

# LAFAYETTE LEOPARDS

## POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

**QUARTERBACKS** - Cole Northrup saw brief action in both '18 and '19, throwing for 196 (54%, 0-1). Northrup started all 3 in spring of '21, throwing for 602 (62%, 4-3). Northrup departed along with last year's backup Sean O'Malley (65, 67%, 1-1). No QB on the roster had seen action heading into last year. Washington St transfer Aaron Angelos started the first 2 while splitting reps with Rent Montie. Ah-Shaun Davis started the next 8. He threw for 1,414 (59.8%, 4-5) but was injured vs Colgate and Angelos started the finale. He finished with 328 (63.3%, 0-1). Montie added 274 (59.6%, 1-3). All 3 return so they go from no returning experience to 3 with experience and should be more productive.

**RUNNING BACKS** - In '18 Selwyn Simpson was #2 with 352 (4.1). Simpson led the Leopards in rushing in '19 with 360 (4.4). Jaden Sutton was #3 with 268 (3.7). Their top 3 returned in spring. Sutton led with 104 (3.9) while Simpson only put up 97 (2.9). Last year both Sutton and Simpson returned. Simpson had 110 vs Fordham and had a career high 450 (4.9). Sutton wasn't far behind with 398 (4.4). He had 113 vs Colgate. This year they lose Simpson and Michael Hayes (207, 4.4). The Leopards go from bringing their top 2 back to losing 2 of their top 3 along with FB Ty Hranicka (5 st) but Sutton had more rush yards than their leaders in both '18 and '19 so they are actually in better shape.

**RECEIVERS** - Lehigh had to replace their top 2 WR's in spring of '21 and their top returnee was Joe Gillette (314, 15.0). Quinn Revere led with 214 (11.3) and TE Steven Stilianos had 125 (13.9). Gillette was #3 with just 89 (17.8) and Julius Young added 87 (21.8). Last year Revere departed along with TE Jake Taggart (2 st), but 6 of their top 7 were back and they are in much better shape despite losing their top guy. Young went over 100 on 3 occasions including 147 vs Air Force. He led with 651 (14.2). Gillette was #2 with 484 (11.8) and added 116 (7.7) rush. Jordan Hull had 174 (11.6) while KJ Rodgers added 170 and a team high 17.0 ypc. Their top 5 all return this year with the only loss being TE Stilianos (4 st, 130, 6.2). They've got solid depth and Young will be one of the top WR's in the Patriot.

**OFFENSIVE LINE** - In '19 the Leopards rushed for 114 ypg (3.4) but gave up 44 sacks! Only 6 OL saw starting action in spring with Lafayette rushing for just 80 ypg (2.6) but they did only give up 4 sacks in 3 games. 4 starters returned last year, only losing RG John Burk. They rushed for 99 ypg (3.1) but allowed 45 sacks this time! The Leopards only have 2 starters back this time. Gone are LT Joshua Roberts (7 st), C Joe Grundhofer (11 st), 2nd Tm All Patriot RT Gavin Barclay and bkp LT Casey McCollum (4 st). They do have 4 with starting experience but this is a younger unit and their least experienced on offense.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - Lafayette was gashed for 208 rush ypg (4.5) in non conf play in '19 but only allowed 105 (3.0) in Patriot League play. In spring they allowed just 63 rush ypg (2.1). The entire DL from spring returned including '19's Patriot League Def POY DT Malik Hamm who was their #4 tkl'r and had 15 tfl including 8.5 sacks. Hamm led with 5.5 sacks and was their #2 tackler as Lafayette allowed 159 rush ypg (4.0). They return 3 All-Patriot DL including Hamm (2x 1st Tm). The only loss is Colin Hurlbrink (2 st, #11 tkl'r) so this is the strength of the defense.

**LINEBACKERS** - Lafayette lost their top 2 LB's in spring of '21 who were #1 and #2 tkl'rs. Major Jordan led with 21 tkl's and Marco Olivas was just behind with 20 (3.5 tfl). Five LB's saw starting action and all 5 returned in the fall. They had their #1, #2, #5 and #12 tkl'rs back. Olivas was #3 in the Patriot with 117 tackles and led with 9.5 tfl's. This year they lose 3rd Tm All Patriot Major Jordan (6 st, #7 tkl'r). Three starters return including Olivas (1st Tm All Patriot). Their #1, #4, #5 and #13 tkl'rs are back so this is another strength.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS** - Lafayette only allowed 194 pass ypg in '18 but allowed 64.6% and was actually last in the Patriot League in Pass Efficiency defense. They had 3 starters back in '19, allowed 220 pass ypg (62.4%, 15-5) and improved to #5 in the Patriot League. All 4 starters were gone in spring and they allowed 272 pass ypg including 328 vs Bucknell and was once again #5 in the Patriot (66%, 5-1). Last year Lafayette's 4 starters returned after gaining valuable experience in spring. They only allowed 182 pass ypg (57.9%, 10-7) and moved up to #2 in pass efficiency defense. This year they lose FS Caleb Burr (11 st, #3 tkl'r) and 1st Tm All Patriot CB Jordan Anderson (8 st, #8 tkl'r, 9 pd). Two starters return and they get back their #6, #10, #14 and #15 tkl'rs. Last years unit wasn't as experienced as 4 starters indicated so this is still a solid secondary with 3 All Patriot guys back.

**SPECIAL TEAMS** - Jeffrey Kordenbeck made 3-4 fg's (L/26) in spring. He also avg'd 37.9 ypp and had 4 TB on 12 KO's. Their punt return unit was a non-factor while their KR averaged 20.1. Last year they lost their do-it-all kicker Kordenbeck. Micah Pettit made 10-15 fg's (L/49). Jakob Trestik averaged 39.2 yards per punt (tm net 33.0). Michael Hayes averaged 25.1 KR. This year they lose K Pettit and Hayes. Trestik is back but they need to find a solid kicker or this unit is down a few notches.

**COACHES** - John Troxell takes over as Head Coach at his alma mater (class of '94). He oversaw a rebuild at D III Franklin & Marshall. He was a 2x Centennial Conference Coach of the Year and led the Diplomats to 9 playoff experiences, posting a 92-67 record. He was also an assistant here from '01-'05. OC TJ DiMuzio joins after spending 8 years as an offensive assistant at Monmouth. DC Mike Saint Germain graduated here in '07. He was the DC/LB Coach at D II Kutztown State in PA the last 3 years. They do not designate a Special Teams Coordinator.

## FORECAST

**OFFENSE** - In 2017 Lafayette bottomed out, averaging just 12 ppg and 219 ypg. In '18 they improved to 258 ypg but still only avg'd 13 ppg. In '19 avg'd 370 ypg in their F/9 but struggled down the stretch and only put up 243 ypg in their L/3. They still improved to 18.4 ppg and 338 ypg. They put up 19 ppg and 311 ypg in the spring. 8 starters returned last year. The Leopards didn't settle on a QB until the 3rd game and averaged just 282 ypg and 16.6 ppg. Against Patriot foes they did increase to 311 ypg and 21 ppg. 7 starters return this year. They are much more experienced at QB. They've only reached 20 ppg once in the last 7 years so that's their bench mark which we think they could hit but they do have to learn a new system.

**DEFENSE** - Lafayette allowed 29.4 ppg and 348 ypg in '18. In '19 the Leopards allowed 376 ypg but still improved to 26.6 ppg. They held 2 of their 3 foes under 300 yds in spring, allowed just 20.3 ppg and 335 ypg. All 11 starters from a very abbreviated spring returned last year so they were more experienced but not as much as their number indicated. They gave up 341 ypg and 23.6 ppg. This year 8 starters return. They have 5 of their top 6 tacklers back and 14 of their top 20. The Leopards are led by 1st Tm All Patriot players LB Marco Olivas and DT Malik Hamm so this could be one of the better defenses in the conference.

**2022** - Lafayette posted 3 wins each year in 20'17 and '18, but did improve from -157 ypg to -90. In '19 they had 15 starters back, but lost their first 7 games (3 by 4 pts or less) then won 4 of their last 5. They finished -38 ypg and were actually +23 ypg in Patriot League play. They went 2-1 in spring, winning both home games but were -24 ypg thanks to a blowout loss at Bucknell. the Leopards have won 6 of their last 8 games dating back to the last half of '19. They had 19 starters back including all 11 starters returning on defense. After a rough 0-3 start, the Leopards got in the win column by beating beating Penn. They led Fordham 41-36 but allowed a game deciding td with :28 left. After edging Georgetown 24-23 when they rallied from a 17-0 deficit, the Leopards were 3-5 then lost their last 3 including 7 point losses to Colgate and Lehigh. HC John Garrett was dismissed after 5 seasons. Lafayette hasn't with a winning record since 2009. New HC John Troxell has 15 starters returning. Only 1 of their 4 Patriot losses last year came by more than a touchdown. They host two FCS Playoff teams in Holy Cross and Sacred Heart, plus they have a home date with Ivy League co-champs Princeton. They travel to both Colgate and Fordham so they will need to pull some upsets to finish in the top half of the conference.