

What To Watch: Four Ranked Matchups Highlight Week 8 Slate



The college football schedule is continuing to ramp up as the season progresses, with four matchups between ranked teams this week with plenty of other exciting games gracing the schedule.

Outside of Ohio State and Penn State's top-10 matchup, three other games will take place between teams ranked in the top 20, evenly spaced throughout the day for your viewing pleasure.

Here are some of this week's top matchups:

No. 7 Penn State at No. 3 Ohio State (12 p.m., FOX): We normally avoid highlighting Ohio State games in this section considering there is plenty of other coverage of the Buckeyes at BuckeyeSports.com, but it feels wrong not to briefly discuss what will be the biggest game of the weekend.

Can James Franklin finally overcome Ohio State at Ohio Stadium? Will Ohio State's offense be up to the challenge against one of the nation's best defenses? Can Penn State pull off an explosive play against Ohio State's rapidly improving defense? All of these questions should go a long way in determining the outcome of this one, as well as who has the inside track in the Big Ten East.

No. 17 Tennessee at No. 11 Alabama (3:30 p.m., CBS): Alabama will be looking for revenge after falling to the Volunteers last season for the first time since 2006, but this is not the Crimson Tide of old that has dominated teams week-in and week-out.

Alabama is led by quarterback Jalen Milroe, who has thrown for 1,397 yards and 14 touchdowns while the Crimson Tide have allowed 31 (!) sacks in just seven games. Fortunately for the Volunteers, that has been a strength of their defense with 24 quarterback takedowns, good for fourth in the country.

But the Crimson Tide defense has been mostly up to the challenge, allowing just 16.0 points and 291.6 yards of offense per game, and that's including 34 points given up in a loss to Texas and 431 yards allowed in the season opener against Middle Tennessee State. Tennessee's Joe Milton has been efficient if not a true playmaker for the offense, throwing 10 touchdowns to four interceptions, and it could be an opportunity for an Alabama defense with seven interceptions already on the season.

No. 14 Utah at No. 18 USC (8 p.m., FOX): Things could get ugly here for USC if the Trojans suffer

another loss that would all-but eliminate them from College Football Playoff consideration.

USC is coming off a defeat at Notre Dame, where the Fighting Irish played a calm, cool and collected game, taking advantage of a porous Trojan defense - allowing 30.0 points and 397.0 yards per game - and forcing quarterback Caleb Williams into three interceptions and all-but ending his campaign for a repeat Heisman Trophy - pop some champagne, Archie.

Things do not get easier this week against Utah, considered by pretty much every metric an improved defense over Notre Dame. The Utes are allowing just 12.2 points and 277.8 yards per game, which could make for a long afternoon for USC. While Utah is not necessarily a juggernaut on offense - especially with the continued absence of quarterback Cameron Rising - it has not stopped the Utes from having a 5-1 record midway through the season, including a 34-point outburst in their recent win over California.

Other notable games on the schedule include:

- No. 22 Air Force at Navy (12 p.m., CBS)
- UCF at No. 6 Oklahoma (12 p.m., ABC)
- Washington State at No. 9 Oregon (3:30 p.m., ABC)
- South Carolina at No. 20 Missouri (3:30 p.m., SECN)
- Minnesota at No. 24 Iowa (3:30 p.m., NBC)
- No. 8 Texas at Houston (4 p.m., FOX)
- No. 13 Ole Miss at Auburn (7 p.m., ESPN)
- No. 2 Michigan at Michigan State (7:30 p.m., NBC)
- No. 16 Duke at No. 4 Florida State (7:30 p.m., ABC)
- Clemson at Miami (8 p.m., ACCN)
- Arizona State at No. 5 Washington (10:30 p.m., FS1)