



Projected Standings

1. MEMPHIS
2. TULANE
3. UTSA
4. SOUTH FLORIDA
5. EAST CAROLINA
6. NORTH TEXAS
7. UAB
8. ARMY
9. FLORIDA ATLANTIC
10. NAVY
11. RICE
12. CHARLOTTE
13. TULSA
14. TEMPLE



Byrum Brown - QB - USF

The Premier “Group of 5” Conference?

On one hand, the strength of the conference took another hit when SMU left for the ACC a year after Cincinnati, UCF, and Houston all left for the Big 12. On the other hand, ironically, the opportunity for the American to once again reach the College Football Playoff has increased significantly in the new expanded format. Since 2014, no “Group of 5” (a curse word in the American vocabulary) conference has put more teams in New Year’s Six games than the American. In theory, that should mean the American is set up well to appear in the Playoff on a frequent basis even though many of the teams that built the conference’s success are now playing elsewhere.

While the Playoff is obviously an important discussion, college football is far more than just the postseason tournament at the end of the year. What makes this game so special is the pageantry, traditions, rivalries, and fan bases all around the country. There is no better showing of the spirit of college football than the Army/Navy rivalry. Both schools now reside in the American and even though their Week 16 meeting is technically a non-conference game, the eyes on this game across the country should benefit the conference as a whole.

Even if you ignore the top talent in the conference for a moment, you’ll still find thrilling football waiting for you in the American. If you love electric offense, a team like North Texas has you covered with TCU transfer Chandler Morris stepping in to run a system that produced the sixth-most points in the country. UAB’s Jacob Zeno quietly posted one of the most accurate passing seasons in college football history.

So, let’s talk about the Playoff. Memphis, Tulane, UTSA all have great shots at that Group of Five Playoff bid by virtue of winning the American and all three face some of the best teams in college football in the non-conference. Memphis heads to Florida State where they will face their former coach Mike Norvell. Tulane faces both Kansas State and Oklahoma in back-to-back weeks. The Wildcats actually visit Tulane following a shocking 2022 upset that kicked off the Green Wave’s run of dominance the past two seasons. UTSA travels to Austin to face off against the Texas Longhorns. There’s certainly still a path to a playoff for the conference even if these teams go 0-4. However, if one of the AAC teams can pull an upset, it will not only be a premier upset, but it will give that team a resume boost that most likely can’t be matched by anyone in the other Group of 5 conferences.

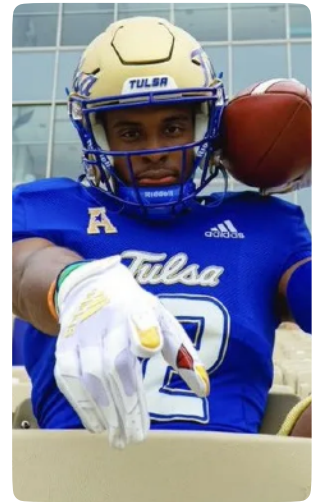
Tulane has to replace their best quarterback in franchise history, Michael Pratt. The same story rings true for UTSA who must replace seven-year star Frank Harris. Memphis, on the other hand, does not. Seth Henigan, who is already the all-time leading passer for the Tigers, comes back for his fourth season and returns both of his favorite targets in Roc Taylor (1,083 yards) and DeMeer Blankumsee (901 yards). That doesn’t mean it’s impossible for Tulane and UTSA to win the American, far from it. Tulane pulls Ty Thompson from Oregon to play quarterback and UTSA will turn to Owen McCown who had a good showing in the Frisco Bowl.

South Florida had a great first season under Alex Golesh and they also pose a threat in the conference title race. They also possess a star quarterback in Byrum Brown who threw for 3,292 yards and ran for 809! That’s *probably* the end of the list in terms of contenders, but the games aren’t played on paper. If you’re looking for the best that the Group of 5 has to offer, look no further than the American conference.

15 Must-Watch Games

Sept 7: UTSA @ Texas St.	Sept 14: UNT @ Tx Tech	Oct 11: Memphis @ USF
Sept 7: KSU @ Tulane	Sept 14: Rice @ Houston	Nov 1: USF @ FAU
Sept 14: App State @ ECU	Sept 14: Tulsa @ OKST	Nov 2: Memphis @ UTSA
Sept 14: Memphis @ FSU	Sept 21: USF @ Miami	Nov 28: Memphis @ Tulane
Sept 14: FIU @ FAU	Sept 28: USF @ Tulane	Dec 14: Army vs. Navy

Fun Fact: The American features one of the most fascinating coaching stories: Biff Poggi. The former hedge fund investor played in college with Dan Marino and won 13 high school state championships

Offensive MVP**Seth Henigan - QB****Defensive MVP****Colin Ramos - LB****Top Newcomer****Chandler Morris - QB****Top Freshman****Josh Smith - WR****5th and Goal Preseason All-AAC Team****First Team****Second Team**

QB Seth Henigan - Memphis	Byrum Brown - South Florida
RB Makhi Hughes - Tulane	Dean Connors - Rice
WR Roc Taylor - Memphis	Kamdyn Benjamin - Tulsa
WR Mario Williams - Tulane	Demeer Blankumsee - Memphis
WR Sean Atkins - South Florida	Amare Thomas - UAB
TE Oscar Cardenas - UTSA	Bryce Damous - UAB
OG Xavier Hill - Memphis	Zane Herring - South Florida
OT Connor Finucane - Army	Rashad Green - Tulane
C Vincent Murphy - Tulane	Federico Maranges - Florida Atlantic
OT Connor McMahon - Navy	Parker Moorner - East Carolina
OG Gabe Blair - North Texas	Jonah Gambill - Memphis
K Chase Allen - UTSA	Jacob Barnes - Tulane

First Team**Second Team**

DE Chad Stephens - East Carolina	Desmond Little - UAB
DT D'Anta Johnson - East Carolina	Brandon Brown - UTSA
DT Patrick Jenkins - Tulane	Roderick Brown - North Texas
DE Owen Ostroski - Tulsa	Jimmori Robinson - UTSA
LB Chandler Martin - Memphis	Kaleb Fortner - Army
LB Colin Ramos - Navy	Josh Percy - Rice
LB Jesus Machado - Tulane	Jackson Ambush - Florida Atlantic
CB Dontae Balfour - Charlotte	Sean Fresch - Rice
CB Shavon Revel - East Carolina	Dashaun Peele - Navy
S Gabe Taylor - Rice	Andreas Keaton - Temple
S Logan Berryhill - South Florida	Rayuan Lane - Navy
P Riley Riethman - Navy	Logan Lupo - Florida Atlantic

American Championship Game - Campus Site
Friday, December 6 - 8:00 PM ET ABC

Photo via USF Athletics (Left)
 Photos via AP News, Navy Sports, Dallas Morning News, Rivals (Top)