

ROBERT MORRIS COLONIALS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - Jimmy Walker threw for 1925 (56%, 20-10) in 2018 while George Martin threw for 225 (54.5%, 2-1). Martin took over as the starter in '19. He only topped 200 pass yards once, with 272 vs Dayton. He led for 1,348 (52%, 1107). Martin was the only QB to throw a pass during their spring season. He had a career high 304 vs Charleston Southern and finished with 520 (47%, 3-2). Martin returned last year. He threw for just 13 yards in the opener vs Central Michigan but he also increased his pass yards over each of his next 3 starts. Against Hampton, Martin topped his career high with 315 yards. He finished with 2,045 yards, increased his completion % to 59.9 and finished with a 14-7 ratio. This year they lose 3Y starter Martin. The only QB's from last year's roster to return are Anthony Chiccitt who had 5 attempts (1 td) and Corbin LaFrance (2 att's). They add JUCO transfer Jake Simmons and true frosh Zach Tanner. With no experience this unit is clearly down.

RUNNING BACKS - In 2018 Alijah Jackson was #2 with 568 (5.4). Their top 2 returned in '19 with Jackson at the top with 971 (5.2). Jackson returned in the spring but their schedule was brutal (JMU, Kenn St, Char Southern) and he rushed for 174 but just 2.9. Jackson returned and we figured he could return to his 2019 form. He had 127 vs Hampton and 132 in the finale vs Campbell and led with 660 (3.6) while adding 247 rec (9.5). Jonathan Wynn was #2 with just 99 (5.8). Four of their top 5 return including Jackson for his 5th year. The only loss is Wynn. They have 3 Seniors in the unit including Jordan Johnson has 203 career yards so this is a veteran group, and clearly a strength.

RECEIVERS - In '18 Matthew Gonzalez led the team in receptions with 563 yards (16.6) with DeLano Madison #2 with 326 (13.0). The top 4 returned in 2019 and put up similar numbers with Gonzalez #1 (563, 16.6) and Madison #2 (351, 13.0). Both Gonzalez and Madison were gone in the spring. Charlotte transfer D'Andre Hicks led with 182 (9.6), Daevon Robinson was #2 with 105 (13.1). Robinson departed last year and with only a 3 game spring season this unit was still inexperienced. James Westry topped 100 twice and led the way with 460 (13.1). Hicks was #2 with 362 (9.5). Demonte Martin added 265 (14.5) and Jaylon Brown had 232 (14.5). This year they only lose Westry and Chris Charles (1 st, 130, 11.8). Six of their top 8 receivers return including Hicks and TE Dylan Smith (9 st, 97, 9.7) is also back so this unit goes from inexperienced to experienced.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In 2018 the Oline opened holes for 132 (3.8) with 7.6% sacks. They only had to replace one part time starter last spring but facing a much tougher slate of defenses the numbers plummeted to 53 ypg rush (1.8) with 6 sacks (6.9%). Last year they only lost one starter from spring but they still only rushed for 83 ypg (2.6) with 20 sacks (6.3%). This year they only have 2 starters back in C Trevor Renfro and RG Hayden Baron. Considering their lack of production it might not hurt to bring in some new blood. They do have 16 OL on the roster but this is a very young unit with only 11 underclassmen

DEFENSIVE LINE - In '19 Bobby Mo allowed 182 rush ypg (4.4) with just 14 sacks (4%). Their spring stats were skewed by playing just 3 foes including Kennesaw St's triple option and they gave up 220 (4.6) with 5 sacks (8.3%). Last year they only lost their #10 tackler. They gave up 203 in non-conference action and just 161 vs Big South foes but both put up 4.6 ypc against RMU. This unit is depleted this year after losing NT Bryce Fontana (9 st, #16 tkl'r), DT Supilani Mailei (9 st, #6 tkl'r, 2.5 sk, 5 tfl), DE Matt Holmes (10 st, #7 tkl'r, 2.5 sk), Izon Pulley (#19 tkl'r) and Vincent Boyd (5 tkl). 2nd Tm All Big South DE Ricardo Watson (#8 tkl'r, 7.5 sk) and Garrett Fairman (8 st, #13 tkl'r, 2.5 sk) are their only experienced guys with 5 of their top 8 gone.

LINEBACKERS - In the spring they had to replace their #5 and #6 tacklers but they did get their top guy back in Aniello Buzzacco. Buzzacco led with 39 tackles and Jamar Shegog had 28. Last year both Buzzacco and Shegog returned, making this the strength of the D. This time it was Shegog who led with 78 tackles and was #2 with 9 tfl's. Buzzacco was #2 with 59 tackles (4 tfl). Shegog returns this year but they lose both Buzzacco and Tyren Cloyd (#4 tkl'r, 2 tfl) and backup Olivier Pageotte-Andre (1 st, #14 tkl'r) departs as well. Shegog was 2nd Tm All Big South but this unit is down with 3 of their top 5 gone.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - This was their strength in '19 when they allowed just 176 pass ypg (55.2%). Robert Morris lost 2 starters heading into spring. They allowed 166 ypg but 66.7%. Last year the whole unit returned from the spring but was still inexperienced overall. They only held one team under 200 pass yds (GWebb) and gave up 251 (64.9%, 23-7). The Colonials were dead last in the Big South in pass defense efficiency. This year they lose S Miles Hayes (#5 tkl'r, 2.5 tfl) and CB Tavin Harville (10 st, #10 tkl'r, 4 pbu, 2 int) who got invited to Steelers training camp. Six of their top 8 return and they add VMI transfer Will Bunton. They are much more experienced now so this will be their most improved unit.

SPECIAL TEAMS - In 2019 Nick Bisceglia hit 12-16 FG with a long of 38. Their punter George Soudeer III avg 39.4 and while top PR Tim Vecchio avg just 4.7 In the spring Bisceglia hit just 1-3 FG with a long of 32. Souders avg just 35.8 on 4 punts but with -1 return yard overall. The team had just 2.3 on PR's and 18.8 on KR's. All the key players were back last year. Bisceglia improved to 10 of 12 (L/43). Souders had a 36.5 avg from 34 punts while Mike Benson put up 36.9 on 21 punts (33.3 net). Jonathan Wynn avg'd 19.7 KR while they allowed a 26.0 KR avg. Bisceglia was the lone highlight in this unit last year but he is gone along with their KR so they are once again a below average unit.

COACHES - Former NFL Linebacker Bernard Clark took over as HC in '18. He had several FBS stops as DLine coach including at Pitt in '10. he was also DC at FIU from '04-'05, Hampton from '12-'13 and Albany ('14-'17). Eric Gallon is the first year OC. Dave Plungas is in his 4th year as DC and is also the assistant Head Coach. He was the OLB Coach at Albany from '15-'17. The Colonials do not have a designated ST Coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In '18 Robert Morris hired Bernard Clark and after putting up just 11 and 10 ppg in '16 and '17 they improved to 25 ppg and 340 ypg. In '19 they put up 22 ppg and 291 ypg but were better in NEC play, averaging 25 ppg and 286 ypg. They played 3 spring games with 2 coming against perennial FCS playoff teams and only put up 10 ppg and 227 ypg. Last year they moved to the Big South. After getting shutout by Central Michigan they put up 22.3 ppg and 316 ypg over their next 9 games vs FCS teams. This year they return 6 starters but they have zero experience at QB, lost their top WR and 3 starting OL. They've been fairly consistent under Clark, putting up between 20 and 25 ppg each season and this looks like more of the same.

DEFENSE - Robert Morris' defense plummeted in '18 after Clark was hired when they allowed 516 ypg and 43 ppg. They had a huge jump in '19, improving by more than 2 td's to 25 ppg and only 358 ypg. Against NEC foes they allowed just 22 ppg and 346 ypg. They were no match for their spring foes, allowing 33 ppg and 386 ypg then last year with 5 starters from '19 gone and a move to the more competitive Big South, they allowed 34 ppg and 420 ypg. This year only 5 starters return. Five of their top 7 tacklers are gone and their front 7 needs rebuilt. They have a new DC and we don't think they will take a big step back but it's hard to see them improving with such a young defense.

2022 - John Banasak took over as head coach in 2014 but did not meet with success going 1-10, 4-7, 2-9 and 2-9 for the schools 7th straight losing season since their playoff berth. Bernard Clark took over in 2018 and they played two more years in the Northeast Conference. After going 2-9 in his first year and -220 ypg in league play they made a startling turnaround in their final year of the league. After their usual 1-4 start the Colonials went on a 6-1 run before losing at Central Connecticut 49-28. They beat Sacred Heart 16-14 in the final for their first winning season since 2010 at 7-5 but were -60 ypg in league play. They were expected to join the Big South in the fall of 2021 but were let in early in the spring. They opened with #2 James Madison and lost 36-16 then faced #7 Kennesaw St and lost 35-0. In what turned out to be their third and final game they lost to Charleston Southern 27-14. On the season they were 0-3 and were -160 ypg and lost by an avg score of 33-10. Last year Bobby Mo played their first full season in the Big South. After having their opener vs Dayton cancelled they were trounced by Central Michigan 45-0 but did manage to win 2 of their next 3, including getting revenge over Charleston Southern 31-24. They lost trailed North Alabama 35-7 2Q but only lost by 9 (gbg td :28 left) and trailed Gardner Webb 21-0 2Q but only lost by 11. Against Hampton they trailed 28-13 3Q but rallied and won on a GW fg with :05 left. The Colonials were no match for #8 Kennesaw St or Monmouth but did win their finale over Campbell in OT to finish 4-6. This year they have 11 starters back. Their first 3 foes all had winning records last year including Miami, OH and SoCon Champs ETSU. They also travel to App St and host Bryant who moves in from the NEC so we don't see them improving on last year's 4 wins.