



Miami, Ole Miss QBs take different paths to FB playoffs

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Former Normal assistant chief presses to stop firehouse closure

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FCS CHAMPIONSHIP

‘THEY GAVE IT THEIR ALL’



CLAY JACKSON PHOTOS, THE PANTAGRAPH

Illinois State linebacker Tye Niekamp (46) sacks Montana State quarterback Justin Lamson (8) on Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, during the FCS Championship at Firstbank Stadium.

Redbirds fall to Montana State after comeback forced overtime

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. — “This is the dream right here,” Montana State coach Brent Vigen told an ESPN national television audience shortly after the conclusion of the FCS national championship game.

For Illinois State, it was the recurrence of a haunting nightmare from 11 years ago.

The Redbirds’ second title game appearance featured a similarly gut-wrenching ending as a Montana State extra point in overtime was the difference in a 35-34 Bobcats’ victory before a FirstBank Stadium crowd of 24,105, the most to witness an FCS

MORE COVERAGE

- ISU receiver Dylan Lord has huge performance **PAGE B1**
- Check out photos from one of the most memorable games in FCS National Championship history. **PAGES B5**

national title game since 1996.

“Tough game. I’m very proud of our team,” ISU coach Brock Spack said after the first overtime championship game in FCS history.

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Illinois State quarterback Tommy Rittenhouse (16) hugs family members after the game against Montana State on Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, during the FCS Championship at Firstbank Stadium.

PRIVACY BREACH

Illinois health records exposed

700K patients affected by 3-year IDHS error

PETER HANCOCK
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Human Services disclosed recently that it mistakenly uploaded private health-related information about hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans to a publicly accessible website and left it there for more than three years before it discovered the mistake.

But the agency would not explain this week why it took officials so long to discover the problem or why officials waited more than three months after it was discovered to notify the individuals affected and the news media, as required by federal rules.

In a news release dated Friday, Jan. 2, IDHS said the data breach involved two categories of individuals. One category included approximately 32,401 customers of its Division of Rehabilitation Services, which provides services to people with disabilities. The other involved more than 672,000 recipients in the Medicaid and Medicare Savings Program, which helps low-income Medicare beneficiaries pay for premiums, deductibles and coinsurance.

In both cases, the agency said, information about individuals was uploaded to a mapping website used by the agency’s Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. The bureau used that site to create maps

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ILLINOIS

Graduated income tax a longshot

BRENDEN MOORE
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — When a progressive Chicago alderperson scolded Gov. JB Pritzker in November over his opposition to Mayor Brandon Johnson’s failed proposal to tax large corporations \$21 per employee, Illinois’ billionaire chief executive was quick with a retort defending his progressive bona fides.

“What we need is a progressive income tax, a graduated income tax in this state,” Pritzker told Chicago Ald. Byron Sigcho-Lopez, a democratic socialist who confronted him following a Veterans Day commemoration in Little Village. “You know that I’ve worked very hard to get that passed.”

Pritzker poured \$58 million into the 2020 campaign advocating for a change in the state constitution to allow for an income tax structure that would charge higher rates for higher levels of income.

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