

# MORGAN STATE 2021 PREVIEW

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. The Bears were outgained in every loss but had more yards of offense in each of their wins.

Morgan St's offense in '17 averaged 361 ypg and 19.5 ppg. '18 saw the TO problems fixed (even) but dipped to 309 ypg (18.7 ppg). While rush ypg went up (+2 ypg, the passing attack lagged (-54 ypg). In '19 Morgan St recouped its passing numbers (+45 ypg) but struggled to run the ball (-38 ypg and -1.1 ypc from '17). They finished with 316 ypg and 18.8 ppg. DeAndre Harris started three games in '17 and started 17 games between '18-'19. Harris had a ratio of 18/18 in two seasons as the full-time starter. Morgan St comes into 2021 with very little experience at the QB position. The Bears added former walk-on and grad transfer Neil Boudreau, who played P, QB, and S at San Diego State. Morgan St loses two-year starter at RB Josh Chase, who averaged 4.0 ypc the previous two seasons and led with 532 in '19. Morgan St returns So. Jabriel Johnson, who was second with 371 in '19 as a true Fr and led with a 4.8 ypc. Johnson started games 2-4 while appearing in 10. 7<sup>th</sup> yr WR Wesley Wilfolk, the team's second leading receiver in '19 (385,17.5), is their top returning WR while no other WR on the roster has any experience. TE Idahota Akojie started three of the final four games in '19 and returns to lead an inexperienced unit. So. Marvin Atuatasi (7 starts at RG) is the only returning starter along the OL, while So. Dexter Carr also started four at C. They will be tasked with leading an inexperienced unit.

Morgan St had an inconsistent defense in '18, holding three opponents to 275 yds or less, but allowed over 400 on five occasions (362 ypg, 25.6 ppg). Morgan St had three games where they held opponents to under 100 rushing yards, but they were gashed on the ground for over 200 yards four times (314 yards vs Bethune-Cookman) in '18. In '19 Morgan St had excellent experience yet allowed 439 ypg and ballooned to 34.5 ppg. Sr. DT Chima Dungba (eight starts in '19) will anchor an inexperienced DL alongside the other returning starter, So. Christian Teague. Teague started the final six games in '19 at DE as a true Fr. The DL saw its sack percentage drop in '19 (-1.8%) and is losing five of their top eight tacklers. In Wheatley's first year ('19), Morgan St allowed an average of 226 ypg rushing (5.1), +72 ypg than in '18, despite returning three of their top four tacklers including star WLB Rico Kennedy (All-time leader in TFL and 4<sup>th</sup> in sacks), MLB Ian McBorrough, and GRIZ Malachi Washington. Kennedy finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in FCS with 19.5 TFL while leading the MEAC with 4 FF in '17. Kennedy was 2nd Team All-MEAC in '18 after starting every game and leading the team with 10.0 TFL. McBorrough started all 22 games as an underclassman and was named All-MEAC 1st Team in '18 as a Jr. Washington started eight games in '17 and was named 2nd Team All-MEAC. Washington missed the season with injury in '18. All three returned in '19. Despite lush talent and experience in the middle of the defense, Morgan St was gashed early and often throughout the season. Jr. Devan Hebron started 10 games at SLB in '19 and will look to lead a new group that's losing five of their top six tacklers at LB. The defense in '18 only allowed 49.7% of pass attempts to be completed. That number increased to 54% in '19 and Morgan St has 0 returning starters in the secondary and lost their top six DBs

Jr. 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 will be back after averaging 11.6 ypr in '19 with a long of 23. Jabriel Johnson is the leading returner at KR from '19 and averaged 12.3 ypr with a long of 19.

Despite returning most of its offense, Morgan St only saw an increase of +7ypg while struggling to run the football effectively in '19. The return of Johnson at RB and inexperience at QB means Morgan St must improve its ground game. Devan Hebron takes over at GRIZ for a defense that lost eight starters but is returning seven players with starting experience. Morgan St has been solid at pass defense in seasons past but has lost so much in the back end coming into '21 that they will have to reengage with effectively stopping the run to have any shot at competing. Wheatley is establishing his culture and working on maintaining and building depth on both sides of ball, and 2021 will more than likely be a rebuilding year in Baltimore.