

# STEPHEN F AUSTIN

## POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

**QUARTERBACKS** - In Colby Carthel's first year with SF Austin in 2019 he brought in a JUCO QB in Trae Self who threw for 2550 (53%, 12-12) with Cam Arnold throwing for 433 (59%, 3-3). Self made the strides you would expect out of a second year starter as he threw for 2001 (58%, 15-7) in the fall of 2020. With Arnold gone, the backup was Baylor transfer Preston Weeks and he threw for 266 (66%, 1-0). Last season Self returned and threw for 343 in week 2 and nearly helped lead the upset of Texas Tech (lost 28-22). Later in the year Self topped 300 yds in 4 straight games & helped lead SF Austin to the FCS playoffs for the first time in 7 seasons. In that playoff game Self threw for 243 & 3 td's against Incarnate Word but threw two second half int's. Overall Self was the first QB here to top 3,000 pass yds in a season since 2011 (3201, 63.6%, 28-9). Self also ran for 311 (3.6) and was 2nd Tm WAC. Weeks was again the backup and he threw for 251 yds (59.3%, 1-2) in limited action. The Lumberjacks return both their starter & backup this season and are in great shape at QB.

**RUNNING BACKS** - SF Austin returned their top 2 RB's in 2019 but Texas Tech transfer Da'Leon Ward led with 471 (3.8) and Josh McGowan was #2 with 450 (4.1). Ward was the top back again into 2020, and had 111 vs West Texas A&M and 265 (4.7) in just 5 games but was OFY. RFR JaQuarion Turner took over and had 208 vs ECU and 109 vs Pittsburg St later in the season and led with 541 (4.1). Tre'Jon Henderson was #3 with 131 (4.7). Last year Turner, Ward, and Henderson all returned and they added transfer Miles Reed from Hawai'i. Reed started 10 games, topped 100 yds in a game 3 times, and led with 678 (4.1) and was 2nd Tm WAC. QB Self was the #2 rusher, Korbryn White was #3 (213, 5.1), and Henderson (59, 3.1), Turner (25, 2.1) and Ward (14, 2.8) all had a lesser role in the run game. All 7 RB's that recorded rushing stats last season are back in 2022 & the rushing totals should certainly take a big jump forward this season.

**RECEIVERS** - In '19 SF Austin had to replace their top 2 WR's (comb 1320, 12.4). Remi Simmons was #3 with 568 (9.6) and was back as was #4 RB Josh McGowan (220, 15.7). Xavier Gipson led with 934 (18.0) with Calvin Carter #2 (346, 13.8) and Lar'Darion Cobb was #3 with 281 (10.8). Simmons was only #4 with 234 (10.2). In 2020 Gipson had another strong year and led again with 841 (16.2) in just 10 games. Simmons was #2 with 413 (18.8) and Jeremiah Miller was #3 with 254 (12.7). Gipson returned in '21 but SF Austin did lose Simmons and JaQuarion Turner (128, 8.5). Gipson took another leap last season, as he led all of FCS with 1377 yds (18.4, 14 td) and was 1st Tm AA and the WAC Offensive Player of the Year! J. Miller was #2 (476, 17.6), while Quen Ty'vian Borders finished #3 (255, 11.6) and Josh Thompson was #4 (218, 14.5). Overall 7 WR's topped 100 yds in '21 and they all return! TE's Chad Aune (8 st) and Keshon Williams (4 st) both return as well. This talented receiver room paired with an All-WAC QB will be a lethal combination in '22.

**OFFENSIVE LINE** - In 2019 the OLine only paved the way for 109 (3.0) and allowed 35 sacks. They had to replace 3 starters in 2020 and SF Austin improved slightly to 125 (3.7) rush with 20 sacks allowed. Coming into '21 this unit returned intact, but only improved their rushing totals to 132 ypg (3.8) and they allowed 22 sacks. On the season SF Austin did use 7 different starting OLine combinations. The only OL to start all 12 games was C Clint Lopic & he was 1st Tm WAC. LT Zach Ingram started 10 games and was named 1st Tm WAC too. LG Keegan Holm (10 starts) was 3rd Tm WAC. SF Austin hasn't averaged over 150 rush ypg in a season since 2015 (209, 5.7) but with all 9 players who started on the OLine last season return, this unit should be able to pave the way for improved rushing numbers & they could top that 150 ypg mark for the season if they remain healthy.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - The Lumberjacks rush defense allowed 191 ypg (4.9) and collected just 19 sacks (4.1%) in 2019. SF Austin played a mix of FBS, FCS, and D-II teams in 2020 and allowed 237 rush ypg (5.7) to FBS foes while allowing just 113 ypg (3.4) to FCS/D-II foes. Overall they allowed 163 rush ypg (4.4) and collected 25 sks in 10 games (6 sks vs 4 FBS foes). Last season all starters returned and there was a decent improvement in the rush defense, as they held 5 foes under 100 yds and overall gave up 116 rush ypg (3.3). The Lumberjacks pass rush showed massive improvement, as they collected 43 sacks (11.3%)! DT Rayshad Nichols led the unit in tackles (12 st, #3 tkl'r, 10 sk, 5.5 tfl) and was 1st Tm WAC. DE's Amad Murray (2nd Tm WAC, 12 st, #4 tkl'r, 7.5 sk 5.5 tfl) and BJ Thompson (1st Tm WAC 12 st, #11 tkl'r, 9.5 sk) both had strong seasons too. Nichols, Murray, and Thompson all return, with the lone starter lost being Dennis Osagiede (12 st, #6 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl). With 3 starters back, and solid depth behind them, this unit could be the WAC's best DLine in 2022.

**LINEBACKERS** - In 2019 the defense allowed 453 ypg and 35 ppg. In 2020 they did have 8 of the top 10 tacklers back overall and showed the improvement we expected as they allowed 372 ypg and 22 ppg. All LB starters from 2020 were back last season and there was improvement again from the Lumberjacks defense as they allowed 313 ypg and 19 ppg and held foes to 65 ypg under their season average. Brevin Randle (12 st, #2 tkl'r, 2.5 tfl) and Bert Morris (12 st, #5 tkl'r, 3 pbu) held things down in SF Austin's 4-2-5 defensive scheme and six different players started at NB for SF Austin last season. Both LB starters return along with Jeremiah Davis (30 tkl, 4 tfl) and Jermaine Brown (22 tkl) and this unit remains strong.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS** - SF Austin did allow 262 pass ypg (62%) in 2019, but collected 10 int's. In 2020 the pass defense showed improvement as they allowed 209 pass ypg (56%) and collected 14 int's. Last season with the entire secondary back for the Lumberjacks, they held foes to under 200 ypg passing (197 pass ypg allowed) for the season for the first time since 2011! They also collected 15 interceptions. SS Myles Heard led the Lumberjacks in tackles (8 st, 69 tkl, 3.5 tfl, 3 pbu) while FS Jeremiah Walker (11 st, t-#8 tkl'r, 4 int, 3 pbu) was 2nd Tm WAC. CB's Myles Brooks (12 st, t-#12 tkl'r, 6 pbu, 4 int) and Willie Roberts (11 st, t-#12 tkl'r, 8 pbu, 2 int) both had productive seasons with Brooks named 1st Tm WAC and Roberts named 3rd Tm WAC. The lone starter gone is CB Brooks, who transfers out but if they can find a solid replacement then unit should be just as productive.

**SPECIAL TEAMS** - In 2019 Max Quick averaged 41.8 yards on punts, Storm Ruis hit a super 21-26 fg's including 2-3 of 50+ (long 54). The return game was average with just 5.3 on PR's and 19.9 on KR's. In 2020 Quick averaged 41.0 yards on punts and new K Chris Campos hit 13-19 fg with a long of 48 and one miss from 50+. Xavier Gipson averaged 10.6 on PR's and Korbryn White had a 29.9 avg on KR's. All 4 starting specialists were back last season and Campos hit 20-24 fg's with a long of 53 yards (perfect 13-13 fg's on inside 40 yds) and was 3rd Tm AA! Quick averaged 46.0 yards per punt (41.3 net) and had a long of 74 yards and was also named 1st Tm WAC. Lenard Lemons led SF Austin with 281 KR yards (23.4) and Xavier Gipson led with 170 PR yards (11.3) and was 1st Tm WAC. All 4 specialists return again for SF Austin and they look to have to the top K/P combo in the WAC & one of the best in the FCS.

**COACHES** - Colby Carthel enters year four as the head coach at SF Austin, and is 14-8 the last 2 seasons after going 3-9 in his first year here. Carthel helped lead the Lumberjacks to the playoffs in 2021 for the first time since 2014. Prior to being the HC here, Carthel was the HC at Texas A&M Commerce from

2013-2018, and won the D-II National Championship in 2017. The fourth year OC is Matt Storm, who spent 2013-2018 as the OC at Texas A&M Commerce under Carthel. The new DC is Joe Cauthen, who was the DC at Buffalo last season. Prior to that Cauthen was the DC at Houston (2019-2020) and DC at Arkansas St (2014-18). The Special Teams Coordinator is Nik Nelson, who has been an assistant coach with SF Austin since 2019.

## FORECAST

**OFFENSE** - The Lumberjacks offense averaged just 347 ypg and 18 ppg back in 2018. Under new HC Carthel the showed some improvement in 2019, as they put up 363 ypg and 24 ppg. Despite returning the QB, top WR and the starting OLine, SF Austin only put up 360 ypg and 26 ppg in 2020. Last season the offense took a big step forward, as they averaged over 400 ypg for the first time since 2016 (424 ypg) and they scored 34 ppg. With the entire starting unit coming back this season, this unit could have an even better year as long as they remain healthy.

**DEFENSE** - Over the past decade SF Austin hasn't been a team known for their defense. Starting in 2013, the Lumberjacks had 7 straight seasons where they allowed over 400 ypg and from 2013-2019 they allowed anywhere from 29 ppg to 49 ppg. The defense took a nice step forward in 2020 as they allowed 372 ypg and just 22 ppg! With all 11 starters back in 2021 the defensive numbers improved even more to 313 ypg and 19 ppg allowed. This defense does lose a pair of starters, but with 9 starters back and solid depth behind them, this unit should look similar to the stout Lumberjacks defense we saw in '21.

**2022** - After making it to the FCS playoffs in 2014, the Lumberjacks would go on to record 7 straight losing seasons before going 6-4 in the fall of 2020. The Lumberjacks went 8-4 in 2021 and broke their playoff drought, but lost in overtime to Incarnate Word. While many teams were experienced last year due to the extra covid year, SF Austin returns 20 starters this season and are extremely experienced on both sides of the ball. With the defending WAC champions, Sam Houston, returning just 6 starters, this could be the Lumberjacks year to not only win the WAC, but make a run in the playoffs.