

Davidson

When Scott Abell was hired as HC, Davidson was coming off 3 straight 2-9 seasons and had only won 7 games in 5 seasons and only 1 of those wins came against FCS competition. In '19 they started the season playing three Division 3 schools and started 3-0 including a memorable 91-61 win over Guilford where they held a 964-698 yd edge! The Wildcats won 3 league games and finished 6-5, their best finish since 2007. In 2019 Davidson started 3-0 again they lost a close game vs Campbell despite a +180 yd edge. They were 5-3 and won 3 straight before dropping their finale to Drake by a fg. Their 8-4 record was their best since 2000. In the spring they lost their opener then won 4 straight before dropping their L/2 including a playoff game at Jacksonville St 49-14.

Prior to Abell's hiring, Davidson averaged just 13, 17 & 20 ppg the 3 years prior. Abell, who also serves as his own OC/QB Cch immediately sparked the Wildcats offense by switching to a Triple Option. They jumped to 44.9 ppg and 547 ypg in '18. After failing to score 30 points against any FCS teams in '17, they were only held under 30 points twice all year. The Wildcats slipped to 35 ppg and 433 ypg in '19. With little time to prepare their option they fell to 26.1 ppg and 376 ypg in the spring. Davidson returned a 3Y starter in Tyler Phelps this spring. He threw for 1,139 (50%, 9-5, 316 rush, 4.0) in '19 then added 676 (56%, 7-3, 307, 4.1) in spring. Phelps departs, so their most experienced QB is Louis Colosimo who threw for 177 (63.6%, 3-0) in '19. Three of their top 4 were gone in the spring including 2x 1st Tm All-Pioneer RB Dugger (twice over 1,000 rush). Dylan Sparks led with 574 (4.6) and Coy Williams was #2 with 515 (5.0). Slot Eli Turner had 172 (5.2). This time they return their top 3 and go from completely inexperienced to experienced. Jalen Staples led Davidson with 489 (22.2) in '19. Three others topped 100. Two of their top 4 were gone in spring but Staples returned and led again with 222 (11.7). Turner was #2 with 111 (18.5). This time 3 of their top 4 return including Staples so this is a solid unit coming back. When Abell was HC at Washington & Lee, his offense led D3 in rush ypg 3 of his last 6 years. Davidson led the FCS in rushing in Abell's first year, avg 428 ypg (7.2). They were #2 in rushing in '19 (322, 5.4) then led FCS with 280 (4.6) in spring. In Abell's 3Y here the Wildcats Oline has given up just 8 sks. This year only 2 Oline st'rs return and 3 have st'g exp but they should still be one of the top rushing schools in the FCS.

Davidson allowed 41 ppg and 468 ypg in Abell's first year as HC. They improved by nearly 3 td's in his 2nd year, only giving up 20.7 ppg and 278 ypg. Six of their top 10 tkl'rs were gone in spring and they didn't have the advantage of playing 2 or 3 D3 schools like they usually do. They fell to allowing 27.7 ppg and 371 ypg. The Wildcats allowed 109 rush ypg in '19 then slipped to 145 (5.2) in spring. This year they get three starters back and 5 of their top 6 return. Their only loss is DE James Boyle (#11 tkl'r, 2 sk). Their top 4 LB's return including their top 2 tkl'rs, Jalen Jefferson and Jake Alexander as well as their #5 tkl'r, Jaden Pask. Their only loss at LB is TJ Elliott (8 tkl). The Wildcats only allowed 169 pass ypg (61.8%, 21-9) in '19. In spring they slipped to 227 pass ypg allowed and gave up 68.3% (15-5). They lose 1 starter in CB Jalen Bolden (#3 tkl'r, 8 pbu, 2 int). Four of their top 5 return including their 4, #6, #9 and #10 tkl'rs.

Caden Bonoffski made 6-7 fg's (L/48) in spring. Evan Pritchard avg'd 41.5 ypp (37.1 net). The Wildcats had 0 PR yards all season. Bradyn Oakley avg'd 21.3 KR and Mark McCurdy had a 23.4 avg. All four return so this unit is experienced and should be one of the best ST's in the Pioneer.

Scott Abell has done a great job leading Davidson to the top of the Pioneer League and even got them to an FCS Playoff game last year. They get 14 starters back and go back to playing a schedule that includes 2 lower division schools. The Wildcats are clearly a contender in the Pioneer League and the experience they gained in the spring will be invaluable to their triple option offense.