

TURNOVERS = OIUORANIUT

Turnovers can have a huge impact on games and on a team's season. They can also lead to many misleading final scores and make or break a season. BY PHIL STEELE

This article was in my very first magazine back in 1995 and really got me hooked on uncovering different metrics to help me forecast how teams will fare the next year. That year I went back and looked at three years worth of information on teams that had double-digit turnovers the previous year. The data from those three years showed that teams that benefitted from double-digit turnovers one year had a weaker or the same record 75% of the time. The opposite was true for teams off a season with a negative double-digit turnover ratio also with a 75% success rate.

That first magazine was just 192 pages and printed on black and white newsprint. There have been many changes in the world since 1995 and a lot of changes with the magazine, which is now full color and almost double the size. There has been one constant over the 30 years and that is the results of the Turnovers Equals Turnaround article which continues to hit at least 70% on a yearly basis. If anything, the results are getting stronger as the last twelve years 74 teams have benefitted from +14 turnovers or more. The next season they had the weaker or same record 91% of the time. Last year 13 teams made the Going Down Box and 11 of them had a weaker record. Last year 9 teams made the Going Up Box and none of the 9 had a weaker record for a success rate of 91.3%!

In the last six years there have been 68 teams in the Going Up Box. Only 14 of those teams had a weaker record the next year with the box going 45-14-9. In 2021 Tulane was -9 in TO's just missing last year's box but went from 2-10 to 11-2. The last 4 years there were 53 teams in the Going Down box and 39 had a weaker record. That means the Going Up and Going Down boxes combined have gone 103-34-13 the last 6 years, a success rate of 77.3%.

Turnovers can have a significant impact on games as well during a team's season. They can also lead to many misleading final scores. Last year Louisville was +4 TO's vs ND and won 33-20 despite fd's and yards being even. The next week I used Pitt +7 on the Phil Steele Plus Tour and they upset Lville 38-21. I also used ND -2' vs USC and they won 48-20! Each week on my Phil Steele Plus Tour with selections, I will give you a Misleading Final play of the week for free (see page 11) and usually 6-8 other free plays with complete reasoning.

This is the article that got me going on all the different metrics that I use in the magazine. What turned out to be 3 years of research has now grown into 34 years (90-23). This is the 30th year for this article and it has been a proven winner each year of the magazine. Now here is a look at how the FCS teams have done.

GOING UP

FCS Teams with -9 or more Turnovers last 7 years

TOTAL	IMPROVED/SAME	IMPROVED	SAME	WEAKER
99	80 (80.8%)	70 (70.7%)	10 (12.6%)	16 (20.2%)

Teams that suffered bad breaks the year before are usually headed for better fortune the following season. In the FBS in the past 34 years, there have been 408 teams that finished the season minus double-digits in TO's. Of those 408 teams, 272 (67%) have had better records the next year! **Teams with a negative double-digit TO ratio had the same or stronger records 77% of the time since 1991.**

In my seven years of research for the FCS the numbers were even a little stronger. There have been 99 teams in that span that were coming off a season of -9 turnovers or more and the chart above shows you a 80.8% success rate! Teams at -13 or more had a 86.5% success rate and those at -16 or more were at a 93.3% success rate! Teams with -9 TO' are actually 17-3 85%!!

Let's take a look at some teams who had terrible luck (a lot of TO's) in one year then drastically improved the next year without those negative TO's.

Austin Peay was 0-11 in 2016 but were -11 in TO's. In 2017 they were net 0 in TO's and improved all the way to 8-4 under Will Healy.

Indiana St was -13 in turnovers in 2017 and went just 0-11. The next year they were actually +9 in TO's and improved all the way up to 7-4! The Stock Market Indicator and TO's would both have had them regressing in 2019 and they dropped back to 5-7.

Incarinate Word was -16 in TO's in 2017 and just 1-10 but +4 in TO's in 2018 and improved to 6-5.

In '22, Idaho, Western Carolina and Prarie View A&M were all off season of - double digit turnover and all 3 managed to go from a losing record to a winning record!

As mentioned above even teams that were -5 in turnovers or more had a 77.9% success rate in having either a stronger or the same record the next year.

In the box to the left is this years Going UP teams that had the worse turnover luck last year. And check out my blog on July 23 for the complete numbers breakdown of each category.

TURNOVER	MARGIN
Valparaiso	-15
Idaho St	-14
Indiana St	-14
Cal Poly	-12
Lindenwood	-12
The Citadel	-12
Delaware St	-12
East Tenn St	-12
Gardner Webb	-11
Lehigh	-10
North Alabama	-9

GOING DOWN

FCS teams with +7 or more Turnovers last 7 years

TOTAL	WEAKER/SAME	WEAKER	SAME	IMPROVED
131	101 (77%)	83 (63.3%)	18 (13.7%)	30 (23%)

Teams that benefitted from double-digit turnovers the previous year rarely get a repeat of that good fortune. In the last 34 years, 507 teams have had plus double-digit turnovers. Of those 507, 328 have had weaker records the following year (65%). Only 138 teams (27%) have improved their record and the other 41 (8%) finished with the same record. **Teams with a positive double-digit TO ratio have had the same or weaker records 73% of the time since 1990.** If we tighten the parameters to +14 TO's over the last twelve years, just 9 (13%) of those 72 teams have had an improved record. Here a look at my FCS research.

THE LAST 7 YEARS College Teams with +10 or more Turnovers				
TOTAL	WEAKER/SAME	WEAKER	SAME	IMPROVED
73	55 (75.3%)	47 (64.3%)	8 (10.9%)	18 (24.6%)

In my seven years of research for the FCS the numbers are very similar. For the 27 teams that benefitted from +14 or more in TO's the previous year 18 had a weaker record, 4 had the same and only 5 improved for 81.4% success. Above I show the +10 which is the normal cut off but it is suprising that teams that had +7 to +9 had a great success rate with 46 of 58 teams having a weaker or the same record (79.3%) and that is why they are listed above in the box.

Here are some examples. In 2017 Southern Utah was 9-3 but +11 in TO's. The next year they fell to 1-10 with a -4 TO margin.

In 2021 ETennSt was +13 in TO's and were 11-2. In 2022 they were just +2 in TO's and fell to 3-8.

In 2018 Colgate was +15 in TO's and 10-2. In 2019 they went to -2 in TO's and were just 4-8. In 2021 Eastern Washington was 10-3 (+12 TO's) but dropped to 3-8 last year.

In the box to the left is this years Going Down teams that has the bestturnover luck last year and might not be as fortunate this year. Plus 7 teams not listed in box (no room) are Long Island, McNeese St, WCarolina, Northern Iowa, and NCA&T.

TURNOVER	MARGIN
North Dakota St	+19
Furman	+17
Eastern Illinois	+16
South Dakota St	+16
Bryant	+13
Alcorn St	+10
Jackson St	+9
Harvard	+9
Montana	+9
San Diego	+8
Southern Illinois	+8
Montana St	+8