The DII Report™ : 🎃 Scary Halloween scores shake up latest DII football bracket projections

Super Region One and Two see some major changes this week with several shockingly ghoulie upsets.

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2 HOURS AGO · PAID

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What a scary good weekend in DII football. Davenport, despite losing, held Ferris State to a season low 23 points and season-low 259 yards — the Bulldogs' fewest ya since its last loss 39 games ago on Aug. 31, 2024 — showing the Panthers are very much for real. East Stroudsburg kicked its way to a stunning upset over then No. 6 Kutztown to clinch its spot in the PSAC championship game and a rematch against the scorching hot Slippery Rock offense. And the mighty Bearcats reclaimed their

spot atop the MIAA after a dominating 59-14 trouncing — featuring not one, but TWO, 21-point quarters — of then-top 10 Emporia State.

There was more, especially in Super Region Two. Three undefeated teams are no more, leaving THESE seven in the hunt for a perfect season. And yes, there were sc shakeups in both the Power 10 and bracket projections.

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Two teams break into to the Week 9 Power 10 rankings



So, there is some explaining needed here. Was it fair and just that Kutztown lost in overtime to a top 25 team and gets the boot from the top 10 for the first time in thr seasons? Maybe not, but the Golden Bears are now trailing East Stroudsburg in NF and have little chance to be the No. 2 seed in Super Region One, no matter the

outcome of the PSAC championship game. So, the Bears should be the No. 3 seed, l have a head-to-head loss to the Warriors, and if I couldn't put the Warriors in the t 10, I simply couldn't put the Golden Bears.

Same question about Emporia State? Is a loss to the No. 11 team in DII football worthy of dropping from the top 10 altogether. Well, a loss would be unfair… but tl was a massacre. The Bearcats were up 31-7 at the half, and came out scoring two m touchdowns before we were halfway through the third quarter before the Hornets could retaliate. This was a message, and it was sent loud and clear.

Carson-Newman kind of benefits by default. The Eagles didn't pick up a statement victory against Catawba this week (it was a blowout, but it was expected). But losse by Emporia State, Kutztown, and Davenport helped Carson-Newman leap to the Power 10 for the first time ever.

The rest of my top 25 shifted once again. The first five out are Kutztown, Davenpor Valdosta State, Emporia State, and East Stroudsburg. Yes, I am keeping Davenport the top 15 despite its first loss, and just scroll back up if you need to see why. If yo need an extra reason, Harlon Hill hopeful, Cephus Harris, ran for 162 yards rushin and two touchdowns against one of the best defenses in the land. The next 10, in order, are: Michigan Tech, Minnesota Duluth, Findlay, North Greenville, Benedict, Virginia Union, Augustana (SD), Kentucky State, Johnson C. Smith, and Henderson State.

Now, onto the bracket projections. Remember, with NPI, being in the top 32 today does not mean you are tournament bound. Heck, it doesn't even mean you'll be top next week. Your weekly reminder:

- The DII football bracket is 32 teams, eight teams per super region.
- Each conference's champion, minus the Gulf South, gets an automatic bid to tl tournament. The Gulf South has only three teams, thus no AQ is allowed, and

means Super Region Two will have more at-large bids (five) than AQs (three). T rest of the super regions have an even split.

- REMEMBER (before you email me complaining), these projections are **NOT** w the bracket would look like RIGHT NOW if the season ended today. Inkblot Sports has always done a great job with that. However, there are simply a few teams that have played a few nice games on the road, inflating their NPI. That won't last in the home stretch of conference play.
- Friend of The DII Report Cory Hogue does a nice breakdown of NPI here (and the way, why are you not subscribed to Cory Hogue Sports yet?).

2026 DII football bracket projection (10/31/26)

Super Region One



In the conversation: Indiana (PA), Virginia State

What changed: The MEC and NE10 are making life difficult for IUP and Virginia State. West Liberty suffered a stunner of a loss, but are still the team to beat in the one-bid MEC. However, there are 11 teams ahead of the Hilltoppers in Super Regic One NPI. Assumption has two tough games remaining against Franklin Pierce and

Pace, but come in right behind West Liberty in SR1 NPI. These two automatic qualifiers are going to leave at least two deserving teams home.

If the Trojans can't beat Virginia Union next week, their season is done. IUP has an uphill, likely unsurmountable battle, because if Cal and IUP finish as they are right now, Cal should get the edge with its 49-0 head-to-head win in the Coal Bowl. Both IUP (home vs. Shepherd) and Cal (home vs. Bloomsburg) host two teams on Nov. 14 that could arguably boot them from the bracket should they lose. There is a lot left to play for here.

Super Region Two



In the conversation: Newberry

What changed: Currently, four of the top five spots in Super Region Two NPI belon the SIAC, but that simply can't hold up. So, before we get to the rest of this super region, let's look at that:

- Benedict (current No. 3 in SR2 NPI): Has big wins against Johnson C. Smith an Edward Waters. Benedict plays Central State this weekend and should the Tig win, they likely have a date with Kentucky State in the SIAC championship. Th gives Benedict the edge.
- Central State (current No. 2 in SR2 NPI): The Marauders already have a loss to Kentucky State (a big one at that) and have Benedict this weekend. Should they lose, they also lose their shot at the SIAC championship game and AQ, making them a very tricky at-large. A big win against Edward Waters on Halloween me they should stick in the bracket.
- Edward Waters (current No. 5 in SR2 NPI): Talk about a wild resume. These Tigers have a win against Kentucky State in which they dropped 61 points; however, they have detrimental losses to Benedict and Central State. A few thi need to happen in their favor, but ultimately those losses may keep them out.
- Kentucky State (current No. 1 in SR2 NPI): The Thorobreds have the big signature win against Central State and the stunner of a loss to Edward Waters What is concerning is that this past weekend, they needed to come-from-behin to beat 1-8 Savannah State. That means 3-6 Morehouse, which they play this weekend, is not necessarily the walk in the park it should be. The Thorobreds need to win against Morehouse, and then get into the SIAC championship gam and win there to keep that No. 1 seed.

But wait, there's more. Newberry is currently No. 8 in SR2 NPI, but they Wolves ha Carson-Newman on the slate. The Eagles lone loss came to Mars Hill, which if they played that game nine more times, I think the Eagles win each one. So, let's say the Eagles win, will the Wolves have enough to stay in the mix? It will be tight, especia with UNC Pembroke roughly 1 NPI point off their trail. The Braves should make their way to the Conference Carolinas championship game, setting up a rematch w North Greenville after that thrilling 41-42 loss on Oct. 3.

But wait… there is more. Valdosta State picked up a win against West Alabama, lik ending the Tigers season. However, the Blazers host North Greenville this weekend and travel to Delta State on Nov. 14. Delta State can be 0-9, but if the Statesmen ha a chance to knock their archrival Blazers out of the playoffs, you will see their best football of the season. So, Valdosta State could (not necessarily will) lose both remaining games, making selection Sunday even more difficult and likely opening t door for Newberry. That would mean a tournament without a single Gulf South Conference team. Which is bonkers.

Super Region Three



In the conversation: Augustana (SD), Tiffin

What changed: There is a bit to be decided here and it starts next week with the Davenport vs. Michigan Tech matchup. There is a chance that if Davenport wins a Michigan Tech losses, paired with the unlikely chance that Augustana beats

Minnesota State on the road, that the Wildcats are booted from the bracket. There some big-time games this weekend.

That is why this GLVC autobid is really going to leave teams, really good teams, ho and is something that needs to be figured out. This region is simply too deep to all a team into the bracket that will likely lose by 40-plus points in Round 1. Minneso Duluth (which owns that big win over Augie on Sept. 3), Findlay, and Northwood should win out. Minnesota State should as well; however, they have a pair of teams remaining that should boost their NPI over Northwood's should the Mavericks exi victorious.

- Davenport: *Ferris State, Oct. 31 (lost 23-14)*, at Michigan Tech, Nov. 7, Grand Valley State, Nov. 14
- The Anchor-Bone Classic: *Ferris State wins over GVSU*
- Michigan Tech: *Grand Valley State (Wildcats WIN)*, *lost to Ferris State, 27-20*, Davenport, Nov. 7
- Minnesota Duluth: *Northern State (Bulldogs won)*
- Augustana (SD): at Minnesota State Nov. 7, vs. Wayne State (Neb.) Nov. 14

Super Region Four



In the conversation: Henderson State, Southeastern Oklahoma State, Washburn

What changed: As it has been for four weeks, the top six here seem like a lock… but things have gotten even more interesting with the Nos. 7 and 8 spots.

Central Missouri simply has the metrics, but the Mules' three losses have been absolute blowouts to ranked teams. Does that hurt them in the long run and open t door for Henderson State or Southeastern Oklahoma State? The Mules win over Washburn should keep them in, especially with two winnable games against Pittsb State and Nebraska-Kearney. A loss at either ends the Mules season.

Now, this wild race in the GAC. Unfortunately for the Tigers, Reddies, and Savage Storm won't be able to get in with an AQ thanks to Harding, and that's where the waters get murkier. Ouachita Baptist beat Southeaster Oklahoma State on the road earlier this season, which, despite the Savage Storm currently holding down the eig NPI spot in Super Region Four, is an edge. However, the Savage Storm just beat Henderson State on the road, which gives them the edge between those two. The Savage Storm should win both of their remaining games, which means this year's Battle of the Ravine on Nov. 14 essentially becomes a play-in game for Ouachita an Henderson State. If the Tigers win they are in, full stop. If Henderson State wins, w got some figuring out to do.

The bonkers scenario would be if Central Missouri loses. Let's say Ouachita Baptis wins. If the Mules lose just one game, it comes down to Henderson State and Southeastern Oklahoma State, which means the Savage Storm — who haven't made tournament appearance in 22 years — are in.

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