

# NEW HAMPSHIRE WILDCATS

In 2014 the Wildcats went 8-0 in CAA play and finished 12-2 falling 21-18 to Illinois St in the FCS semi-finals. In 2015 they started 3-4 but won 4 straight to make the playoffs but lost in the 1st round to Colgate. In 2016 they easily won their 1st round playoff game but then lost to JMU 55-22. In 2017 UNH made their 14th straight playoffs (longest streak in FCS) & won their first 2 playoff games but then lost in the quarterfinals, 56-14 at South Dakota St. In 2018 with 17 returning starters including QB Trevor Knight, and were expected to easily make their 15th straight playoffs. In the opener they lost to Maine for the first time since 2010. Knight was injured in the 2Q as the Wildcats trailed 29-0 into the 4Q & lost 35-7. Knight would miss the next 3 games. In a defensive struggle, they lost 10-3 to Colgate. They trailed Colorado 35-0 early 3Q and lost 45-14. They only trailed #11 Elon 14-9 in 2Q but trailed 24-9 at half in a 30-9 loss. Knight returned vs Holy Cross & UNH led 28-0 into a scoreless 4Q. Thanks in part to 2 defensive TD's by the Seawolves, UNH trailed 21-0 2Q & lost 35-7. They only trailed #24 Delaware 10-7 2Q but trailed Stony Brook 31-7 into the 4Q. That 38-14 loss guaranteed a losing season & the end of their FCS longest playoff run, but UNH did not give up on the season. The Wildcats had a 75 yd TD run on the first play from scrimmage vs Villanova and never looked back on a 35-0 win. They shocked #3 JMU leading 14-0 1Q & 35-10 early 4Q and held on for a 35-24 win. They led Albany 17-3 into the 4Q & sealed the 24-10 win with an IR TD. With no hope at a winning season, they never led at Rhode Island but after trailing 17-0 got within 3 twice including 24-21 w/3:15 left but lost their 7th game. It was the Wildcats first losing season since going 5-7 in 2003. HC Sean McDonnell was scheduled to return for his 21st season, he has more CAA wins (98) than any other active HC (3rd all-time). DC John Lyons returned for his 9th sn, and will be joined by 4th yr Run Gm Coor. Alex Miller & 2nd yr Pass Gm Coor Michael Ferzoco. McDonnell took a medical leave of absence in August and Ricky Santos who had joined the staff as the associate head coach and QB Coach and took over as the interim and had 14 returning starters to work with. They opened up 0-2 with a 3 point loss to Holy Cross and a 13 pt loss to FIU. NH won their next 4 games before a 16-10 loss to Delaware. They beat Villanova but were bounced by powerful James Madison then lost to Albany by 7. A win over Maine made them 5-3 in CAA play and returned them to a winning season but no playoff berth. The Wildcat got in just 1 game in the spring a 24-20 loss to Albany then had two games cancelled and opted out of the last two games so it was more like a spring practice.

In '19 New Hampshire returned 7 starters to the CAA's #11 Scoring & #11 Total Offense. Unfortunately for them, one of those will not be QB Trevor Knight UNH's #6 all-time passer (6345 yds). Despite missing 3+ gms with injury Knight (8 st) threw for 1,074 (56.1%, 7-5, 84 rush, 4 td). They also lost Christian Lupoli, who started the 3 games Knight missed throwing for 565 (50.5%, 2-2), who transferred in January. Their only QB with gm experience is former Iowa transfer QB Tommy Herion, who hit 25-53-284 (47.2%, 0-2) in limited play last year. Max Brosmer started the last 10 of 2019 and was a three time CAA Rookie of the Week in '19. He is 6-4 as a starting QB and led the Wildcats to a pair of game winning scoring drives in the 4Q in 2019 (RISl, SBrook). He threw for 1967 (58.8%, 12-12). He was just the 2<sup>nd</sup> true frosh QB to start here in school history. Bret

Edwards had started the opener in '19 but DNP in the 2H and hit 10-25-124. Brosmer hit 20-35-128-2-0 vs Albany in the Spring and both are back. In '19 they lost their #3 RB (2 st, 198, 3.0) but returned their top 2 in Carlos Washington (582, 5.9, 6 td) & Evan Gray (292, 3.4, 1 td). Gray led in '19 with 646 (6.0) and Washington was #2 (601, 4.4). Dylan Laube was #3 with 285 (4.5) and led the team in all purpose yards with 1372. Last year they had to replace Gray but Washington and Laube form a solid duo. In '19 they had to replace their top 2 receivers in 1st tm CAA WR Neil O'Conner (11 st, 814, 11.5, 3 td) & another WR

(11 st, 437, 13.2, 2 td). Their top returning receiver was RB Washington (164, 9.6). The receiving unit's top returnees are WR Sean Coyne (9 st, 148, 7.0, 2 yd) & TE Justin Malone-Woods (6 st, 80, 8.9, 1 td). Malik Love led with 542 (11.1) while RB Laube was #2 (412, 14.7). Brian Espanet was #3 with 340 (13.6) and Charles Briscoe was #4 with 236 (12.4). Last year they had to replace Love but Coyne missed '19 with injury and returned. This unit is more experienced than the 2019 unit. In '19 the OL lost 2 OL who combined for 10 sts in '18. They returned 7 who combined for 45 sts including C Patrick Flynn (11 st) & RT Noah Robinson (9 st). In '19 NH improved from 113 ypg rush (3.2) to 140 ypg rush (4.0 and improved the sack % from 10.7 to 5.6%. Three starters return to the O-line but only C Matt Mascia is in the same spot as '19. Patrick Flynn with 22 starts was C in '18, LT in '19 and LG in the spring. Riley Burns (16 car sts) was RG in '19 but and moved to RT. They had just 58 yds rush (2.4) in the one spring game last year but should be a solid unit. Overall the Wildcats despite losing their top 2 QB and top 2 WR improved from 275 ypg in CAA play and 19 ppg to 317 ypg and 22 ppg. With 7 returning starters (11 from spring) they will improve a 2<sup>nd</sup> straight year.

In 2019 the Wildcats returned 7 starters to the CAA's #4 Scoring (22.8) & #2 Total Defense. The DLine lost two 11 gm starters including a 2nd tm CAA DE (38 tkl, 3 sk, 5 tfl). They returned 2 starters in DT Elijah Lewis (11 st, 34 tfl, 5 tfl) & DE Brian Carter (8 st, 22 tkl, 5 sk, 1 tfl). The must lost 1 LB (10 st, 48 tkl, 4 sk, 4.5 tfl) but returned 2nd tm CAA LB Quinlen Dean (11 st, 79 tkl, 6 sk, 8 tfl) & bkp LB Michael Balsamo (1 st, 35 tkl, 5 tfl). The secondary lost their starting SS (11 st, 61 tkl, 5.5 tkl, 3 int, 5 pbu) & av bkp CB (3 st, 25 tkl, 4 pbu). They returned 4 of their 5 starters in 2nd tm CAA FS Pop Lacey (11 st, 79 tkl, 2 int, 5 pbu), WS Evan Horn (11 st, 57 tkl, 3 tfl, 4 int, 5 pbu), CB Prince Smith (8 st, 37 tkl, 2 int, 8 pbu) & CB Isaiah Perkins (11 st, 29 tkl, 7 pbu). The defense lost 4 of their top 10 tkl'rs but returned 8 of their top 12 & 2 of their 3 all-CAA players. That '18 D allowed 309 ypg and 25 ppg in CAA play and in '19 it fell to 362 ypg but only 22 ppg. Last year the unit lost 6 starters in 2 CB's, 2 LB's, a S and a DE. They did return S's Evan Horn and Pop Bush who were #1 and #2 tacklers and Horn also had 6 takeaways (4 int, 2 FR) along with 4 sks, 2 FF and 5 pbu. He has 4 carrer IR TD's. Lacey was injured and Max Oxendine had 43 tkls in 8 games. The two returning CB's had just 7 and 6 tkls the previous year after losing both starters. LB Oleh Manbczyk started 9 games as a true frosh in '19 and had 49 tkls and 4 sacks. The next most exp'd LB back is Zedane Williams who had 5 tkls. DE Michael Carter had 8 startes in '19 and Gunner Gibson had 2 but had a team high 9.5 tfl. Both DT's returned in Elijah Lewis (22 consec sts) and Niko Kvietkus (8 tlf) who both started all 11 in '19. They only lose 1 starter from the spring in DT Elijah Lewis. Counting from the spring they have 10 starters back but in reality only have 5 starters back from '19 but I do like the talent.

The Special Teams returned all their top players in '19 including 3rd tm CAA P Drew Sanborn (40.2 avg), K Jason Hughes (5/8 FG, L/41) and their top returnmen. This year they lose their reliable K Jason Hughes (14-17 FG) and kickoff man Jordan Conn takes his spot. P Sanborn (41.0) also moves on and rFr Aidan Cadogan takes his spot. Dynamic returnman Dylan Laube is back and frosh CB Tyrell Wiggins figures into the return mix as well.

In '19 with 14 starters back the Wildcats with an interim head coach went 6-5 but failed to make the playoffs for a 2<sup>nd</sup> straight year after having made the playoffs 14 straight years. With only one game in the spring it was almost like the Wildcats took last year off in the fall and just played a Spring Game. I wonder if that will put them back at all? The return of McDonnell should help along with 7 starters from '19 on offense and 5 on defense. That '19 squad was 5-3 in CAA play but -45 ypg. New Hampshire was given respect by the coaches and media relations directors as they were picked 5<sup>th</sup> in the 12 team Colonial. Coach McDonnell won't be satisfied unless they return to the playoffs and his return along with a solid nucleus should give them a shot at that.