



LSU (9-4, 5-3 SEC) vs. Baylor (8-5, 6-3 Big 12)
Postgame Notes
Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 · Kickoff 2:33 p.m. CT · ESPN

GAME INFORMATION

LSU Captains: LB Greg Penn III, QB Garrett Nussmeier, LB Whit Weeks, RB Josh Williams

Coin Toss: Baylor won, deferred; LSU received

Weather: Dome (outside: Sunny, 72 degrees)

Wind: Dome (outside: North at 15 mph)

Attendance: 59,940

Brian Kelly Career Record: 313-108-2

Brian Kelly LSU Record: 29-11

Brian Kelly vs. Baylor: 1-0

LSU vs. Baylor All-Time: 9-3

LSU STARTERS

Offense

LT Tyree Adams, LG Paul Mubenga, C DJ Chester, RG Bo Bordelon, RT Miles Frazier, QB Garrett Nussmeier, RB Josh Williams, TE Trey'Dez Green, WR Zavion Thomas, WR Aaron Anderson, WR Chris Hilton Jr.

Defense

DT Paris Shand, DT Gio Paez, DE Bradyn Swinson, DE Sai'vion Jones, LB Greg Penn III, LB Whit Weeks, STAR Davhon Keys, CB PJ Woodland, CB Zy Alexander, S Jardin Gilbert, S Javien Toviano

GAME NOTES

General

- LSU faced Baylor for the first time since the 1985 Liberty Bowl when it met the Bears on New Year's Eve in the 2024 Kinder's Texas Bowl.
- LSU and Baylor met for the 12th time in series history.
 - In a series that dates back to 1907, LSU holds a 9-3 lead in the overall series against the Bears (6-1 in Baton Rouge; 1-0 in Waco; 1-1 in Houston; 0-1 in Memphis; 1-0 in Shreveport).
 - LSU and Baylor met in a bowl game for the third time (1963 Bluebonnet Bowl; 1985 Liberty Bowl; 2024 Texas Bowl).
 - LSU is 1-2 against Baylor in bowl appearances.
- LSU is 3-1 in games played in NRG Stadium after Saturday's 44-31 victory over Baylor.
 - The Tigers beat Wisconsin, 28-24, to open the 2014 season at NRG Stadium followed by a 56-27 victory over Texas Tech in the 2015 Texas Bowl. Most recently, LSU dropped a 42-20 decision to Kansas State in 2021 when the Tigers only fielded 38 scholarship players and WR Jaray Jenkins started at QB.
 - LSU was scheduled to play BYU in the 2017 season-opener at NRG Stadium, however, severe flooding to Houston forced the game to be moved to the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans. LSU won that game against BYU, 27-0.
- LSU made its 47th appearance in a domed stadium against Baylor.
 - The Tigers are 35-12 all-time in games played in a domed stadium, which includes a 3-1 mark in NRG Stadium following Saturday's 44-31 win against Baylor.
 - LSU's last game in a domed stadium came in the 2024 season opener featuring LSU and USC at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas.
 - It was LSU's fourth appearance in NRG Stadium in Houston at the home of the Texans. The three previous appearances included a 28-24 win over Wisconsin in the 2014 season opener, a 56-27 victory over Texas Tech in 2015, and a 42-20 loss to Kansas State in 2021.
- LSU made its third appearance in the Texas Bowl inside NRG Stadium and came out victorious for the second time.
 - LSU's other appearances included matchups against Texas Tech (LSU won, 56-27) and Kansas State (KSU won, 42-20).
- Six current members of the LSU football team appeared in the 2021 Texas Bowl against Kansas State, with WR Chris Hilton Jr. and LB Greg Penn III both starting that contest.
 - Other current Tigers who played in the 2021 Texas Bowl include: RB Josh Williams, DE Sai'vion Jones, LS Jonathan Ferguson and DT Jacobian Guillory.
- LSU coach Brian Kelly watched the 2021 Texas Bowl from the press box after taking over the program on Dec. 1, 2021.
 - Current LSU Offensive Line Coach Brad Davis served as the interim coach for the Tigers in the 2021 Texas Bowl, managing a team with only 38 scholarship players available for the game against Kansas State.
- LSU is 38-9-1 against current members of the Big 12 conference.
 - The Tigers have played all but one current member of the Big 12, with Kansas the only current member of the league LSU has yet to play in football.
 - LSU has played Baylor more times (12) than any other Big 12 team, while its nine victories over the Bears stand as the most against any program from the conference.
- LSU made its 56th bowl appearance in the Texas Bowl. LSU is 31-24-1 all-time in bowl

GAME NOTES

games, which includes a 2-0 mark in the College Football Playoffs.

a. Dating back to the 2000 season, LSU has appeared in a bowl game every year with the exception of 2020.

10. Brian Kelly coached in the 15th bowl game of his career as a Division I head coach.

a. Kelly is 9-6 in the 15 games as a head coach, including a 3-0 mark at LSU.

11. Against Baylor, LSU faced one of its former assistant coaches for the 24th time.

a. Baylor HC Dave Aranda coached at LSU from 2016-19 serving as the defensive coordinator and eventually the associate head coach.

b. LSU is 18-6 all-time against former assistant coaches.

c. The only four former LSU assistants who have wins over the Tigers are Will Muschamp (at Florida), Mack Brown (at Texas), Jimbo Fisher (at A&M), and Kirby Smart (at Georgia).

d. LSU is 15-0 vs. former assistant coaches in Tiger Stadium and 3-6 in games played on the road or at a neutral site.

12. Dating back to the 2001 season when LSU captured its first outright SEC title since 1986, the Tigers have done quite well against non-conference opponents, going 96-14 against non-SEC foes during that span. Of the 96 wins, 21 have come against top-25 teams.

13. LSU is 12-3 against non-conference opponents under third-year head coach Brian Kelly.

14. During the winter transfer portal period, 17 players (2 starters) from the 2024 LSU roster departed from the team, and 5 players opted out for the NFL Draft including OL Will Campbell, TE Mason Taylor, OT Emery Jones Jr., WR Kyren Lacy, and S Major Burns.

15. OL Bo Bordelon earned his first start at LSU, replacing Miles Frazier at RG, who shifted to RT for the 2024 Texas Bowl.

16. True freshman defensive end CJ Jackson saw action for the first time in an LSU uniform.

17. LSU scored both defensive (INT) and special teams (KOR) touchdowns for the second time in its bowl game history.

In the 1995 Independence Bowl vs. Michigan State, LSU had fumble recovery for a TD (Gabe Northern, 37 yards) and a kickoff return for a TD (Eddie Kennison, 92 yards).

a. The last time LSU did so in any game was 10/24/2020 vs. South Carolina (Eli Ricks, 45-yard INT and Trey Palmer, 93-yard KOR).

Offense

1. QB Garrett Nussmeier had an impressive performance at the Texas Bowl, going 24-for-34 with 313 passing yards, 3 TDs, and one INT.

a. The 313 yards marked the 8th 300-yard passing game for Nussmeier this season. It was the 9th of his career.

b. Nussmeier was named the 2024 Texas Bowl Most Valuable Player. The honor marked the second bowl game in a row (2023 ReliaQuest vs. Wisconsin; 2024 Texas vs. Baylor) Nussmeier had received the MVP award.

c. Nussmeier is the third LSU player to be named bowl MVP in consecutive seasons joining Joe Burrow (2018 Fiesta & 2019 Peach/2020 CFP Championship) and Rohan Davey (2000 Peach & 2002 Sugar).

2. RB Caden Durham led the Tigers' rushing attack with 60 yards on 13 attempts.

a. RB Josh Williams scored the only rushing TD on the day for LSU, carrying the ball 9 times for 42 yards.

3. WR Chris Hilton Jr. led the air game for LSU coming down with 4 receptions and accounting for 113 yards and one score.

a. TE Trey'Dez Green caught two TD passes from Nussmeier.

4. Nussmeier found Green in the back of the endzone for a 10-yard TD to give LSU the early 7-0 lead with 8:31 remaining in the 1Q.

a. The TD pass was Nussmeier's 27th on the season and the 38th of his LSU career.

b. Green caught the 3rd TD pass of his freshman season.

c. LSU ran 12 plays, went 68 yards, and drained 6:22 off the game clock.

5. Nussmeier connected with Hilton deep down the right sideline for the 41-yard TD, giving LSU the 21-7 advantage with 12:16 remaining in the first half.

a. Nussmeier threw his 28th TD pass of the season and the 39th of his career.

b. Hilton reeled in the 6th TD of his career and his 3rd of the season.

c. LSU's offense ran 5-plays and went 81 yards, taking off 2:30 from the clock.

6. Following another deep ball to Hilton for 43 yards to the 1-yard line on the subsequent drive, Nussmeier tossed a 1-yard TD pass to Green for his third of the game. The score pushed LSU's lead to 28-7.

a. Nussmeier's season total increased to 29 with his career total eclipsing 40 total TD passes.

b. Green brought in his second TD pass of the game. It was his 4th TD reception on the season.

c. LSU put together a 6-play, 58-yard TD drive that took 1:30 off the game clock.

7. Williams, playing in his home state and city, sidestepped a defender on a direct snap to score on a 4-yard rush, cushioning LSU's lead to 41-24 with 14:56 remaining in the game.

a. Williams' rushing TD was his 6th on the season and 17th of his 6-year career at LSU.

b. LSU's drive consisted of 7 plays and 47 yards with 3:05 coming off the clock.

Defense

1. S Jardin Gilbert and LB West Weeks each recorded a team high 7 tackles.

2. Freshman LB Davhon Keys came up with a 41-yard INT return for a TD after the ball went through the Baylor RB's hands. LSU's lead was 14-0 with 6:40 left in the 1Q.

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- a. The defensive TD was LSU's 4th in a bowl game, and the first pick-6 in a bowl game since Quad Wilson IV returned an INT 99 yards at the 2023 Citrus Bowl against Purdue.
 - i. Prior to Wilson's pick-6, Marcus Spears returned an INT 20 yards for a TD in the 2003 BCS National Championship at the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans.
 - b. It was LSU's first defensive TD of the 2024 season.

Special Teams

1. PK Damian Ramos went 5-for-6 on PAT attempts.
 - a. Ramos' streak of consecutive PATs made was snapped at 129. He missed on his fifth attempt of the night.
2. P Peyton Todd had one punt for 35 yards.
3. RS Zavion Thomas returned a kickoff back 95 yards for the TD to add on to LSU's 34-14 lead with 1:28 remaining in the first half.
 - a. LSU returned a kickoff for a TD in consecutive games for the first time in the SEC era (since 1933).
 - b. LSU recorded multiple KO return TD's in a season for the third time (1937, 1957, 2024).
 - i. Aaron Anderson had a 100-yard KOR for a TD in LSU's regular-season finale vs. Oklahoma on Nov. 30, 2024.
4. With 9:46 remaining in the contest, Ramos knocked through a 43-yard FG to increase LSU's lead to 44-24.
 - a. Ramos' season totals moved to 23-for-29. Baylor blocked his first FG attempt earlier in the game during the 2Q.