

# Phil Steele's 2026 PLUS/MINUS POWER RATINGS

If you have read the other parts of the magazine, I am sure you are familiar with the fact that I have **NINE different sets of power ratings** that I create each preseason to give me nine different ways of analyzing a team. Over the last decade or so, I have provided you with one of those sets here. It is the one that will most closely resemble the Top 25 polls as it is based on last year's scores with adjustments made for this season. Let me take a minute of your time to give you a little history of my fascination and dependency on power ratings when analyzing a team in the preseason and during the season. I started following college football with great intensity at about 8 years old. At that time (being a numbers guy) I devised my own set of power ratings which was based mostly on where the preseason magazines I was reading ranked the teams. I even awarded points at that time for how many player pictures each team had in the magazines. I updated those ratings during the season based on the final scores of the games.

One of the reasons for this particular article is that a few years later after compiling my ratings (and no longer counting pictures), I stumbled upon the *GamePlan* magazine. In the front of the magazine was a set of power ratings for each team! I now had two sets of power ratings on each team and I updated them both during the year giving me two different ways of looking at the strength of a team. Again this year, I thought for all of you who like to use a set of power ratings, I would provide you with one of my nine sets. Is this the main set of ratings I use? No, that would be my Power Poll rankings which are a combination of the nine sets. This is a solid set of numbers and what I have noticed is that it most closely resembles what the general perception of each team is heading into 2026 and Vegas' ratings.

Let me tell you about some of my other power ratings. One of my main sets is the talent rating. For this, I rank each position on every team from 4 for the weakest to 10 for the strongest in the country. They are ranked to the decimal. For example, I will rate a QB position at 7.87 if I feel they are a hair weaker than a 7.89 QB. I add all of the positions up, add in special teams and coaching and that set is ready. The second set to look at are my computer numbers. I take a look at last year's final numbers, which not only take into account the score of the game, but the strength of each team's offensive rush & pass and also the defensive rush and pass. When doing my power ratings I always award what I call a Plus/Minus for each position. If a team had an All-American VHT QB last year and now has an inexperienced non-VHT, then they would rate a minus 6. If a team had no experience at a position and suffered through injuries last year with poor production but now has everyone back, including the injured players who are more experienced while adding new talent to the mix, they would rate a plus 6. Everything else falls in between. To make my computer numbers for THIS year I looked at last year's final ratings and applied the Plus/Minus for each position to them to develop the computer projection. I mentioned that I rank each position from 4 to 10, which gives me a fresh set of numbers based just on this year and I have a formula which takes the talent of each position (example: pass offense would be QB plus WR plus OLine) and converts it to a computer number. I compare the two computer numbers derived from two different methods then put my own thoughts into refining the figures and come up with an opening number for the next season. I could write a book (or a magazine for that matter) on how I devise each of the nine sets but that gives you some idea of how I do two sets of my power ratings.

As for the ratings listed on the sides, these are my Plus/Minus ratings. I first take last year's final Plus/Minus ratings, which are calculated mostly by the score of each game last year and the strength of opponents played. Losing to Georgia by 5 would move a team up in the ratings (Georgia would have been expected to win big), while only beating UMass by 15 would probably move the same team down. I then take my aforementioned Plus/Minus ratings and add them to the totals. Some teams are weaker than last year and drop in the rankings, while the ones that are improved move up.

As mentioned this is just **ONE set of my power ratings**. A note here is that on page 46 I rank the teams based on the Power Poll, which is all 9 ratings combined, so that page does indeed differ with this one as far as rankings. The Plus/Minus ratings are a good set of ratings but I personally put more weight into the Power Poll. Here I list my Preseason 2026 Plus/Minus ratings for the upcoming campaign. I hope you find them useful.

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each week during the season for  
**UPDATED PLUS/MINUS POWER RATINGS**

SEC	
GEORGIA	131.99
TEXAS	131.95
OKLAHOMA	128.52
TEXAS A&M	128.08
MISSISSIPPI	127.86
ALABAMA	127.14
LSU	126.69
TENNESSEE	124.10
FLORIDA	121.61
MISSOURI	120.33
S CAROLINA	119.52
VANDERBILT	118.84
AUBURN	117.33
MISS ST	112.61
KENTUCKY	110.23
ARKANSAS	108.32

BIG TEN	
OHIO ST	133.68
OREGON	132.78
INDIANA	131.97
USC	127.50
MICHIGAN	125.57
WASHINGTON	124.84
PENN ST	124.72
IOWA	123.38
MINNESOTA	117.99
ILLINOIS	117.73
NEBRASKA	116.49
UCLA	112.96
WISCONSIN	111.67
MARYLAND	111.20
NORTHWESTERN	110.38
MICHIGAN ST	105.94
RUTGERS	105.58
PURDUE	100.90

ACC	
MIAMI, FL	129.93
SMU	123.52
CLEMSON	122.35
LOUISVILLE	120.55
VIRGINIA TECH	118.44
VIRGINIA	117.02
GEORGIA TECH	116.50
PITTSBURGH	116.45
FLORIDA ST	116.14
DUKE	114.49
NC STATE	114.45
WAKE FOREST	112.48
CALIFORNIA	111.64
N CAROLINA	107.97
SYRACUSE	105.88
STANFORD	101.40
BOSTON COLLEGE	101.11

BIG 12	
TEXAS TECH	128.25
BYU	125.62
UTAH	122.75
HOUSTON	121.75
ARIZONA	121.01
TCU	119.09
KANSAS ST	117.58
ARIZONA ST	116.58
BAYLOR	112.03
OKLAHOMA ST	111.94
KANSAS	111.05
W VIRGINIA	109.91
CINCINNATI	109.91
UCF	109.37
IOWA ST	106.21
COLORADO	105.36

IND/PAC 12	
NOTRE DAME	132.69
CONNECTICUT	96.57

AAC	
NAVY	111.25
TULANE	108.32
UTSA	106.67
USF	105.17
MEMPHIS	105.15
E CAROLINA	104.77
ARMY	104.64
TEMPLE	98.78
N TEXAS	97.61
FLORIDA ATLANTIC	97.00
TULSA	95.34
RICE	91.05
UAB	90.29
CHARLOTTE	83.05

MOUNTAIN WEST	
UNLV	111.02
NEW MEXICO	109.65
HAWAII	104.26
AIR FORCE	103.26
NORTH DAKOTA ST	102.30
WYOMING	94.66
NEVADA	91.42
SAN JOSE ST	88.71
N ILLINOIS	86.01
UTEP	85.57

SUN BELT	
JAMES MADISON	108.01
TROY	101.67
OLD DOMINION	100.75
GEORGIA SOUTHERN	97.81
MARSHALL	97.62
ARKANSAS ST	97.36
LA TECH	95.92
LOUISIANA	95.75
APPALACHIAN ST	91.89
COASTAL CAROLINA	90.90
SOUTH ALABAMA	90.14
ULM	85.37
S MISS	85.32
GEORGIA ST	85.04

CONFERENCE USA	
WKU	103.01
JAX STATE	99.81
LIBERTY	98.15
KENNESAW ST	97.56
DELAWARE	94.18
FLORIDA INT	93.51
MISSOURI ST	88.18
NEW MEXICO ST	87.85
MIDDLE TENN	84.34
SAM HOUSTON	83.05

MAC	
W MICHIGAN	103.82
MIAMI, OH	101.29
TOLEDO	99.35
OHIO	95.34
C MICHIGAN	94.34
E MICHIGAN	92.25
BUFFALO	92.14
BOWLING GREEN	89.81
AKRON	88.82
KENT ST	87.78
BALL ST	84.37
SACRAMENTO ST	83.61
MASSACHUSETTS	80.86

PAC-2	
BOISE ST	119.39
SAN DIEGO ST	107.80
FRESNO ST	107.52
WASHINGTON ST	101.00
TEXAS ST	100.33
UTAH ST	100.25
COLORADO ST	95.59
OREGON ST	94.65