

# Phil Steele Plus Inside the Pressbox

WEEK 1A

Saturday, August 28th

**299 NEBRASKA**

1:00 p.m.

**300 ★ ILLINOIS**

**Upset  
POW**



**301 HAWAII**

3:30 p.m.

**302 UCLA**

**303 UTEP**

9:30 p.m.

**304 NEW MEXICO ST**

**305 CONNECTICUT**

2:00 p.m.

**306 FRESNO ST**

**SOUTHERN UTAH**

10:00 p.m.

**SAN JOSE ST**

**EASTERN ILLINOIS**

6:00 p.m.

**INDIANA ST**

**ALCORN ST**

7:00 p.m.

**NC CENTRAL**

**Phil Steele's**  
**SPECIAL PLAYS OF THE WEEK**  
**UPSET PLAY OF THE WEEK**  
this is a Best Bet  
★ **Illinois 28 Nebraska 27**  
**HIGH SCORING POW**  
**No Selection this week**









Category	Team & Margin	Phil's Forecast:
Las Vegas Line	San Jose St By 24.5	<p>These two teams have met twice before. First met in 2000 (SJSt win 47-7) and last met in '10 with SJSt (-14) only winning 16-11. The Thunderbirds had 3 straight winning seasons from 2015-'17 including winning shares of the Big Sky Title &amp; making the playoffs in both '15 &amp; '17. After finishing 9-3 in '17 (Most wins ever as an FCS team) the shockingly plummeted to 1-10 in 2018 &amp; finished 3-9 in '19. In the spring they finished just 1-5 but their 5 losses were by a combined 15 pts with 4 being by 3 pts or less &amp; they led Big Sky Champion Weber St 16-9 in the 4Q but lost 19-16. QB Justin Miller was a first time starter in the spring and threw for 1697 (66%, 15-4). Despite their records Southern Utah was just -25 ypg in Big Sky play in '19 and -32 ypg in the spring. San Jose is off an incredible season winning the MWC and has 19 returning starters They do have a big game vs USC on deck but do take care of business when expected to as they are 11-4 ATS as a HF the last 7 years and 8-1 SU and ATS vs FCS teams since 2012. They did lost to UCDavis outright in 2018. Southern Utah is 0-9 SU vs FBS teams since 2014 and have lost the last 4 ATS losing by an average of 35.8 ppg including a 56-23 loss to UNLV in 2019. My computer is calling for San Jose to win this comfortably and they are only a 3 TD favorite.</p>
Las Vegas Total	56.5 Points	
+/- Ratings	San Jose St By 29.2	
Game Grade	San Jose St By 42.6	
Computer Yards	San Jose St 770- (-51)	
Computer Points	San Jose St 44-6	
Phil Steele	San Jose St by 30	
		<b>San Jose St 40 Southern Utah 10</b>

Category	Team & Margin	Phil's Forecast:
Las Vegas Line	Indiana St By 13.5	<p>Heading into the 2018 season, E.Illinois was off a 6-5 season and brought back 13 st'rs but finished 3-8. This forced a coaching change &amp; EIU brought in long-time Northwestern assistant coach Adam Cushing. The first-year HC got back 11 starters in '19 but the Panthers went just 1-11. Last season the Panthers played 6 games in the spring and finished just 1-5 with their lone win coming against Tennessee Tech 28-20. After two years as Pass Coor at Wyoming in '15-'16, Curt Mallory, son of former Indiana HC Bill Mallory, was named the Indiana St HC in '17. After going 0-11 his first season he was named the MVFC Coach of Year after leading them to 7-4 record in '18. They took a step back in '19 falling to 5-7 and then after not playing in the fall last year they opted to sit out the spring so have not played in two years. Indiana St plays in a much tougher conference (Missouri Valley) and did almost upset Kansas in 2019. They are the stronger team but Vegas has this pegged correctly as they are favored by 2 TD's and it will be interesting to watch how a team that sat out last year plays in the opener.</p>
Las Vegas Total	50 Points	
+/- Ratings	Indiana St By 18.8	
Game Grade	Eastern Illinois By 48.9	
Computer Yards	Indiana St 383-323	
Computer Points	Indiana St 35-18	
Phil Steele	Indiana St by 14	
		<b>Indiana St 31 Eastern Illinois 17</b>

Category	Team & Margin	Phil's Forecast:
Las Vegas Line	Nc Central By 5.5	<p>Alcorn State has become SWAC royalty under HC Fred "Air" McNair. Alcorn won back-to-back SWAC titles in '18 and '19 and have made three Celebration Bowl appearances in the game's brief five-year history. They did not lose the last two. Years to North Carolina A&amp;T. McNair is a two-time SWAC Coach of the Year ('18,'19). In '18, Alcorn outgained opponents by 183 ypg, outscored them by 12 ppg, and held a +6 TO margin. In '19, Alcorn outgained opponents by 54 ypg, outscored them by 11 ppg, but boasted a +12 TO margin. While Alcorn has lost five all-conference performers and three HBCU All-Americans from their SWAC championship squad in '19, they return All-SWAC 1st Team performer, HBCU All-American, and the SWAC Offensive Player of the Year in '19, Sr. Felix "Triggerman" Harper. They do lose their top RB and only have 2 starters back on the O-line from '19 after sitting out all of last year. They lost 3 of their top 4 DL and #1 tackling LB but return 3 of the top 5 from the secondary. NC Central experienced a four-year stretch from '14-'17 where they went 31-15, including an impressive 18-4 at home. This stretch was highlighted by a 9-3 campaign in '16 that saw NC Central go a perfect 5-0 at home and capture their first MEAC title since '73 while finishing #19 in the nation in the FCS Coaches Poll. NC Central earned a trip to the Celebration Bowl and is the only active MEAC member to appear in the game. NC Central outgained opponents by an average of 87 ypg in '16. In '17, however, the number shrunk to just 3 ypg. The TO margin improved from -7 to +3 in '17, but NC Central went 7-4 and failed to repeat as champs. In '18, NC Central fell to -68 ypg and recorded their first losing season in five years. HC Trei Oliver, was brought in to lead his alma mater in '19. NC Central showed improvement, more than halving the difference in ypg (-32) but slipped to 4-8 and had their first losing season at home since '13 (2-3) while being shutout by a combined 78-0 in their final two games. Alcorn St is the stronger team and much more used to playing in big games</p>
Las Vegas Total	69 Points	
+/- Ratings	Nc Central By 71.2	
Game Grade	Nc Central By 0.0	
Computer Yards	Alcorn St 375-344	
Computer Points	Alcorn St 41-24	
Phil Steele	Alcorn St by 17	
		<b>Alcorn St 41 NC Central 24</b>