

NICHOLLS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - Chase Fourcade was the Southland Player of the Year in '18 and returned in '19 for his senior season where threw for 2979 yds (67%, 17-12) and ran for 635 yds (3.7, 12 td) and was named Southland Offensive POY! Fourcade left Nicholls as the all-time leader in pass yds and pass td's, but Nicholls brought in former LSU and JUCO QB Lindsey Scott (PS#36) and he picked up right where Fourcade left off. In 7 games in the spring of '21 Scott threw for 1,684 yards (58%, 18-7) and led the team in rushing with 557 (6.1, 6 td). In the fall of '21 Scott was back and again was a dynamic dual-threat QB, throwing for 2083 yards (62%, 16-11) while leading the Colonials in rushing again (990, 6.9, 9 td) and was 3rd Tm Southland. The bad news is that Scott transfers out, but backup Kohen Grainer started the L/2 games in the fall (616, 55%, 4-3) so he has some experience. They also go back to the portal and add former LSU and UTSA QB Lowell Narcisse (PS#11) who threw for 1,643 yards (55%, 11-5) and ran for 618 yards (4.1, 4 td) in 8 starts at UTSA. Narcisse seems to fit the dual-threat mode Nicholls wants at QB. so it wouldn't shock us if he is the starter this season.

RUNNING BACKS - Julien Gums ran for 544 (6.8, 6 td) as a true frosh. In '19 Gums led the Southland Conference with 1,232 yards (5.8, 16 td) and was 1st Tm Southland. In the spring of '21 QB Scott was the #1 rusher but Gums led all RB's with 467 yards (5.1, 8 td) while John Carrington was #3 (271, 6.2) and Collin Guggenheim was #4 (133, 7.4). Last fall Scott was again the top rusher and Guggenheim took over as the top RB (L/4 st, 930, 6.4, 10 td) and was 1st Tm Southland. Gums finished #3 (F/4 st, 313, 6.4) despite being OFY (injury) after the 4th game. Guggenheim returns this season along with a healthy Gums, and they also get back #3 RB Marquese Albert (3 st, 281, 5.7). This unit is loaded with talent & if Gums can return to his all-conference level of play this unit will have a great season running the ball.

RECEIVERS - DaiJean Dixon led Nicholls in receiving in 2019 (1044, 19.3, 8 td) and was 1st Tm Southland. Going into the spring '21 season Dixon and KJ Franklin (338, 12.5) returned, but they lost their #2 receiver. Dixon again led with 514 (14.7, 7 td) while Franklin was the new #2 receiver (303, 13.2). That duo was back again in the fall and Dixon (9 st, 1002, 14.1, 8 td) and Franklin (636, 13.8, 6 td) remained the top two receivers. Dontaze Costly was the #3 receiver (11 st, 286, 13.6, 3 td), but he departs this season along with Dixon (3rd Tm AA!) and they lose TE David Mosley (8 st). Franklin (11 st, 2nd Tm Southland) is back this season along with TE Lee Negrotto (2 st, 235, 11.8) and A'Dontre Davis (1 st, 226, 15.1). Five of the top 8 receivers are gone this season, with the three returnees being the #2, #4 and #5 receivers. Nicholls receivers should still have a solid season, but do lose key talent & depth here.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In the spring of 2021 Nicholls OLine did an excellent job opening running lanes (263, 5.9) and they gave up 12 sacks in 7 games (5.1%) with 10 sacks coming in 2 games. All five starters returned on the OLine last fall led by a trio of 1st team preseason OL in PJ Burkhalter, Evan Roussel and Jair Joseph. In their F/2 games LY against FBS foes Nicholls ran for 100 (3.6) and 152 (4.1) but in their L/9 games (all vs FCS foes) they topped 200 yards in 8 games and for the season rushed for 247 ypg (5.9) and they allowed just 10 sacks all season (only 1 sk all'd in L/5 gms). LG Burkhalter (11 st), C Roussel (11 st) and RT Josph (10 st) were all named 1st Tm Southland, with Burkhalter named 1st Tm AA. LT Mark Barthelemy (11 st) was named 4th Tm Southland. This season Nicholls loses Burkhalter

(55 career starts) and Josph (30 career starts), but return Barthelemy and Roussel along with Baylee Trusty (7 st) Mikhail Hill (4 st). Nicholls returns talent at RB and this OLine should still be able to open up running lanes and protect the QB.

DEFENSIVE LINE - The run defense in the spring of '21 for Nicholls allowed 133 ypg (4.0) and they collected 14 sacks (6.0%). This unit returned quite a bit of experience last fall, but still allowed 142 ypg rushing (4.6) and recorded 26 sacks (6.9%). This unit was led by 1st Tm Southland DE Perry Ganci (11 st, 34 tkl, 6 sk) and DE Jequaries Martin (8 st, 29 tkl, 2.5 tfl). Martin and DT Myles Vigne (9 st, 15 tkl) are the 2 starters gone, while Ganci and DT Zack Bernard (9 st, 23 tkl, 3.5 sk) are the 2 starters back. They also get back Elinus Noel (18 tkl, 2 tfl) and Glen Thurmond (2 st, 17 tkl) who will see more time this season. Former Tulane transfer Juan Monjarres (14 tkl, 3 sk) also returns & with 5 of the top 7 DL back, we expect Nicholls to have better numbers against the run & get to the QB more often in 2022.

LINEBACKERS - Nicholls gave up 383 ypg in the spring of '21, but that number jumped up to 544 ypg all'd over the final 4 games when they faced better foes. Last fall they did lose 1 starter, but the unit was solid as they gave up 388 ypg and 29 ppg. Ty'Ree Evans led Nicholls in tackles (11 st, 61 tkl, 6 tfl) and was 3rd Tm Southland along with Hayden Shaheen, who was the #2 tackler (10 st, 56 tkl, 6.5 tfl, 1 int). The NB was Kevin Johnson, and he was the #10 tackler last season (11 st, 24 tkl, 3 tfl, 2 int) and was 1st Tm Southland. Both Evans and K.Johnson depart this season, leaving Shaheen as the lone starter back. Players like Jacob Parker (22 tkl, 4 tfl) and Quinton Sharkey (21 tkl, 3.5 tfl) return at LB and should step into more significant roles this season.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - The pass defense in '19 gave up over 300 pass yds 5 times and for the season allowed 264 ypg (62%) and picked off the F/3 foes to all under 100 pass ypg, but in the L/4 games against far better competition they gave up 402 pass ypg (67%)! This unit brought back an experienced secondary last fall, but still gave up over 300 pass yds in 4 games and for the season gave up 246 ypg (61%) and they only recorded 6 int's. S Tyreke Boyd led the unit in tackles (49 tkl, 2 int) and was 4th Tm Southland while CB Jarius Monroe (36 tkl, 10 pbu) was 1st Tm Southland. The secondary loses a pair of starters in CB Monroe (9 st) and S Kevin Moore (7 st, 33 tkl, 2 pbu), while they bring back Boyd (9 st) and CB's James Tobin (6 st, 25 tkl, 6 pbu) and Malik Woodery (4 st, 16 tkl, 2 pbu). This unit brings back 5 of the top 7 players, but will need to work on improving the pass D and securing more int's.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Gavin Lasseigne hit 6-7 fg's (L/31) in the spring of '21, while Craig Walker was the P and averaged 39.7 yards per punt (L/77) and had a net of 37.3 yards. Lasseigne returned in the fall and connected on 11-13 fg's (L/45) and was 1st Tm Southland. Walker returned as the P and averaged 38.1 yards per punt (L/55) with a 36.5 net. The top KR in the spring had 185 yds (14.2) while Nicholls has just 13 PR yds all season. Last fall WR Robinson led with 373 KR yds (21.9) and Nicholls had just 23 PR yds all season. This season the only loss is P Walker and his likely replacement is rFr Patrick Vanderbrook.

COACHES - Tim Rebowe enters his 7th season as the HC at Nicholls and has compiled a record of 44-35 with 3 trips to the playoffs. Before taking over here in 2015, Rebowe spent 2004-2014 as a position coach at Louisiana coaching both the S's and LB's. Rob Christophel is in his 7th season as the OC/QB coach at Nicholls. Prior to taking over as OC here Christophel was the OC at Missouri St (2007-2014)

and was the OC at Louisiana from 2001-2006. Coaching consistency runs strong here as the 7th year DC is Tommy Rybacki, who before Nicholls was the CB coach at Central Arkansas in 2014, LB/DB coach at Louisiana from 2011-2013. Coaching consistency runs strong here as the 7th year ST coordinator is Brian Wallace. Before coaching here he was a defensive and special teams assistant at Louisiana College from 2012-14.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - The Colonials offense averaged 402 ypg and 28 ppg in 2017. Those numbers jumped to a then decade-best 474 ypg and 32 ppg in 2018. Nicholls offense again averaged over 400 ypg (411) and 28 ppg. Nicholls topped their offensive numbers from 2018 in the spring of 2021 when they put up 522 ypg and 49 ppg! With all 11 starters back last fall the offensive numbers were again strong with 493 ypg and 33 ppg. Last fall Nicholls also put up 76 ypg above what their foes allowed on average. This season they lose 6 starters including their QB, 2 of their top 3 receivers and a pair of OL. While they bring in a dual-threat QB transfer and their rushing attack will be strong, they won't likely match the high output of the L2Y.

DEFENSE - Nicholls defense held foes to 352 ypg and 25 ppg in the 2017 season. The numbers improved even more in 2018 as they allowed 337 ypg and 22 ppg. In 2019 the Colonials defense took a step back to giving up 406 ypg and 27 ppg. In the spring of '21 Nicholls allowed 168 ypg/9 ppg the F/3 gms, but over the L/4 gms against tougher foes they allowed 544 ypg/53 ppg! With 9 starters back last fall the defense showed steady improvement, as they gave up 388 ypg and 29 ppg. This year's defense returns 5 starters and 13 of the top 19 tacklers are back and we expect a similar finish to last year's numbers as long as this unit can stay healthy and the new starters can step in and fill the void of losing 6 starters.

2022 - Nicholls has seen their most consistent success under 7th year HC Tim Rebowe. Three of their six FCS playoff trips have come under Rebowe and two of their four conference titles as an FCS team have come under Rebowe. Last season Nicholls almost beat Louisiana and played close games against SE Louisiana and vs Incarnate Word. In the fall of '21 Nicholls was +105 ypg and +5 ppg, but were -10 TO's! This season they return just 10 starters (ret'd 20 st's LY) and open the season with 5 of their first 6 games on the road. The Colonials close with 4 of their final 5 games at home, including Texas A&M Commerce, who is new to both the Southland and the FCS. After getting excellent QB play the past several seasons, the pressure is on for another QB to emerge. Rebowe has done a great job here, and he'll get the most out of this team. If things come together and the team can remain healthy, the Colonials could be in the mix for the Southland Crown