MATCHUP PREVIEW: Syracuse vs Louisville

09/08/2016

BABERS' SYSTEM vs. LOUISVILLE DEFENSE

Against hurry-up offenses like Syracuse's, Louisville feels their Dime Package provides the best matchups. Head Coach Bobby Petrino will switch around a couple of his key defensive players, such as the Cards' defensive superstar Josh Harvey-Clemens. Usually a safety, Harvey-Clemens will play a hybrid linebacker role against the Cuse offense, bouncing between the box and the secondary throughout the game.

The smaller lineup will put pressure on QB Eric Dungey and his passing game by manning up on SU receivers Steve Ishmael and Amba Etta Tawo—who combined for just under 300 receiving yards in last week's season opener—and the Louisville pass-rushers. Along with Harvey-Clemens, the Cards also have LB Devonte Fields, TCU's former Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year and tenacious pass-rusher who tallied 63 tackles and in his first year in the ACC last season. Syracuse tackles will have the tough task of stopping Fields from getting to Dungey.

FRANKLIN AND THE TAMPA-2 vs. JACKSON AND THE O-LINE

There were not many blemishes on the defensive side for Syracuse in last week's game and the Orange is looking for the same results against UofL and its sophomore, dual-threat quarterback Lamar Jackson. Against Charlotte, Jackson recorded a school-high eight touchdowns—seven of them in consecutive drives.

"He gets into the open field and is like a dangerous running back or dangerous wide receiver in space," **Dino Babers** said about the Cardinal QB in a press conference Monday morning. "He gets to touch the ball every single snap that they're on offense. He's just a fabulous player."

Junior linebacker **Zaire Franklin** and his fellow defenders will have their work cut out for them with receivers **Jamari Staples** and Reggie Bonnafon. Staples was the team's second-leading receiver in 2015 (37 receptions, 638 yards) and Bonnafon has the fastest 40-yard dash and vertical jump on the team.

What still remains uncertain, though, is the strength of the Cardinals' offensive line. Last season, Petrino ran into some issues with inexperience. But this season, the unit is one year older and have some serious depth, which will be an asset against any Tampa-2 defense. Although the line is still relatively young (only one of the starters last week was of junior age, for instance) Petrino and Offensive Coordinator Chris Klenakis are optimistic about the future of the line. And, from last week's showing, it would seem that Jackson is comfortable playing behind them.

ORANGE PLAYERS TO WATCH

No. 2, QB Eric Dungey—Keeping the ball on the ground will be an effective counter to the Cards' Dime. Last week's 34 completions for Dungey, although ideal, will most likely not happen. He'll have to rely on the feet of his running backs—maybe even his own.

No. 21, RB **Moe Neal**—Neal was the leading-rusher against Colgate and now, in only the second game of his career, he will have a chance to run if he is given the snaps. Remember, Babers also has veterans Dontae Strickland and Jordan Fredericks to help take some weight off the passing game.

OPPOSING PLAYERS TO WATCH

No. 8, QB Lamar Jackson—Whether it's with his speed, arm or mental focus, Babers was right when he said Jackson can do it all. He is adaptable and versatile. But, the Cardinal staff wants to save his legs—more specifically, their prized QB—so the Cuse defense should expect more of a passing game from

No. 7, WR Reggie Bonnafon—In 2015, Bonnafon played quarterback, wide receiver and running back all in the same season. But, with the emergence of Jackson, his speed was too fast to overlook and has settled in as a wide receiver. He will, no doubt, be given chances for receptions in Friday's game.