

# Stakes high in college football semis

By RALPH RUSSO | AP College Football Writer



Top: Clemson running back Travis Etienne; Bottom: Notre Dame quarterback Ian Book

The College Football Playoff semifinals are set, with No. 1 Alabama (13-0) facing No. 4 Oklahoma (12-1) in the Orange Bowl in Miami and No. 2 Clemson (13-0) facing No. 3 Notre Dame (12-0) in the Cotton Bowl in Arlington, Texas.

Both games will be played Dec. 29.

The defending national champion Crimson Tide is led by quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, while the Sooners' explosive offense is led by quarterback Kyler Murray. Alabama and Oklahoma have not played since the 2014 Sugar Bowl,

won by the Sooners. The stakes will be much higher this time around and feature the two highest scoring teams in the country. Oklahoma is averaging 49.5 points per game and Alabama is averaging 47.9.

Meanwhile in the other semifinal, Clemson and Notre Dame face off for the first time since 2015, a regular-season game played in a downpour and won by the Tigers, 24-22.

The Irish are making their first playoff appearance, but for Clemson this is four straight. Both teams made quarterback switches during the season to lift their offenses.

Notre Dame installed Ian Book as the starter four games into the season and the junior has completed 70 percent of his passes with 19 touchdowns. Clemson turned to freshman Trevor Lawrence after three games and he threw 24 touchdowns and only four interceptions.

Alabama and Clemson are both double-digit favorites according to odds makers, meaning only a significant upset can prevent the fourth straight playoff meeting between the Tigers and Tide, and third championship game between the two.



Top: Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray; Bottom: Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa

## BOWL GLANCE | ALL TIMES PST

**SATURDAY, DEC. 15**  
**Celebration Bowl:** Atlanta; NC A&T (9-2) vs. Alcorn State (9-3) 9 a.m. (ABC)

**Cure Bowl:** Orlando, Fla.; Tulane (6-6) vs. Louisiana-Lafayette (7-6) 10:30 a.m. (CBSSN)

**New Mexico Bowl:** Albuquerque; North Texas (9-3) vs. Utah State (10-2) 11 a.m. (ESPN)

**Las Vegas Bowl:** Fresno State (11-2) vs. Arizona State (7-5) 12 p.m. (ABC)

**Camellia Bowl:** Montgomery, Ala. Georgia Southern (9-3) vs. Eastern Michigan (7-5) 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**New Orleans Bowl:** Middle Tennessee (8-5) vs. Appalachian State (10-2) 6 p.m. (ESPN)

**TUESDAY, DEC. 18**  
**Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl:** UAB (10-3) vs. North Illinois (8-5) 4 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19**  
**Frisco (Texas) Bowl:** San Diego State (7-5) vs. Ohio (8-4) 5 p.m. (ESPN)

**THURSDAY, DEC. 20**  
**Gasparilla Bowl:** St. Petersburg, Fla.; Marshall (8-4) vs. South Florida (7-5) 5 p.m. (ESPN)

**FRIDAY, DEC. 21**  
**Bahamas Bowl:** Nassau; Toledo (7-5) vs. FIU (8-4) 9:30 a.m. (ESPN)

**Famous Idaho Potato Bowl:** Boise; Western Michigan (7-5) vs. BYU (6-6) 1 p.m. (ESPN)

**SATURDAY, DEC. 22**  
**Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl:** Memphis; (8-5) vs. Wake Forest (6-6) 9 a.m. (ESPN)

**Armed Forces Bowl:** Fort Worth, Texas; Houston (8-4) vs. Army (9-2) 12:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**Dollar General Bowl:** Mobile, Ala.; Buffalo (10-3) vs. Troy (9-3) 4 p.m. (ESPN)  
**Hawaii Bowl:** Honolulu; Louisiana Tech (7-5) vs. Hawaii (8-5) 7:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 26**  
**SERVPRO First Responder Bowl:** Dallas; Boston College (7-5) vs. Boise State (10-3) 10:30 a.m. (ESPN)

**Quick Lane Bowl:** Detroit; Minnesota (6-6) vs. Georgia Tech (7-5) 2:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**Cheez-It Bowl:** Phoenix; California (7-5) vs. TCU (6-6) 6 p.m. (ESPN)

**THURSDAY, DEC. 27**  
**Independence Bowl** Shreveport, La.; Temple (8-4) vs. Duke (7-5) 10:30 a.m. (ESPN)

**Pinstripe Bowl:** Bronx, N.Y.; Miami (7-5) vs. Wisconsin (7-5) 2:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**Texas Bowl:** Houston; Baylor (6-6) vs. Vanderbilt (6-6) 6 p.m. (ESPN)

**FRIDAY, DEC. 28**  
**Music City Bowl:** Nashville, Tenn.; Purdue (6-6) vs. Auburn (7-5) 10:30 a.m. (ESPN)

**Camping World Bowl:** Orlando, Fla.; West Virginia (8-3) vs. Syracuse (9-3) 2:15 p.m. (ESPN)

**Alamo Bowl:** San Antonio; Iowa State (8-4) vs. Washington State (10-2) 6 p.m. (ESPN)

**SATURDAY, DEC. 29**  
**Peach Bowl:** Atlanta; Florida (9-3) vs. Michigan (10-2)

9 a.m. (ESPN)

**Belk Bowl:** Charlotte, N.C.; South Carolina (7-5) vs. Virginia (7-5) 9 a.m. (ABC)

**Arizona Bowl:** Tucson, Ariz.; Arkansas State (8-4) vs. Nevada (7-5) 10:15 a.m. (CBSSN)

**Cotton Bowl Classic:** Arlington, Texas; CFP Semifinal, Notre Dame (12-0) vs. Clemson (13-0) 1 p.m. (ESPN)

**Orange Bowl:** Miami Gardens, Fla.; CFP Semifinal, Oklahoma (12-1) vs. Alabama (13-0) 5 p.m. (ESPN)

**MONDAY, DEC. 31**  
**Military Bowl:** Annapolis, Md.; Cincinnati (10-2) vs. Virginia Tech (6-6) 9 a.m. (ESPN)

**Sun Bowl:** El Paso, Texas; Stanford (8-4) vs. Pittsburgh (7-6) 11 a.m. (CBS)

**Redbox Bowl:** Santa Clara, Calif.; Michigan State (7-5) vs. Oregon (8-4) 12 p.m. (FOX)

**Liberty Bowl:** Memphis, Tenn.; Missouri (8-4) vs. Oklahoma State (6-6) 12:45 p.m. (ESPN)

**Holiday Bowl:** San Diego; Northwestern (8-5) vs. Utah (9-4) 4 p.m. (FS1)

**Gator Bowl:** Jacksonville, Fla.; NC State (9-3) vs. Texas A&M (8-4) 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)

**TUESDAY, JAN. 1**  
**Outback Bowl:** Tampa, Fla.; Mississippi State (8-4) vs. Iowa (8-4) 9 a.m. (ESPN2)

**Citrus Bowl:** Orlando, Fla.; Kentucky (9-3) vs. Penn State (9-3) 10 a.m. (ABC)

**Fiesta Bowl:** Glendale, Ariz.; LSU (9-3) vs. UCF (12-0) 10 a.m. (ESPN)

**Rose Bowl:** Pasadena, Calif.; Washington (10-3) vs. Ohio State (12-1) 2 p.m. (ESPN)

**Sugar Bowl:** New Orleans; Texas (9-4) vs. Georgia (11-2) 5:45 p.m. (ESPN)

**MONDAY, JAN. 7**  
**College Football Championship:** Santa Clara, Calif.; Cotton Bowl winner vs. Orange Bowl winner 5 p.m. (ESPN)

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