

UTAH UTES

DL LOWELL LOTULELEI



POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2016

QUARTERBACKS - The last QB to make it through a season healthy for the Utes was Brian Johnson in '08 (13-0). 6'7" Travis Wilson (PS#30) started 7 in '12, 9 in '13, 11 in '14 and almost did it with 12 sts in '15 (2095, 62%, 13-10, #2 rush 490). He set the schl record for QB career sts w/39 (old rec 33). Kendall Thompson (Okla transfer) had 3 sts the L2Y and both depart. Chase Hansen (PS#25, now stg SS) and Brandon Cox (PS#55) have comb'd for just 4 career pass att's so they added in Washington transfer Troy Williams (PS#7) who had 1 start w/UW but was at JC LY, throwing for 2,750 with a 31-4 ratio! True frosh Tyler Huntley (PS#51) was IFS. While the unit is a lot less exp'd, I think they can top LY's stats (especially the 15-11 team ratio).

RUNNING BACKS - In '14 the Utes added Devontae Booker (PS#56JC), who is explosive with great balance and vision. Early in '14, Gil Brandt told me he was very high on Booker and once again proved accurate in his assessment. Booker led w/1,512 (5.2, 306 rec) while Bubba Poole's numbers (607, 4.1 '13) dropped to 211 (4.3). Booker turned down the NFL in '15 and Poole moved to slot WR. Booker was having another great year (1261, 4.7, 318 rec) including 222 vs Cal but was OFY vs Arizona. UConn/JC transfer Joe Williams (4.38 spd) had just 12 att's in the first 9 but had 121 yd vs UCLA and 187 vs Colo (finished #2 among RB w/477, 4.6). Booker (#4DC DEN) was the 2nd player in schl history w/B2B 1,000 yd seasons (John White '11-'12) and will be missed. Troy McCormick has blazing speed but missed LY with a torn ACL (178, 5.9 '14). TY they add in a pair true frosh RB's. The top 2 RB's comb'd for 1,738 (4.7) LY and this group could come close to that.

RECEIVERS - In '13 Utah had good size with 10 receivers being 6'3" or taller but lacked breakaway speed. In '14 their 1 rec had 523 (12.2, #6 DC) and LY they had to replace 3 of the top 4. The top returnee was 6'3" Kenneth Scott (PS#59, 506, 10.5). He was #2 again (457, 11.7) while true frosh Britain Covey led with 519 (12.1, miss 2 inj). TE Harrison Handley meanwhile stepped up after the top 2 TE's were inj'd (286, 13.6). TY Covey leaves for a 2Y mission and also gone are Bubba Poole (7 st, 145, 6.0) & Scott (12 st). This group continues to add speed and even though they're a little less exp'd, they should be just as productive.

OFFENSIVE LINE - After rushing for just 134 ypg (3.6) in '12 HC Kyle Whittingham felt the need to add size to the unit. In '13 they had more size and despite just 28 car sts, improved to 160 ypg (4.1, 23 sk). In '14 (46 car sts) the 190 ypg rush was the best s/Urban Meyer's '04 unit. LY they lost a 2nd Tm P12 LT (#3DC) and a 2Y G. They ref'd 4 str's from their final 5 gms (56 car sts). The veteran unit trimmed the sacks to 23 with the rush numbers stagnant (183, 4.2). TY they lose C Siasio Aiono

(11/31) and bkp Andrew Albers while C Hiva Lutui (8 st '15) may miss the start of TY with a knee inj. The career starts do however climb to 90 and big strides should be expected.

DEFENSIVE LINE - This has been Utah's primary recruiting emphasis annually and they have sent many DL's to the NFL. In '14 they had just 1 ret str but that was Nate Orchard, who had a schl record 18.5 sks (Jimmy Bellamy 15 in '91). Utah slipped a little rush D wise (147, 3.8) but "Sack Lake City" led the nation with 55 sks! LY they lost 1st Tm AA Orchard (#2DC) and a DT (8 st). DE Hunter Dimick had 10 sks in '14 and Star Lotulelei's (#1DC '13) younger brother Lowell st'd the last 9 as a true. The unit was more exp'd (8 w/st exp) and also got the addition of PS#18 UCLA transfer Kylie Fitts. The rush D improved to 109 (3.3) with 37 sks despite Dimick being OFY after 7. TY they lose DE Jason Fanaika (10 st, 53 tkl, 4 sk), DT Viliseni Fauonuku (8 st, 38 tkl, 5 sk) and DT Stevie Tu'ikolovatu (2 st, 28 tkl, 6 tfl) but should be just as strong as they add in PS#40 Maxs Tupai who is big and strong enough to play right away.

LINEBACKERS - While most of the top guys ret'd to the unit LY highlighted by 2nd Tm P12 Jared Norris (#1 tkl'r, 13 tfl) they did lose Jason Fanaika (8 st, #7 tkl'r) who moved to DE. I still said, "This will be one of the P12's top LB corps." They proved to be just that. Gionni Paul was 1st Tm P12 and #1 tackler by far (30 more than #2 guy) with 13.5 tfl and 4 int's. Jared Norris was 2nd Tm P12 again (#2 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl) and Utah allowed just 22.3 ypg. NB Justin Thomas earned 10 sts (#6 tkl'r). TY they lose Paul (13 st), Norris (12 st) and Jason Whittingham (4 st, 26 tkl, 6 tfl). Sunia Tautefoli was a bkp at 2 LB spots a year ago although he had just 1 tkl. This unit goes from a strength to a question mark but they do add in PS#20 & 82 JC's.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - LY the Utes lost their SS (#3 tkl'r) a CB (11 st, #5 tkl'r, 13 pbu, #2DC) and another CB (7 st, 25 tkl, 5 pbu). I said that provided they maintain better health, the Utes should improve in my PDR despite losing 110 car sts. Utah improved even more than expected rising to #11 (54%, 22-22). New FS Marcus Williams earned 1st Tm P12 with 5 int's and CB Dominique Hatfield had 4. Converted QB Hansen st'd at SS vs Wash and had 17 tkl's on the ssn but was OFY. TY they lose SS Tevin Carter (12 st, #4 tkl'r, 5.5 tfl) and Cory Butler-Byrd (3 st CB, #11 tkl'r) who will be starting at WR. They should finish near the top of the PDR again with their most exp'd secondary in years.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Whittingham always produces a fine ST unit. He brought in 5 yr U downhills ski veteran Andy Phillips at K in '13 while P Tom Hackett (Australian) earned 1st Tm P12 (43.4, 40.2 net). In '14 they were my #1 ST unit. Hackett won the Ray Guy Award (46.7, 42.7 net) and was Utah's 5th 1st Tm AP AA. Phillips had 39 TB on 75 KO to go with 23-28 fgs (L50) and earned 1st Tm P12 for a 2nd consecutive year. LS Chase Dominguez was also one of the best at his position. LY they lost their top RM but Hackett won the Ray Guy again (48.0, 43.7 net). Phillips meanwhile hit 23-27 (long 53). Britain Covey (11.7) had a PR TD and Cory Butler-Byrd a KR TD (27.9). They finished #4 and even with the loss of the Pac-12 All-Century Team P, they will be near the top again.

COACHES - Kyle Whittingham (12th year here) has 4 of Utah's 7 ten win seasons (s/1892). He begins his 22nd season overall w/program (10Y as the DC). Dennis Erickson, who has 23Y HC exp ('89-'2011 w/Miami FI, Oregon St, Idaho & Ariz St as well as SEA & SF in NFL), is also asst HC/RB's. Aaron Roderick (12Y, co-OC '10) and Jim Harding (OL cch here '14, co-OC Wyo '13) are co-OC's. New DC Morgan Scalley has been here s/08 (ST/S '15). Justin Ena & Sharrieff Shah are in their 1st yr as co-ST's co-oc's. Ena cch'd LB's here LY, while former Utes player Shah has coached CB's here the L4Y.

THIS DECADE 47-29 (61.8%) #40 - In '04 four of my then 7 sets of power ratings called for an unbeaten season. They achieved that AND became the first BCS buster. Utah's #4 finish was their highest ever and Urban Meyer left for Florida. It took Kyle Whittingham 4 yrs to deliver an unbeaten ssn in '08 and won 10 in both '09 & '10 (final 2 yrs in MW). They were 86-36 from '00-'09. The step up to the P12 was tough. In '11 I called for their 3 yr streak of DD wins to end & they were 8-5. In '12 they had 16 ret str's but had their first losing season s/'02 at 5-7. In '13 Utah did not make my Most Improved List as they drew both Oregon & Stanford (DNP either first 2Y). Once again they suffered some tough losses (see LY's mag Phil's Forecast) to finish 5-7, but knocked off their first ever Top 5 team at home (Stanford). In '14 they only had 12 ret str's and 5 P12 AG's but steamrolled Colo St 45-10 in the bowl for a 9-4 finish (#21). Utah tied Oregon and USC for most 1st Tm selections on the All-P12 Tm (5). LY they got as high as #3 and were 10-3 for a 47-29 record in the decade.

2015 ANALYSIS 10-3 - LY, I called it Utah's best team since they joined the Pac-12 and they proved to be just that. Utah beat Michigan in Jim Harbaugh's debut and opened 3-0. Utah had perhaps the season's most impressive win by any team clubbing Oregon in Autzen Stadium 62-20! They then got 5 int's off Cal's Jared Goff to win 30-24 at home. They trailed Ariz St 18-14 4Q but won 34-18 and moved to #3 in the AP at 6-0. They were a dog to unranked USC (3-3) and lost on the road 42-24. After wins over Oregon St and Wash, the Utes were back to #10 and controlled their own destiny in the South. Arizona got a TD with 4:01 left to force OT and Utah lost in 2OT. Utah lost to UCLA at home 17-9 then led Colo 20-7 winning by just 6. Utah was upset at being relegated to the Las Vegas Bowl at 9-3. They had 76 yds in the 1H vs rival BYU but jumped out to a 35-0 lead fueled by TO's. They held on to win by 7 and were 10-3 and #17 in the final poll.

ALSO ON ROSTER:	TE Chad Hekking 6'4" 240 Fr	DB Conner Charles 5'11" 175 Jr
RB James Gray 5'8" 174 So	LB Justin Tatola 5'11" 211 Jr	DB Nick Mika 6'2" 190 So
WR Gabe Cook 5'11" 192 Jr	LB Sam Whittingham 5'10" 210 Jr	DB Philip Alta 6'1" 195 Jr
WR Andrew Santiago 6'0" 195 Sr	DB MacKay Dunn 5'10" 172 So	
TE Tyler Bell 6'4" 231 Jr	DB Jonathan Hookman 5'11" 190 Jr	

PHIL'S FORECAST

OFFENSE - Utah avg 388 ypg in '14 and despite returning their 4th yr QB and RB Booker and going 10-3, the numbers slipped a little to 363 ypg. TY they lose QB Wilson, RB Booker along with their top 2 rec's. I happen to like the replacements and it would not surprise me to see them top '15's numbers.

DEFENSE - The "Sack Lake City" defense that produced 55 sks in '14 had "only" 37 sks LY but both the ppg (22.3) and ypg (367) improved. While they have 7 str's back they do lose 4 of their top 5 tkl'rs. They still have one of the Pac 12's top D's.

2016 - It was a storybook season for Utah for 6 gms (#3 AP) and they still finished a solid 10-3 and tied for first in the P12 South with USC at 6-3 (best overall record South). Utah is 20-25 in P12 games the last 5Y. They had 3 net close wins LY (pg 24). They were +13 in my Turnovers=Turnaround (pg 30) and are -32 in All Conf pts returning (pg 33). The Utes had an offensive ypg of 11.9 (pg 25). Their schedule features 5 Pac-12 road games (only 4 at home). All 6 of those factors point to a dip in the win total. I do think the new QB can top last year's numbers and Utah has my #3 D in the Pac-12 and a winnable non-conf schedule. Of their 5 Pac-12 road games, only 1 is vs a team that had a winning conf record LY. If Utah beats USC at home Sept 23 they could very well open up at 7-0. While I consider them a contender in the wide open South, I don't think they will match LY's DD win season.

OFFENSE

JERSEY #
IN RED

2016 PROJECTED STARTING LINEUP

JERSEY #
IN RED

DEFENSE

QB 3 Troy Williams Jr.	6-2 200 PS#7. 1 st, 176 (64%, 0-2) at Wash '14. 2750 at JC LY. 5 Brandon Cox (6'2" 205 Jr) PS#51. IFS. 8 Logan Bateman (6'1" 190 So) PS#321. 12 AJ Cecil (6'1" 190 So).	RE 49 HUNTER DIMICK SR.	5 st, 14 tkl, 7 tfl LY. 50 Pita Taumoepeenu (6'1" 245 Sr) PS#378. 33 gm, 31 tkl 33 sks, 5 tkl '14. PS#40.
RB 28 Joe Williams Sr.	5-11 205 PS#199. RS '13 @Conn. 2nd Tm NJCAA '14. L2 st, 477 (4.6) LY. 4 Troy McCormick (5'9" 178 Jr) PS#139. 13 gm, 178 (5.9) '14. OFY LY. Tani Laha'uli (6'0" 220 So). Jordan Howard (5'10" 209 Jr).	RT 93 LOWELL LOTULELEI JR.	6-2 310 PS#57. 9 st, 33 tkl, 4 sk '14. 9 st, 26 tkl, 5 tfl, 1 pbu, 1st Tm P12 LY.
WR 16 Cory Butler-Byrd Sr.	5-10 180 PS#15C. 5 st (2WR, 3CB), 1 rec, 30 tkl, 7 pd LY. 8 Kyle Fults (5'9" 178 Jr) PS#97JC. 7 gm LY. 24 Kenric Young (6'1" 189 Jr) PS#149. 9 gm, 3 rec LY. RB 27 Marcel Manalo (5'11" 220 Jr) PS#114.	LS 45 Alani Hapili-Katooa (6'3" 290 So) PS#98. 10 gm LY. Lucas Rydaich (6'2" 231 Jr). Nate Wanner (6'3" 230 Fr).	6-3 278 PS#209. 2 st, 17 tkl, 3 tfl '14. 7 st, 21 tkl, 3.5 tfl LY. SS Pasoni Tasini (6'3" 295 Sr) PS#152JC. 7 gm, 3 tkl LY. 99 Vaha Vainuku (6'3" 290 Fr) PS#219. 35 Clarence Smith (6'3" 240 Jr).
WR 81 TYRONE SMITH SO.	6-4 205 PS#418. F/4 st, 193 (10.7) as true LY. 47 Caleb Repp (6'5" 210 So) PS#238. 6 st, 25 (12.5) as true LY. Alec Dana (6'2" 186 So) PS#42JC. Tyler Cooperwood (5'9" 163 Sr). Jamerson Field (5'11" 185 So).	LE 97 KYLIE FITTS JR.	6-4 265 PS#18. 6 gm w/UCLA '13. Trans '14. 11 st, 41 tkl, 7 sk, 10 pbu LY. Chris Hart (6'2" 245 Jr) PS#112. Kendall Huey (6'4" 245 Jr) PS#319JC. Hayden Clegg (6'1" 235 Sr) 13 gm, 6 tkl LY.
WR 9 Tim Patrick Sr.	6-5 210 PS#410JC. 5 st, 177 (11.1) '14. OFY LY. 11 Raelon Singleton (6'3" 210 So) PS#126. 1 st, 49 (8.2) LY. 80 Siasio Wilson (6'2" 195 Fr) PS#150. TE 82 Ken Hampel (6'3" 250 Sr).	ROV NA David Luafatasaga Jr.	6-4 232 PS#20JC. 30 Cody Barton (6'2" 232 So) PS#146. 12 gm, 7 tkl as true LY.
TE 87 SIALE FAKAILOATONGA SR.	6-4 255 PS#41. 3 st, 4 rec 2Y. 5 st, 120 (10.0) LY. 84 Evan Moeai (6'2" 230 Sr).	31 Evan Eggman (6'2" 215 Jr) 13 gm, 11 tkl LY. 37 Christian Dreves (6'1" 230 Jr). Jake Jackson (6'3" 230 Jr) PS#272.	6-0 220 9 gm LY. Kurtis Taufa (6'2" 236 Jr) PS#82JC. Donovan Thompson is PS#164. David Hamilton is PS#94. 34 Alex Whittingham (5'10" 208 Jr) 16 gm ST 2Y. Sharrieff Shah (6'1" 225 Sr).
89 Harrison Handley (6'5" 250 Jr) PS#38. 5 st, 286 (13.6) LY. 86 Wallace Gonzalez (6'5" 255 So) PS#124.	6-1 295 PS#67. 1 gm '13. 1 st (opener) LY. 8 st, 13 gm LY. 75 Nick Nowakowski (6'1" 295 Sr) 24 gm L2Y. Mark Kruger (6'2" 295 Fr).	MAC 19 Sunia Tautefoli Jr.	5-8 180 PS#39. 12 st, 62 tkl, 6 tfl, 9 pbu F2Y. 10 st, 48 tkl, 9 pd LY. 1 Boobie Hobbs (5'10" 180 Jr) PS#308. 11 gm, 3 tkl as true. 13 gm, 8 tkl LY. SLB 42 Marcus Sanders-Williams (5'11" 230 Sr).
LG 54 ISAAC ASIATA SR.	6-5 315 PS#234. 5 st, 13 gm '14. 7 st, 13 gm last ssn. 69 Lo Falemaka (6'5" 300 Jr) PS#315. F/2 gm, OFY last ssn. 67 Nick Carman (6'3" 290 Fr) PS#196. 71 Daniel Heller (6'2" 290 Fr).	LB 15 DOMINIQUE HATFIELD SR.	5-10 175 PS#145. 10 st, 38 tkl, 10 pd '14. 11 st, 33 tkl, 6 pd LY. 5 Tavaris Williams (5'11" 185 So) PS#148. 6 gm, 4 tkl as true. RS LY. Terrell Burgess is PS#183. Damian Greene (5'8" 182 Jr).
77 Darrin Paulo (6'5" 310 Fr) PS#112. 78 Jake Grant (6'3" 296 Fr) PS#232. IFS. Tucker Scott (6'4" 288 Fr) PS#106.	6-5 300 PS#252. 1 gm '13. 13 st RT '14. 13 st, 2nd Tm P12 LY. 70 Jackson Barton (6'7" 310 So) PS#29. 12 gm bkp LY. 73 Johnny Capra (6'6" 300 Fr) PS#179. Kyle Lanterman (6'2" 280 Fr).	RC 29 REGINALD PORTER SR.	5-11 185 PS#345. 2 st, 10 tkl '13. OFY LY. 14. 9 st, 38 tkl, 11 pbu LY. 14 Brian Allen (6'3" 205 Sr) PS#241. 10 gm '13. 6 gm, 1 tkl '14. 3 st, 26 tkl, 4 pd LY. 6 Tyson Cissow (5'10" 190 Fr) PS#189.
RT 68 JIM DIELMAN SR.	6-5 300 PS#252. 1 gm '13. 13 st RT '14. 13 st, 2nd Tm P12 LY. 70 Jackson Barton (6'7" 310 So) PS#29. 12 gm bkp LY. 73 Johnny Capra (6'6" 300 Fr) PS#179. Kyle Lanterman (6'2" 280 Fr).	SS 22 Chase Hansen So.	6-3 212 PS#25. 13-14 MSN. 1 st, 17 tkl LY. 3 Jason Thompson (6'2" 208 Sr) PS#107.
LT 52 SAM TEVI SR.	6-6 305 PS#113. 11 gm, 9 tkl on DL as true. 13 gm bkp OL '14. 13 st LT LY.	33 WY QB. 11 gm, 10 tkl LY. 25 Casey Hughes (5'11" 195 So) PS#316. 9 gm, 1 tkl LY. Jordan Goff (5'10" 188 Jr).	
Garett Bolles (6'6" 296 Jr) PS#2JC. 79 Keven Dixon (6'5" 277 Fr) PS#194. 76 Scott Peck (6'6" 310 Fr) PS#195. IFS.	4 ANDREW PHILLIPS SR.	FS 20 MARCUS WILLIAMS JR.	6-1 195 PS#194. 6 st, 59 tkl as true. 13 st, 66 tkl, 10 pd, 1st Tm P12 LY. 7 Andre Godfrey (5'10" 191 Jr) PS#121. 1 st, 8 tkl '14. 11 gm, 3 tkl LY. 4 Austin Lee (5'11" 200 So) PS#118. 7 gm 3 tkl as true LY.
4 ANDREW PHILLIPS SR.	5-10 210 40-48 fgs, 15 tkl, 85-86 PAT, 133 KO/50 TB, 1st Tm P12 F2Y. 13 st, 23-27 fgs, L/53, 47-47 PAT, 20TB/81 KO, HM P12 LY. Mitch Wishnowsky (6'2" 220 So) PS#187JC. Hayes Hicken (5'11" 185 Fr).	33 MITCH WISHNOWSKY SO.	6-2 220 PS#187JC. IFS. 39 Andy Phillips (5'10" 210 Sr) 3x All-P12 K.
		61 Jake Kane (6'5" 220 Sr) DNP L2Y. 45 Jeff Gaston (6'0" 189 Sr) FCS L2Y. 92 Hayes Hicken (5'11" 185 Fr).	

UTAH UTES

Salt Lake City, Utah

WEATHER ZIP: 84112

Enrollment: 31,673 (#7/#42)

KYLE WHITTINGHAM

PLAYING EXP: LB at BYU ('78-'81), USFL ('83-'84), LA Rams ('87) PRIOR HC EXP: None

12TH Year Here / 12TH Overall

2015 RECORDS

10-3

CONF: 6-3 (TIE #1-2 SOUTH)

2016 RET STARTERS:

OFF: 6 DEF: 7

LETTERMEN (O/D/ST)

RET: 59 (28,29,2)

LOST: 26 (12,11,3)

HERE/OVERALL

Record: 94-46

Bowls: 8-1

Home: 50-18

Away: 36-27

Neutral: 8-1

Vs Conf: 55-38

Vs Top 10: 3-6

Vs Top 25: 12-16

Vs Power 5: 15-5

Off Bye: 17-5

Off Loss: 29-16

PAC-12 - SOUTH

Phil's Homefield Edge - 4.25

2016 Schedule Difficulty - #24

DATE OPPONENT

Sep. 1 Southern Utah (Thur)

Sep. 10 BYU

Sep. 17 at San Jose St

Sep. 23 USC (Fri)

Oct. 1 at California

Oct. 8 Arizona (HC)

Oct. 15 at Oregon St

Oct. 22 at UCLA

Oct. 29 Washington

Nov. 5

Nov. 10 at Arizona St (Thur)

Nov. 19 Oregon

Nov. 26 at Colorado

Dec. 2

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CAREER PASSING LEADERS

1. Scott Mitchell 8,981 '87-'89

2. Brian Johnson 7,853 '04-'05, '07-'08

3. Mike McCoy 7,404 '92-'94

CAREER RUSHING LEADERS

1. Eddie Johnson 3,219 '84-'88

2. Tony Lindsay 2,995 '77-'80