

CORNELL BIG RED

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - In '19 QB Mike Catanese started 2 of the first 3 but he suffered a season ending injury in their loss to Georgetown so Richie Kenney started the last 7. Kenney had 332 vs Brown and finished with 2,069 but only a 9-12 ratio (57%). Catanese departed (242, 71%, 0-1, 88 rush) but Kenney got significant experience and Dezmond Brinson saw action in 7 games in '19 (16 pass, 64 rush). Kenney started 8 games. He threw for 1,515 (47.3%, 5-7). Ben Mays started 2 and threw for 561 (57.8%, 3-3). Jameson Wang played a part-time Wildcat role. He threw for 304 (65%, 4-4) and led with 349 (5.5) rush. This year they lose Kenney but Wang and Mays combined for more td passes than him in less than half the attempts and Wang brings a valuable dual threat so they are actually improved.

RUNNING BACKS - Harold Coles led with 515 (6.4) in '17 and 710 (5.4, 293 rec) in '18. In '19 he returned once again along with their #2. Coles finished #2 in the Ivy League with 832 (5.9, 98 rec) despite missing 1 game. SK Howard was #2 with 348 (5.7) and no other RB topped 100 yards. Last year Coles departed but Howard's ypc nearly matched Coles so they were still in solid shape, but less experienced. QB Wang led with 349 (5.5). Devon Brewer was their top RB with 314 (4.5). Howard only finished with 243 (4.0). Delonte Harrell added 156 (3.45). This year Brewer (1 st), Howard (8 st) and Harrell (1 st) all depart. Their top returning RB is Eddy Tillman (142, 8.4). This unit needs rebuilt and Wang will likely take a lot of the carries.

RECEIVERS - In '19 Cornell had 3 of their top 6 back including their #1 guy, Owen Peters (455, 15.7). Phazione McClurge led with 677 (16.5). Peters was #2 with 427 (14.7). Eric Gallman added 376 (11.4). Three of their top 6 returned last year but they lost both McClurge and Peters along with TE John Fitzgerald (10 st, 226, 11.3). Thomas Glover emerged and topped 100 on 3 occasions including 133 vs Princeton. He led with 767 (14.0). Alex Kuzy had 583 (13.6). Curtis Raymond added 534 (19.8). No one else topped 140. This year they lose Kuzy (9 st), Raymond (3 st), TE Ryan Fitton (8 st, 137, 15.2), Devan Cross (1 st, 120, 9.2) and Turner DePalma (7 st, 2 rec). They get Glover (1st Tm All Ivy) back but the supporting cast must be rebuilt.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In '19 Cornell lost 4 OLine starters but John Christian Riffle was actually 2nd Tm All-Ivy in '17 before losing his job in '18. Despite the losses, they nearly matched '18's production by rushing for 139 ypg (3.9, 20 sacks). Last year Cornell returned 3 starters including 3rd Tm All-Ivy RT Hunter Nourzad and 4 had starting experience, making this one of the most experienced Oline's in the Ivy League. Cornell only rushed for 122 ypg but ypc improved to 4.1 and they allowed just 9 sacks! This year the Big Red lose 4 starters. Gone are 1st Tm All-Ivy RT Nourzad (Transfer to Penn St), 3rd Tm All-Ivy C Jack Burns, 4th Tm All-Ivy OG Robert Fatovic and LT Will Swope. They go from one of the most experienced to one of the least experienced Oline's in the Ivy League.

DEFENSIVE LINE - 3 Dline starters returned in '19 and they improved to 136 (3.5) in Ivy League play and 124 (3.3) overall (22 sk), their best since 2005 despite losing starting NT Jordan Landsman after 2 games. Last year they lost DE Nathaniel Weber (7 st, #12 tkl'r, 2 sk), DT Michael Giloolley (4 st, #13 tkl'r, 2.5 sk), DT William Baker (6 st, 14 tkl), DE Cyrus Nolan (2 st, 10 tkl) and Landsman (2 st, 5 tkl). Only 1 starter returned but that was their top guy, Maxton Edgerly (9 st, #10 tkl'r). Cornell allowed 148 rush ypg (4.1, 14 sk) and 170 (4.4) in Ivy League play. This year Cornell loses DT Jack Muench (9 st, 16 tkl, 3 tfl), and a Edgerly (11 tkl). Three starters return including DE Holt Fletcher (10 st, #10 tkl'r) and Wallace Squibb (1 st, 18 tkl, 1.5 sk) was just as good as the departed Muench. This is a solid unit and could match '19's production.

LINEBACKERS - In '19 Cornell returned their #3 and #14 tkl'rs and Mo Bradford (#4 tkl'r) moved in from DE. Jake Stebbins was 3rd Tm All-Ivy and this 4-man unit made up 6 of their top 10 tkl'rs. Last year they lost RLB Bradford (10 st, #4 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl) and WLB's Malik Leary (4 st, #6 tkl'r, 10 tfl) and Justin Bedard (6 st, #7 tkl'r) as well as bkp NB Eric Stoxstill-Diggs (3 st, #11 tkl'r). 2 starters returned in Stebbins (3 st, #3 tkl'r) and NB Logan Thut (7 st, #8 tkl'r) but their depth was severely depleted. Stebbins and Lance Blass were their top 2 tkl'rs but they allowed 28.9 ppg. This year they lose Blass (10 st, #2 tkl'r, 7.5 tfl) and Thut (10 st, co-#3 tkl'r) but 1st Tm All Ivy LB Stebbins (#1 tkl'r, 10 tfl) returns along with their #8 and #14 tkl'rs. Stebbins is one of the top players in the Ivy League and they should be better despite the losses.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - This was the strength of the defense in '19 when they allowed 214 pass ypg and finished 3rd in pass efficiency defense in the Ivy (62.4%, 15-8). Last year they lost a pair of 1st Tm All Ivy League performers in Jelani Taylor (#1 tkl'r, 3 int, 10 pbu) and David Jones (#2 tkl'r, 2 int, 6 pbu) along with FS Jake Watkins (10 st, #5 tkl'r). Only 1 starter returned and this went from a strength to an inexperienced unit. They matched '19's production by allowing 215 pass ypg (59.4%, 15-8) but slipped to #6 in the league in pass defense efficiency. This year they lose SS Isaiah Hogan (9 st, #5 tkl'r), CB Keenan Clarke (10 st, #6 tkl'r, 8 pd), CB Michael Irons (9 st, #7 tkl'r, 9 pbu), S Jalyx Hunt (1 st, #9 tkl'r) and S Eric Diggs (1 st, #12 tkl'r). Only 1 starter returns again (#3 tkl'r), and they lose 6 of their top 8 DB's, making this their least experienced unit on the defense.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Last year they lost both their K and their return man. Scott Lees made 8-11 fg's (L/40). Koby Kiefer took over punting and avg'd 39.4 (33.9 net). Javonni Cunningham averaged 21.9 KR. This year they lose K Lees and P Kiefer so they will need to replace most of the unit.

COACHES - David Archer is in his 9th season as HC and was an asst here from '07-'12 and was Team Capt here back in '04. The 5th year OC is Joe Villapiano. He was an asst at Harvard from '05-'17. DC Backus is in his 9th year here. He was also DC at Princeton ('09-'13) and Bucknell ('02-'06). The 5th year ST Coor is Chad Nice.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In 2017 Cornell's offense slipped back to averaging 349 ypg and their ppg dropped by nearly a touchdown to 17.3. In '18 they had 9 starters back including QB Dalton Banks but barely improved at 19.1 ppg and ypg actually slipped to 344 ypg. Cornell returned 7 starters on offense in '19. The Big Red gradually improved, avg 372 ypg and 20.6 ppg. They came back off a 1 year hiatus and had 5 starters back last year. They still only averaged 20.1 ppg and 366 ypg. This year they only have 2 starters back but they do have experience at QB and one of the best WR's in the Ivy League. The Oline and RB are their biggest concerns so overall their numbers could slip again.

DEFENSE - In '17 Cornell posted their best season under HC Archer, improving by nearly a full touchdown, allowing just 24.3 ppg and 355 ypg (lowest since '08). In '18 they allowed 395 ypg and 29.7 ppg. 7 starters returned in '19 and they were even better than '17, allowing just 338 ypg and 20.7 ppg. Last year they only returned 3 starters and just 3 of their top 13 tkl'rs. They gave up over a td more overall (28.9 ppg, 363 ypg) and 31 ppg/396 ypg in Ivy League play. This year 5 starters return. They are inexperienced in the secondary but have got one of the top LB's in the conference and are more experienced than last year with 6 of their top 13 tkl'rs back.

2022 - Cornell HC David Archer is an ex-Big Red player and Asst Coach. He took over in 2013 but won just 6 games in his first 3 years. The Big Red started 2016 with 3 straight wins, including an upset over a ranked Colgate squad but finished 4-6 (-86 ypg). In '17 they slipped to 3-7 but improved to -10 ypg and their 3 Ivy League wins were their best under Archer. In '18 Cornell again finished 3-7 and they were -50 ypg with 2 Ivy League wins. The Big Red started just 2-6 in '19 then shocked undefeated Dartmouth 20-17 and closed with a 26 point win over Columbia. The Big Red improved to +34 ypg and one of their losses (at Penn) came with +171 yd & +13 FD edges. Last year only 8 starters returned. Cornell started 0-4 but were only -8 ypg in those. They were only 2-6 before a blowout loss to Dartmouth and in their home finale lost to Columbia by 8 despite a 431-257 yd edge. This year 8 starters are back. They will be favored in 2 non-conference games and host Brown which should keep them out of the Ivy League cellar.