

College Football Pick 'Em

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Abstract

This project allows users to create customizable College Football Pick 'Em Leagues. Any user can create a league, tailor it to their preferences, and invite friends to compete against. Each week, users can make picks against the spreads, and each pick is evaluated as win, loss, or push (tie). Winners are selected weekly, and a season winner is rewarded at the conclusion of the season. This application is a fun way for users to test their prediction skills and earn bragging rights!

Introduction

Playing the game is very easy for anyone who wants to get into it. First, just choose a league commissioner. It is their job to set up the league and customize settings such as conference from which to pick and number of picks per user.

After a league has been set up, all members can make weekly picks by viewing the matchups, along with their spreads, and predicting the outcomes.



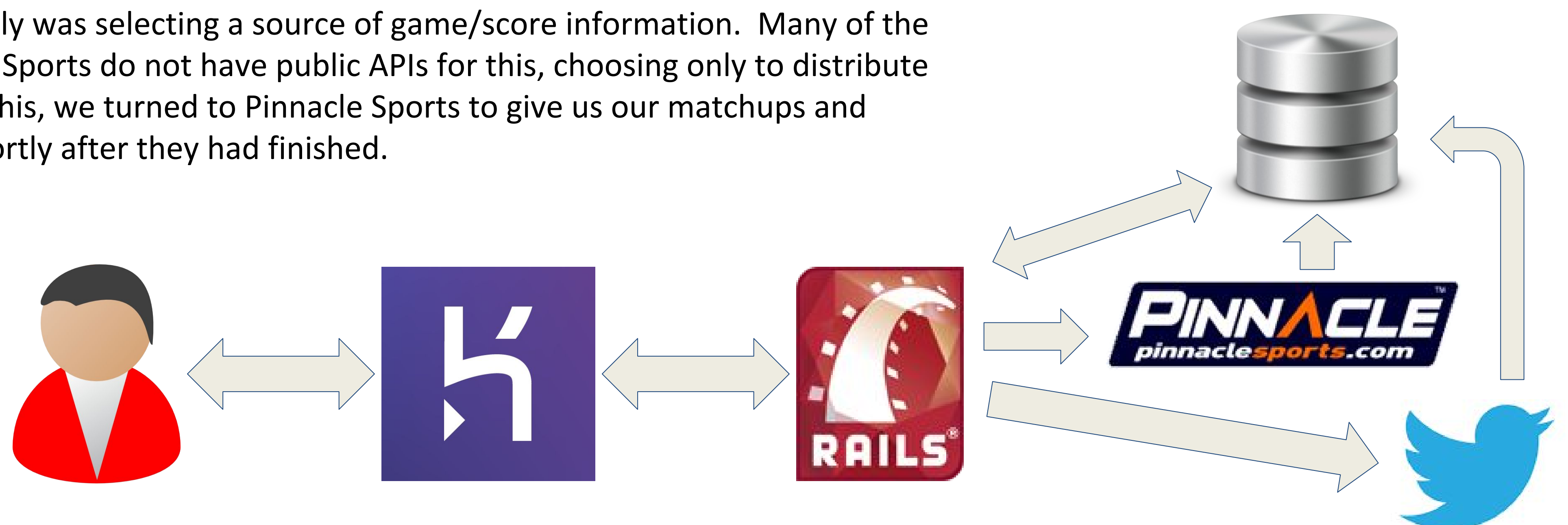
After you've made your picks for the week, you'll be able to view others picks to see how you stack up against them. Scores are updated in real-time, and correct/incorrect picks will be indicated as games finish.

At the end of each week, player records are determined based on game results and their predicted outcomes. Players are rewarded for the best weekly record, and then for the best overall record at the season's conclusion.

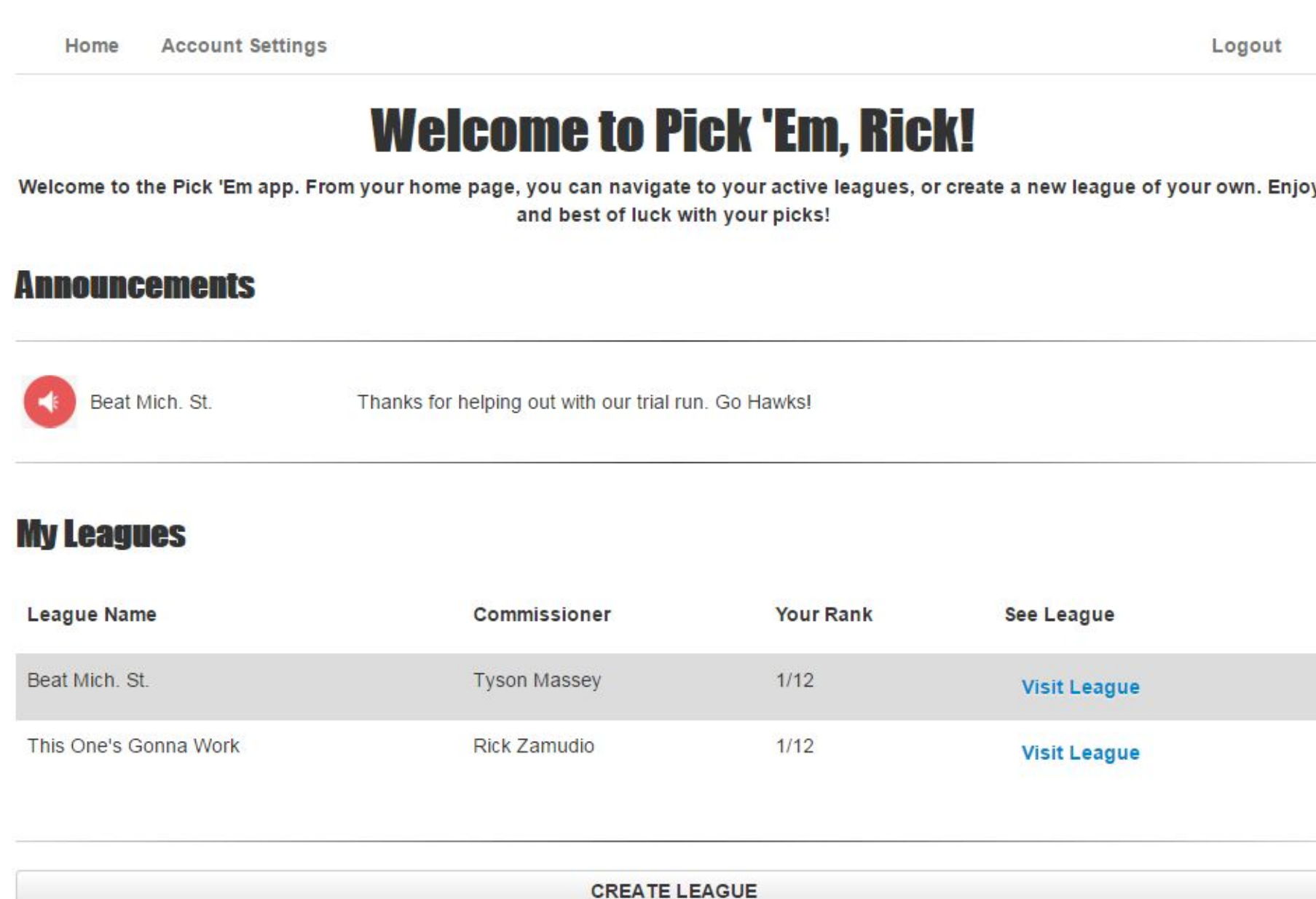
System Description

One of the larger challenges we faced initially was selecting a source of game/score information. Many of the largest media outlets such as ESPN and CBS Sports do not have public APIs for this, choosing only to distribute to large 3rd parties instead. To get around this, we turned to Pinnacle Sports to give us our matchups and spreads and Twitter to find game scores shortly after they had finished.

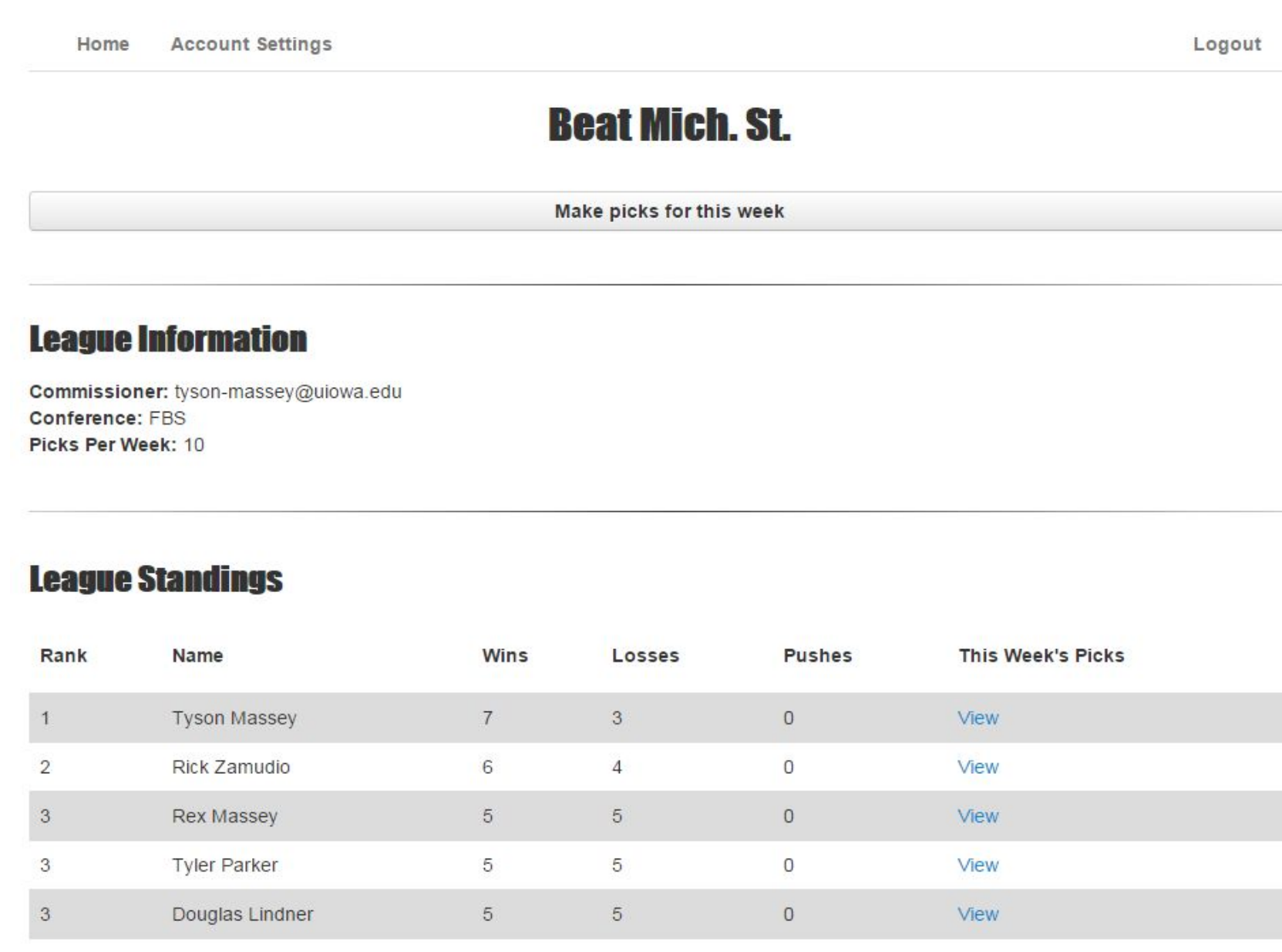
After getting scoring setup, we created a league commissioner role who could invite others to play, then moved forward with allowing users to make their weekly picks and finally totaling up scores at the end of the week (and season) to determine a winner.



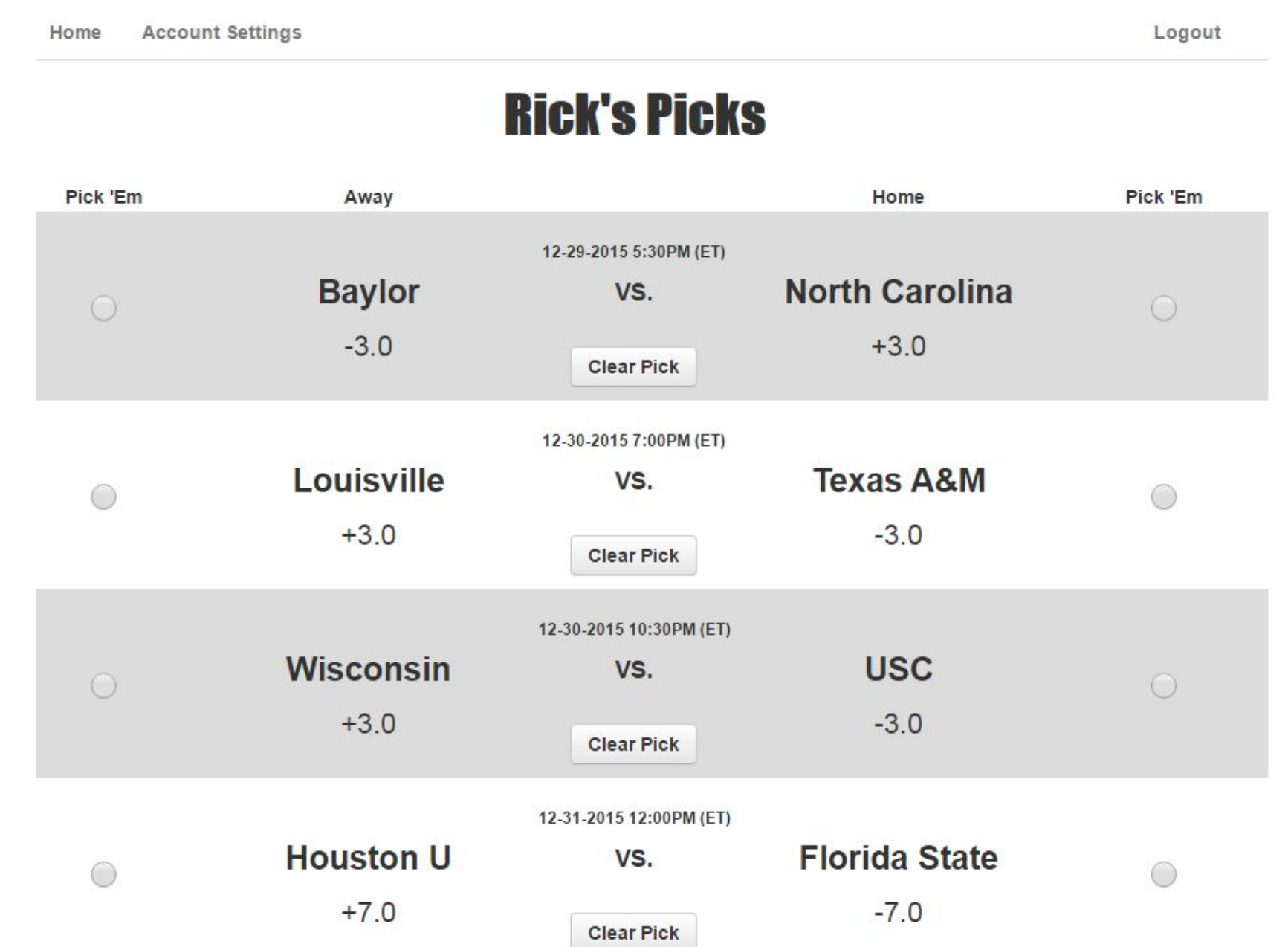
Screenshots



User Home: This the landing page after login. Here, the user can view any announcements, visit their leagues, or create a new league.



League Home: From here, the user can view league standings, weekly winners (not pictured), and others' picks once user has made their own.



Picks Page: The user can view games, their spreads, and times, and predict the number of outcomes determined by the commissioner.

Lessons Learned

- There is a huge market opening for sports game and results APIs
 - ESPN recently closed theirs to third parties
 - CBS and other news outlets mostly only provide fantasy APIs
 - Most options are extremely expensive (> \$1500 per month)
- Twitter is an easy way to get up to date statistics on common things such as sports
- There are some difficulties associated with time-dependent page content and real-time updates
- Developers need to schedule significant time for testing
 - Our testing results: 99.25% rspec coverage and 46 Cucumber scenarios
- Agile methodology practice (we had three sprints, with velocity ~13)

Conclusion

This project proved to be a learning experience in full-stack application development with a team, Agile methodology, and version control through Github. We successfully delivered a working and practical product which could be used for future football seasons.

This application has potential for continued future expansion. Currently, the project is set up as a friendly competition between coworkers, family, or friends. In the future, it would however be easy to monetize a concept like this, as fantasy football does. If users pay to play, weekly and season winners could take a payout, and we could take a portion as the app distributors.