



35th Bayou Classic Means More Than Usual

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When Grambling and Southern meet on Saturday for the 35th Bayou Classic, there will be more than bragging rights on the line. A win for the Tigers (9-0, 6-2 SWAC) gives them the Western Division title and a spot in the conference championship game. However, should the Jaguars (6-4, 5-1) come away with the victory there will be a three-way tie atop the division between Grambling, Southern and Prairie View A&M and the division winner will be decided by a coin flip. Southern leads the series though the teams have split the last four meetings with the Jaguars winning 22-13 last year.

Grambling enters the contest on an eight game winning streak, including a 33-7 victory over Texas Southern last weekend. The second-best rushing offense in the conference is led by the sophomore tandem of RB Cornelius Walker (140-653-3) and QB Greg Dillon (138-540-2). A third sophomore, Frank Warren, is third on the team (93-292-3) and led the unit with 113 yards on 18 carries against Texas Southern. Dillon is the league's eighth-best rusher and also ranks tenth in passing (88-159, 14 TDs, 7 ints.) in terms of yards per game. His favorite receiving targets are senior Nick Lewis (30-408-5), freshman Kenneth Batiste (21-177-2), sophomore Kiare Thompson (18-212-4) and junior tight end Larry Donnell (17-220-6). The Tigers' offense is so successful thanks in large part to an offensive line whose average weight is more than 300 pounds.

Grambling's defense, ranked second in the SWAC in points allowed (13.4) and third in yards allowed (260.8), is led by senior LB Keefe Hall (82 tackles, 1.5 sacks), senior DB Jack Jeffery (66 tackles), junior DB T.J. McCord (47 tackles, 3 ints.), senior DT Melvin Matthews (7 sacks, 14.5 tackles for loss) and junior DB Desmond Lenard (5 ints, TD).

Southern enters the Classic following a 15-0 win over Alabama State and brings the conference's most potent offense (422.7 ypg, 29.7 ppg) led by junior QB Bryant Lee. Lee leads the SWAC in completions (205), yards (2,498) and touchdowns (17) while throwing just seven interceptions. His two favorite targets are among the best in the conference: junior Juamorris Stewart (67-964-11) and senior Del Roberts (44-586-4). Other top receivers are junior Clevan White (35-368-1), senior RB Kendrick Smith (20-204-1), junior Curry Allen (19-165-1) and sophomore Corderious Gregory (15-221-2); all but Roberts and Smith stand at least 6-3. Smith ranks fourth in rushing with 520 yards and two touchdowns on 124 carries, while Lee has done enough with his legs to rank seventh (133-510-6).

Southern's defense is led by senior LB John Malveaux, seventh in the SWAC with 81 tackles, senior DB Glenn Bell (70 tackles, sack), senior end Vincent Lands (65 tackles, 6 sacks) and senior DB Joe Manning (52 tackles, 2 ints.).