

TEXAS SOUTHERN TIGERS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - In '19 DeAndre Johnson threw for 1,926 (60%, 10-5, 187 rush, 1.7). He departed prior to the spring. Thaddeus Payton started their 2 spring games but he was gone last season as well. The only QB with in-game experience on the roster was Jalen Brown who played in one game in his career, going 21 for 37 for 281 yds with a td and an int. Brown started the first 2 but it was true frosh Andrew Body who started vs Rice and threw for 353 yards. Body kept the job was the SWAC offensive POW after throwing for 338 vs Southern. He led with 2,212 (59.7%, 14-4) and was #2 in rushing as well with 643 (6.5). Brown departs after throwing for 454 (57.1%, 5-0). Body returns and rFr Jackson St transfer Brandon Mallory is the only other QB currently on the roster (as of 8/3). Body must stay healthy but they are in much better shapen entering '22.

RUNNING BACKS - TSU retured their top rusher from '19 in Dominic Franklin (538, 4.7) and Ladarius Owens who was #2 in 412 (4.9) and they added Texas St transfer Jaylin Nelson (PS#98) as well. Owens rushed for 109 (6.8) in spring. Last year Owens led with 658 (7.6) despite missing 2 games. He had 198 vs Jackson St and 179 vs Alabama A&M in back-to-back games late in the season. Jacorey Howard added 230 (5.6) and Kevin Harris had 187 (2.6). Franklin rushed for 200 (5.4). The only loss this year is Jeff Proctor (107, 2.4). They get 5 of their top 6 rushers counting QB Body making this a strength.

RECEIVERS - Texas Southern had to replace Donnie Corley who led with 1,039 (14.4) in '19. Also gone was their #2 WR who put up 437 (17.5). Their leading receiver in the spring, Ke'Lenn Davis had just 4 catches for 47 yards. Davis was much better in the fall. He had 181 vs Rice and led with 1,000 (19.0). TE Jyrin Johnson was #2 with 503 (15.2). Texas Tech/LSU transfer Jonathan Giles added 394 (9.9). This year they lose 2nd Tm All-SWAC WR Davis (11 st) and Giles (11). TE Johnson is back and they add rFr AJ McDuffy from Temple. For the 2nd straight full season they have to replace a 1,000 yard WR so they are in the same shape entering '22.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In '19 Texas Southern rushed for 151 (3.6) and allowed 33 sacks (7.9%). They rushed for 139 (3.5, 7 sk) in their 2 spring games. Texas Southern lost both starting OT's entering '22. The Tigers returned Nate Hines who played both G and C in '19. They rushed for a season low 93 yards in their opener and only averaged 119 rush ypg (3.3) in their first 3. The Tigers topped 200 rush yards in 6 of thier last 8 and finished with 189 (5.1) and sacks dropped to 20 (6%). This year they lose 4th Tm All-SWAC C Hines (11 st). Four starters return and they have 7 with starting experience. LG Drake Centers was 1st Team All-SWAC and this should be one of the top Oline's with nearly everyone coming back from a unit that showed massive improvement last year.

DEFENSIVE LINE - Texas Southern was gashed for 259 (6.3) and only had 15 sacks in '19. They held Prairie View A&M to 88 rush then allowed Southern to put up 256 rush in their 2 spring games. Last year they had 3 back with starting experience including Preseason All-SWAC DE Michael Badejo. The Tigers allowed 384 rush ypg (8.1) in non-conference play and 182 (4.6) vs SWAC foes. This year they lose 4th Team All-SWAC DE Badejo (10 st, #10 tkl'r, 3.5 sk). Three starters return and they have 5 with starting experience. DT Tyler Martinez was their #2 tackler and was tied for #1 with 3.5 sacks. TSU returns their #2, #5 and #16 tkl'rs. They were absolutely gashed by 2 FBS foes for 419 and 349 last year but were much better vs SWAC foes so this unit is better than their overall numbers (200, 5.0, 25 sk) indicate.

LINEBACKERS - Former Preseason All-SWAC LB Julian Marcantel missed 2 straight seasons due to injury but he returned last year along with Tarik Cooper who HC McKinney said "Runs like a WR or RB". McKinney led TSU in tackles last year with 62 (4.5 tfl, 2 int). He returns this year along with #2 tackler but Marcantel (#6 tkl'r, 2.5 tfl), Tim Walton (#4 tkl'r, 7.5 tfl), Drew Robinson (2 st, #13 tkl'r) and TIGER LB Drew Gibbs (7 st, #20 tkl'r) all depart. Kenyota Smith and Nicholas Cole will fill in at the Tiger spot. Cooper and Jacob Williams (#12 tkl'r) return but they are down compared to last year with less experience.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - This was a young secondary last year but there was only one way to go after finishing in last in pass defense efficiency in '19 when they allowed 61.7% and a 34-5 ratio! Ja'Corey Benjamin played in every game as a true frosh in '19 and tied for the lead with 2 int's and 7 pbu's. He started the first 5 last year but battled injuries and missed 4 games. Isaiah Hamilton led with 7 pbu's and 2 int's. TSU improved finished 10th in the SWAC in pass D efficiency (66.3%, 21-8). This year they lose CB Joshua Murray (6 st, #8 tkl'r, 7 pd), S Marquis Walker (11 st, #9 tkl'r, 3 pd) and Terrence Franklin (#19 tkl'r). They return their #2, #4, #11, #14, #18 and #19 tacklers and add SMU transfer Terry Keys. They go from inexperienced to experienced and should be the most improved unit on the defense.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Texas Southern had to replace their punter and Long snapper from '19. Richard Garcia was 2nd Team All-SWAC in '19 when he converted 11-14 fg's (L/45). Last year Garcia only hit 6-10 (L/45). Sawyer Evans averaged 38.7 ypp (tm net 32.9). Jonathan Giles averaged 12.4 PR and LaDarius Owens had 370 KR yards (23.1). This year Evans and Garcia both return along with Owens. If Garcia gets back to '19's form they will be much better but still have a lot to improve to be considered a top notch ST's unit.

COACHES - Clarence McKinney took over in '19. This is his 4th season leading the Tigers. He was the RB Coach at Arizona in '18 and held the same position under Kevin Sumlin at Texas A&M from '14-'17. He was also the OC at A&M in '13 and coached RB's at Houston from '08-'11. The 4th year OC is David Marsh. He was the OC from '17-'18 at Campbell. He was also an assistant at Texas A&M under Kevin Sumlin. The DC is Jeffery Ceasar who is in his 4th year and also coaches the Dline. ST's Coor Milo Austin held the same position for 3 years at Delaware St.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In 2017 TSU averaged just 17 ppg and 263 ypg. Against SWAC foes they only put up 19 ppg and 272 ypg. They improved slightly in '18, averaging 19 ppg and 337 ypg and their numbers vs SWAC foes were nearly identically. They were held 85 ypg below what their opponents allowed on average. HC McKinney was hired in '19, and while they went winless, their offense improved to 22 ppg and 417 ypg. They even put up 11 ypg more than their opponents allowed on average. After putting up 42 points in 2 spring games they came back in the fall having to replace their starting QB and 1,000 yd WR from '19 along with 3 starters on the Oline. They peaked with 33 ppg and 432 ypg, averaging 60 ypg more than their foes allowed on average (#19 in FCS). 8 starters return this year including QB Body. They have made huge strides under McKinney, with their 432 ypg last year being their most since at least 1990 according to their record book and we think they could make another jump.

DEFENSE - In McKinney's first season TSU allowed 45 ppg and 553 ypg! They were a little better vs the SWAC, allowing 38 ppg and 493 ypg. They gave up 20 points to Prairie View in the spring then followed that up by allowing 51 and 458 yards to Southern. Last year this was a young defense with 5 starters back from '19. They 154 points in their first 3 games. A shutout over first year NAIA North American was their bright spot as they allowed 36 ppg and 454 ypg. Overall they allowed their opponents to put up 143 ypg above their season average (#127 in FCS). Seven starters are back on D including their top 3 tacklers. They get 12 of their top 20 tacklers back. Last year was actually a solid improvement over '19 so this year they should make another jump, but this is still one of the lower rated defenses in the SWAC.

2022 - Texas Southern hasn't had a winning season since 2010 when the also last won the SWAC, and even those wins were vacated by the NCAA. In '18 TSU went 2-9 and was -97 ypg while getting outscored by an average of 14 ppg. They hired McKinney to rebuild the program in '19. They got off to a rough start, with 4 straight blowout losses. They didn't get to play their first home game until their 6th game and nearly won as part of a 3 game stretch where they lost by 7, 3 and 7. They finished 0-12 and had 4 losses by 7 or less and were only -79 ypg vs SWAC foes. They played 2 spring games and nearly upset Prairie View A&M in their opener then led Southern 16-14 but allowed a KR td and went on to lose by 28 vs Southern before having their final game cancelled. Their opening schedule was rough, losing by 23 against eventual SWAC West champs Prairie View A&M then were blownout at Baylor & lost by 14 to Rice (TSU late gbg td). The Tigers beat up on an ill-prepared first year NAIA school 69-0 then upset Southern 35-31, scoring the game winning td with :39 left, giving McKinney his first SWAC win and ending their 12 game conference losing streak. They lost their next 2 then had their best performance under McKinney, crushing Ark Pine-Bluff 59-17 (+204 yds). At 3-6 they led Alabama A&M by 9 late 4Q but lost by 3 then led Alabama St 21-17 4Q and lost by 3 again. TSU finished 3-8 but only -23 ypg and -12 vs SWAC foes. They miss the 2 bottom teams in the SWAC East. Six of their first 7 games are on the road and they only get 4 home games. They could be improved but it might not show in the win column.