

Virginia Cavaliers 2008 College Football Betting Preview

Contributed by
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The University of Virginia Cavaliers football team opens the 2008 football season hosting the No. 3 (AP) ranked USC Trojans Aug. 30 and is already listed by oddsmakers at online sportsbook SBGglobal.com as +19 ½ point underdogs on home turf, Scott Stadium in Charlottesville, Va. Unlike USC, Virginia is not ranked by either of the major pre-season polls (AP or USA-Today Coaches) and completely ignored by sportsbooks who give the Cavaliers zero chance of winning a BCS championship.

Virginia was picked by the media to finish fifth place in the six-team ACC Coastal Division at ACC media days in Greensboro, N.C. Oddsmakers list Virginia at +3000 odds to win the ACC outright. A big reason for such low expectations in Charlottesville is due to several key losses on both offense and defense including defensive end Chris Long and offensive guard Branden Albert, both first round picks taken in the NFL Draft in April. Also drafted was tight end Tom Santi chosen in the sixth round. The Cavaliers must also find a quarterback after losing Jameel Sewell to graduation. Sophomore Peter Lalich is the most likely candidate to replace Sewell. Lalich is the only returning quarterback to get any playing time last year. The strength of the Virginia offense is the running game with the return of senior running back Cedric Peerman and Mikell Simpson. While it will be impossible to replace Long on defense, a solid line-backing corps returns to the unit three of four players from a year ago. The strength of the linebacking unit will help make up for Long's loss. Virginia will struggle some this year and a post-season bowl appearance is unlikely. However, with all the young talent on the roster, the program will use this year to build up depth and experience for the near future.