UC DAVIS

QUARTERBACKS - In the spring of 2021 the Aggies had to replace their starting QB who threw for 3,563 yards (65%, 28-13) in 2019. QB Hunter Rodrigues (6-13-62-0-0 in '19) started all 5 games in the spring throwing for 931 yards (66%, 8-4). Last fall Rodrigues returned along with Miles Hastings (74 yds, 1-1 spring '21) and Trent Tompkins (52 yds, 1-0 spring '21). Rodrigues started 6 of the F/7 games but then missed the next three games. He returned in the regular season finale & then threw 4 int's in the playoff game. Rodrigues led UC Davis with 1,379 yards (61.5%, 8-9) and ran for 240 yards (4.6) while Miles Hastings started the other 6 games and threw for 1,173 yards (60.5%, 7-8). Tompkins was used as more of a runner, as he threw just 18 passes (102, 55.6%, 1-0) but had 80 rush attempts for 448 yards (5.6, 6 td). This fall Rodrigues is gone, but the unit brings back Hastings and Tompkins, who could be a very formidable 1-2 punch at QB. If Hastings can remain consistent & cut down on the int's this position will be in solid shape in '22.

RUNNING BACKS - Last fall the Aggies returned RB Ulonzo Gilliam, who led with 1,249 yds (5.1, 11 td, 2nd Tm Big Sky) in '19 & was #2 (309, 5.1) in the spring. They also returned Lan Larison, who led in the spring with 327 (5.8, 4 td). Gilliam started all 12 games last fall and led with 901 yards (4.5, 6 td) and had 278 rec yards (6.5) and was 2nd Tm Big Sky. QB Tompkins was the #2 rusher and Larison was #3 with 255 yards (4.4). This fall the Aggies return their top two rushers & should have another productive season running the ball.

RECEIVERS - In the spring of 2021 the Aggies had to replace their AA TE but returned 4 of their top 5 receivers from '19. The Aggies returned their top 12 receivers going into the fall led by WR Carson Crawford (276, 11.5). The Aggies receiving corps was led last fall by Jared Harrell with 551 yards (12 st, 12.5, 5 td) along with TE McCallan Castles (12 st, 387, 14.3) and CJ Hutton (8 st, 8.4, 4 td). This fall the Aggies lost 3 of their top 5 receivers in Harrell, Khris Vaughn (3 st, 266, 16.6) and Carson Crawford (182, 8.3). TE Castles and Hutton return, they add San Jose St & Arizona transfers and will need some lesser experienced players to step up behind them if this unit is to see any increased success.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The Aggies OLine paved the way for just 124 rush ypg (4.2) & allowed 14 sacks in '19. In the spring of 2021 with 4 starters back they paved the way for a Big Sky best 254 ypg (5.3) allowing just 5 sacks (3.5%). Last fall the Aggies only lost a 2-game starter who started 11 in '19. Everyone else on the OLine was back and UC Davis ran for 176 ypg (4.0) which was #2 in the conference. The OLine also allowed just 17 sacks on 437 pass attempts (3.9%). The Aggies return 7 players who started a game last fall including 4 starters on the OLine this fall led

by 1st Tm Big Sky RG Jake Parks and 3rd Tm Big Sky C Connor Pettek. With an experienced OLine up front to go along with experienced QB and RB units, UC Davis should have one of the better OLines in the Big Sky this season.

DEFENSIVE LINE - The DLine allowed 123 rush ypg (4.2) with 28 sacks in '19. In the spring of 2021 the Aggies DLine allowed 120 rush ypg (2.9) with 13 sacks in just 5 games (9 vs Cal Poly!). Last fall the unit returned their top 6 up front, but the run defense took a step back as the Aggies allowed 185 rush ypg (4.9) and they recorded 23 sacks (5.3%), with 18 of them coming in 4 games. The Aggies DL last fall was led by DE Bryce Rodgers (12 st, 51 tkl, 4.5 sk, 4.5 tfl) who was 2nd Tm Big Sky. This fall Rodgers is the only DL starter lost for UC Davis as DT Chubba Maae (12 st, 20 tkl, 3 tfl) and DE Michael Ambagtsheer (6 st, 20 tkl, 4 sk). With 3 of the top 5 DL returning this fall we are expecting the Aggies to improve a little vs the run and they'll have to work on getting to the QB more consistently this season.

LINEBACKERS - The LB unit lost their #1 tackler (37 kl, 4.5 tfl, 1 int) going into last fall, but overall 7 of their top 8 including Cole Hansen (#2 tkl'r, 7.5 tfl) were back and the unit looked to be in good shape. The Aggies defense did struggle at times last fall & they allowed foes to gain 47 ypg above their season avaerage. The unit was led by Teddye Buchanan (10 st, 74 tkl, 5.5 tfl, 2 int) along with Cam Trimble (10 st, 5 sk, 4.5 tfl) and Nick Eaton (9 st, 41 tkl, 2 tfl). Those 3 all return this fall and the lone departure of significance is James Scharetg, who started 4 games (39 tkl, 2.5 tfl). Hansen (8 st, 37 tkl, 2 tfl) also returns this fall and they add a Cal transfer at LB. With 7 of the 8 LB's back again, we expect this unit to show improvement.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - The sAggies secondary allowed 253 ypg pass (61%, 22-9) in '19 & improved to just 236 ypg (58%) with an impressive 8-7 ratio in the spring of '21. Last fall they lost a safety (#4 tkl'r, 2 int), but returned 8 of their top 9 DB's. The pass defense remained fairly consistent as the Aggies allowed 243 pass ypg (57.5%) and collected an impressive 15-13 ratio. The secondary was led by S Chris Venable (12 st, 73 tkl, 6 pbu, 2 int) and CB Jordan Perryman (12 st, 63 tkl, 12 pbu) who was 2nd Tm Big Sky. This season the Aggies lose Perryman along with S Erron Duncan (12 st, 45 tkl, 2 int). However 5 of the top 8 DB's return including starters Venable, CB Jehiel Budgett (12 st, 32 tkl, 3 pbu) and NB Jaylin White (5 st, 39 tkl, 9 pbu, 3 int) who was 3rd Tm Big Sky. We expect players to step up, fill the starting holes, and for UC Davis to have a solid pass D once again in '22.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Isaiah Gomez hit 4-5 fg's (L/40) in the spring of '21. He returned last fall and connected on 19-25 fg's (L/45) and was 4th Tm Big Sky. Daniel Whelan was the punter in the spring & averaged 47.9 yards per punt with a superb 43.5 net! Last fall Whelan returned and averaged 46.3 yards per punt with another excellent net of 42.5 & was 2nd Tm Big Sky. DB Jaylin White led with 129 KR yards in the spring & the Aggies had 81 total PR yards. Last fall RB Lan Larison racked up 688 KR yards (29.9, 1 td) & was 2nd Tm Big Sky while DB Isaiah Thomas led with 244 PR yards (9.0). This fall the Aggies lose their All-Conference punter and their PR, but get man their K and superb KR man. It is unlikely that the new P will match what Whelan did, but overall this unit will be solid.

COACHES - Dan Hawkins, the former Colorado and Boise St HC, enters his 6th season as the HC at UC Davis with a record of 31-22 (21-16 Big Sky) and has led them to a pair of playoff berths including making it to the FCS quarterfinals in 2018. The OC is Cody Hawkins (Dan's son) and enters his 3rd season as the OC, but has been on the staff here since 2017. Matt Coombs enters his 3rd season as the DC at UC Davis. Prior to coming to the Aggies, Coombs was an assistant at Oregon and also spent time as a DEF quality control coach at Boise St. Brett Arkelian is the ST coach.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In 2018 the Aggies were #2 in the Big Sky in scoring (39.9 ppg) & #3 in total offense (488 ypg). In 2019 the Aggies plummeted to #7 in scoring (28.7 ppg) & #6 in total offense (433 ypg). In the spring of 2021 with a new OC the offense returned 7 starters & improved to 39.8 ppg, which was the best of the teams that played a Big Sky schedule. The Aggies offense last spring put up 507 ypg, the 2nd best of those teams. The offense last fall returned all 11 starters and the Aggies offense was #4 in the Big Sky, putting up 407 ypg and their scoring offense was #6 in the Big Sky with 28.3 ppg. This season UC Davis brings back 9 starters on offense and as long as they remain healthy they'll be able to have one of the more productive offenses in the Big Sky this season.

DEFENSE - In 2018 UC Davis was #5 in scoring (31.0 ppg) despite being #10 in total defense (471 ypg) in the Big Sky. In 2019 the Aggies were again #5 in scoring (29.3 ppg) & improved to #8 in total defense (444 ypg). In the spring of 2021 with a new DC & 6 starters returning, the Aggies were #3 in scoring (23.7 ppg) & led the Big Sky in total defense (356 ypg) of the teams that played a Big Sky schedule. Last fall they returned 9 starters on defense, but they finished #9 in the Big Sky, allowing 429 ypg, but their scoring defense finished #5 in the Big Sky allowing 22.8 ypg. This season 8 starters return for the Aggies on defense and we expect their ypg allowed to improve a bit this fall.

2022 - UC Davis started their 2021 season out 8-1 and that included a win over Tulsa. Ranked high as #4 in the polls, UC Davis would lose their L/2 regular season games and then were eliminated in the 1st round of the FCS playoffs. In their F/9 games UC Davis was +35 ypg, +15 ppg and +9 in T)'s, but in the L/3 games were -190 ypg, -23 ppg, and -10 TO's! This season the Aggies return 17 starters (9 OFF/8 DEF) but open the season at Cal before going to South Dakota St, the site of their playoff loss last fall. UC Davis avoids Montana and Eastern Washington (both made playoffs LY) in the regular seaon, but do face playoff teams Sac St and Montana St on the road, which means they have a more favorable home Big Sky schedule. Of the 5 Big Sky teams to make the playoffs LY UC Davis returns the most starters. This is an experienced team with a veteran HC & we expect them to be in the hunt for not only a playoff spot but also the Big Sky championship!