

TARLETON

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - In the spring of 2021 the Texans had to replace their starting QB (3338, 59%, 34-3 ratio). Steven Duncan took over as the starter and threw for 1,542 yards (59%, 11-3) with Cam Burston throwing for 313 yards (42%, 2-2). Duncan returned last fall and started all 11 games for the Texans, and threw for 2,505 yards (62.5%, 19-9) and was 3rd Tm WAC. Mike Irwin was the backup and threw for 134 (42%, 1-1). The bad news for this unit is both QB's who saw snaps LY are gone. Tarleton adds former Holy Cross QB Marco Siderman, who threw for 1,040 yards (66%, 8-4) in 13 games as the backup. They also add JUCO Alakai Yuen who threw for 1,683 yards (66%, 12 td) in 2019 at Ventura College. The Texans also have RS frosh Beau Allen & frosh Cydd Ford. Tarleton has QB's on the roster with experience, but they will have to learn the system & are replacing an All-WAC QB.

RUNNING BACKS - Tarleton lost their star RB from 2019 (1457, 8.9, 15 td) going into the spring of 2021 and Rhyeem Skinner led the way with a 687 yards (4.3) in 8 games. Khalil Banks was #2 with 222 (5.4) and Derrel Kelley was #3 with 200 (5.6). The top 3 RB's all returned last fall but senior Jayy McDonald emerged as the leading rusher with 659 yards (4 st, 6.6) and had 172 rec yards (11.5) & was 1st Tm WAC. Daniel Wright was the #2 RB (443, 6.0) while Skinner finished #3 (432, 5.0). The Texans RB room takes a big hit this season as they lose their top 4 RB's from last fall. The top 2 guys back are D. Kelley (76, 2.9) and Braelon Bridges (31, 4.4). They do add Ontario "Mookie" Douglas from D-II East Central where he ran for 2,849 yards and 33 career td's. He topped 1,00 yards in 2 seasons & in the spring of '21 ran for 105 yards (2 td) vs Tarleton. Overall this is largely a young & inexp'd unit, but the addition of Douglas gives this RB room a nice boost for the 2022 season.

RECEIVERS - Last spring the Texans they had to replace their #1, #3, #4 and #5 receivers who combined for 2,408 yards. Tariq Bitson led with 614 (14.3) with Gabe Douglass #2 with 465 (18.6). JF Thomas was just #3 with 264 (13.2) and Dray Roberson was #4 with 241 (10.5). The top 5 all returned last fall so the unit was much more experienced. Bitson again led the unit with 721 yards (11 st, 17.2, 7 td) and was 1st Tm WAC. Thomas was #2 with 406 (9 st, 18.5) while Kaylon Horton finished #3 (227, 12.6). This season the Texans lose their top 5 receivers and 7 of their top 10. The top returnees are Antwonie Ware (5 st, 17.0, 12.1) and Gabe Douglas (118, 13.1). They add Ark Pine-Bluff WR Dejuan Miller who had 1,967 rec yards from 2018-2021. They also add Jaden Smith (Montana St). The transfers will help soften the blow from the losses this unit deals with in 2022, but with a new QB under center along with several new receivers this unit is a ? going into '22.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In 2019 the O-line paved the way for 248 ypg rush (6.0) with just 14 sacks allowed. In the spring they had to replace 3 starters and moved up from D-II to FCS level and the numbers dropped to 181 (4.5) rush but allowed just 11 sacks (4.2%). Last fall this unit returned a good amount of experience & paved the way for 176 ypg (5.1) and allowed just 10 sacks in 11 games (3.1%) including just 3 sacks allowed in the L/5 games. This unit returns 4 starters on the OLine including 2nd Tm WAC RT Blake Haynes and 4th Tm WAC C Austin Whitehead. Whoever starts at QB will have a superb OLine in front of them this season.

DEFENSIVE LINE - In '19 the Tarleton run defense allowed just 103 ypg (2.7) in their final D-II season & collected 38 sacks. In the spring of '21 the Texans allowed 142 ypg (3.4) and collected 14 sacks (6.1%). Going into the fall they lost their #1 DL (38 tkl, 8.5 tfl) but overall returned an experienced unit. The run defense however took a step back & allowed 173 rush ypg (4.4) and collected just 16 sacks in 11 games (4.5%). The DLine was led by 3rd Tm WAC DL Sean Walton (11 st, 39 tkl, 5 sk, 4.5 tfl). Javier Duran also had a productive season (9 st, 32 tkl, 3.5 tfl) and was also named 3rd Tm WAC. This unit loses Walton, but Duran returns along with Makody Robertson (8 st, 26 tkl, 2 tfl) and Prince Umanmielen (20 tkl, 2 tfl). With 4 of the top 6 DL back including 2 starters, this unit looks to be in good shape entering '22.

LINEBACKERS - The Texans returned all LB starters last fall and Ronnell Wilson (#1 tkl'r in spring) was the #2 tackler (9 st, 58 tkl, 7 tfl) and was 2nd Tm WAC. DJ Harris led the team with 66 tackles (7 st, 7 tfl) and was 1st Tm WAC. This season Tarleton loses Wilson along with Chadwick Thibodeaux (4 st, 38 tkl, 2 tfl), but they get back Harris, along with 4th Tm WAC LB Zach Strong (8 st, 46 tkl, 4 tfl). With 5 of the top 7 LB's back this season the Texans LB corps should help this defense have an improved season overall.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - The pass defense in the spring of '21 was quite productive, as the Texans allowed just 163 pass ypg & allowed opposing QB's to hit just 47.4%! They also allowed just 7 pass td & had 4 int. Last fall this unit returned all of their top tacklers and again had another good season against the pass, as they allowed 190 pass ypg & allowed just 54.9% completions. They also had an impressive 15-13 ratio. The leader of the Tarleton secondary was Devin Hafford (11 st, 50 tkl, 3 tfl, 7 pbu, 6 int), who was named WAC Defensive POY! S Donovan Banks (9 st, 50 tkl, 2 pbu) also was productive LY along with CB Benjie Franklin (7 st, 36 tkl, 6 pbu, 3 int). This season the secondary loses 3 starters including Hafford & the lone returnee is Banks. They also get back Marsean Fisher (5 st, 24 tkl, 6 pbu) and Greg Eggleston (3 st, 20 tkl, 2 int) so they will likely step into starting roles this fall & the pass defense shouldn't take too much of a step back in 2022.

SPECIAL TEAMS - In the spring of 2021 Adrian Guzman hit 11-16 fg's (L/45) while Jake Walrath averaged 37.5 yards per punt & had a net of just 34.4 yards. Last fall both K and P were back and Guzman hit 10-16 fg's (L/37) and Walrath's average went up to 42.6 yards per punt with a net of 39.9 yards & Walrath was named 3rd Tm WAC. Kaylon Horton led the Texans with 448 KR yards (26.4, 1 td) and 159 PR yards (9.4). Last fall Horton returned and led with 210 KR yards (17.5) while Dray Roberson had 157 KR yards (39.3, 1 td) & was 1st Tm WAC. Tarleton had just 92 PR yards all season. This fall the Texans return both their K and P, but lose their top 2 return men. If a new return man can emerge, the kicking game should be strong & this would be a good all-around ST unit.

COACHES - Todd Whitten first was the HC here in 1996, but then left a year later for the OC job at Wyoming. Whitten returned here as HC in 2000 & was here for five seasons, twice making the D-II playoffs. Whitten spent 2005-09 as the HC at Sam Houston St. Whitten returned to the college HC ranks in 2016 here and overall here has compiled a record of 90-45. Whitten also serves as the OC

and calls all the plays for the offense. The new DC for the Texans is Tyrone Nix, who has spent 17 years as a DC at the FBS level, holding that title at UTSA (2020), Midd Tenn (2012-16), Ole Miss (2008-11), S.Car (2005-07) and SMiss (2001-04). Michael Walton enters his 3rd season here as the ST Coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In 2018 the Texans offense averaged 516 ypg and 45 ppg! In their final year of Division II play in 2019 Tarleton put up 45 ppg and 532 ypg on offense! In their first season in the FCS the Texans offense managed to put up 412 ypg and 32 ppg & they were +108 ypg and +13 ppg. Last fall the offense returned nearly intact, but they averaged almost the same ypg (419) and the ppg dropped to 27. Tarleton was +55 ypg and +5 ppg on the season. This season the Texans offense will look quite different, at least at QB and the skill positions as they lose both QB's, their top 4 RB's and 7 of their top 10 receivers. The OLine is the only exp'd offensive unit with 4 starters back. They add transfers at QB, RB and WR but we expect a bit of a decline from this offense in 2022.

DEFENSE - The Texans defense in 2018 allowed just 303 ypg and 16.5 ppg. In 2019 the defense was rock solid again as they allowed just 287 ypg and 16.5 ppg! Despite their jump to the FCS in the spring of 2021 the Texans defense was still superb, allowing just 305 ypg and 19 ppg. Last fall 15 of their top 17 tacklers were back, but the defense took a bit of a step back, allowing 364 ypg and 22 ppg. This season Tarleton returns 6 starters on defense, with the secondary being the hardest hit unit by departures as they lose 3 starters including the WAC DPOY from last fall! 5 of the 6 returning starters are in the front 7 and that should be the strength of the defense, while the pass D is a ? going into the season.

2022 - Tarleton moved up to Division II in 1995 rejoining the Lone Star Conference. They won at least a share of the conference 5 times & had 5 playoff appearances. Tarleton made the jump to the FCS in 2020 but aren't eligible to make the playoffs until 2024. Tarleton played 11 games last fall and 8 of them were against FCS foes, but 3 of their 6 wins came against D-II competition. This fall the Texans play all 5 WAC games and travel to SF Austin and Abilene Christian while they host FCS powerhouse Sam Houston. Tarleton faces two D-II schools but also travel to face TCU. The Texans get back 10 starters overall, but do have a veteran HC and they add several transfers who will hopefully help the team overcome key losses on both sides of the ball. While they likely won't challenge for the WAC title this season, a 5 or 6 win season is definitely possible for the Texans.