

HOUSTON BAPTIST

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - Bailey Zappe threw for 3,811 yds (64%, 35-15) in 2019, and returned in 2020. HBU only played 4 games in the fall, and Zappe threw for 1,833 yds (65.6%, 15-1). Zappe transferred to WKU in 2021 and there was a big void to fill at QB. Blaise Bentsen (6'5" 225) started the first 3 games a year ago and threw for 493 (56.7%, 5-4) but was OFY after a serious head injury. Desmond Young started the next two games and threw for 222 (46.6%, 2-2) on the season. Orion Olivas took over as the starter in the L/6 games and finished the season with 1,383 pass yds (57.1%) but threw just 6 td's to 13 int's! Both Olivas and Young return this season and with a full offseason under their belt, there should be some improvement, but our overall expectations for this unit are limited.

RUNNING BACKS - Dreshawn Minniweather led the Huskies with 723 rush yds (6.9, 7 td) and Ean Beek was #2 with 660 yds (5.0). The top two rushers were back in 2020 and Beek led with just 137 yds (3.4) and Minniweather ran the ball 9 times in 4 games (38 yds). Minniweather and Beek were again back in 2021 but Xzavier Ford was the leading rusher, but only had 263 yds (3.5) and Beek had 165 (4.2) while Minniweather ran for 73 yds (2.5). Ford returns along with RJ Smith (73, 2.5) but they lose veterans Minniweather and Beek. The returnees have experience & we think the rush numbers should improve slightly.

RECEIVERS - HBU's pass game in 2019 was led by QB Zappe and his favorite target was Ben Ratzlaff, who led with 1,139 yards (13.1, 12 td) and Jerreth Sterns was #2 with 833 yards (7.9, 9 td). In 2020 the HBU pass offense averaged 460 ypg in 4 games and Je. Sterns was #1 with 454 yds (9.7, 5 td) and his brother Jo. Sterns was #2 with 403 yds (31.0, 4 td) and Ratzlaff was #3 (399, 13.8). The top 3 WR's were all gone in 2021 and the leading returnee was Vernon Harrell (185, 14.2 in '20), he finished 2021 as the #6 WR (3 st, 144, 9.0). Tyson Thompson was the leading receiver last season (10 st, 562, 11.3) while Ismael Fuller was #2 (11 st, 339, 11.3) and Branden Walker was #3 (6 st, 282, 8.3). This season Thompson is gone, along with Charles King (3 st, 248, 9.5) and Lane Botkin (1 st, 159, 9.9) who were the #4 and #5 WR's in '21. Fuller and Walker are back along with Harrell, and with 3 of the top 6 returning, this unit is in decent shape, but will need better QB play if they are to make any strides this season.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In 2019 HBU was a pass-first team (63% of plays were passes) and the OLine allowed just 29 sacks in 12 games (4.9%) and HBU ran for 128 ypg (4.4). In the 4 game season in 2020 HBU passed on 67% of their passes and the OLine allowed just 7 sacks on 217 pass attempts (3.2%), but the rush game only averaged 88 ypg (3.4). Last fall HBU returned 4 starters on the OLine, but the offense looked drastically different with the top players transferring out, but the offense still passed the ball 59% of their plays. The OLine only paved the way for 57 ypg (2.1) and they allowed 40 sacks (9.3%). In 2021 there were 8 OL that recorded a start, and 6 of them return in 2022 including 3rd Tm Southland C Christian Hood and 4th Tm Southland LG Dylan McCreery. Overall all five starters return and this unit should have good chemistry up front, but we will temper our expectations with this unit overall.

DEFENSIVE LINE - In the brief history of the HBU program, their rush defense has never allowed less than 180 ypg in a season, and that came in 2019. In the 2020 season the rush defense allowed 230 ypg (5.6) and they recorded just ONE sack in four games! Last season this unit returned a lot of experience, but they allowed 219 rush ypg (5.0) and recorded just 16 sacks (4.2%). This season the DLine take a pretty big hit, as DT's Kyler Baugh (8 st, 52 tkl, 3.5 sk) and Segun Ijiyera (10 st, 29 tkl, 4 tfl, 2.5 sk) along with DE's Vejon Wallis (8 st, 34 tkl, 4.5 tfl) and Philip Ossai (5 st, 31 tkl, 4.5 tfl). They also lose Carter Couch (4 st, 14 tkl, 2 sk). The top returnees are DE's Delvin Mason (2 st, 23 tkl, 3 tfl), and Luke Horner is also back (1 st, 11 tkl, 1.5 tfl). However, with limited experience back this will likely take a step back this season.

LINEBACKERS - Going into 2021 this unit lost 1 starter from a unit that struggled (faced 3 FBS teams) as they allowed 592 ypg. Last season against a normal schedule the defense allowed 478 ypg and 42 ppg and they allowed their foes to gain 74 ypg above their season average (#111 FCS). This unit was led by Rodney Dansby (7 st, 131 tkl, 3.5 tfl) who was 1st Tm Southland and was the Southland Freshman of the Year. Brennan Young (10 st, 99 tkl, 9.5 tfl) was 2nd Tm Southland and Peyton Kennedy finished as the #9 tackler (3 st, 32 tkl, 3 tfl). Those three all return and the lone starter gone is Jeremy Ardoin (7 st, 26 tkl, 3 tfl). This unit returns a lot of experience and should be a solid unit, and will be counted on early with an inexp'd DLine in front of them.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - HBU's pass defense allowed 317 ypg (66%) in 2019 and recorded 11 int's. The pass defense allowed 362 ypg in 2020 (65%) and picked off five passes. Last season this unit lost a pair of starters, but the pass defense did show some improvement, allowing 259 ypg, but they allowed opposing QB's to complete 68% of their passes and again recorded just five int's. S's Isaiah Cash (10 st, 95 tkl, 3 tfl) and Xavier Toliver (11 st, 70 tkl, 5 tfl) led the unit, while CB's Coi Miller (11 st, 84 tkl, 5 pbu) and Derrick Wilson (10 st, 42 tkl, 3 pbu) also had solid seasons. Those four players all return this season and overall the top 8 DB's are back in 2022 and this unit has potential to take a step forward in defending the pass.

SPECIAL TEAMS - In 2019 Gino Garcia went 18-26 on fg's (L/54) while Blake Patterson averaged 42.1 yds per punt (39.9 net). In 2020 Garcia was just 5-10 fg's (L/50) and had 1 blocked, while Patterson averaged 40.1 yds per punt (36.2 net). Last season Garcia went 9-10 on fg's (L/59) while new P Brady Buell averaged 42.4 yds per punt (39.6 net). This season K Garcia departs, but P Buell returns as does backup K Nery Enriquez (1-1 fg LY). RB Beek was the top KR in 2020 (234, 16.7), but WR Tyson Thompson took over the return man role as he recorded 854 kick return yds (25.88, 1 td) and 109 punt return yds (9.9, 1 td). The bad news for this unit is that they lose their kicker and best return man. HBU will need backup K Enriquez to step up as well as a new return man if this unit is to have a productive unit on special teams

COACHES - Vic Shealy has been the HC at HBU since the start of the program in 2013. He is 19-70 in his career here and has yet to record a winning season. Shealy was the DC at Kansas in 2011 and also was the DC at Richmond in 2009 and the DC at UNLV from 2005-2008. Cedric Cormier

is the OC here at HBU and prior to this job he was the WR coach at UNLV from 2010-2019. The 2nd year DC is Shane Eachus, who prior to HBU was a defensive assistant at Oklahoma St (2018-2020) working with LB's. Roger Hinshaw is the co-DC here and has been on the staff since 2013 when he worked with DE's, now he helps coach LB's. James Miles is the Huskies ST coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - The HBU offense struggled in 2017, putting up just 270 ypg and 14 ppg and they were -143 ypg and -14 ppg. In 2018 with Bailey Zappe at QB the offensive production went up to 394 ypg and 27 ppg, but HBU offense still averaged 31 ypg less than what their foes allow on average. In 2019 with Zappe back at QB again the offense took off and averaged 463 ypg and 36 ppg! They also averaged 29 ypg above what their foes allowed. Despite playing 3 FBS teams in their 4 game season in 2020 the offense put up 548 ypg and 34 ppg! Last season with QB Zappe and a number of key players gone, the offense plummeted to 252 ypg and 17 ppg and their offense was held to 159 ypg below what foes allowed on average (#126 FBS). This season 9 starters return, and while the offense should improve some, we're not expecting any drastic jumps in production this season.

DEFENSE - Since joining the Southland in '14 HBU's defense has never given less than 400 ypg in a season. Their best mark came in 2017 when they allowed 413 ypg and 28 ppg and only collected 9 sacks. In 2018 the HBU defense allowed 474 ypg and 44 ppg and foes gained 110 ypg more than their season average against HBU. The numbers got worse in 2019, as the Huskies gave up 496 ypg and 37 ppg and allowed foes to gain 133 ypg above their season average. Against 3 FBS foes in the 4 game 2020 season the defense struggled & allowed 592 ypg and 47 ppg. Nine starters were back in 2021, but the defense still gave up 478 ypg and 42 ppg and allowed foes to gain 74 ypg above their season average. This season 7 starters are back including all 5 DB starters, but they are losing a lot of experience on the DLine. The defense has never been the strength of this team & while they have 10 of the top 15 tacklers back, they still may struggle to consistently stop teams.

2022 - HBU's program has only been around since 2013 and has never won more than 5 games in a season & have won just 6 Southland games since 2014. This season HBU does host Southland foes Nicholls and McNeese at home, but they travel to Incarnate Word. They do face FCS newcomers Lindenwood and Texas A&M-Commerce. They do also have non-conference games at Northern Colorado and Tarleton. HBU may have a chance to win a game or two this season, but look like they will finish in last place in the Southland for the 5th time in the last 8 seasons.