

TENNESSEE TECH GOLDEN EAGLES

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - QB's Willie Miller (4 st, 879, 54%, 5-8) and Bailey Fisher (3 st, 367, 61%, 2-3) split time at QB with Miller starting the L/4 games in the spring and he was back last fall. Miller started 7 games but only threw for 648 yards (46.6%, 5-7), while Davis Shanley started a pair of games & threw for 594 (51.7%, 2-8). Drew Martin also started 2 games and threw for 440 (67.2%, 440, 1-2). This season TTU returns Miller, but he is listed as a WR and they lose Shanley and Martin. Lem Wash returns (9-14-78-2-1 last fall) too, but the Golden Eagles bring in former Austin Peay & Memphis QB Jeremiah Oatsvall, who passed for 3,495 yards (53%) with 44 td's and 21 int's during his Austin Peay career. He also ran for 1,448 yards and 14 touchdowns. Oatsvall DNP last season at Memphis & comes here with 1 season left. The addition of Oatsvall is a huge boost to this QB room & he will likely be the day one starter and should put the best QB numbers here in quite some time.

RUNNING BACKS - Kurt Taylor (5 st, 264, 3.9) led the Golden Eagles in rush yards in the spring of '21 and QB Miller was #2 (243, 4.0, 4 td), while Jordan Brown was #3 with 150 (4.1). Taylor departs but Brown returned last fall along with David Gist (2 st, 98, 3.4). Gist emerged as the starter last fall (10 st) and led the way with 901 (4.9, 8 td) and was 2nd Tm OVC. QB Miller was again the #2 rusher (334, 4.3) and Brown finished as the #3 rusher again (1 st, 270, 4.3, 5 td). This season TTU loses Brown, but Gist returns along with former Army RB Colton Dooley. Aside from Gist this is a young unit entering 2022, but they should have a productive season.

RECEIVERS - The receivers last spring were led by Quinton Cross (4 st, 255, 11.1) and Metrius Fleming (5 st, 187, 15.6). All of the top 6 receivers were back last fall and they had plenty of experience at this position. However the pass offense struggled for much of the season as they averaged just 160 pass ypg. Cross led the team again in receiving with 574 (14.0) & was 3rd Tm OVC while RB Gist was #2 (220, 5.9) and Ashton Maples was #3 (192, 11.3). This fall 6 of the top 7 receivers return, with the lone loss being Justin Oden (6 st, 134, 11.2). This exp'd receiver unit should have a much better season production-wise with the addition of Oatsvall at QB.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The TTU OLine had 5 players start at least 6 games last spring, but despite this they paved the way for just 114 rush ypg (3.3) and gave up 19 sacks. The OLine brought back 3 starters last fall and the OLine struggled to opening running lanes early on as TTU averaged just 48 ypg (1.6) in the F/4 games, while the OLine also allowed 12 sacks over the F/4 games. The OLine showed improvement over the L/7 games as TTU averaged 199 rush ypg (4.8) and they allowed just 6 sacks including just 4 sacks in the L/6 games. This season the Golden Eagles return 4 starters on the OLine led by 3rd Tm OVC LT Trevor Stephens and the lone starter lost is C Kurt Huff. This unit also adds transfers from Arkansas St and Jackson St. Four starters return from the OLine that finished last fall strong and we expect that to carry over to this season, especially with experience back at RB and QB.

DEFENSIVE LINE - The DLine in the spring of '21 was led by DE Chris Tucker (7 st, 34 tkl, 3.5 sk, 3.5 tfl) and DT Jale'n Gladney (6 st, 21 tkl, 4 tfl). TTU only had 11 sacks in the spring and 4 of them were in the opener, but they allowed 130 rush ypg (4.0). All four starters returned on the DLine last fall, but the run defense regressed a bit to allowing 143 rush ypg (4.3) and they recorded just 17 sacks and 12 of them came in 3 games. The DLine was led by 1st Tm OVC DE Devin Squires (8 st, 30 tkl, 8.5 tfl) along with DT's Kail Dava (10 st, 22 tkl, 8 tfl, 3rd Tm OVC) and Christian Cantrell (11 st, 18 tkl). Those three players all return along with DE Daniel Rickert (5 st, 15 tkl, 2 tfl) and they lose just one starter in 1st Tm OVC DE Chris Tucker (9 st, 30 tkl, 7.5 tfl) and a backup in AJ Hall (10 tkl, 5.5 tfl). Rickert will likely take over at the vacant DE spot and the Golden Eagles DLine has plenty of experience & they have a good run defense, they just need to work on getting to the QB more often.

LINEBACKERS - The TTU defense in the spring of '21 was led by LB's Seth Carlisle (7 st, 50 tkl, 3 pbu) and Jack Warwick (7 st, 45 tkl, 3.5 tfl, 3 pbu) who both returned last fall along with two of the top backups. Carlisle was the top tackler again from this unit last fall (11 st, 67 tkl, 1 int) and Warwick was the #3 overall tackler (10 st, 56 tkl, 3.5 tfl). NB Jalon Baker finished as the #5 tackler (L/9 st, 38 tkl, 3 tfl, 1 int) and KJ Phillips was the t-#7 tackler (31 tkl, 2.5 tfl). This season TTU loses Warwick but the get back Carlisle, Phillips and NB Baker. TTU will need a new starter to emerge at LB alongside Carlisle, but should be in good shape this season.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - The TTU pass defense allowed 193 pass ypg last spring (224 in '19) but allowed QB's to hit nearly 64%. The TTU secondary was led last spring by FS Josh Reliford (7 st, 41 tkl, 5 pbu, 2 int, 2nd Tm OVC). The secondary returned four starters last fall, and the pass defense did allow 3 games of 300+ pass yards but overall for the season gave up 223 pass ypg and opposing QB hit 60.5%. Reliford led TTU in tackles last season (11 st, 69 tkl, 4 tfl, 6 pbu) and was 3rd Tm OVC. CB Nyquan Washington (9 st, 41 tkl, 8 pbu) also had a solid season. This season the Golden Eagles return all four starters in the secondary, but they lose CB Jayvian Allen (31 tkl) who is listed as a RB on the '22 roster, but TTU should likely have an improved season against the pass.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Hayden Olsen was the fg kicker and main punter in the spring of 2020 and he connected on 7-12 fg's (L/52) with 2 blocked while averaging just 35.7 yards per punt with a net of 33.1 yards. Last fall Olsen was back and went 7-9 on fg's (L/46) and was also the main punter again, averaging just 35.8 yards per punt. Nicholas Bigelow also punted and averaged 40.3 yards per punt and the team just was just 34.6 yards. In the spring of '21 TTU totaled 261 KR yards and just 66 PR yards. Last fall no TTU player topped 100 KR yards & as a team they had 279 KR yards and WR led with 117 PR yards. TTU returns Olsen and Bigelow, and they might be best served to let Olsen handle the fg's and Bigelow handle punts. They will need someone to step up as a return man if this unit is to see any increased overall success.

COACHES - Dewayne Alexander enters his 5th season as the coach at Tenn Tech, but is just 12-29 overall (7-22 OVC play). Alexander was the OL coach here previously (2013-15) and was the OL coach at East Tenn St in 2017. The new OC for

Tenn Tech is Wesley Satterfield. Prior to joining the TTU staff Satterfield was the WR coach at Richmond (2019-21) and before that was the OC at Austin Peay from 2016-18 where he coached QB Oatsvall, who joins TTU this season as a grad transfer. Alexander hired a familiar face for the DC role in Donnie Suber, who he coached with at Cumberland (NAIA). Suber spent 14 seasons at Cumberland with the L/5 coming as HC. Rico Council is listed as the Assistant ST Coordinator.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - TTU put up just 300 ypg and 16 ppg on offense in 2017. Moving ahead to '18 those numbers increased slightly to 330 ypg and 18 ppg and again in '19 when the Golden Eagle offense averaged 366 ypg and 26 ppg. Last spring but the offense managed to just put up 294 ypg and 20 ppg. 8 starters returned for TTU in the fall of '21 but the offense only averaged 304 ypg and 18 ppg and the offense was held to 105 ypg under what their foes allowed on average. This fall the Golden Eagles return 10 starters on offense but will need to get better production at QB if this offense is to see any increased production. Tenn Tech has not averaged more than 400 ypg in a season since 2012 (407 ypg) and since 2013 their best offensive output for a season is 366 ypg in 2019.

DEFENSE - TTU's defense allowed 415 ypg and 30 ppg. Then in 2018 despite returning 6 starters they allowed a decade-worst 525 ypg and 46 ppg! TTU's defense collected just 10 sacks in '17 and that number only increased to 13 in '18. In '19 TTU returned 4 starters on defense, but there was some improvement as they allowed 398 ypg and 31 ypg with 28 sacks. Last spring TTU's defense held foes to 304 ypg and 24 ppg in the F/6 gms before allowing 436 yds and 40 pts in the finale to UT Martin. Overall they allowes 323 ypg and 27 ppg with 11 sacks in 7 games. Last fall 10 starters were back for the Golden Eagles on defense & they were solid for much of the season, allowing 366 ypg, but did give up 32 ppg, but some of that had to do with TTU's -18 TO differential last fall. This season 9 starters return for TTU's defense and they should be able to cut down on the ppg some if the offense can hold onto the ball better.

2022 - Tenn Tech returned 12 st's in '19 and began the season 4-1 but finished the season 2-5. Last spring TTU played all 7 games vs OVC foes and despite being just -28 ypg they were just 2-5 (-5 TO's). TTU began last fall 0-4, won 3 of their next 4 games, but then finished with 3 straight losses to finish 3-8. They were only -27 ypg in OVC play, but -190 ypg vs non-conf foes. This fall TTU returns 19 starters & the pressure is on 4th year HC Alexander to win. TTU opens at Kansas before hosting Texas A&M-Commerce & Samford. Later in the season TTU faces Kennesaw St (11-2 LY) and closes with North Alabama & NC Central. TTU only faces 5 OVC foes & 3 of those are road games against UT Martin, SEMO and EIU. This season TTU has the experience, but will need to find a steady QB and will have to cut down on the TO's if they are to improve from their win total from LY.