

College Football Predictions: USC vs Virginia

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The University of Southern California Trojans open their season Saturday afternoon, August 30th in Charlottesville, Virginia. Their opponent will be the Cavaliers of Virginia, led by Head Coach Al Groh. The game kicks off at 3:30pm ET on ABC. College football predictions at Sportsbook.com have the Trojans as a -19.5 road favorite.

Pete Carroll's 2007 team failed to meet expectations, that is not to say they were bad, that is just to say that they did not win a national title. USC finished 11-2 last year but suffered a home loss to Stanford that dealt a fatal blow to their BCS Championship aspirations. The Trojans enter this season ranked third in the AP poll and despite returning just four starters on offense, remain the favorite at +300 odds to win the BCS.

Groh's Cavaliers enter the 2008 season with few expectations. They finished 9-4 last year and made a Gator Bowl appearance against Texas Tech, losing 31-28. They return only six offensive starters and five defensive starters. What was a dominant defensive line last year becomes a weakness in 2008. Defensive end Chris Long was taken by the Rams in the first round of the draft and the three other starters are gone as well. It is highly unlikely that they will hold opponents to the 19.7 point per game average that they did in 2007.

The key match up in this contest will be the aforementioned Virginia defensive line against the rushing attack of USC. The Trojans averaged 5.0 yards per carry last season and they have a number of talented backs this year, led by Stafon Johnson.

Sportsbook.com line for USC vs Virginia:

USC -19.5, Over 42.5

Virginia +19.5, Under 42.5
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