

MORGAN ST BEARS

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2022

QUARTERBACKS - DeAndre Harris started three games in '17 and started 17 games between '18-'19. Harris threw for 947 in '18 and 1,808 in '19 but only had a ratio of 18-18 in two seasons as the full-time starter. Harris was gone last year so Morgan St went into 2021 with very little experience. The Bears added former walk-on and grad transfer Neil Boudreau, who played P, QB, and S at San Diego State. Boudreau started all but 1 game. He only topped 200 yards twice and had just an 8-13 ratio. He finished with 1,331 (51.9%) and only rushed for 39 yards. Duce Taylor was #2 with 201 (44.7%, 0-1). Boudreau and backup Jairus Grissom (1 st, 5 attempts) both depart. Malcolm Brown is the only other QB with experience but that was only 2 attempts. Brown and Taylor are the only QB's on the roster so not only are they not experienced but they have zero depth.

RUNNING BACKS - Last year Morgan St lost a two-year starter in RB Josh Chase, who averaged 4.0 ypc the previous two seasons and led with 532 in '19. Morgan St returned Jabriel Johnson, who was second with 371 in '19 as a true Fr and led with a 4.8 ypc. Alfonzo Graham didn't have any carries in their first 3 games, and never received more than 9 carries in a game but led with 506 and a stellar 9.4 ypc. He also had 148 receiving (8.7). His top game came in the finale against Georgetown when he had 160 on just 9 carries. Johnson was #2 with 469 but only a 3.8 ypc. This year they only lose Romello Kimbrough (190, 7.6). Graham was clearly the more explosive RB and was named 2nd Team Preseason All-MEAC. This is the strength of their offense with their top 2 RB's back.

RECEIVERS - Wesley Wilfolk, the team's second leading receiver in '19 (385, 17.5), was their top returning WR while no other WR on the roster has any experience. Wilfolk led with just 336 (12.9). Thomas Marcus was #2 with 243 (13.5). Devon Mondy was #3 with 207 (10.4) and Isaiah Genera added 150 (8.8). All 4 are gone this year. Their top returnee is Andre Crawley (144, 12.0). They go from 1 of their top 4 back to 0 of their top 4 so surprisingly they are less experienced, but they also go from losing 1,523 yards to just 936 so they are actually in better shape this year.

OFFENSIVE LINE - In '19 Morgan St rushed for 121 (3.2) and allowed 33 sacks (10.6%). Marvin Atuatasi (7 st at RG) was the only returning starter along the OLine, while Dexter Carr also started four at center last year. Morgan State rushed for 122 ypg (4.0) and allowed 26 sacks. The Bears only lose C Ahmeen Reese (9 st). Four starters are back and 6 have starting experience including both Atuatasi and Carr. They go from inexperienced to experienced so they are improved but still have a long way to go to be in the top half of the MEAC's Oline's.

DEFENSIVE LINE - In '18 Morgan St allowed 154 rush ypg (4.5) and 29 sacks (8.6%). In '19 they were gashed for 308 rush ypg in their first 5, but the schedule was a big reason as they opened with road games at Bowling Green, James Madison and Army's triple option. In their last 7 they allowed 166 (4.3). Overall they allowed 226 (5.1) and put up 22 sacks (6.8%). Only 1 starter was back from '19 and they lost 5 of their top 8 tacklers. They actually improved to 173 (4.3) partly thanks to a lighter schedule but they also went from giving up 211 rush ypg vs MEAC foes to just 159 (4.1). This year they lose NT Christian Teague (10 st, #4 tkl'r, 2 sk, 6.5 tfl), DT Marcus Coleman (10 st, #15 tkl'r, 3 tfl) and DT Danny Chaudry (1 st, #20 tkl'r). One starter returns and two of their top 5 are back so they are basically in the same shape as last year.

LINEBACKERS - In '19 Morgan St returned 3 of their top 4 tacklers including their star WLB Rico Kennedy who was their all-time leader in tfl's and 4th in sacks. Kennedy was 3rd in FCS with 20.5 tfl's in '19. Both Ian McBurrough and Kennedy topped 100 tackles. Last year they lost 5 of their top 6 including Kennedy and McBurrough. Lawrence Richardson led with 68 tackles (5.5 tfl) and Elijah Williams wasn't far behind with 52 (#3 tkl'r). This year they lose Aree Booker (3 st, #5 tkl'r), Kalen Jennings (8 st, #13 tkl'r) and Deshawun Alleyne (#16 tkl'r). They get their #1, #3 and #9 tkl'rs back and they come in this year with more experience.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - Morgan St only allowed 49.7% in '18 (8-3) and was #6 in the MEAC in pass D efficiency. In '19 that number rose to 54% and they fell to #6 in pass defense efficiency. Last year this unit was wiped out with their top 6 all gone. They gave up 261 pass ypg and a 26-8 ratio (58%). This year Morgan St returns all 4 starters. They have their #2, #6, #7, #8, #10 and #11 tacklers along with #17 and #18. They go from completely inexperienced to experienced and should have a decent turnaround.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Nicholas O'Shea was All-MEAC 3rd Team in '19 as the primary P, K, and KOS. O'Shea was 13-18 on FG, averaged 49.6 yards on kickoffs, and pinned 13 punts inside the 20 while averaging 34.0 yards per punt. Leading PR Wesley Wilfolk was back after averaging 11.6 ypr in '19 with a long of 23. Jabriel Johnson was the leading returner at KR from '19 and averaged 12.3 ypr with a long of 19. Kluivert Akubuo won the kicking job and made just 1 of 8 fg's (L/25). QB Neil Boudreau doubled as the punter and averaged 37.9 and a 34.3 net. Jae'veyon Morton had a 9.3 PR average while Alfonzo Graham had a 29.3 KR average. This year they lose both their kicker and punter. Currently they don't have a kicker on their roster and their only punter is also listed as their only long snapper so unless he is The Flash, they need to add some guys.

COACHES - Damon Wilson is Morgan State's first year Head Coach. He comes here after spending 13 years as Head Coach at Bowie State in Maryland where he won 3 CIAA Conference Championships and had 5 playoff berths in DII. BT Sherman steps in as the OC. He was Norfolk St's RB Coach and was promoted to OC and Associate Head Coach there. He also coached at Howard for 3 seasons where he finished as OC and QB Coach after spending the first 2 years as WR Coach. This is his 2nd stint here. He coached WR's here for 5 years from '09-'13. Antone Sewell is the new DC.

He came over from Bowie State with Wilson also spent 5 years coaching at Prairie View A&M. Tory

FORECAST

OFFENSE - Morgan St was consistently mediocre from '15-'19. Each year they put up between 17 and 19 ppg. In '17 they did average 27 ppg and 420 ypg but were shutout in all 3 con-conference games. In '18 the Bears averaged 309 ypg and against MEAC foes they put up 20 ppg and 334 ypg. They were actually worse against conference foes in '19 when they only averaged 16 ppg and 302 ypg. They sat out the '20 season and came back with just 2 starters back on offense. The year off obviously didn't help as they averaged just 14 ppg and 269 ypg. This year Morgan St has 5 starters back on offense. They are young at QB and lost their top 4 WR's but their run game should be explosive with 4 starters on the Oline back and an explosive set of RB's. They are also in their first year of a new system so while they might not be much better, they can't get a whole lot worse.

DEFENSE - In '17 this defense allowed 37 ppg but only 360 ypg. They were due for a drop in ppg allowed and they improved by double-digits, allowing 26 ppg while ypg allowed were nearly the same (362). In '19 they allowed 32 ppg and 439 ypg but only 24 ppg and 392 ypg vs MEAC foes. Five starters returned on defense last year. They allowed 69 vs Tulane in their second game but only allowed over 4 one other time. Overall they didn't improve, allowing 31.6 ppg and 436 ypg. This year they get 8 starters back. They get 10 of their top 12 tacklers back including their top 3. They do have to get used to a new system so there could be some growing pains but after taking a year off this defense should be much better and they are definitely more experienced.

2022 - Morgan St went 1-10 in '17, being shutout in their first three games by a combined score of 101-0. They were +1 ypg and held the yard edge in 6 of their games but were -15 in TOs. Morgan State improved in 2018 to 4-7 with four losses by single digits (-53 ypg), but still went just 1-4 at home. 2019 saw the hiring of first-time HC and former NFL RB Tyrone Wheatley. Morgan St went 3-2 at home but were winless on the road for the second time in three seasons and finished 3-9 and slipped to -123 ypg. After sitting out the '20 season they came back very inexperienced with just 7 starters back while most other teams were over-experienced. Morgan St was shutout in their opener and outgained 412-142 in a 31-0 loss to Towson. They were blownout by Tulane 69-20. They scored on their first drive and led Sacred Heart 7-0. Tied at 7 the Bears allowed a 6 yard td pass with :01 left in the half and went on to lose 21-7. They were tied 7-7 at half with St. Francis (PA) but didn't score again until 3:40 4Q and lost 27-14. They led NC Central 17-14 3Q but lost by 11. They also led 20-17 against Norfolk St in the 3Q and lost 31-20. The Bears got their first win against Delaware St 20-14. After a blowout loss to Albany they beat Georgetown 28-21. The Bears were -166 ypg and -144 vs MEAC. Wheatley left the Bears to take an NFL job so Damon Wilson was hired. He has a young team with 13 starters back. They get 5 home games but only 2 in MEAC play. HC Wilson will have his work cut out for him and they aren't likely to win more than a couple games. They do host Howard and Norfolk St as well as a lower division school. They were -9 TO's last year and with a little luck they could get above last year's 2 win total.