebraska 23

Editorial lean: **LOW**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,3,5] | Method and links: page 20

# WISCONSIN AT UCLA

SAT OCT 17 | 7:30 PM ET | NBC / PEACOCK



## THE CONTEXT

UCLA enters the week ranked No. 12 after beating Oregon.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

I favor UCLA at home, with the caveat that a strong result the previous week does not automatically transfer to a different opponent. Wisconsin can make this a limited-possession game by controlling the line and avoiding long-yardage passing situations. UCLA needs to finish drives before that slower rhythm takes hold.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch Wisconsin rushing success on first down and UCLA tackling near the line of scrimmage. If the visitors consistently create short conversions, the expected scoring opportunities decline. The seven-point estimate assumes UCLA wins enough early downs to avoid that squeeze.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# UCLA 24 - Wisconsin 17

Editorial lean: MODERATE

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,2,3] | Method and links: page 20

# KANSAS AT KANSAS STATE

SAT OCT 17 | 12:00 PM ET | FS1

## THE CONTEXT

The Sunflower Showdown opens in the noon Eastern window.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

This rivalry earns a place for its regional intensity and the possibility of a close finish. Kansas State gets a small home-field lean; the reasoning is a projected possession advantage, not a claim of superior verified season metrics. Kansas can reverse it by generating explosive gains that bypass long drives.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch special teams and the first possessions after halftime. In a three-point scenario, a return that changes field position can matter as much as a long offensive drive. If Kansas avoids negative plays, the home lean becomes much less convincing.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Kansas State 30 - Kansas 27

## Editorial lean: LOW

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1] | Method and links: page 20

# TCU AT BAYLOR

SAT OCT 17 | 7:00 PM ET | FS1

## THE CONTEXT

A Texas rivalry fills the early evening Big 12 window.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

I lean TCU by one field goal in an intentionally close projection. Baylor home-field advantage makes a comfortable road win difficult to justify without stronger evidence. TCU needs productive early-down offense and clean protection; Baylor can control the matchup if it forces the visitors into long third downs and keeps its own possessions alive.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch the balance between aggression and giveaways. Fourth-down decisions can create the extra possession that separates two evenly matched game scripts. My score assumes TCU finishes one more drive, not that either team controls every phase.

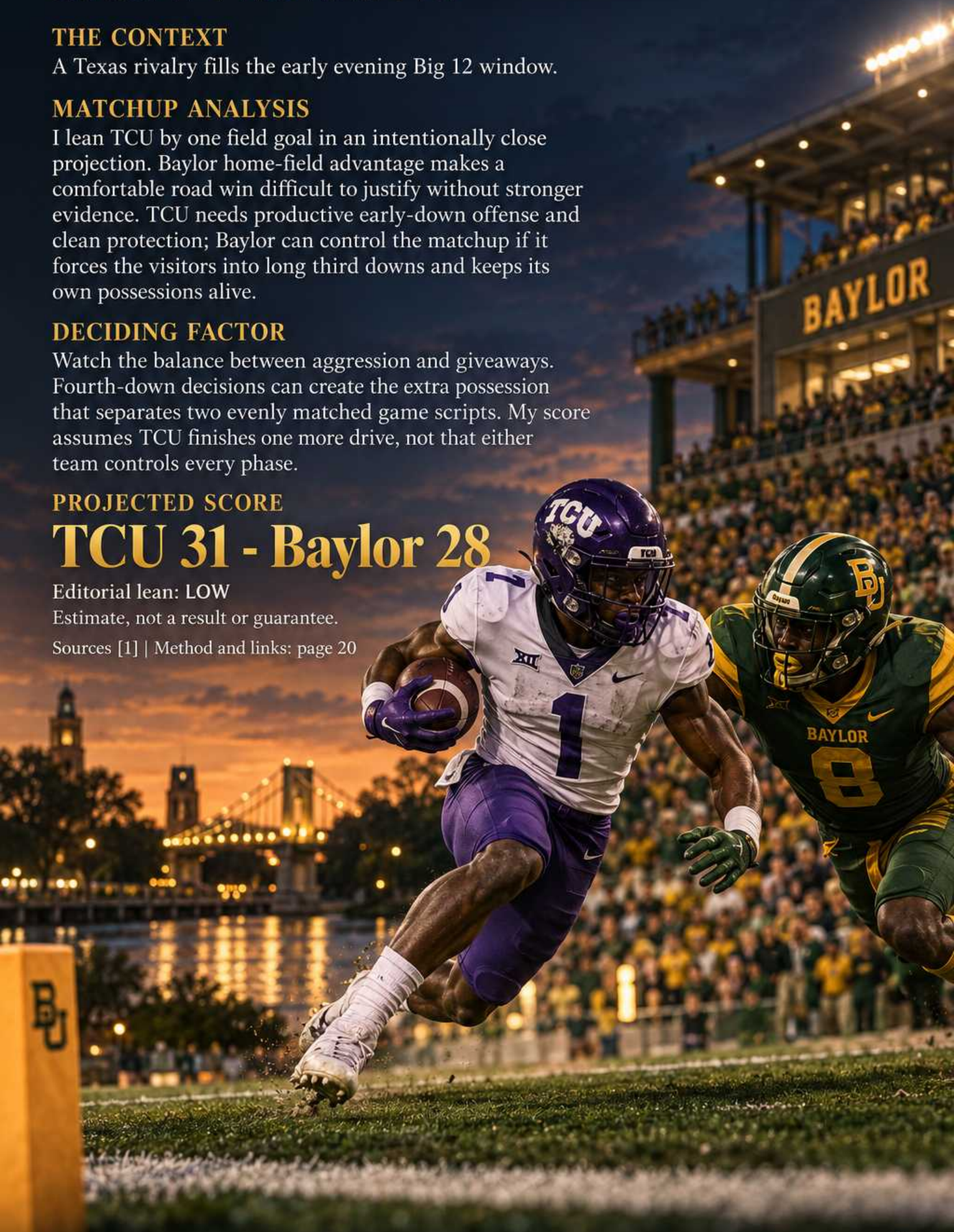
## PROJECTED SCORE

# TCU 31 - Baylor 28

Editorial lean: LOW

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1] | Method and links: page 20



# NORTH CAROLINA AT DUKE

SAT OCT 17 | 3:30 PM ET | ESPN2

## THE CONTEXT

North Carolina beat Pitt 21-17 in Week 6.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

The rivalry setting gives this afternoon game value beyond national rankings. I take Duke narrowly at home, while North Carolina latest result is a reason to resist a comfortable favorite narrative. North Carolina can build on that momentum by playing patiently and avoiding the mistakes that hand a rival short scoring fields.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch third-down protection and which team turns its first red-zone opportunity into a touchdown. Duke needs to keep the game on schedule; repeated pressure on its own offense could quickly shift this low-confidence forecast toward North Carolina.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Duke 27 - North Carolina 24

Editorial lean: **LOW**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,3] | Method and links: page 20



# UTAH AT COLORADO

SAT OCT 17 | 10:15 PM ET | ESPN

## THE CONTEXT

Utah holds the No. 11 spot in the current AP poll.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

Utah is the editorial choice, but a road game in Boulder still requires disciplined communication and controlled tempo. Colorado can challenge the forecast by creating explosive gains before Utah settles into a possession advantage. The visitors should favor reliable progress over a series of ambitious throws that leave the defense returning quickly to the field.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch whether Colorado can create pressure while keeping enough defenders in coverage. If Utah repeatedly reaches second-and-short, the projected margin becomes easier to envision. A fast Colorado start would force a more open game than this estimate assumes.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Utah 31 - Colorado 20

Editorial lean: **MODERATE**

*Estimate, not a result or guarantee.*

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20



# WAKE FOREST AT CALIFORNIA

SAT OCT 17 | 10:30 PM ET | ESPN2

## THE CONTEXT

Wake Forest is newly ranked at No. 21.

## MATCHUP ANALYSIS

This late ACC road trip is a useful test of how much weight to give a fresh ranking. I lean Wake Forest only narrowly. California can challenge the visitors through a patient opening and clean tackling, while Wake needs to avoid turning a long trip into a sequence of hurried or mistake-filled possessions.

## DECIDING FACTOR

Watch the first quarter and the defensive adjustments after halftime. California can make this forecast look optimistic if it controls field position and denies easy completions. The three-point projection leaves plenty of room for the home team to win a close finish.

## PROJECTED SCORE

# Wake Forest 27 - California 24

Editorial lean: **LOW**

Estimate, not a result or guarantee.

Sources [1,2] | Method and links: page 20

# SOURCES & EDITORIAL NOTES

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RESEARCH CUTOFF: OCTOBER 12, 2026

- [1] **FBSchedules: October 17 TV selections**  
Schedule, kickoff times and broadcasters.
- [2] **Associated Press: October 11 Top 25**  
Rankings and national context.
- [3] **Reuters: October 10 Top 25 roundup**  
Completed Week 6 results.
- [4] **BYU Athletics: College GameDay announcement**  
Unbeaten records and Provo matchup context.
- [5] **Nebraska Athletics: Oregon kickoff update**  
11:00 PM ET kickoff confirmed.

CLICK EACH SOURCE TO OPEN THE ORIGINAL

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## HOW TO READ THE SCORES

These are original qualitative editorial estimates, not statistical model outputs, betting lines or calibrated win probabilities. Recent results, rankings, venue and possible game scripts inform each lean. Low means a fragile edge; moderate means a clearer editorial preference; provisional flags material uncertainty.

Schedules and reported results are sourced facts, Tactical interpretations and projected scores are opinions. Rankings are AP rankings as of October 11. Final injury reports and weather are not assumed known; check official updates before kickoff.

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