

# YOUNGSTOWN ST PENGUINS

## POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

**QUARTERBACKS** - In '19 YSU had to replace their QB. Nathan Mays was the backup in '18 and led in '19 with 1,287 (61%) with a 13-4 ratio and rushed for 311 (3.5). Joe Craycraft threw for 893 (52%, 8-3). Mark Waid threw for 73 yards on 15 attempts (47%, 1-0). It was Waid who led in spring with 527 and improved to 63.9% (3-4, 283 rush, 3.3) but he transferred in October. Craycraft saw action in 3 games and threw for just 176 (47.7%, 1-0). Last year they added rFr Demeatric Crenshaw who was a PS#33 out of HS and led Pickerington Central to two state titles. He held offers from BC, Cincy, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisville and others. He started 9 games, throwing for 791 (62.2%, 6-5) and rushing for 599 (4.5) with 7 td's. He was named MVFC Freshman POY. Craycraft started 1 and threw for 271 (47.2%) with just a 1-5 ratio. Mitch Davidson added 277 (55.2%, 4-1). This year Crenshaw and Davidson return. Crenshaw's 5.07 yds per attempt was the 3rd lowest in the FCS last year but he should be better in his 2nd year and he is a dynamic runner.

**RUNNING BACKS** - YSU lost their top 2 RB's heading into spring. Jaleel McLaughlin had just 63 yards in his first 2 games then exploded for over 100 in each of their last 5 games. He finished with 697 (5.2). Last year McLaughlin returned. He posted a career high with 242 in their opener against Incarnate Word. He topped 100 yards in 5 of his 8 games against Valley foes and led with 1,139 (6.5) with 12 td's and 176 receiving (8.8). Christian Turner was their most experienced back going into last fall. He had 557 (4.4) in 3 years for the Penguins then added another 209 (3.7) last year. McLaughlin was a 3rd Team All-American last year. He returns while Turner departs. Dre Rushton (34, 2.8) is the only other RB that saw action last year that returns. Their depth is inexperienced but as long as McLaughlin stays healthy then they have one of the top backs in FCS.

**RECEIVERS** - In spring of '21 YSU had to replace their top 5 receivers who combined for just 1,639 (15.6) in 2019. Natavious Payne led with 141 (11.8) with CJ Charleston #2 with 112 (16.0) TE Andrew Ogletree was #3 with 109 (9.1) and TE Jake Benio #4 with 88 (7.3). All 4 returned in the fall but Payne was moved to DB. TE Ogletree led with just 282 (10.1). Kentucky transfer Bryce Oliver (PS#228, 8 rec's) was #2 with 266 (11.1). Charleston only had 147 (9.2) despite playing in all 10 games. This year they lose Ogletree (10 st, #6DC IND) and Jorge Portorreal (3 st, 174, 11.6). Their top 5 dipped to just 1,045 last year so despite being less experienced they should do much better. They moved QB Brandon Alexander over to WR and Oliver should be better in his 2nd year here and they add Eastern Mich transfer Latrell Fordham (PS#260, 107, 13.4) and Mich St Transfer TE Trenton Gillison (PS#11, 6 car st, 203, 11.3).

**OFFENSIVE LINE** - In 2019 the Oline opened holes for 187 (4.5) but did allow 10.8% sacks. This spring they had to replace 4 starters and slipped to 167 (3.9) with 10.6% sacks. The unit returned intact last year and we said they would be improved. YSU rushed for 208 (4.8) and allowed 23 sacks, but still 9.7%. Four starters return this year including 3rd Team All-MVFC OL Jaison Williams (10/17) and they added Errol Walker from Grambling and Joey Groeber from Cincy. They have 74 career starts back, making this a veteran unit that is blocking for one of the top RB's in the Valley, so we think this could be your best OL in the conference by years end.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - YSU allowed 171 (4.4) rush ypg in '19 and recorded 36 sacks. They were much better vs non-conference foes, allowing 124 (3.5) than they were Valley foes (194, 4.8). In spring they had to replace their #4 and #9 tacklers who combined for 22 sacks. Their rush D actually got better, allowing 148, 4.1). After recorded 0 sacks in the first 4 games they had 8 in the last 3. Last year all 4 starters returned from the spring. They couldn't replicate their success against the run in a full season and allowed 222 (6.4). Against NDSU they were gashed for 464 and over 10 yards per carry. Only once all season did they hold a team below 4.9 ypc. They also only produced 14 sacks (4.4%). This year they lose Vinny Gentile (8 st, #19 tkl'r, 3 sk) and Jelani Stafford (1 st, #20 tkl'r, 2 tfl). They get their #7, #10, #12, #13 and #16 tacklers back and add Toledo transfer Jalen Crider (1 tkl, PS#409). This unit was still recovering from significant losses off '19's unit so a full season under their belt should help.

**LINEBACKERS** - In '19 this unit made up their #3, #5, #10 and #11 tkl'rs. By last season all 4 were gone. Grant Dixon led in the spring with 55 tackles then led again last season with 67 (2 sk, 2 int). Griffin Hoak was their #2 tkl'r in spring then returned and was #3 last year with 47 (4 sk). This year they lose Dixon (10 st) and NB Zaire Jones (8 st, #4 tkl'r) but Hoak returns along with their #11 tackler Alex Howard (2.5 tfl). They also added Western Illinois transfer Greg Benton (16 car st, 133 tkl 3Y) who was named 2nd Team Preseason All-MVFC so they are actually more experienced with a full season under their belt.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS** - YSU allowed 168 pass ypg in '19 but finished 7th in Pass D Efficiency (57.6%, 21-11). In spring they allowed just 164 pass ypg and were #3 in Pass D Efficiency (55.2%, 7-4). Last year they only lost a backup DB and added Florida transfer Quincy Lenton (PS#70) yet they allowed over 320 pass yards in 4 of their first 5. They improved in their last 4 giving up just 197 pass ypg but overall allowed 252 (61.1%, 25-9) and finished 10th in Pass D Efficiency. This year they lose Jordan White (7 st, #2 tkl'r, 3 int, 4 pbu), Keyon Martin (10 st, #6 tkl'r, 1 int, 10 pbu) and a bkp (1 st, #14 tkl'r). Two starters return and they have their #5, #8, #9, #15, #17 and #18 tkl'rs back. They are more experienced and Lenton is back after missing 6 games last year. Last year was a big letdown and they probably can't fair worse.

**SPECIAL TEAMS** - Last year Colt McFadden made 8 of 9 fg's (L/45) with the only miss coming from beyond 50. Paddy Lynch averaged 41.6 on 30 punts while Nick DeSalvo averaged 42.4 on 22 punts. Together they combined for a decent 38.1 net. St. Surin averaged 25.6 KR and Randy Smith averaged 8.0 PR. This year McFadden and Lynch return so this is still a solid ST's unit.

**COACHES** - YSU aslum Doug Phillips is in his 3rd year as HC. He spent time coaching at Cincinnati (3Y), Iowa St (1Y), Bowling Green (2Y) and Ohio St (1) in various positions. 3rd year OC Troy Rothenbuhler was TE Coach at Eastern Kentucky in '19. He was the OC at DII Findlay for 7 seasons and spent 6 years at Bowling Green including 1 as OC. He also was an analyst for the AZ Cardinals in '18. First year DC Jahmal Brown was DC at Lenoir-Rhyne for 3 seasons and Notre Dame College (OH) for 2. Evan Harvey is the 3Y ST's Coor.

## FORECAST

**OFFENSE** - YSU averaged 30 ppg but only 378 ypg in '19. They did put up 17 ypg more than their opponents allowed on average (#38 in FCS). They were #2 in Scoring Offense but only #5 in Total Offense. In spring the Penguins had just 2 starters back on offense and plummeted to just 14.4 ppg and 267 ypg, finishing last in both Scoring and Total Offense in the Valley. Last year the offense returned basically in tact from spring and of course they were better, putting up 24.7 ppg and 341 ypg, good for 7th in Scoring Offense in the Valley but only 9th in Total Offense. This year they have the Frosh MVFC POY back at QB in Crenshaw who should be much better in his 2nd season under center. They have an All-American RB behind him in McLaughlin and a veteran OLine. Their WR's are their big question mark and if Crenshaw makes big strides then this offense would see a nice jump in ppg and ypg.

**DEFENSE** - YSU allowed 27 ppg in both '18 and '19. The Penguins held their opponents 22 ypg below their average in '19, allowing just 339 ypg and were 6th in Total Defense in the Valley. In spring they had 5 starters back and allowed just 22 ppg and 313 ypg but were still only 6th in Scoring D and 5th in Total D. The spring experience didn't help last year as they gave up 35.4 ppg and 474 ypg. They were 10th in Scoring D and dead last in the Valley in Total Defense. This year they lose 4 of their top 6 tacklers but added an All Conference LB from Western Illinois and overall they have 13 of their top 18 tacklers back so they should be better but they do have a new DC so there may be some growing pains.

**2022** - This program enjoyed a lot of success in the mid 90's under Jim Tressel when they won 4 National Title games. Between 2001-2015 they appeared in the FCS Playoffs just once ('06). In '16 Former Nebraska Head Coach Bo Pelini got YSU to the National Title game in '16 and they lost to James Madison to finish 12-4 and were +62 ypg. They were 6-5 in '17 but +94 ypg and were -4 net close losses including a 7 point loss at Pitt and a 3 point loss to North Dakota St. In '18 YSU went 4-7 but were +21 ypg. They were -10 TO's and -2 Net Close Losses. They started 4-0 in '19 but lost 6 of their last 8 and finished +166 ypg vs Non-Conf but -24 vs MVFC foes. Pelini left YSU to take the DC role at LSU and Doug Phillips was brought in during the Covid year. They started 0-4 before getting his first win, over South Dakota 28-10 then lost their last 2. They finished 1-6 but were only -46 ypg. Last fall they won their opener over Incarnate Word then lost their next 3. They beat Missouri St 41-33 then lost their next 4 before pulling another upset, beating Southern Illinois 35-18 on their Senior Day. They finished 3-7 and were -132 ypg but all 3 wins came against FCS Playoff teams. They have 16 starters back. They miss South Dakota St and Northern Iowa (both picked in top 5). If they can pull a few upsets like last year they could get to 5 or 6 wins.