

## Southeastern –

Southeastern Louisiana whom many of you know as SEL has officially rebranded and become Southeastern this year. Frank Scelfo returns for his 4<sup>th</sup> year and is just 16-15 but his Lions are the preseason favorite in the now six team Southland conference which was an 11 team league in Spring ball this year.

Southeastern only lost to national champ Sam Houston State 43-38 in the opener and then went 4-1 in conference play after that to finish in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. They did have 3 close wins vs Mcneese St (25-20), Northwestern St (27-24) and at Nicholls (52-45) At 4-2 they added a game in a effort to make the playoffs. They were outgained 807-541 in the playoffs by Southern Illinois on the road to end and were left at home.

The offense has 10 starters back this year led by Arkansas transfer Cole Kelley (PS#55) who is a big boy at 6'7 260 lbs. Kelly started 4 games for Arkansas in 2017 throwing for 1038 yards but lost his spot when Chad Morris took over in 2018. He was the backup here in 2018 throwing for 607 (71.3%) with a 9-1 ratio and rushed for 200 yards. This spring the job was his and he threw for 2662 (68.9%) with a 18-4 ratio and rushed for just 46 yards and is 1<sup>st</sup> team Preseason Southland. South Alabama transfer Cephus Johnson (PS#213) is the backup and led the Jaguars in passing in 2019 with 900 (51.6%, 5-7) while rushing for 173. Johnson only attempted 3 passes here in the spring but was the teams' #3 rusher with 142 (4.7). The top rusher in the 7 game spring was Morgan Ellison 263, 5.8) but he is gone. Taron Jones was #2 rusher in 2019 (358, 4.6). The unit is bolstered by UCLA transfer Charles McClendon (PS#171) and Louisiana transfer Jordan Griffin (PS#475) who had 73 rush yards with Texas Wesleyan in 2019. I look for an improved rush attack. The top 4 WR's all return with CJ Turner (1<sup>st</sup> team Southland preseason) leading in the spring with 534 (12.10, Ed Magee was #2 (493 (12.6), Austin Mitchell (2<sup>nd</sup> team Southland preseason) was #3 with 354 (14.8 and Tim Wilson was #5 (2512, 15.7). All 5 starters return on the Offensive line are back led by 1<sup>st</sup> team preseason OL Jalen Bell and 2<sup>nd</sup> team preseason OL in Ethan McMullan, Rendon Miles-Character and Drew Jones. FB/TE Damien Dawson (1<sup>st</sup> team Pres Southland). Southeastern had 509 ypg and 40 ppg on offense in the spring after averaging 485 ypg and 37 ppg in 2019 and will have Scelfo's most potent offense in his three years.

The defense allowed 372 ypg in Southland play in 2019 and in the spring slipped to 474 ypg and 33 ppg. If you include their playoff game which they allowed 807 yards and 55 points to Southern Illinois they gave up 521 ypg and 36 ppg for the season. They bring in a new defensive coordinator in Raymond Monica who was an 8 year DC at Temple back in 1998-05 and was the DL coach the last two years here. He inherits 9 returning starters and they add in Missouri transfer Gerald Nathan (PS#160, 1 tkl in '19) and Southern Miss DE Garrett Crawford (PS#800). The defense returns 9 starters but does have their top 11 tacklers back from last year. Drawing Preseason 1<sup>st</sup> team Southland mentions are DL Darrius Henry (#9 tklr, 2.5 sk spg), LB Alexis Ramos (#1 tackler 80, 5.5 tfl), DB Ferlando Jordan (#7 tklr, 2 int, 6 pbu) and DB Donnell Ward-McGee (#2 tklr, 1 int, 5 pbu). Drawing 2<sup>nd</sup> team Southland Preseason were LB Herman

Christophe (#3 tklr, 3.5 tfl) and DB Jack Henderson (#10 tklr). Last year DB's were 7 of the top 11 tacklers and they need to get more production from the front 7 and should be able to do that. I look for a decent but much improved defense this fall.

All 4 Special Teams players are back led by K Mateo Rengifo who hit a super 9-10 FG with a long of 36 and P Austin Dunlap who avg 43.7 with a 40.6 net! Top PR Austin Mitchell had just one PR all year (3.0, defense was poor) and top KR was Javon Conner (19.9). This should be one of the Southlands best ST units.

The Lions are the preseason favorite to win the Southland and look like they deserve that role if the defense improves as expected. They do play Louisiana Tech on Sept 11. The Lions have a Brand New Field Turf surface on their home field. This years Motto is "Step Up". In the Southland this year each team plays 3 conference opponents twice and they draw Northwestern St (Picked 5<sup>th</sup>), McNeese St (picked 4<sup>th</sup>) and Nicholls (picked 2<sup>nd</sup>) twice each. Southeastern should be able to earn a playoff berth. In 2019 they won a playoff game vs Villanova but were slaughtered by Montana 73-28 in the next round and came close to the playoffs last year. They have a good shot at gaining their 2<sup>nd</sup> playoff berth in 3 years.