

LEHIGH MOUNTAIN HAWKS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - Toledo transfer Cross Wilkinson started all 3 games in spring of '21 and completed 61% while throwing for 400 yards (1-1). Wilkinson returned in the fall along with Nigel Summerville (85, 62%, 0-0). Alec Beesmer started the last 2 in '19 (437, 44.1%, 1-2). He didn't play in spring but returned for the fall. Wilkinson had a 0-4 ratio in the first 2 games and was replaced by Frosh Dante Perri vs Princeton. Perri started 5 of the next 7 games and led with 1,383 (60%, 5-5). Nigel Summerville started 2 games but only threw for 107 (46.4%, 0-0). Beesmer played in 2 games and threw for 28 yards (40%, 0-1) and was the only QB to finish with positive rush yards (60, 5.5). Wilkinson and Beesmer depart but they return 2 with starting experience again. Perri played well down the stretch (229 pass ypg L/3) and better this year.

RUNNING BACKS - In '19 Zaythan Hill led with 396 (7.2) while Rayshawn Allen was #2 despite more than double the carries (334, 2.7). Nate Hope added 133 (2.3). Allen led in spring with 128 (3.4). Hill only had 55 (2.1). Only Hope departed last fall. Allen and Hill gave Lehigh 2 experienced RB's. Hill had 159 vs Fordham but led with only 393 (4.0). Jack DiPietro was #2 with 248 and had a team best 5.1 ypc with 116 rec (11.6). Allen started all 11 but only had 222 and just 2.6 ypc. This year they lose Allen but both Hill and DiPietro are back so they don't have starting experience but return their top 2 rushers. Hill was 3rd Tm All Patriot last year and DiPietro was the MVP of Rivalry 157 vs Lafayette.

RECEIVERS - Heading into spring of '21, Lehigh had to replace their #1 (859, 12.8) and #2 WR's (575, 11.1). Austin Dambach was #3 with 364 (12.6) and Alex Snyder added 355 (15.4). Dambach and TE Snyder returned in spring. Dambach led with 104 (13.0). Johnny Foley was #2 with 92 and Eric Johnson added 89 (12.7). Their top 3 all returned in the fall along with TE Snyder (58, 9.7). They had 5 that topped 200 yards on the season but no one topped 300. Johnson led with 279 (9.7). Jalen Burbage was #2 with 257 (10.7). Roemello Miner was #3 with 233 (10.6). Dambach added 229 (13.5). This year 7 of their top 8 are back with the only loss being Dambach (1 st). There aren't any standouts in the unit but they've got solid depth.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In '19 Lehigh rushed for 77 (2.5) and allowed 40 sacks (10.1%). In the spring Lehigh only rushed for 32 ypg (1.1) and allowed 15 sacks in 3 games with a ridiculous 16.7%. Their best OL, LT Christopher Fournier transferred to LA Tech and they lost their RT. The Mountain Hawks had 3 starters back and couldn't get worse after their awful production in the spring. Lehigh improved to 74 rush ypg (2.3) and allowed 33 sacks (10.5%), basically matching '19. This year they lose LT Jack Fris (11 st), 1st Tm All Patriot RG Justin Gurth (8 st) and bkp RT Christian Curatolo (3 st). Three starters return and they've got 4 back that started 8 games or more. This is now an experienced unit that should continue to improve.

DEFENSIVE LINE - Lehigh allowed over 200 rush ypg every year from 2012-2018 then only allowed 130 (3.7) in '19, holding 5 foes under 100 rush ypg. They gave up just 88 rush ypg (2.9) in spring and they had all 3 starting DLine back so this was a very solid unit in the fall. In their first 6 games they were shredded for 228 ypg (5.5) then the schedule lightened and they allowed just 71 (2.5) in their last 5. All 4 starters return and they get their #3, #11, #12, #16 and #19 tacklers back. The only loss is Xavier Stephens (1 st, #15 tkl'r). They were clearly overmatched by their top foes last year but are more experienced and should balance things out this year.

LINEBACKERS - LB's made up Lehigh's #1, #3 and #14 tkl'r's in spring of '19. Last fall they had all 4 starters back and Pete Haffner (#1 tkl'r) led a pretty good unit. Nate Norris was tied for their lead in tackles with 69. Haffner missed 5 games yet still led with 6.5 tfl's but he departs this year. The rest of the unit returns which includes their co-#1 tkl'r, #6, #7 and #8 tkl'r's. This is a more experienced LB unit and they got used to playing without their top guy for almost half of last year.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - Lehigh only allowed 165 pass ypg in spring (62%). Last year all 4 starters returned including the #2, #4, #6, #7, #9 and #10. This is another experienced unit but faced more tougher passing competition during the season. They allowed over 400 passing twice but did finish 4th in pass defense efficiency (60.6%, 17-5). This year they return all 4 starters including their co-#1, #5, #9, #10, #13, #14 and #18 tkl'r's. TyGee Leach led with 8 pbu's last year and was their co-#1 tkl'r. Naturally they are more experienced and should be in the top half of the Patriot again.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Dylan Van Dusen only made 1-2 fg's L/20 in spring. Daniel Simpson averaged 40.3 ypp. Lehigh produced -8 PR yds and just 14.0 KR. Last year they had both Van Dusen and Simpson back. Van Dusen missed from 21 and 22 vs Fordham but made his other 10 fg's (L/42). Simpson averaged 38.5 (36.0 net). This year they get 1st Team All Patriot K Van Dusen back but Simpson departs. They did block 5 punts last year and Jack DiPietro was the Patriots ST POW vs Lafayette. This was one of the top ST units in the Patriot last year and could repeat that.

COACHES - This is Tom Gilmore's 4th year as head coach at Lehigh. He was the OLB coach at Wake Forest under Dave Clawson in '18 and from '04-'17 he was HC at Holy Cross where he went 72-81 and led the Crusaders to a playoff berth in '09. He was also DC here '00-'03. Scott Brisson was promoted to OC/QB Coach in '17. He served as WR Coach here from '14-'16 and also coached here from '08-'09. Mike Kashurba enters his 4th year as DC and 5th on staff. He was also DC/DB Coach at Holy Cross from '14-'17 and DC at Bucknell in '12-'13. They don't have a designated ST Coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - Andy Coen's teams were known for their offense, averaging at least 30 ppg in 6 of 7 years from '11-'17 but in '18 they dropped to just 16.6 ppg and 302 ypg. They dipped further in Gilmore's first season, avg just 15.7 ppg and 311 ypg. They only put up 5 ppg and 209 ypg in their 3 spring games. They brought back 10 starters in the fall but their top WR's and OL from '19 were all gone. Amazingly, it took Lehigh until their 7th game to score their first touchdown. In their first 6 games they were shutout 3 times and totaled just 9 points! The Hawks averaged 11.6 ppg and 230 ypg. Nine starters return and this time they've got real experience coming off a full season. They will certainly be improved but are still at the bottom of the Patriot.

DEFENSE - HC Tom Gilmore was a DC at both Dartmouth and here ('00-'03) so it's no surprise that Lehigh's defense improved significantly after he was hired. The Mountain Hawks improved from 35.1 ppg and 446 ypg allowed in '18 down to just 21.4 ppg and 346 ypg in Gilmore's first year. They only allowed 15 ppg and 253 ypg in the spring. Last year Lehigh's offense left them on the field for large portions of their first 6 games. They allowed 32.5 ppg and 422 ypg in their first 8 but just 8.3 ppg and 228 ypg in their last 3. They also held Patriot Champs Holy Cross to just 233 yards. Overall they allowed 25.9 ppg and 369 ypg. This year they get 13 of their top 14 tacklers back. Gilmore will have this defense playing much better and we wouldn't be surprised if they are the most improved defense in the Patriot.

2022 - In '18 the Mountain Hawks won their opener then lost 8 straight before winning 2 of their last 3 by 28 & 31 points but that wasn't enough to save 13Y head coach Andy Coen who was fired. They finished -144 ypg. In '19 Lehigh hired Tom Gilmore as their new head coach. They lost their first 3, went on a 4 game win streak then lost their last 4, finishing -36 ypg but +3 ypg in Patriot League play. They lost all 3 games in the spring, only put up 16 total points and were -44 ypg. Last fall 7 of their first 8 opponents finished with 5+ wins and they played 2 FCS playoff teams and one of the co-Ivy League champs. They scored just 9 points in their first 6 games and started 0-8. Their schedule lightened up and they closed with 3 straight wins to end the season over teams that combined for just 6 wins all season. This year they get 19 starters back from a full season. The non-conference schedule is brutal again, with FCS playoff teams Villanova and Monmouth along with Ivy League co-Champs Princeton. They get both Colgate and Fordham at home and travel to Lafayette and Georgetown, both of whom they beat last year so it will be tough to match last year's 3 win total.