

CHARLESTON SOUTHERN BUCCANEERS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - Jack Chambers was the starting QB since '19 when he threw for 2,029 (57.4%, 14-13) and led the Bucs in rushing with 553 (5.6). He had an impressive spring season as well as CSU averaged 251 ypg through the air with Chambers sporting a 7/4 ratio (55.2%) and led again with 192 (3.0) rushing. Last year Chambers started all 10 games. He had a career high 405 vs East Carolina and threw for 2,490 (55.2%, 17-10) and led in rushing once again with 477 (3.5) with 7 td's. This year they lose both their 3x leading passer and 3x leading rusher in Chambers who transferred to NC State. Ross Malmgren saw action in 4 games last year and threw for 57 yards (53.3%, 1-0). They add JUCO transfer Tony Bartalo. They go from a 3 year starting dual threat to zero experience so there will likely be a huge drop off.

RUNNING BACKS - In '19 Terrence Wilson was their #3 rusher with 294 (4.0) and Kendrick Bell was #4 with 252 (5.4). Their top RB departed prior to their spring season. Wilson had 108 (2.2) and Jamari Dunbar was behind him with 63 (3.3). Last year Dunbar and Wilson were gone so they were inexperienced again. JD Moore had a solid 5.3 ypc but only 284 yards. Kyris Barnett added 185 (3.3) and Dee Oscar contributed 122 (3.3). This year they only lose Barnett. If Moore gets more carries then they could see a significant increase. Also losing 3x leading rusher QB Chambers means their RB's will be relied on much more.

RECEIVERS - Garris Schwarting was their top WR in '19 with 575 (14.7) but he only had 90 yards in their spring season. Cayden Jordan led with 108 and 127 in 2 of his last 3 games and led with 274 (18.3). Geoffrey Wall was #2 with 182 (7.6) and Isaac Ross chipped in 130 (11.8). Last year Jordan led with 752 (14.2) while Schwarting was just behind him with 540 (11.3). Wall improved to 501 (8.0). This year Schwarting, Wall and Demetrius Jones (372, 12.0) all depart and Dylan Jones (372, 12.0) moved to DB. Only 2 of their top 5 are back but 2nd Tm All Big South WR Jordan does return. Unfortunately the combo of a new QB and a young WR corps is a tricky prospect to overcome.

OFFENSIVE LINE - CSU rushed for 153 (4.3) and allowed 23 sacks in '19 but against conference foes they were better, putting up 167 (4.4). They struggled in their spring season, avg just 97 rush ypg (2.7) and allowed 15 sacks in 4 games (10.6%)! Last year they had 4 starters back from the spring. They rushed for 145 ypg in their first 3 then were held under 75 rush yards in 4 of their last 7 including vs NC A&T when they finished with -3 rush yards! 8 different OL started at least 2 games and they averaged just 114 (3.4) with 35 sacks allowed. This year they lose LT Preston Nichols (8 st), RT Jacob Tylski (10 st), RG JT Melton (10 st) and backup D'Andra Thompson (2 st). Two starters return and 4 have starting experience. They add VMI transfer Shane Strand who started 11 games at RT for the Keydets last year. They used 8 different starting lineups last year and if they can keep a consistent group then they will be improved.

DEFENSIVE LINE - In '19 CSU was gashed for 310 (7.0) rush ypg in non-conference play. They only gave up 162 (4.3) vs Big South foes but their overall average was 224 (5.5). Naturally only playing conference foes in their spring season they improved, allowing just 132 (3.1, 6 sk). Last year they returned Shaundre Mims who was 1st Tm All Big South after averaging 1.4 tfl's per game. CSU did much better against non-conference foes (189, 5.1) and dominated against the Big South (96, 2.5). Overall they allowed 124 (3.3) with 22 sacks. Mims led the Big South with 1.65 tfl's per game (8 sk, 8.5 tfl) and was a 4th Team FCS All-American. This year Mims and BUCK Nick Salley (11 st, #8 tkl'r, 3.5 sk, 3 tfl) both depart along with John Chiaramonte (4 st, #13 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl). Two starters return but this group isn't nearly as menacing without their top 2 guys.

LINEBACKERS - Last year CSU returned their #2, #7 and #8 tacklers from their 4 game spring season. Garrett Sayegh led with 96 tackles, also contributing 2 sacks and 2 int's. He was also #2 in tackles per game in the Big South. Justin McIntire was a distant 2nd with 69 tackles (3 pd). Jerome Rice added 45 tackles and was #2 on the team with 9.5 tfl's. Both All Conference LB's Sayegh (1st Tm) and Rice (3rd Tm) return while they must replace McIntire (11 st) and Kyle Syvarth (3 st, #12 tackler). With their top guys back this will be a strength.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - CSU's top tackler during the spring season was S Cody Cline who made 40 stops and 2 int's. Cline missed 5 games last year and CSU allowed 241 pass ypg but only 54.8% and their 15-13 ratio allowed helped them finish 1st in pass defense efficiency. This year they lose CB Matthew Williams who led with 11 pbu's (11 st, #5 tkl'r, 2 int), Akele Pauling (2 st, #19 tkl'r) and Jarrod Stanley (3 st, #20 tkl'r). Three starters return and if Cline can stay healthy then this is a much improved unit with 5 back with starting experience.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Nathaniel Toole converted just 2-4 fg's, but did bang home a 53 yd fg vs Robert Morris. Both of Toole's missed fg's were blocked. Toole was also the team's KOS and averaged 51.7 yards per kickoff. Miller Braddock was a solid P to have in the fold (40.1). Last year Sam Babbush made just 6-12 fg's (L/44). Toole tried 3 fg's and missed them all from 40+. Braddock averaged 39.6 and their net was only 32.8. Cayden Jordan averaged 9.6 PR and Roderick Hawkins 210 (23.3). Babbush returns. This unit was quite disappointing last year but it can't be hard to replace their lost pieces.

COACHES - Notre Dame's all-timer leading rusher Autry Denson became HC at Charleston Southern ahead of the '19 season. Denson was Notre Dame's RB Coach in '15-'18 and also coached RB's at Miami (OH) in '14. Klay Koester is their OC. He has been here since '19 and spent 3 year prior as OC at UVA-Wise. He also spent 5 years as WR Cch/TE Cch at Eastern Kentucky. DC/LB Coach Zane Vance has been here for 5 years. He was the Asst HC/LB Coach at New Mexico St for 4 years prior to that. He also spent 7 years at Kent St. The ST's Coordinator is Zack Johnson. He was ST Coor at Savannah St for 3 years.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In '19 Charleston Southern averaged 22 ppg and 362 ypg. Against Big South foes they put up 27 ppg and 374 ypg. In the spring season the Bucs put up 21 ppg and 348 ypg. Last year they had 3Y starting QB Jack Chambers back. He led the Bucs to 25 ppg and 371 ypg! This year 5 starters return but Chambers is gone. Their top RB and top WR return so whoever they choose as their QB does have solid skill guys around him but it's hard to see them improving statistically.

DEFENSE - CSU allowed just 325 ypg and 24 ppg in '18. They slipped to 411 ypg and 30 ppg in Denson's first season. In the spring they allowed 20 ppg and 336 ypg. Last year the Bucs had a mixed bag of performances. They alternated bad performances with good and finished by allowing 29 ppg and 365 ypg. This year they get 7 starters back and 13 of their top 18 tacklers return including 1st Tm All Big South LB Garret Sayegh. Their DB's should improve if Cline stays healthy but the Dline is a huge concern after losing an All-American DE. In both of Denson's full seasons here they've allowed 29 ppg and 30 ppg and we see more of the same.

2022 - CSU football has only been around since '91, and quickly jumped to FCS in '93. The Bucs did not post their first winning season until '05. They began to take the next step under current Coastal Carolina HC Jamey Chadwell, starting with a 10-win season in '13 and Big South conference titles in '15 and '16. Chadwell moved on from CSU after the '16 season, and former HC Mark Tucker went 11-11 in the two following seasons, by far the greatest run in CSU's short history. Denson was hired in '19 after they slipped to 5-6 (-79 ypg '18). The Bucs were 2-5 then won their last 4 to finish with a winning record in Denson's first season but were -49 ypg and -6 ypg in Big South play. They went 2-2 in their spring games (+12 ypg). Last year they started 1-0, were blownout by Monmouth early then suffered B2B 3 point losses to ECU and Robert Morris. They alternated good performances with poor the rest of the way including losses to North Alabama and North Carolina A&T but beat Campbell and Gardner-Webb in OT. In their finale they were practically fed to the Dawgs in a 56-7 loss to the FBS National Champs in Georgia. They finished 4-6 but were +6 ypg and +26 ypg vs Big South foes. This year the Bucs have 12 starters back but must replace their star QB and DL. The Bucs open with an improving Western Carolina, travel to NCSt and Eastern Kentucky then host Furman who won 6 games last year. They also travel to Bryant and Kennesaw St. Only 2 of their Big South games are at home. Denson is doing a good job and if they find a QB they could surprise but the schedule doesn't lend them a lot of room for error.