

TOWSON TIGERS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - In '18 the Tigers had the CAA's #1 Scoring (34.5 ppg) & #1 Total Offense (465 ypg). A big part of their offensive success was former Western Michigan/Rutgers transfer QB Tom Flacco (Joe's brother). He was the CAA OPOY, throwing for 3,251 (61.3%, 28-11) and also led the Tigers with 742 rush (4.4, 4 TD). Backup QB Ryan Stover (5-5-49-1-0) also returned. In '19 Flacco threw for 2,922 yards (60.4%) with a 22-6 ratio & rushed for 324 (2.9) earning 2nd Tm CAA. Stover was 4-9-63. Both moved on and Towson did not play football in 2020. Last year the Tigers brought in Chris Ferguson, who led Maine to the '18 CAA Title throwing for 2,372 (56.5%, 22-11). In '19 he started the first 6 at Maine but was injured vs Richmond & OFY, finishing with 1,655 (57.7%, 8-8). He transferred to Liberty in '20 but DNP. They also added North Carolina transfer Vincent Amendola (PS#265). Ferguson started all 11 but threw for just 1,547 (57.3%, 11-9, -80 rush). Amendola played in '2 (16-34-182-2-1) but was the #5 rusher (51, 3.4, 1 td). RJr Jeff Miller played in 5, throwing for 301 (55.3%, 1-4, -9 rush). This year all 3 depart. They bring in Maryland/WKU transfer QB Tyrrell Pigrome (PS#90) who started 10 at WKU last year throwing for 1,603 (57.6%, 9-2) & rushing for 337 (3.2, 4 td). He also started 8 games over 4 years at Maryland. They also add Maryland transfer Zack Jackson (PS#525) & UAB transfer Tyler Johnston (PS#87), who made 21 starts the last 4 year (4824 pass) including throwing for 408 (55.1%, 2-3, 8 rush) in 6 games (3 st) last year. The Tigers have a pattern of bringing in experienced transfers & doing well, but struggles some last year, so whoever wins the job could actually improve on last year's numbers.

RUNNING BACKS - In '19 Towson only had to replace a backup RB (18, 2.0) as they returned their top 3 RB in 1st Tm CAA RB Shane Simpson (711, 4.7, 6 td, 356 rec), Kobe Young (455, 6.3, 3 td) & Yeedee Thaeenrat (250, 5.2, 5 td). Simpson started the first 3 but then was OFY with injury. He was still the #4 rusher with 162 (7.4, 2 td). Young also played in just 3 finishing with just 29 (3.2, 1 td). Thaeenrat led the way with 746 (5.9, 14 td) earning 2nd Tm CAA. Adrian Feliz-Platt emerged with 480 (4.7, 1 td). After no football in '20, last year they lost the top 3 RB's but brought in a big time addition in Georgia Tech transfer Jerry Howard (PS#101), who rushed for 564 (5.3) at GT in 2018. Howard led with 932 (4.9, 3 td, 134 rec) earning 3rd Tm CAA. Newcomer RB Devin Matthews was their short yardage RB, finishing #2 with 271 (3.2) but leading the team with 8 rush td. WR D'Ago Hunter was #3 (122, 4.5, 1 td). RB Sabias Folley was #4 (64, 3.8). This year they lose Howard. The unit returns both Matthews & Folley along with 2nd Tm CAA FB Luke Hamilton (5, 2.5, 43 rec). They also add Kent St transfer RB Joachim Bangda (PS#38), who rushed for 463 yds in 3 years & Marist transfer Chris Watkins (8, 2.7 in '21). While they might slip a little losing an RB who came up just short of a 1,000 yds, the presence FB Hamilton & Matthews, should help.

RECEIVERS - In '19 the unit lost 2 of their top 5 receivers in WR Sam Gallahan (458, 13.1, 2 td) & WR Brent Richardson (353, 12.6, 2 td). They returned 5 of their top 7 receivers led by their top 2 in 1st Tm CAA WR Shane Leatherby (10 st, 885, 13.2, 7 td) & WR Jabari Allen (7 st, 751, 14.2, 8 td). They also added Pitt transfer WR Darian Street (PS#136). Leatherby led with 667 (12.8) earning 2nd Tm CAA. Allen was injured & played in just 3 gms (2 st, 64, 16.0). Caleb Smith emerged as the #2 WR with 570 (16.3). Street finished #3 (455, 13.8). Chris Clark was #4 (216, 12.0) & true frosh Daniel Thompson was #5 (212, 12.5). Last year they lost their #1 & #4 WR's but got Allen back and added FBS transfers TE Marcus Joyner (ODU) & blocking TE Robert Schwob (Maryland). Smith (10 st) led with 614 (11.8, 5 td) earning 3rd Tm CAA. While Street (10 st) moved up to #2, he had just 336 (14.0, 2 td). Allen (4 st) finished #3 with 263 (9.1, 3 td). Thompson was #7 (111, 15.9, 1 td). WR D'Ago Hunter (797 all-purp '19) was #8 (108, 7.7). This year they lose #1 Smith, #4 TE Jason Epps (5 st, 152, 11.7, 1 td), #5 Ryan Rutkowski (1 st, 138, 11.5) & #9 TE Joyner (2 st, 76, 9.5). They return 2 of their top 3 and add South Carolina transfer WR Sam Reynolds (PS#136), Maryland transfer TE Malik Jackson (PS#94) & Norfolk St transfer DaKendall James, who started his career at Coastal Carolina & was NSU's #2 receiver (7 st, 557, 15.1, 4 td) in '19 (195, 9.3, 1 td in '21). Their is enough talent to improve on last year's output.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In '19 the OLine took the biggest losses as they had to replace three 10+ gm starters including 1st Tm CAA RT Matt Kauffman (12 st, 34 car sts). They returned two 12 gm starters in 3rd Tm CAA LG Aaron Grzymkowski & LT Andrew Garnett along with a backup RG (2 st). They added Temple transfer Darian Bryant (PS#204). The OLine paved the way for 189 ypg rush (4.7) with 7.7% sacks in '18 but the less experienced unit only slipped to 155 (4.4) rush and 9.8% sacks. While they did not play in 2020 the unit returned all their top OL in '21 led by 2nd Tm CAA LG Grzymkowski (12 st), C Cole Chierpko (12 st), LT Garnett (12 st), R Demarcus Gilmore (12 st), RG Brendan Casels (9 st). They paved the way for just 126 ypg rush (3.5) while allowing 29 sacks (8.3%). This year they lose 2nd Tm CAA LG Grzymkowski (11 st), LT Garnett (11 st), R Demarcus Gilmore (11 st) & RG Casels (2 st). They return C Cole Chierpko (11 st), RG Jean Germain (8 st) & backup RG Roman Wahrheit (1 st). They also add Merrimack transfer Ralph Paige, (10 st '21), Long Island transfer Julian Singh (9 st '21), Lafayette transfer Josh Roberts (7 st '21). Despite the losses the OLine underperformed last year so they should not drop this year.

DEFENSIVE LINE - In 2019 the DLine lost 3 of their top 6, who combined for 22 sts, 92 tkl, 7 sk & 6 tfl including DT Zain Harps Upshur (36 tkl, 7 tfl). They returned 4 of their top 7 who combined for 27 sts, 129 tkl, 12 sk & 20.5 tfl led by DE Bryce Carter (12 st, 52 tkl, 6.5 sk, 7.5 tfl) but as they had one less spot as they switched to a 3-4 defense, former Oklahoma transfer DE Ricky DeBerry (34 tkl, 9.5 tfl) moved to LB. They went from allowing a CAA worst 187 ypg rush (4.7) with 22 sacks to allowing 156 ypg rush (#7 CAA) with the same 22 sacks. After not playing in 2020, the unit had to replace 2 starters last year in #5 tkl'r DE Carter (11 st, 54 tkl, 4.5 sk, 7.5 tfl) & #12 DE Tibo Debaille (8 st). They returned 12 game starter DT Sam Gyeini (27 tkl, 3.5 tfl), along with DE Bryce Lauer (3 st, 22 tkl, 2 tfl), DE Marcus Bowman (1 st, 5 tkl) and former South Carolina transfer Jesus Gibbs (10 tkl, 2 sk). They added Indiana transfer Tramar Reece. Gibbs started the first 4 (15 tkl, 3 tfl) but then was injured & OFY. They dropped to allowing 164 ypg rush (#11 CAA, 4.6). This year they losses are massive as they lose #6 tkl'r DT Vinnie Shaffer (11 st, 38 tkl, 4 sk, 1 tfl), DE Gyeini (11 st, 20 tkl, 3.5 sk, 1.5 tfl), DE Bowman (7 st, 18 tkl, 2.5 sk, 2 tfl) & backup DL Oly Okombi (15 tkl). They get Gibbs back along with #14 tkl'r DE Lauer (19 tkl, 1.5 sk) & DE Reece (3 st, 9 tfl). This year they add Kent St/ECU transfer Damir Faison, who had 8 starts at East Carolina in '20, Stony Brook transfer Makye Smith (42 tkl, 5 sk, 5 tfl in '21) & Virginia Union University transfer Jamal Jones (18 tkl, 3.5 sk). While they add some talent to fill the holes, this will still be a rebuild unit and may slip some this year, especially early.

LINEBACKERS - In 2019 the LB unit lost #2 tkl'r 3rd Tm CAA LB Diondre Wallace (12 st, 89 tkl, 4.5 tfl) & their top backup Chris Tedder (25 tkl, 2.5 tfl). They returned two 12 gm starters in #1 tkl'r 2nd Tm CAA LB Robert Heyward (99 tkl, 10.5 tfl) & #3 tkl'r Keon Paye (74 tkl, 5 tfl, 2 int, 2 pbu). In the new defense they added a spot and while they moved in former Oklahoma transfer DE Ricky DeBerry (34 tkl, 9.5 tfl), he was OFY after starting the opener (8 tkl, 1 tfl). They went from allowing 28.8 ppg (#10 CAA) & a CAA worst 390 ypg in '18 to giving up just 23.5 ppg (#3) & 385 ypg (#7). After not playing in '20, they had some big losses last year. They lost 3 starters in #2 tkl'r 2nd Tm CAA LB Heyward (87 tkl, 12.5 tfl, 2 int), #6 3rd Tm CAA OLB Paye (12 st, 43 tkl, 6.5 tfl, 5 int, 4 pbu) & John Lambert (11 st, 33 tkl, 3 tfl, 2 pbu) along with DeBerry, Malik Tyne (19 tkl, 2 sk), & Matriel Reaves (14 tkl, 1 sk). They returned #3 tkl'r Christian Dixon (11 st, 72 tkl, 4.5 sk, 4.5 tfl) but the next most experienced LB was Ryan Kearney (6 tkl). They also added Temple transfer Keyvone Bruton & Gardner-Webb transfer Darien Reynolds. They allowed 28.6 ppg (#11) & 374 ypg (#9). This year they lose #2 tkl'r 3rd Tm CAA MLB Dixon (11 st, 73 tkl, 4 sk), #3 MLB Reynolds (4 st, 46 tkl, 7 tfl), #4 OLB Bruton (11 st, 41 tkl, 2.5 tfl, 1 int), OLB Elorm Lumor (5 st, 10 tkl, 1.5 sk, 1 tfl) & Nygil Johnson (3 st, 14 tkl, 1 tfl). The unit return #9 tkl'r MLB Kearney (27 tkl, 1.5 sk, 2 tfl) & Daniel Raymond (14 tkl, 2 tfl). They add JC transfer Ibrahim Kouyate & D-II transfer Onaje Lewis, but with the losses the unit will likely take a bit of a step back this season.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - The secondary lost their top DB, Monty Fenner (12 st, 71 tkl, 10 pd) and a bkp (1 st, 16 tkl, 2 int) in 2019. They returned 5 of their top 7, who combined for 35 sts, 165 tkl & 21 pd led by Mantriel Reaves (52 tkl, 5 pd) & Terrill Gillette (40 tkl, 3.5 tfl, 9 pbu). They added Kansas transfer DB Robery Topps (PS#216). They went from the CAA's #10 Pass Eff D (202 pass ypg, 53.2%, 18-8) in '18 to #5 (230 pass ypg, 56.2%, 18-16) in '19. With no football in '20, #4 tkl'r 3rd Tm CAA S Tippet (70 tkl, 5 int, 9 pbu) transferred to Rhode Island. Last year besides Tippet had to replace 3rd Tm CAA S Gillette (38 tkl, 4.5 tfl, 15 pbu) & CB Jeremiah Wynn (3 st, 12 tkl, 13 pd). They returned #1 tkl'r S SJ Brown (10 st, 87 tkl, 1.5 tfl, 2 int, 3 pbu), CB Brandon Shuman (5 st, 26 tkl, 3 pbu), CB Jirhe Love (3 st, 15 tkl, 3 pbu), S Topps (1 st, 11 tkl, 2 pbu) & S Jamal Gay (2 st, 10 tkl). They also added South Dakota transfer Mark Collins & JC transfer Charles Peebles. The unit slipped again to #9 in Pass Eff D (210 pass ypg, 59.2%, 14-7). This year they lose #1 tkl'r 2nd Tm CAA S Brown (11 st, 76 tkl, 2 int, 2 pbu), #5 4th Tm CAA CB Collins (9 st, 40 tkl, 2 int, 4 pbu), #11 CB Shuman (5 st, 23 tkl, 3 pd). They return #7 tkl'r CB Peebles (8 st, 30 tkl, 3 pbu), S Topps (11 st, 22 tkl, 2 pbu) & S Gay (25 tkl, 2 tfl). They also add Indiana transfer Juwan Burgess (7 st, 29 tkl '19, 22 tkl L/2 yrs), ECU Sean Tucker, & Southern Illinois transfer Dorian Davis (14 tkl '21). This unit is actually the most experienced on the defense. Like the rest of the defense they bring in talent to fill holes, but is the one most likely to have a shot at improving despite losing their

SPECIAL TEAMS - The Special Teams unit had a new coordinator in '19 and lost P/KO Pat Toomey (40.1 avg, 5 TB/59 KO). They returned K Aiden O'Neill (22-29 FG, L/50) & CAA STPOY & AA RS Shane Simpson (24.0 KR, 1 td, 6.9 PR). K O'Neill hit 11-18 (L/49) in '19 with 3 misses from 50+. New P Shane McDonough avg 43.9 ypp. Towson avg 4.9 on PR's and Dago Hunter was solid 26.7 on KR's. Last year they lost 2nd Tm CAA K O'Neill. McDonough & Hunter returned & they added they added in Connecticut transfer Clayton Harris. (11-17 FG in '18) but he did not play. McDonough had a 40.4 avg (0 TB) and earned 2nd Tm CAA. True frosh Keegan Vaughan won the K job & hit 4-8 (L/41). Hunter earned 3rd Tm CAA (874 ret yds, 7.1 PR, 22.1 KR). This year they return both Hunter & Vaughan but will have to replace their top ST player P McDonough.

COACHES - Rob Ambrose was a Towson WR from 1989-'91 & was an asst cch here from 1993-2000 including OC from '97-'00. He had 6 winning seasons in his 12 seasons (13 yrs, No FB in '20). That includes 3 playoff appearances ('11, '13 & '18) and being CAA Champs in 2011 & co-Champs in '12. He came here after 3 years as UConn's OC. The new Pass game Coor is 4 yr RB coach Tyree Foreman. They return 4th year Run game Coor/DL cch Collin Bauer. They also return 3 year DC Eric Daniels, who was the DC at Briar Cliff in '18 when they improved from allowing 52 ppg to just 24 ppg. Lyndon Johnson returns for his 6th season overall and 5th as STC/S cch.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In 2019 the Tigers returned 6 starters from the CAA's #1 Scoring (34.5 ppg) & Total Offense (465 ypg). They returned former WM/Rutgers transfer QB Tom Flacco, 1st Tm CAA RB Shane Simpson & 5 of their top 7 receivers led by 1st Tm CAA WR Shane Leatherby but Simpson was injured & OFY after 3 games. They dropped to #4 in CAA in scoring (30.2 ppg) & #5 in Total Offense (396.1) despite RB Yeedee Thaeenrat earning 2nd Tm CAA. Towson did not play in 2020 season. Last year the offense had some big holes to fill as they lost QB Flacco, their top 3 RB along with their #1 & #4 receivers but did return all their top OL. They returned 7 starters and brought several transfers including former Maine QB Chris Ferguson & Georgia Tech transfer RB Jerry Howard. Still they dropped to #10 CAA in Scoring (19.5 ppg) & #9 in Total Offense (312 ypg). This year the offense loses both Ferguson & 3rd Tm CAA RB Howard along with their top WR (3rd Tm CAA) & TE and 3 OL starters including their 2nd Tm CAA LG. They return just 4 starters and look to fill the holes with some talented transfers. Still this rebuild unit may take time to come together which may make it hard to improve by too much this season.

DEFENSE - In 2019 Towson returned 7 starters to the CAA's #10 Scoring (28.8 ppg) & a CAA's worst in Total Defense (390 ypg). They brought in new DC Eric Daniels and they switched from a 4-3 to a 3-4 Defense. They took a big step up finishing with the CAA's #3 Scoring (23.5 ppg) & #7 Total Defense (385 ypg). After not playing football in 2020 the defense only returned 4 starters as they lost 7 of their top 9 tacklers including all 4 of their all-CAA players from '19. They added several talented transfers & did return 2 of their top 3 tacklers but with all the losses dropped to the CAA's #11 scoring (28.6 ppg) & #9 Total Defense. This year the losses are even bigger as they return just 3 starters. They lose 10 of their top 16 tacklers including their top 6 and all 3 all-CAA players from '21. As Towson does they bring in some talented transfers to plug the holes but the most experienced unit is the secondary that loses their top 2 players. Like the offense the defense will need to come together & may struggle at the start of the season.

2022 - In 2018 the Tigers made their first playoff appearance since 2013 but lost in the first round to Duquesne to finish 7-5. In 2019 with a possible playoff berth on the lone they lost they gave up a GW FG with :41 left to lose 25-23 to Elon & finished 7-5 again. After cancelling the 2020 season Towson decided not to play in the spring of '21 season. Last year they returned just 11 starters from the '19 team. They but brought in several transfers to fill holes as Towson does. They opened with a 31-0 win over Morgan St but then played a tough schedule and lost 3 straight at New Hampshire, at home vs eventual FCS Champ North Dakota and at San Diego St. They held on to beat Stony Brook 21-14 and then beat then-undefeated #12 Rhode Island 28-7 at home, holding the Rams scoreless in the final three quarters. They had 6 turnovers vs William & Mary & lost 40-14. They opened with 24 unanswered vs Albany and won 38-24, to even their record at 4-4. They blew a 10-0 lead over Richmond & lost 28-17. In their last 2 games they never led losing 37-14 to Elon & 56-10 at JMU. This year the Tigers return just 7 starters but once again being in several talented transfers to fill the holes including 3 FBS transfers at QB. This year JMU & Rhode Island both drop off the schedule and are replaced by CAA newcomers Monmouth & Hampton making the schedule a little easier. This is definitely a team in rebuilding mode and how fast they come together on both sides of the ball will determine if they can improve on last year's 4 win total, but they could finish the season strong.