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**The only upset bigger than the Aggies over #13 Cal would be those other Aggies--Division 1-AA UC Davis--beating Stanford. Not to worry, Bears fans--an upset is not in the works. The only question is whether the Bears will cover the point spread, which currently hovers around 30.**

Everything about this matchup favors the Bears, with the possible exception of injuries that may keep several Cal starters from seeing action. Still, Cal's second team should be able to take the Aggies pretty easily if they can control mistakes such as untimely penalties, turnovers, and disastrously blown coverages.

Cal has a chance to go 4-0 for the first time since Mooch's bears started with 5 wins and coasted to an Aloha Bowl appearance. The Bears are #16 in Sagarin's rankings with 85.11 points, and even with home field advantage that puts the #147 Aggies as a 28-point underdog. For good reason.

The Aggies run the "spread" offense, similar to [Texas Tech](#) and [Illinois](#). They will have four receivers and empty backfield a lot, and it shows in their stats. In their three losses (34-17 at home to [UTEP](#), 39-0 at [Colorado](#), and 38-21 at [New Mexico](#)), they average just 27 yards per game on the ground. That's just 86 TOTAL rushing yards, folks. Even if you add back the copious sack yards (114 on 17 sacks), it still is an abysmal 200 yards total rushing (67 yards per game). As a team, they average 27 rushing attempts per game to 42 passing attempts per game.

Cal is #1 in the Pac-10 in pass defense efficiency.

Cal is also #1 in the Pac-10 in scoring defense, allowing opponents just 40 total points (13.3 points per game). Bad news for the Aggies, who score even fewer: 12.7 points per game. In addition, 31 of the Aggies' 38 total points have come in the fourth quarter. It gets worse: Fourth quarter is garbage time for the Aggies; in both those games, they trailed by 31 points entering the fourth quarter (31-0 and 38-7). But wait! Worse news is that Cal has allowed only three total points in the fourth quarter this season, and only 10 total points in the second half. As they say, "Something's gotta give." In addition, although the Bears are allowing a high scoring percentage (83%) in the red zone, the real story is that they are allowing opponents just two red zone appearances per game, second least in the Pac-10 behind [Arizona](#).

All this really shows is that the Aggies have real trouble scoring points, especially against their opponents' first team. Even though they will often use four wideouts, WR Dombrowski accounts for more than one third of their receptions (22 out of 60 total) for 101 yards receiving per game. The Aggies have just three passing TDs yet five interceptions and are averaging a -2.0 turnover ratio. It's hard to envision any 80-yard, 23-play, 9-minute drives coming from this offense against the Bear defense. This may be one reason that the Aggies have chosen to change their starting QB this week. The coach insists he always expected to switch quarterbacks, but he just had to do it sooner due to the low offensive production. Reading between the lines of his quotes from his weekly press conference, he is already looking past this game. So don't count too much on the wild card.

On the other side of the ball, it's even more grim. The Bears are only 5th in the Pac-10 in scoring offense, but they are one of six Pac teams scoring more than 40 points per game. They also lead the Pac-10 in rushing with 264 yards per game and have had three different 100-yard rushers. The Bears are the only Pac-10 team to have more rushing yards than passing yards. It's a scary matchup when Cal averages more points per game than NMSU averages rushing yards per game. That's not really supposed to happen.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record (kids, ask your parents what it means), the Bear offensive line will simply roll over the Aggie defense. Cal's O line averages a hefty yet athletic 335 pounds, and NMSU's 3-4 defense has just three linemen who average 273--not small, but too small for this matchup. The one thing going for the Aggies defense is that they are all upperclassmen--seven seniors, three juniors, and a sophomore. Experience isn't seeming to help, however, as they are giving up 215 yards per game rushing and 199 yards per game through the air. And 37 points per game. UTEP was the only team they held under 100 yards team rushing; Colorado gained 238, and New Mexico ran up 328 rushing yards. It is possible that the Bears could have all three of their 100-yard rushers get 100 yards in one night.

Finally, if and when the Aggies force Cal to punt... they'll be facing the #2 punter in the Pac-10, who averages 41.7 yards per punt and has allowed only six return attempts in 15 boots for an eye-popping 0.3 yards per return. I've read some criticism that Lonie hasn't hit his potential, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a more efficient and effective punt team. On the other side, Cal has two TDs on nine punt returns and are averaging an eye-popping 26 yards per return. It's just wrong when a team averages nearly as much yardage per punt return as their opponent averages in rushing yards per game.

Overall, this game will hardly be considered Must-See TV by most of the nation. Certainly, Bear fans around the country will tune in and should be happily slurring the Cal Drinking Song and forgetting the words to Big C by halftime. They might want to tune in to the NMSU web site to hear the game broadcast in Navajo.

It's almost a lose-lose situation to predict the score of this game, but I'll go with a halftime of 28-0 and a final of 56-0. That would be Cal with more points.

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