

# TRASH TALK - RAIDER NATION EDITION

No silly, not *those* Raiders, Al Davis died years ago, he just forgot to advise his still ambulatory carcass. I'm talking about the Texas Tech Red Raiders baby! Yes, Mrs. Randiego's team is playing another huge game today, this week against the Oklahoma State Cowboys. OSU is the best team in Oklahoma according to Texas Radio (the one with the big beat).

Tech will get its first test as a top team with the Cowboys not far behind in statistics and personnel. The Cowboys and Red Raiders rank in the top 10 nationally in total offense and scoring. They are fighting not only for a share of the lead in the Big 12 South, but also for the opportunity to stay alive in the BCS national championship picture. What may be the most interesting match-up is Tech's No. 10 rushing defense against the Cowboys' No. 5 rushing offense. Tech's defensive line was by far the winning factor in controlling not only Colt McCoy – four sacks, one interception, one fumble – but also down in the trenches. Tech has allowed 349 yards per game this season and gave up less than 400 against Texas. The difference in the Longhorns and Cowboys are three talented running backs in Kendall Hunter (1,220 rushing yards) and Keith Totson (565 rushing yards). Add in quarterback Zac Robinson and the ability to run or throw, and suddenly a play-action pass to receiver Dez Bryant can turn the whole game around in a heartbeat. Robinson and Bryant have connected 60 times for 1,054 yards and 15 touchdowns this season. Another one could come down to the wire in Lubbock.

FAST FACTS: Cowboys – This is the third game in five weeks against a top 5

opponent on the road ... OSU is trying to win two games in one season against top 10 opponents for the first time since 1976 ... OSU hasn't won in Lubbock since 1944. Red Raiders – Own the nation's longest winning streak at 11 games, dating back to last season ... Raiders have won eight of the last 11 in the series ... Tech is 9-0 for the first time in 70 years.

The other huge game is Alabama and ~~Liar-Liar~~ Nick Saban returning to a Saban-hate filled Baton Rouge and it's LSU Cats. This could be ugly. The Tide can clinch the SEC West Championship with a win Saturday afternoon against LSU, and would appear to have clear sailing to a championship game against Florida in Atlanta. I don't think so; am picking LSU to pull off the upset.

Elsewhere around the NCAA, it is not the most fascinating week. Utah already beat TCU in a curiously important, but sloppy game. That leaves Utah and Boise State left alive in the all important "mid-major that's gonna get screwed by the BCS" category. Cal at USC is a big game, but won't be a good one. The Trojans will wax the Bears badly. How the hell USC is rated #7 in BCS behind some of those other one loss teams is baffling. They did this to USC the last two years in a row at the end of the season, and, at least last year, they were probably the best team in the country and absolutely should have been playing in the title game instead of that pathetic Ohio State excuse. Who didn't see that shellacking coming in the finale. Nobody; everyone knew, but there it was. Go figure.

In the National Favre League, there are actually, as opposed to the NCAA, several good matchups. Gosh bmaz, tell us about the mighty Bretts versus the Rams, you say. Okay, that is not the game of the week, but the Jets better watch out, the Rams show up to play at the damndest times. Steven Jackson is likely out

though, so i will stick with the Favres at home.

The two best games look to be the Gents at Iggles and masaccio's Titans at Da Bears. Both are wonderful matchups. Popular pundit wisdom seems to be that McNabb is going to rally the iggies over Eli. Yeah, I dunno about that. I think Good Eli comes to play and that the Giants are too consistent and solid for the Eagles, and the Philly fans get a little, um, you know, displeased. Again, go figure. And again, I am going to take the opponent of the Titans (they are not the Pats of Tom Brady and last year fer chrissakes, they gots to lose sooner or later). Plus it gives masaccio something to club me over the head with, and everybody enjoys that spectacle.

Other good games are the Bills at the Pats, I'll take the Pats, the Cheeseheads at Vikings, where I'll take the Pack, and the Colts at the Stillers. Don't know about the last one; no clue. But I know this, Big Ben is hurting (although Byron Leftwich looked awesome last week) and Willie Parker looks to be doubtful again. Plus, the Colts just flat out need the win more and are starting to come together now that Bob Sanders is back. Colts pull out a narrow win, maybe by a Vinateri field goal. The Monday Night game is right here in Phoenix. 49ers are in town. This is just about as unfathomable a concept as is imaginable, but look for the Cards to whup the Niners and raise their record to 6-3. On a related note, look for the world to end.

Get to hootin n hollerin, a whoopin and a whompin. Trash it up!