THE CITADEL BULLDOGS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - The Citadel runs a triple option much like the military academies in the FBS and their QB has led in rushing each of the last 3 seasons. In '19 The Citadel was led by QB Brandon Rainey who threw for 1,195 (51%) with a 14-4 ratio and rushed for 897 (3.8). The Bulldogs played 4 games in the fall of '20 then came back and played 7 games in the spring. Rainey was the starter in the fall then Frosh QB Adams took over in the spring. Adams only threw for 279 (43%, 3-3) but rushed for 742 (4.1). 3 of Rainey's starts came against FBS foes and he only threw for 208 (22%, 1-4) and rushed for 137 (2.3). Last year Adams returned. The spring experience helped as Rainey threw for 1,071 (49.2%, 7-5) and he rushed for 948 (4.3) while leading with 12 td's. Darique Hampton saw action in 4 games and threw for 87 yards (45.5%, 0-0, 27 rush). Both Adams and Hampton depart. Soph Graeson Underwood is the oldest returning QB and they have 2 rFr in Varney Farhnbullah and Ahmad Green. This is the youngest they've been in years.

RUNNING BACKS - The top 2 RB's in the spring were both frosh in BB Nathan Storch (536, 3.7) and AB Cooper Wallace (423, 5.0) with Clay Harris (#2 rusher '19 (699, 3.9) missing the spring but being #4 rusher (264, 4.3). In the fall Logan Billings took over as their top B-Back, rushing for 511 (3.8). Wallace had their best ypc at 5.8 (317). Emeka Nwanze added 203 (3.6). This year they lose Joe Douglas (210, 5.2), A-Back Keyonte Sessions (176, 4.9) and Storch (164, 3.6). 3 of their top 4 RB's return and they will need to rely on this unit more with an inexperienced QB.

RECEIVERS - Old reliable Raleigh Webb was back last year after leading the team in receiving each of the previous 3 seasons with a combined 1,284 (17.3) in those years. Ryan McCarthy was #3 in 2018 and #2 the following two years with a combined 421 (19.1) in the 3 years. Naturally, Webb led with 536 (21.4) and added 102 rush. Tyler Cherry was #2 with 240 (20.0). McCarthy had 142 (15.8). This year they lose their 4x leading WR and 2nd Tm All SoCon in Webb. McCarthy departs as well, and with only 5 WR's on the roster from last year the depth is concerning.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The offensive line returned 6 lettermen last year including 2nd Tm preseason SoCon Haden Hass. Jon Barrett Lewis was an 11 game starter in 2018. The rest of the line was made up of frosh and soph in the spring when they rushed for 242 (4.0). The older more experienced unit rushed for 268 (4.4) and allowed 15 sacks. This year the Bulldogs return 2 starters including RT Tereis Drayton but they lose LG Jon Barrett Lewis (10 st), C Haas (11 st), RG Johnathan Toole (7 st) and RT Zach Blanchard (4 st). Much like the Military Academies in the FCS, their OLine is often a young unit so while they might not match last year's production they will be better than expected.

DEFENSIVE LINE - The Citadel has seen their rush ypg allowed rise or stay the same each year since 2016 when they held foes to 133 (4.1). In both '17 and '18 they allowed 143 (4.5) then in '19 rose to 160 allowed (4.6) but did have 27 sacks. In their fall/spring season they gave up 172 (4.7) and sacks dipped to 16 (5.9%). Last year the unit really struggled. They allowed over 200 rush yards in 6 of their last 7 and gave up 213 (5.7) with just 10 sacks. Against SoCon foes they allowed 229 (6.0)! Two starters return and they have 4 of their top 5 back. The Bulldogs allowed their highest rush ypg since 2012 last year but are much more experienced and this should be their most improved unit.

LINEBACKERS - Willie Eubanks was #2 in the SoCon in tackles with 112 in '19. He returned last year and this was the best LB Corps in the SoCon with their #1, #2, #3 and #4 tacklers all back. Eubanks couldn't replicate the magic of '19 and only totaled 59 tackles. This year they lose Eubanks (#2 tkl'r), Anthony Britton (#3 tkl'r) but do get back their #4, #11 and #12 tacklers. They aren't as experienced as last year but they could match last year's production.

DEFENSIVE BACKS- The Citadel allowed 186 pass ypg (60.3%) in their spring/fall season. Last year they lost their #7 (transfer to North Texas) and #16 tacklers. CB Patrick Beverly was 2nd Tm All SoCon in '19 and returned after opting out in '20. They slipped to allowing 210 pass ypg (61.2%, 17-10) and finished #5 in pass defense efficiency in the SoCon. They get all 4 starters back including Beverly (#7 tkl'r, 2 int) and S Wilson Hendricks who led with 69 tackles last year, plus CB Destin Mack (#7 tkl'r) who was tied for #1 in the SoCon with 5 int's and was 1st Team All Conference. This is easily the strength of the defense and their most experienced unit.

SPECIAL TEAMS - K Colby Kittner hit just 5-13 FG with a long of 46 and one miss from 50+ as a frosh. He came back and made 4-6 (L/45) last year. Matt Campbell had 54 punts with a 41.6 avg and the team net was 37.1. He improved to 44.2 last year (40.2 net) last year. Dominick Poole was the top PR (2.0) and Cooper Wallace was the top KR (21.4) in '19. Last year Wallace averaged 22.2 and Pool had 34 PR yards on 4 attempts. Their coverage units allowed 16.0 PR and 26.6 KR averages. Campbell and Kinner are both gone so this goes from one of the top ST units in the SoCon to a big question mark.

COACHES - Brent Thompson is in his 7th year as head coach at The Citadel. In his first season he led the Bulldogs to an FCS playoff berth but they haven't finished with a winning record since. Thompson was the OC here under Mike Houston from '14-'15 and was the OC at Lenoir Rhyne from '10-'13. OC Lou Conte is in his 7th year here as well. He was the RB's coach at Lenoir-Rhyne for 3 years prior. DC Tony Grantham is in his 4th year here. He was the DC at Western Illinois in '17 and LB/ST Coach at Louisville from '14-'16. He also spent 6 years as OLB Coach at Navy and was a grad assistant at LSU under Nick Saban. The Special Teams Coordinator is Kevin Weston.

OFFENSE - The Citadel's triple option was at it's peak in '15 and '16 when they racked up 31 ppg/421 ypg and 26 ppg/417 ypg, reachin ghte FCS playoffs both years. In '17 they lost a 1,000 yard rusher at RB and dipped to 22 ppg and 389 ypg. In SoCon play they only put up 19 ppg/384 ypg. Their starting QB departed in '19 but Brandon Rainey emerged as their top passer and rusher as they put up 29 ppg and 368 ypg and were even better in SoCon play, averaging 31 ppg and 401 ypg. They played 4 games in the fall of '21 then another 8 in the spring. They only averaged 7 ppg and 262 ypg in the fall but 3 of those came against FBS foes and they jumped to 21 ppg and 304 ypg in the spring. Last year the majority of the offense returned including QB Jaylan Adams. They put up 25 ppg and 374 ypg. This year they lose both QB's, their top WR and 3 starting OL. They have been fairly consistent against FCS foes but haven't been able match the magic from '15 and '16. This won't likely be the year they get back to that level with so much youth in their offense and QB is a major question.

DEFENSE - The defense is in their 4th season of moving from the 4-3 to the 3-4. They went from allowing 283 ypg in SoCon play in 2016 to 342 in '17 and 388 in '18 but trimmed it to 358 in '19. In the spring they allowed 354 ypg and 29 ppg in SoCon play. Last year The Citadel had 23 of their top 27 tacklers back. They had their worst statistical season under Thompson as they allowed 34 ppg and 415 ypg against SoCon foes. The Bulldogs return 10 of their top 12 tacklers this year. Their biggest issue was run defense and they have most of their Dline back so they should have a decent improvement.

2022 - In '15 current East Carolina head coach Mike Houston led the Citadel to their first conference title since 1992 and a playoff berth. Houston moved on to James Madison and OC Brent Thompson took over. They again won their first 10 games before losing to North Carolina in a throwaway game then lost to Wofford in the FCS Playoffs 17-3. In '17 they took a step back to 5-6 then improved to 6-5 in '18 and were at one point tied with Alabama 10-10 at halftime with a 209-173 yard edge in a 50-17 loss. In '19 they started 0-2 then won 7 of their next 8 games. They held +83 and +78 yard edges in thier last 2 but lost to UTC by 1 point and Wofford by 20. They went 0-4 in the fall of '20, losing 3 games to FBS foes including Clemson 49-0 and had a young team in the spring. They lost their first 5 games in spring with 3 coming by a td or less but did win 2 of their last 3 and were only -51 ypg in SoCon play. Last year they were experienced at every unit but so was everyone else for the most part. After starting 2-2 they dropped 5 straight, all by double digits before winning their last 2 games by 4 combined points. They finished 3-5 and were -37 ypg in SoCon play. Twelve starters return this year. They only get 5 home games and 3 of them come against SoCon Champs ETSU, an improving UTC squad and Samford. Their most winnable games are on the road so this isn't likely to be the year The Citadel gets back to a winning record.