HARVARD CRIMSON

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - Jake Smith started 8 of the last 9 as a freshman (1154, 57%, 5-9). He beat out eventual Rice transfer Tom Stewart in camp for '18 then started the first 4 but was benched (726, 60.9%, 4-4) for the last 6. In '19 Smith returned as the clear starter. He started all 10 and finished with 2,233 (60.1%, 19-9). Last year Smith returned along with bkp Luke Emge who appeared in 4 games (110, 50%, 0-1). Soph Charlie Dean beat Smith out for the job and started the first 2 but was banged up. Smith was the Ivy League POW after leading the Crimson to a win over #23 Holy Cross but was benched the following week. Dean and Smith went back and forth over the next 3 games but it was Emge who led the Crimson to wins in their last 3 including over Yale in "The Game". Despite only 3 starts Emge led with 675 (53.7%, 5-2). Dean finished #2 with 604 (54.7%, 4-2). Smith added 579 (59%, 4-4). Both Smith and Emge depart so Dean appears to have the job to himself. Jack Bill is athletic and played some WR last year. Curt Casteel played well in their spring game. They aren't as deep as last year but HC Murphy showed confidence in Dean last year.

RUNNING BACKS - In '17 true frosh Aaron Shampklin rushed for 363 (4.5). Harvard returned a 2nd Tm All-Ivy RB in '18 but Shampklin emerged and led with 1,053 (6.1, 133 rec) and was 1st Tm All-Ivy. In '19 Harvard lost '18's leading rusher, then Shampklin missed the season. Devin Darrington was #2 in '18 with 435 (6.2) then led in '19 with 734 (4.0), but even more impressive was true frosh Aidan Borquet who finished #2 with 644, led with a 7.2 ypc and was named the Ivy League ROY. Last year Darrington transferred to Virginia but Shampklin returned. We said this was the top RB duo in the Ivy. Shampklin topped 100 in the first 2 and led with 835 (5.6). Borquet had 169 vs Lafayette and was #2 with 602 (5.3). Sone Notoh added 130 (3.5). This year Shampklin (1st Tm All Ivy) departs but Borquet (2nd Tm All Ivy) returns. They aren't as strong without their duo but Borquet is one of the top RB's in the Ivy.

RECEIVERS - Harvard only returned their #2 WR in '19. 4 of their top 5 were gone along with their starting TE and the next most experienced WR on the roster had just 1 catch in '18. Cody Chrest led with 706 (15.7). Jack Cook was #2 with 447 (16.6). H-Back Ryan Reagan had 310 (17.2) and BJ Watson added 293 (9.5). Last year Harvard lost Chrest, Cook and TE John Stivers (10 st, 114, 12.7). They did get 3 of their top 6 back and Kym Wimberly started the opener in '19 but was injured. They were in much better shape than they were entering '19 despite losing their top 2 guys. Wimberly led with 453 (13.3). Watson was #2 with 322 (10.1). James Batch had 155 (17.2) and TE Haven Montefalco had 154 (11.9). This year they lose their top 3 in Wimberly, Watson and Batch. Kaedyn Odermann had 149 (13.6) but was missed the last 6 games. This is a much younger group and down a few notches.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In '19 Harvard lost 4 starting Oline including 2 All-Ivy performers and they slipped to 156 rush ypg (4.2) and sacks increased to 24. All 5 starting OL started all 10 games. Last year they lost 4 starters including 1st Tm All-Ivy RG Liam Shanahan who went on to start at LSU. With 3 All-Ivy performers gone this was the biggest question mark on the team yet they still rushed for 162 ypg (4.2) and sacks dropped to 16, but their Ivy League rush ypg dropped from 150 (4.2) to 132 (3.6). This year they return 3 starters. 1st Tm All Ivy RT Spencer Rolland transferred to North Carolina and they lose 3rd Tm All Ivy RG Hunt Sparks. This is a more experienced group and one of the Ivy's top Olines.

DEFENSIVE LINE - Harvard's Dline was their biggest concern in '19, losing 5 with starting experience and only 1 starter returned. Despite the losses, they improved to just 90 (2.5) rush ypg allowed and sacks jumped from 18 to 43 (13%)!!! Last year Harvard returned 3 starters but they lost a 1st Tm All-Ivy DE (7 st, #8 tkl'r, 9.5 sk). 7 returned with starting experience, and after their excellent production in '19 this was clearly the Ivy League's top Dline. Harvard allowed just 69 rush ypg (2.1) with 39 sacks. All 4 DL's started all 10 and were All Ivy. This year they lose 2 starters in 2nd Tm All Ivy DT Chris Smith (10 st, #5 tkl'r, 3.5 sk) and 1st Tm All Ivy DT Jacob Sykes (10 st, #9 tkl'r, 7 sk) along with 3 backups (40 tkl). They go from 7 with starting experience to 2 so this is a much less experienced group but they've got 2 All Ivy League DE's in Nate Leskovec (#6 tkl'r, 6.5 sk) and Truman Jones (#10 tkl'r) and DT Thor Griffith (#7 tkl'r, 5 sk) was a finalist for the Jerry Rice Award (Top FCS Frosh).

LINEBACKERS - Harvard returned all 3 starting LB's in '19, making this the strength of the team and their top 3 LB's started all 10 games. Last year they lost starters Cameron Kline (#3 tkl'r) and Joey Goodman (#6 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl) along with backup Bobby Drysdale (#9 tkl'r). They were less experienced but did still have their #2 and #10 tkl'rs back. Jordan Hill was #3 in the Ivy League in tackles. This year they lose 1st Tm All Ivy LB Hill (10 st, #1 tkl'r) and Andrew Irwin (10 st, #4 tkl'r). Only 1 starter returns and the starters took most of the reps last year so this is a really young unit.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - In '19 Harvard returned 3 starting DB's along with Max Jones who was their #3 tkl'r in '18. They allowed just 217 pass ypg and 54% (10-12) in '18 and were 3rd in pass eff D in the Ivy but in '19 they slipped to 6th, allowing 257 ypg (57.6%, 17-7). Last year they lost 3 starters (#1 and #5 tkl'rs). Only 1 starter in Max Jones but he was OFY after 1 game. Harvard still led the Ivy with 17 int's and finished #1 in pass efficiency D (53.9%, 9-17). This year they lose CB Khalid Thomas (9 st, # 15 tkl'r, 3 int, 6 pbu). Their #2, #8 and #14 tkl'rs are back. This is clearly the best secondary in the Ivy League.

SPECIAL TEAMS - In '19 Jake McIntyre made 9-15 fg's (L/42). Jon Sot and Sean McKeough split punting duties and led the Ivy with a 38.8 net. Last year they lost K McIntyre and P McKeough but Sot had the better avg between the two (42.3). Jonah Lipel made 15-19 fg's (L/47). Sot slipped to 39.7 avg (36.1 net). DeMarkes Stradford avg'd 25.9 KR. This year they lose Sot but return 1st Tm All Ivy League K Lipel.

COACHES - Tim Murphy returns for his 29th season. He has the highest winning % in Ivy League history (68.7%) and has led Harvard to 9 Ivy League Titles. He was also HC at Cincinnati ('89-'93) and Maine ('87-'88). Mickey Fein is the 6th year OC. He was also OC at Murray State and Tenn Martin. DC Scott Larkee is in his 14th season at Harvard. He also graduated from Harvard in 1999. Jon Poppe is the 4th year Special Teams Coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - Harvard improved from 22 ppg in '17 (339 ypg) up to 30.4 ppg and 438 ypg in '18. In '19 they only had 5 starters back. They slipped to 390 ypg but still put up 29.6 ppg. Six starters returned last year and they had one of the top RB duo's in the Ivy League. Harvard averaged 32.4 ppg but ypg slipped to 352. This year they have 6 starters back again. They are experienced at QB and have an All-Ivy RB and one of the top Olines in the conference, so they could yet again increase their ppg for a 3rd straight season.

DEFENSE - Harvard's defense has been impressively consistent through the years, allowing between 307 to 368 ypg each year from '10-'19. In '18 they had 5 starters back and allowed 21.8 ppg and 331 ypg. In '19 they had 7 starters back but slipped slightly to 347 ypg with their 2 worst performances coming in their opener and finale (only 304 ypg all'd gms 2-9). Last year only 5 starters returned and they only allowed 296 ypg and just 14.9 ppg (#2 in Ivy). They held opponents 91 ypg below their average (#8 in FCS). This year they have 6 starters back including 3 in the secondary, plus a Frosh AA DT. This is the best defense in the conference.

2022 - . After finishing with at least 7 wins every year from 2001-2016, Harvard slipped back to just 5-5 in '17 and were -64 ypg in Ivy League play. In '18 they held the yardage edge in every game but only improved to 6-4 (+107 ypg). Three of their losses came by 7 points or less, and they outgained Ivy League Champ Princeton in an 8 point loss. The Crimson only had 11 starters back in '19. They lost their opener then won 4 straight, all by double-digits. They suffered 5 straight losses, all by 7 points or less and outgained both #13 Princeton and #14 Dartmouth. Harvard finished 4-6 but were +43 ypg and were -5 net close losses! We said this was the most unlucky team in the FCS in '19 and thought they would easily surpass their 4 win total. They won their first 5 games by 26.6 ppg, lost B2B close games to Ivy League co-champs Princeton and Dartmouth by 2 and 3 points. Harvard won their last 3 to finish 8-2 and were +62 ypg on the season. This year Harvard gets 12 starters back. They only get 3 Ivy League home games. They get Yale and Princeton at home and once again will contend for the Ivy League Crown.