

IN THE TRENCHES: WEEK 14 OUTLAND TROPHY MATCHUPS



PRESENTED BY THE FOOTBALL WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

**A weekly look at the matchups
featuring Outland Trophy candidates**

CLEMSON (8-1) AT VIRGINIA TECH (4-5), 7:30 P.M. ET ON ABC

This week's top Outland Trophy headliner takes us to Blacksburg, Va., and a primetime matchup that will have a bearing on the College Football Playoff picture as well as the ACC title landscape. It's a tough place to play in the Virginia hills and a great test for the Tigers and our three Watch List members.

Last week marked the return of Clemson QB Trevor Lawrence following a five-week hiatus. Lawrence torched Pitt for 403 yards on 26-of-37 passing with two TD's and without an interception, another tribute to the Tigers' line up front that features left tackle **Jackson Carman** (#79, Jr., Fairfield, Ohio). Regardless of which QB was behind him, Carman and the Tigers cranked the offense up each week in November. Lawrence's 403-yard passing performance last week followed true freshman D.J. Uiagalelei's 439-yard performance at Notre Dame, giving Clemson back-to-back games with a 400-yard passer for the first time in school history. Clemson became the first school to have two different players throw for 400 yards in back-to-back games since Seth Russell and Bryce Petty accomplished the feat in 2014 for Baylor.

Injuries sidelined Clemson's **Tyler Davis** (#13, So., Apopka, Fla.) early in the season but he is back in the starting lineup at defensive tackle. In four starts, Davis has three TFL's and two sacks. Saturday will be a great matchup for him against Virginia Tech's offensive front that features left tackle **Christian Darrisaw**.

Darrisaw (#77, Jr., Upper Marlboro, Md.) started the first eight games for the Hokies but was unavailable to play against Pitt on Nov. 21. The Hokies' offensive front has pushed RB Khalil Herbert into the lead in ACC rushing with five 100-yard games and he leads the nation in rushing among players with five or more games averaging 8.2 yards per carry.

The blocking up front has led to Tech scoring 24 rushing TD's thus far after scoring 22 in all of 2019. The 24 rushing TD's are tied for third among Power 5 schools – only Notre Dame (27) and Clemson (25) have more. What difference does an improved line make? Tech has three games with 300-plus net rushing yards this season after not having any such games from 2011-19.

Virginia Tech is rested, as an off week last week followed nine consecutive games. If the game becomes a shootout, it might favor Tech even with Clemson's explosiveness. The Hokies have four 40-point games this season, and since joining the ACC in 2004, Tech is 25-2 in ACC play when it scores 40 or more.

BYU (9-0) at Coastal Carolina (9-0), 5:30 p.m. ET on ESPNU

We add this game to our list this week to highlight BYU left tackle **Brady Christiansen** (#67, Jr., Bountiful, Utah), since BYU and Coastal were able to add this on short notice. It will be a prime matchup for Christiansen, one of the nation's top tackles, as the country watches two teams fighting to keep the undefeated seasons alive.

Christiansen continues to power over defenders as the Cougars' offense continues to dominate defenses. BYU is second in the nation in plays of 30 yards or more with 34. Big plays have been a big part of BYU's success – blocking up front has allowed Zach Wilson to amass a 205.3 QB rating, third nationally, and the Cougars have 175 plays of 10 or more yards this season. BYU has scored 40 points in eight its first nine games for the first time in its history.

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