

DUQUESNE DUKES

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - In spring of '21 Duquesne replaced a 2Y starter (FAU transfer) with Ohio transfer Joe Mischler (PS#140). He threw for 385 vs LIU and 335 vs Sacred Heart and was named 1st Tm NEC after finishing with 1,195 (65%, 9-4). Mischler returned and they added Rhode Island transfer Darrius Perrantes who started 2 games in '19 (287, 53%, 2-1). Mischler suffered a season ending injury in the opener. Perrantes led the Dukes to an upset win over FBS opponent Ohio in his very first start (23-34-194-1-0). He started 8 of the last 9 games and threw for 1,620 (59.7%) and finished 3rd in the NEC with 17 pass td's (7 int's). This year both Mischler and Perrantes return, along with Sr Evan Nelson (1 st, 135, 37.9%, 1-0). They also add D2 transfer Jordan Heisey who saw action in 8 games at Lock Haven last year (330, 40%, 2 td's). Mischler is one of the top QB's in the NEC and Perrantes is great depth and both will likely see action.

RUNNING BACKS - In '19 Duquesne returned AJ Hines 1st Tm AARB AJ Hines (1520, 5.7, 236 rec '18). Hines missed 2 games and dipped to just 780 (4.1). Mark Allen was #2 with 689 (5.0). Both Hines and Allen were gone in the spring as well as their #3 rusher. They added Garrett Owens who rushed for 2,743 yds in 3Y at D2 Mercyhurst. Owens led with 411 (4.7). Billy Lucas ran for 110 in each of the L/2 games. He was #2 with 297 (4.5). Last year they went from losing their top 3 to returning their top 3. Both Lucas and Owens topped 100 twice each. Lucas had 137 vs LIU and led with 699 (5.1). Owens was #2 with 630 (4.9) and also tacked on 239 receiving (9.2). JaMario Clemens had 105 (5.5) in 4 games (redshirt). This year the Dukes lose 3rd Tm All NEC RB Owens. Lucas (1st Tm All NEC) returns and Clements got valuable experience last year. FIU transfer DeMarcus Townsend (PS#67) only saw action in 1 game last year. Losing Owens is a big loss but Lucas is still one of the top RB's in the conference and their depth has potential.

RECEIVERS - In '19 Duquesne had four who topped 200 yards. Two of those returned for spring and they added Cyrus Holder from St Francis (692, 14.7 '18). Holder led with 491 (21.3). Davie Henderson was #2 with 282 (12.8). Joey Isabella added 194 (11.4). All 3 returned in the fall plus they added Kansas St transfer Wykeen Gill (273, 17.1 '19). Holder topped 100 in each of the last 2 and led with 629 (17.0) and 8 td's. Henderson was #2 with just 255 (12.1) and Gill added 252 (9.3). This year Holder (1st Tm NEC), Henderson (6 st), Gill (8 st), Dominic Thieman (2 st, 192, 12.0) and TE Bill O'Malley (7 st, 5 rec) are all gone. They must replace their top 5. They did bring in Wisconsin transfer TE Quan Easterling (PS#165) and ODU transfer Rafael McCoy but this whole unit is inexperienced after losing their top 4.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The Dukes nearly repeated '18's numbers by rushing for 172 (4.0) in '19 but did nearly cut sacks in half with 16. All 5 starters, who started all 11 games in '19, departed in the spring. Despite the inexperience they again matched their numbers, avg 170 (4.2) ypg with 8 sacks. All 5 starters from the spring were back in the fall, plus they added RG Matt Fest who started 10 games at Lehigh in '19. Once again all 5 starters stayed healthy and started every game. While they slipped to 160 rush ypg, they also increased to 4.5 ypc and only 12 sacks (4.4%). This year Duquesne only loses LT Jake Dixon (1st Tm All Patriot). They have 4 multi-year starters and 3

of them were All-Patriot last year. They add Bowling Green transfer Chris Oliver who played defense for the Falcons in '19 (11 tkls) and Shippensburg transfer Josh Zacher was All-Conference last year. The can't get much more experienced and should easily top last year's production.

DEFENSIVE LINE - In '18 Duquesne only let 2 teams top 200 yards and gave up just 130 (3.9, 19 sk). All 4 starters were gone in spring including their #3, #8 and #11 tk'l's. They dropped to 201 (4.9) rush ypg and had just 5 sacks. Last year 3 starters returned including their #6, #8, #10 and #11 tk'l's. Duquesne only allowed Sacred Heart to top 180 rush yards and allowed just 140 (4.3, 19 sk) vs 9 FCS foes. All 3 starters played nearly every snap last year and made the All-NEC team. Now all 3 return. They do need to find some depth but this should be a solid DLine again.

LINEBACKERS - The Dukes had their #1, #9, #10 and #12 tk'l's at LB in '19. All 4 were gone in spring. Their replacements finished as their #3, #4, #12 and #13 tk'l's. Last year their top 4 all return plus they get back Connor Barrett (8 st, #8 tk'l '19) who sat out spring. The experience was key as they allowed just 22.9 ppg. Jahan Worth was 1st Tm All-NEC (6.5 tfl, 5 pd) but he departs this year along with their top sack guy AJ Garson (11 st, #6 tk'l'r, 6 sk). Only 1 starter returns but Barrett is back as well (8 tk'l LY) so they have more experience than meet's the eye.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - Going into last year, Duquesne hadn't allowed a team to top 55% completions since before 2010 and kept foes under 200 pass ypg in 9 of 11 seasons. Duquesne lost all 4 starters prior to spring but still only allowed 123 pass ypg (55%, 6-4). The Dukes had 4 starters back from spring. They had been one of the most consistent position groups we had seen but fell below the standard they had set by allowing 208 pass ypg and 57% completions. This year they lose both Safeties, Leandro DeBrito (#11 st1 tk'l'r, 5 pd, 2nd Tm All-Patriot) and Temitope Agoro (7 st, #3 tk'l'r, 4 pbu) and TJ Johnson (3 st, #16 tk'l'r). Two starters are back and they return their #7, #8, #11, #12 and #13 tk'l's and should improve on their #5 ranking (57%, 13-8) in the NEC.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Brian Brudewicz made 4-6 fg's in spring (L/33). Mike Smigley avg'd 40.3 ypg and improved the Dukes net to 38.2. Joey Isabella avg'd 9.0 PR and Ezekiel Daure avg'd 18.2 KR. All 4 return so their ST's are in solid shape. Four kickers combined to make 19-21 (L/45 with Brian Bruzewicz leading the way, hitting 9 of 9 (L/38). Michael Berarducci averaged 39.8 (Tm Net 35.7). Duquesne had 4 combine to finish with an 8.8 PR avg and 11 combined for a 22.9 avg. They lose their top PR and KR but their P and K return, making this one of the top ST's units in NEC.

COACHES - Jerry Schmitt entered his 18th season at the helm of Duquesne. The Dukes have won 8 conference titles under Schmitt including 5 in the NEC and 2 playoff berths ('15 & '18). Anthony Doria is in his 12th season on staff. He was a record setting QB from St. Francis (PA). DC Mike Craig is in his 2nd stint here. He was ST Coor from '11-'13 here and was one of the top DC's in Division II the last 6 years at Cal U (PA). Kory Gribbin is the ST Coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In '18 the Dukes were averaging 31.2 ppg and 383 ypg until they were shutdown in the 2nd rd of FCS playoffs and slipped to 29.2 ppg and 373 ypg. In '19 they were held under 300 yards on 4 occasions and only put up 22.3 ppg and 342 ypg but in the spring they improved back to 25.8 ppg and 409 ypg. Six starters returned on offense in the fall but they lost QB Mischler in the first game. Duquesne still improved to 29.5 ppg but ypg slipped to 346. This year they get Mischler back from injury along with their #1 rusher and 4 OL starters. Their WR group needs rebuilt but with 6 starters back they could match last year's production.

DEFENSE - This has been an impressively consistent defense highlighted by stellar play in the secondary. Duquesne gave up 28.3 ppg in '18 but when you remove their playoff loss vs SDSU and 2 FBS losses they only all'd 20.7. In '19 they allowed 23.6 ppg and only 298 ypg. In spring they gave up just 17.6 ppg and 324 ypg. 10 starters were back last year and they held foes to 22.9 ppg and 333 ypg. In their last 4 they gave up just 298 ypg. This year Duquesne has 6 starters back. They lose 4 of their top 6 tacklers but #7 through #15 all return. Their depth got solid experience last year and they should step right in and match last year's defense.

2022 - The Dukes have won 8 conference titles under Schmitt including 5 in the NEC and 2 playoff berths ('15 & '18). In '18 the Dukes went 8-3 in the regular season (+80 ypg vs FCS) with 2 losses vs FBS foes and a 1 pt loss. They won their first FCS playoff game vs Towson then were blownout by SDSU, finishing 9-3. In '19 the Dukes started 2-2, won 4 straight then lost their final 3, their 6-5 record was their worst since 2014. Only 7 starters returned in the spring. They won their first 4 games in spring but lost the rematch vs Sacred Heart in the NEC Title game despite a +91 yard edge. HC had a loaded his roster with 14 FBS transfers and with 16 starters back including 10 on defense. They were blownout in their opener at TCU and lost QB Mischler but rebounded with an upset win over Ohio as part of a 5 game winning streak. They led Sacred Heart 13-7 at half but lost 31-13 and was outgained 416-196. After an upset home loss to St Francis they won their last 3 games to finish 7-3 and were +23 ypg. This year Duquesne gets 12 starters back. They get QB Mischler back from injury. They open at Florida St and Hawaii in their first 4 games. Last year we said their game at Sacred Heart likely would determine the NEC Champion, and it did. This year they host the Pioneers and a win likely gives them the conference title.