

Sacred Heart

Mark Nofri has been coaching at Sacred Heart since 1994. He took over as HC in 2012 and has led the Pioneers to 3 FCS playoff berths, losing in the first round each time. They've won 4 NEC titles under Nofri and he is a 3x NEC COY ('13, '14, '18). In '18 Sacred Heart went 7-4 and as +74 ypg. They again went 7-5 in '19 but were only -16 ypg and had 3 wins of 7 pts or less. They were 3-1 in spring and lost in the first round of the FCS playoffs at Delaware. They were +94 ypg and finished with a +37 yd edge in the playoff loss.

In '18 SH avg'd 28.1 ppg and 410 ypg. They slipped to 24.6 ppg and 373 ypg in '19 then put up 26.4 ppg and 388 ypg in the spring. Temple transfer Logan Marchi started the first 10 in '19 and threw for 2,252 (56%, 20-9). He missed the last 2 and Marquez McCray came in and threw for 247 (60%, 1-0) while adding 180 rush (3.8). McCray started all 5 spring games and threw for 880 (65.7%, 7-4, 97 rush). Bkp QB Jake Radic only attempted 1 pass last year. In '19 SH lost their leading rusher who had 1,400 in '18. Julius Chestnut was #2 in '18 with 713 (6.1). He actually topped '18's numbers by rushing for 1,508 (5.1). In only 5 games in spring he rushed for 855 (6.9, 171 rec). Chestnut returns as one of the top RB's in the FCS. He was a Walter Payton Finalist and could have an NFL future. No other RB in '19 or '20 topped 100 yards so depth is a concern. In '19 the Pioneers lost their #1 and #3 WR's but Tyrese Chambers put up 811 (16.2). Kenzio Snelling with #2 with 431 (18.7) and Naseim Brantley was #3 with 407 (12.3). Chambers transferred to FIU and SH also had to replace Snelling. Brantley led with 201 (14.4) and Kenneth Womack was #3 with 130 (9.3) while Troy Holland added 124 (12.4). Their top 3 return this year so they are in much better shape entering '21. In '19 SH ran for 163 ypg (4.2) and only allowed 10 sacks. 3 of their starters returned in spring and they jumped to 208 ypg (4.5) but sacks jumped to 14. All 5 starters from the spring are back including 3rd Tm AA J.D DiLorenzi, making this one of the top OLine's in the FCS.

Sacred Heart allowed just 22.1 ppg & 336 ypg in '18 then slid a little down to 22.3 ppg & 389 ypg. The Pioneers only allowed 18.4 ppg and 294 ypg in spring, holding 3 of their 5 foes under 200 ypg! They allowed 153 (3.9) rush ypg with 22 sacks in '19. The Pioneers lost 2 starters going into spring and allowed 118 (3.6, 7 sk). This time all 4 starters return including their #4, #6, #7 and #10 tkl'rs. LB's made up 7 of SH's top 14 tkl'rs in '19. They had to replace 4 of their top 7 including their #8, #9, #11 and #14 tkl'rs but did bring back #1 tkl'r Chris Outerbridge. DeAndre Byrd stepped up and led in spring (37 tkl, 6 tfl) and Outerbridge was their #2 tkl'r. All 3 starters return from the spring as well as their top backup. In '19 SH allowed 236 pass ypg and just 54.6% (16-12). Three starters were gone in the spring but they only allowed 175 pass ypg (56.1%, 7-5). All 4 starters return here as well including their #3, #5, #8, #9 and #11 tkl'rs. Six have starting experience and this will be one of the top secondaries in the NEC.

Sam Renzi took over at K in spring and made 2-3 (L/33). Gettman improved to 46.8 avg (37.6 net). Naseim Brantley avg'd 7.7 PR and Malik Grant avg'd 22.5 KR. The whole unit returns and should benefit from the experience they gained in the spring.

All 22 starters for Sacred Heart return after a solid spring that saw them make the FCS playoffs. The Pioneers get 6 home games, catch a depleted Dartmouth squad on the road. They could be 7-0 going into a home game against Duquesne on Oct 23rd who they split 2 meetings with and that could decide the NEC.