



January 4, 2022

Texas Bowl – LSU/Kansas State – Lots going on here as the Tigers come in off their win in the season finale over Texas A&M and the 'Cats are off their 22-17 loss at Texas – let's take a look:

For LSU:

- OL coach Brad Davis is the interim HC for LSU – Davis will become the first African American HC of the Tigers (even if it's just for the bowl) and new HC Brian Kelly has announced that he will keep Davis on staff moving forward (<https://www.on3.com/college/lsu-tigers/news/lsu-tigers-offensive-line-coach-brad-davis-remain-on-staff-under-brian-kelly/amp/>)

– Davis from the article:

“I hope to in this role represent LSU in a great light, but also represent all young African-American coaches out there who are looking for this very opportunity,” Davis [said](#) on Monday. “It is a big deal. I want to go out there and coach this team to success. I want to win this game and, more importantly, when I look back, I want to be proud of what I did in this role.

“To not only help the young men in this program but help aspiring coaches, kids in North Baton Rouge who ride the transfer bus and may not see a way out, I was one of those kids and I’m here right now,” Davis continued. “I tell you what, utilizing the resources around you and having a prayin’ mama, you can be up here too, it’s easy.”

- So the Tigers may glean motivation from that, but their personnel issues are many – starting with the offense, starter Max Johnson has hit the portal and backup Garrett Nussmeier’s won’t play so that he can preserve his redshirt (LSU’s request for a waiver allowing him to play and keep RS was denied) – as a result the Tigers will either be starting a walkon or ex-QB Jaray Jenkins under center (with the likelihood that we’ll see both of those options employed) - WR/

PR Trey Palmer has hit the portal, and RB TD Price (1003/6 TD's), who came on really strong at the end of the season, has opted out – in positive news for the Tigers it looks like the OL will come into the game intact, with the possible exception of LT Cameron Wire who has been a bit banged up – on the defensive side of the ball, starting DT's Neil Farrell and Glen Logan have both opted out - LB Damone Clark, who was the *nation's leading tackler* coming into bowl season, has also opted out and fellow starter Micah Baskerville, the team's 2nd leading tackler, is also out – LSU had already lost starting CB's Derek Stingley and Elias Ricks, and now it looks like backups Dwight McGlothern, Cordale Flott, Cameron Lewis, and Raydarious Jones are out as well – simply put, the Tigers will be running a skeleton crew out there on D for this game

As for Kansas State, there are no opt outs but second and third string RB's Joe Ervin and Jacardia Wright both entered the portal leaving the 'Cats thin at the RB position – sounds like a lot of other players have also hit the portal but none that played key roles this season

One big change for the Wildcats is that they have fired their OC and TE coach and ex-Wildcat QB Colin Klein has been named the interim for the bowl – it sounds like the game is a bit of an audition for the permanent job so I expect to see play calling that is a little bit more wide open than what we have seen so far this season from K St – also Skylar Thompson is back at QB after having to leave the Baylor game with injury and missing the finale – according to the 6th year Sr signal caller he is 100% and feels better than he has at any point this season

The line on this game when we captured it initially was LSU -3 and it started to move to Kansas State shortly after that – it was sitting at KSU -4.5 yesterday but shot to 7 when news broke that Nussmeier's waiver request was denied.

While I do see a few reasons for LSU to be motivated to play here, I just don't know if they have the horses to get it done – they do look to have their OL at least mostly intact and it's possible that they'll be able to get push, but the Wildcat D has been pretty decent and athletically the Big12 has seemingly been able to hang for the most part with their SEC counterparts in games between Miss St/Texas Tech and Baylor/Ole Miss so I'm not sure they will come in and just maul the 'Cat D off the ball – the Tigers still have some quality pass catchers but will the QB's be able to get the ball to them? And if LSU runs the Wildcat offense how well will they execute?

On the other hand this is Kansas State's Super Bowl – normally I might fear a bit of a letdown from a team playing against a shorthanded opponent, but not in this case as the Wildcats get a second chance to send Skylar Thompson out a winner after they failed in that effort on Senior Night against Baylor – as a matter of fact Thompson has called this the biggest game of his career:

“To players like Skylar Thompson, the importance of this bowl game is astronomical though some would call it another meaningless bowl game: “Probably the most meaningful game of my career,” Thompson said Monday, then clarified. “Not probably, it is.”

It also sounds like Klein and Thompson have a very solid bond:

*S*uper-senior quarterback Skylar Thompson has had perhaps the closest relationship with Klein, his position coach and mentor.

“He’s been amazing,” Thompson said. “I feel like he hit the ground running with me because I spent so much time with him for five years, and I’ve always felt that he and I are always on the same page.

“I know what he’s thinking before he’s thinking it and he knows what I’m thinking before I think it. That just goes with how much time we’ve spent together, and I’m very excited to go play for him.”

Bottom line here is I don’t know how you back LSU here, even with the tremendous line movement – I think the K St. offense will play better with Klein at the controls, and they’ll be facing a lot of 2nd and 3rd stringers on the LSU D as the game progresses – on the other side of the ball it’s hard to know what to expect from the Tigers, and the Wildcats ranked a respectable 28th in opponent yards per rush attempt so they should at least be able to slow LSU down on the ground

Again this is Kansas State’s Super Bowl, and a second chance to send Skylar Thompson out with a win – LSU might be motivated to play for OL coach Davis but the program has seen a whirlwind over the last month while the ‘Cats had their heads down preparing for this game – line might still be on the rise as I’m seeing a couple of 7.5’s out there, but given all that’s going on this seems like an easy Kansas State or nothing call here

Also wanted to mention, seems like the under may end up being a very popular play today – not sure I like that as I see the potential for K State to open things up a bit on offense and we know that the LSU D will be missing a ton of players – have also heard of a few big wagers

being placed off the strip in Las Vegas on the over and while I have no way to directly verify those accounts I have no reason to doubt the validity of the reports either – the number has been around 47.5/48 for a while and given what I am seeing I wouldn't be surprised for the total to drop a bit before kick

Personally I opened a parlay on Sunday and I bought KSU down to 3.5 -125 as the second leg so think I am just going to let that ride – but I'll continue to watch the number and I'll report back if I find out about any further news that might be impactful

Now off to the golf course to drink a few beers and to get some sun on my face – today, tonight and always I wish you all good luck -

LA Burns