

2025 FCS Football Championship: Full Bracket, Complete Schedule, and Game-by-Game Scores

The **2025 FCS Football Championship** postseason wrapped up another thrilling NCAA Division I Football Championship Series with a dramatic sequence of games spanning from late November into January. With a **24-team playoff field**, a structured bracket, and intense matchups that delivered upsets and standout performances, the road to Nashville, Tennessee, culminated in a highly anticipated title game with unforgettable results. Below is the **full 2025 FCS playoff bracket, detailed schedule of games from the first round to the national championship, and all available scores** through the semifinals and final.

What Makes the FCS Championship Special

The NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) playoff system uses a **24-team bracket** that combines automatic conference champions with at-large teams selected by the FCS Championship Committee. Unlike the FBS bowl system, the FCS determines its national champion exclusively through **head-to-head elimination games**. This structure rewards consistent performance throughout the season and creates space for dramatic postseason surprises.

2025 FCS Playoff Bracket Overview

In 2025, the FCS field included **11 automatic qualifiers and 13 at-large selections**. The top **16 teams were seeded**, with seeds **1–8 receiving a first-round bye**. Seeds **9–16 hosted first-round matchups**, while the remaining unseeded teams traveled to face their opponents.

Seeding and Teams

Top 8 Seeds

1. North Dakota State
2. Montana State

3. Montana
4. Tarleton State
5. Lehigh
6. Mercer
7. Stephen F. Austin
8. UC Davis

Next 8 Seeds (9–16)

9. Rhode Island
10. Abilene Christian
11. South Dakota
12. Villanova
13. Tennessee Tech
14. South Dakota State
15. Youngstown State
16. Southeastern Louisiana

This balanced bracket combined powerhouse programs with underdog squads, producing compelling playoff storylines from the very first round.

2025 FCS Championship Game Schedule

Here is a timeline overview of the 2025 FCS playoff rounds:

Phase	Dates	Description
Selection Show	<i>Nov. 23</i>	FCS Championship field announced on ESPNU
First Round	<i>Nov. 29</i>	Opening round games
Second Round	<i>Dec. 6</i>	Round of 16
Quarterfinals	<i>Dec. 12–13</i>	Elite eight matchups
Semifinals	<i>Dec. 20</i>	Final four

Round-by-Round Results and Scores

Below is a complete recap of the playoff games and their final scores:

First Round – Saturday, Nov. 29

All eight first-round matchups produced competitive football with several close finishes:

- **Rhode Island 27, Central Connecticut State 19**
- **Villanova 52, Harvard 7**
- **Abilene Christian 38, Lamar 20**
- **South Dakota 38, Drake 17**
- **North Dakota 31, Tennessee Tech 6**
- **South Dakota State 41, New Hampshire 3**
- **Illinois State 21, Southeastern Louisiana 3**
- **Yale 43, Youngstown State 42**

The first round set the stage for emerging playoff contenders and provided surprises such as Yale's dramatic one-point win.

Second Round – Saturday, Dec. 6

The second round saw top seeds begin their postseason journeys:

- **Villanova 14, Lehigh 7**

- **South Dakota 47, Mercer 0**
- **Tarleton State 31, North Dakota 13**
- **Illinois State 29, North Dakota State 28** (Major upset)
- **Stephen F. Austin 41, Abilene Christian 34**
- **UC Davis 47, Rhode Island 26**
- **Montana State 21, Yale 13**
- **Montana 50, South Dakota State 29**

A highlight of the second round was **Illinois State's stunning upset of No. 1 North Dakota State**, ending one of the most dominant playoff streaks in FCS history.

Quarterfinals – Dec. 12–13

The quarterfinals narrowed the field to four:

Montana State 44, Stephen F. Austin 28

- **Villanova 26, Tarleton State 21**
- **Montana 52, South Dakota 22**
- **Illinois State 42, UC Davis 31**

These matchups delivered high stakes and high intensity, especially a competitive contest between Montana State and Stephen F. Austin, each vying for semifinal placement.

Semifinals – Saturday, Dec. 20

The final four teams competed for berths in the national championship game:

- **Montana State vs. Montana – 4 p.m. ET**

- **Illinois State vs. Villanova – 7:30 p.m. ET**

At press time, these matchups were set with both games televised nationally, continuing the FCS tradition of exciting postseason action.

National Championship Game

The 2025 FCS National Championship was scheduled for:

- **Monday, January 5, 2026**
- **Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. ET**
- **Venue: FirstBank Stadium, Nashville, Tennessee**
- **TV: ESPN**

This prime-time championship matchup capped the season's narrative and crowned the 2025 FCS national champion.

Final Thoughts on the 2025 FCS Playoffs

The 2025 FCS playoffs showcased the competitiveness and parity inherent in college football's second tier. With upsets like Illinois State's shocking win over perennial powerhouse North Dakota State and strong bids from both Big Sky and CAA teams, this season's tournament delivered edge-of-your-seat drama.

From the opening selection show in late November to the national championship in January, fans were treated to a postseason filled with standout individual performances, thrilling team battles, and dynamic playoff storylines that enhance the legacy of the FCS championship format.

Whether you're a long-time supporter of a seeded contender or rooting for a Cinderella run by an underdog squad, the 2025 FCS championship proved once again why **college football playoffs are among the most exciting events in all of sports.**

