

**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**

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 31 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 fourteen years 80 teams have benefitted from +14 turnovers or more. The next season they had the weaker or same record 86% of the time. The last two years 17 teams made the Going Up Box and only one of the 17 had a weaker record for a success rate of 94%! The last two years 23 teams have made the Going Down box and only 5 improved their record.

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 Pitt was +5 in TO's and blasted Syracuse 41-13! The next week an undefeated Pitt off a misleading final was thumped by SMU on the road by SMU 48-25. Syracuse off a misleading loss upset Virginia Tech at home. 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 35 years (90-'24). This is the 31st year for this article and it has been a proven winner each year. Now here is a look at how the FCS teams have done.

## GOING DOWN

### FCS teams with +7 or more Turnovers last 8 years

TOTAL	WEAKER/SAME	WEAKER	SAME	IMPROVED
150	112 (74.8%)	92 (61.8%)	20 (13.7%)	38 (25.2%)

Teams that benefitted from double-digit turnovers the previous year rarely get a repeat of that good fortune. In the last 35 years, 517 teams have had plus double-digit turnovers. Of those 517, 334 have had weaker records the following year (65%). Only 141 teams (27%) have improved their record and the other 43 (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 fourteen years, just 11 (13%) of those 80 teams have had an improved record. Here a look at my FCS research.

THE LAST 8 YEARS College Teams with +10 or more Turnovers				
TOTAL	WEAKER/SAME	WEAKER	SAME	IMPROVED
79	60 (75.9%)	52 (65.8%)	8 (10.1%)	19 (24.1%)

In my eight years of research for the FCS the numbers are very similar. For the 31 teams that benefitted from +14 or more in TO's the previous year 21 had a weaker record, 4 had the same and only 6 improved for 80.6% success. Above I show the +10 which is the normal cut off but it is surprising that teams that had +7 to +9 had a great success rate with 52 of 71 teams having a weaker or the same record (73.2%) 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 E Tenn St was +13 in TO's and were 11-2. In 2022 they were just +2 in TO's and fell to 3-8.

TURNOVER	MARGIN
North Dakota St	+19
Cent Conn St	+15

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 year's Going Down teams that has the best turnover 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, W Carolina, Northern Iowa, and NC A&T.

TURNOVER	MARGIN
North Dakota St	+19
Cent Conn St	+15
Norfolk St	+14
San Diego	+13
Morehead St	+13
Tarleton	+13
Incarnate Word	+13
Mercer	+12
SF Austin	+12
Alabama St	+11
Nicholls	+10
Richmond	+10
Yale	+10
South Dakota	+10
Stony Brook	+10