

COLLEGES

UK looks to snap home losing streak vs. SEC foes

Ryan Black

Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

LEXINGTON — Now in Year 13 guiding the Kentucky football program, coach Mark Stoops has a 4-8 on-field record versus Florida. But the good news for Stoops and the Wildcats?

Three of those victories have occurred in the past four years. (Though the 2021 win, along with UK’s nine other victories that season, later were stricken from the record because of NCAA violations.) Kentucky and Florida renew their rivalry Saturday night.

The Wildcats (3-5, 1-5 SEC) welcome the Gators (3-5, 2-3) to Kroger Field for a conference clash.

One difference this year is the date.

For more than three decades, UK and UF normally have squared off in either September or October. Not this fall, however.

This marks the first time since 1990 Florida will play in Lexington in November. The Wildcats hope Saturday goes better than that matchup: The Steve Spurrier-led Gators had no issues at then-Commonwealth Stadium, cruising to a 47-15 victory on the strength of four touchdown passes from Shane Matthews.

After a 10-3 road triumph over Auburn last week, UK is gunning for consecutive SEC wins. And the hosts seek an end to a 10-game losing streak in conference home games; its last victory against a league foe in Lexington was against Florida in September 2023.

Kentucky vs. Florida prediction

If this game was judged on vibes alone, Kentucky and Florida are at opposite ends of the spectrum. The Wildcats are riding high after their first SEC win in more than a year. And a path — narrow though it may be — to bowl eligibility has come into focus. Add a victory Saturday and another one next week over FCS foe Tennessee Tech, and all UK needs to do is find a way to topple either Vanderbilt or Louisville for Victory No. 6. Florida, on the other end, expended a momentous amount of energy in attempting to upend arch nemesis Georgia last week. The Gators, in their first game under interim coach Billy Gonzales, couldn’t complete the upset of the Bulldogs, losing 24-20.



Kentucky head coach Mark Stoops gives a thumbs up before a 2023 game against Florida at Kroger Field in Lexington.  
JORDAN PRATHER/USA TODAY SPORTS

What’s the motivation level for Florida players at this point? Gonzales isn’t a candidate to be the full-time coach. Gators with NFL aspirations already are likely thinking about draft preparations; those not eligible to head to the pros presumably have their eyes on the transfer portal and their next college destination. Point blank: UK is playing for far more Saturday. It’ll show as it ends a 10-game skid in SEC home games with a double-digit win.

Scouting report

Why Kentucky has an advantage:

Cutter Boley keeps progressing. Does the redshirt freshman need to cut down on turnovers? Of course.

But he’s been thrown into the fire in a season in which he was expected to be able to sit behind (and learn from) Zach Calzada. That hasn’t happened. While there have been rough patches, Boley has shown enough flashes of brilliance that the Wildcats should have hope for the future.

Florida’s defense should pose a challenge Saturday. But Boley should be up for the task.

**Why Florida has an advantage:** The Gators have more overall talent. Quarter-

back DJ Lagway and Jadan Baugh are one of the best backfield combinations in the country. Kentucky knows that all too well given the pair tore the Wildcats’ defense to shreds last season. If Baugh and Lagway are anywhere close to that level Saturday, it’ll be a long night for UK.

**Score prediction as the Kentucky Wildcats take on the Florida Gators**

Kentucky 27, Florida 16.

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Our college football Week 11 picks

Payton Titus

Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Welcome to Week 11!

The ACC’s last undefeated team went down last weekend in extraordinary fashion, putting the league’s College Football Playoff résumé in danger. Another Power Four coach got canned. And No. 1 Ohio State may have a Heisman Trophy winner on its hands with Julian Sayin.

The Courier Journal’s picks slate this week includes California at No. 15 Louisville, Florida at Kentucky, Wake Forest at No. 11 Virginia, Florida State at Clemson and No. 2 Indiana at Penn State.

Here’s a look at this week’s picks. As is our custom, predictions are straight-up winners and losers (not against the spread), with rankings based on the latest US LBM Coaches Poll. All times listed are ET, and all odds listed are per DraftKings as of Tuesday.

California at No. 15 Louisville

**How to watch:** 7 p.m. Saturday, ESPN2

**The picks:** Eight for Louisville

**Betting line:** Louisville -19.5, over/under 50.5 points

Louisville’s CFP hopes are still alive, but the Cardinals will probably have to win out for that to materialize. Luckily for the Cards, they’re heavily favored against the Cal Bears. Louisville leads the ACC in total defense, while Cal’s scoring offense ranks 12th in the league. Even without running back Isaac Brown due to injury, U of L should walk away from this game 8-1.

Florida at Kentucky

**How to watch:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday, SEC Network

**The picks:** Four for Kentucky, and four for Florida (Payton Titus, Jason Frakes, Alexis Cubit and Natalie Pierre)

**Betting line:** Florida -3, over/under 43.5 points

Kentucky broke its 13-month SEC losing streak last weekend with a win against Auburn, which facilitated the firing of Hugh Freeze. Florida came close to upsetting rival Georgia on Saturday in Billy Gonzales’ first game as interim head coach, but the Gators will be without star wide receiver Dallas Wilson the rest of the season after he broke a bone in his foot. UF will have Jadan Baugh in the backfield, though, which could pose a threat to UK as it looks to win a conference game at home for the first time since September 2023.

Wake Forest at No. 11 Virginia

**How to watch:** 7 p.m. Saturday, ESPN

**The picks:** Eight for Virginia

**Betting line:** Virginia -6.5, over/under 47.5 points

Virginia is in the driver’s seat for the ACC championship after Georgia Tech and Miami lost last weekend. And UVA’s upcoming game against Wake Forest shouldn’t change that. The Cavaliers are undefeated in league play despite having lost a nonconference game against ACC foe N.C. State earlier this season. The Demon Deacons lost 42-7 to the Florida State Seminoles on Saturday, giving FSU its first ACC win of the year.

Florida State at Clemson

**How to watch:** 7 p.m. Saturday, ACC Network

**The picks:** Five for Clemson, and three for Florida State (Jason Frakes, Alexis Cubit and Natalie Pierre)

**Betting line:** Clemson -2.5, over/under 56.5 points

Florida State, 15th in the ACC, and Clemson, 12th, face off this weekend in a weird game between two historically dominant programs. It feels like a must-win for both teams, which sit at 4-4 and 3-5, respectively, if either wants to

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| WEEK 11                 |             |            |            |             |            |            |             |            |
|                         |             |            |            |             |            |            |             |            |
| CAL @ Louisville        | Louisville  | Louisville | Louisville | Louisville  | Louisville | Louisville | Louisville  | Louisville |
| Florida @ Kentucky      | Florida     | Kentucky   | Kentucky   | Florida     | Kentucky   | Florida    | Florida     | Kentucky   |
| Wake Forest @ Virginia  | Virginia    | Virginia   | Virginia   | Virginia    | Virginia   | Virginia   | Virginia    | Virginia   |
| Florida State @ Clemson | Florida St. | Clemson    | Clemson    | Florida St. | Clemson    | Clemson    | Florida St. | Clemson    |
| Indiana @ Penn State    | Indiana     | Indiana    | Indiana    | Indiana     | Indiana    | Indiana    | Indiana     | Indiana    |

STEPHANIE STREMPLEWSKI/COURIER JOURNAL

achieve bowl eligibility. Oddsmakers expect it to be a close game.

No. 2 Indiana at Penn State

**How to watch:** 12 p.m. Saturday, Fox

**The picks:** Eight for Indiana

**Betting line:** Indiana -14.5, over/under 49.5 points

Indiana has never won at Penn State. While Beaver Stadium is one of the toughest places to play in college football, these Nittany Lions are not as intimidating as they usually are. The current No. 2 team has quite an edge on the preseason No. 2 team. Indiana is undefeated, whereas Penn State has lost all five of its Big Ten games so far.

The standings

- 1st – Natalie Pierre, 42-13
  - 2nd – C.L. Brown, 41-14
  - 3rd (tie) – Rich Barak and Ryan Black, 37-18
  - 5th – Payton Titus, 36-19
  - 6th – Brooks Holton, 35-20
  - 7th – Jason Frakes, 34-21
  - 8th – Alexis Cubit, 32-23
- Reach college sports enterprise reporter Payton Titus at [ptitus@gannett.com](mailto:ptitus@gannett.com) and follow her on X at [petitus25](https://twitter.com/petitus25). Subscribe to her “Full-court Press” newsletter here for a behind-the-scenes look at how college sports’ biggest stories are impacting Louisville and Kentucky athletics.