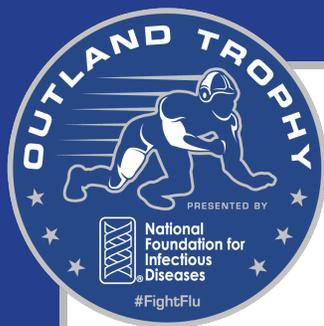


IN THE TRENCHES: WEEK 2 OUTLAND TROPHY MATCHUPS

PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Semifinalists for the 2019 Outland Trophy will be announced on Wed., Nov. 20 and the three finalists will be revealed on Tues., Nov. 26

TEXAS A&M AT CLEMSON, 3:30 P.M. ET SATURDAY ON ABC



Our Outland Trophy sojourn takes us to Death Valley this week and Clemson's Memorial Stadium. Clemson players have been regulars on the Outland Trophy Watch List the past decade as the Tigers have risen to become one of college football's premier programs. This week we highlight the consensus No. 1 team's latest pair of top offensive linemen, as well as a standout defensive tackle, in one of Saturday's nationally featured games.

Clemson's offensive line includes four senior starters including two Watch List members in left guard John Simpson (North Charleston, S.C.) and right tackle Tremayne Anchrum (Powder Springs, Ga.), along with center Sean Pollard (Jackson Springs, N.C.) and right guard Gage Cervenka (Greenwood, S.C.). As the Tigers rack up the wins – they're aiming to tie the school record of 17 consecutive wins Saturday – they continue to post a strong argument if not settle it that, at least offensively, no one is doing it as well and as consistently as Clemson right now.

Anchrum and Simpson are 2019 seniors whose class is 42-3 since 2016 – tied with Alabama for the best mark in the country – and is destined to be its most successful ever, on the scoreboard and on the stat sheets. Last week in a 52-14 win over Georgia Tech, the duo helped Travis Etienne post one of the most prolific and efficient rushing games in school history. Etienne ran for a career-high 205 yards and career-high-tying three touchdowns on just 12 carries. It was the second 200-yard game of his career and the next one will set a new Clemson school record.

Clemson racked up 632 total yards and has now reached 500 total yards in three consecutive season openers for the first time in records dating back to 1954. To credit Anchrum and Simpson and the other linemen further, the Tigers rushed for 411 yards, and scored 27 or more points for a 16th consecutive game to extending a school-record streak. They are tops at pass-blocking as well. Dating back to last season, Clemson's offense has allowed only five sacks in its last nine games, including not allowed a sack in six of those nine contests.

In 2018, with those two in the starting lineup, the Tigers were one of only three FBS programs to produce a 3,000-yard passer, 1,500-yard rusher and 1,000-yard receiver, and one of only 20 teams (including only nine Power 5 teams) to accomplish the feat this decade.

Clemson intercepted a two-point conversion pass in the final minute to preserve a 28-26 win in College Station last year. We're expecting similar excitement Saturday. Dabo Swinney's teams have won eight of their last nine meetings against SEC opponents.

Texas A&M junior defensive tackle Justin Madubuike (McKinney, Texas) enters the season fourth on the Aggies' defense in career tackles with 63. Though he is listed at left tackle, and Clemson's Simpson is listed at left guard, there may be certain plays where Madubuike and Simpson would face off. Madubuike has started in 13 of his 27 career games (four consecutive dating to last season) and has 14.0 tackles for loss in his career. He had three assisted tackled in last week's 41-7 win over Texas State.

OTHER MATCHUP OF NOTE ...

• **Miami at North Carolina, 8 p.m. ET Saturday on ACC Network:** Two of the ACC's most experienced offensive linemen are on display in Chapel Hill, N.C., Saturday night as North Carolina's Charlie Heck (Kansas City, Mo.) goes up against Miami's Navaughn Donaldson (Miami, Fla.). This is one of a series of things to watch in the game, which pits Miami head coach Manny Diaz against his former boss Mack Brown, who is back on the sidelines after a five-year hiatus. Diaz was Brown's defensive coordinator at Texas from 2011-13.

Heck, a senior offensive tackle, helped UNC to one of its most exciting wins in recent years last week in a 24-20 comeback victory over South Carolina. He had six knockdown blocks and didn't allow a sack as the Tar Heels posted 483 yards of total offense (245 passing, 238 rushing). Heck also recovered a fumble, extending a drive that produced a field goal. This will be his 24th start on a line that allowed less than one sack (0.91) per game in 2018, the seventh-best mark in the nation. He was awarded the ACC's Offensive Lineman of the Week for his play against South Carolina.

Donaldson, a junior left guard, returns to Miami as its most experienced player with 23 career starts. He made 10 starts as a true freshman in 2017. Despite a 24-20 loss to Florida two weeks ago, running back DeeJay Dallas had a game-high 131 all-purpose yards including a game-high 94 rushing yards.

Since his arrival on former head coach Mark Richt's staff in 2016, Diaz is 3-0 in ACC openers, winning those games by an average of 25.3 points. Miami won last season's ACC opener over North Carolina in Miami, 47-10.

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