

Lehigh

In '18 the Mountain Hawks won their opener then lost 8 straight before winning 2 of their last 3 by 28 & 31 points but that wasn't enough to save 13Y head coach Andy Coen who was fired. They finished -144 ypg. In '19 Lehigh hired Tom Gilmore as their new head coach. They lost their first 3, went on a 4 game win streak then lost their last 4, finishing -36 ypg but +3 ypg in Patriot League play. They lost all 3 games in the spring, only put up 16 total points and were -44 ypg. Gilmore spent 14Y as HC at Holy Cross. After his first season, Gilmore led the Crusaders to 7 straight winning seasons and a playoff berth in 2009 but finished with at least 5 losses in each of his last 7 seasons.

Andy Coen's teams were known for their offense, averaging at least 30 ppg in 6 of 7 years from '11-'17 but in '18 they dropped to just 16.6 ppg and 302 ypg. They dipped further in Gilmore's first season, avg just 15.7 ppg and 311 ypg. They only put up 5 ppg and 209 ypg in their 3 spring games. Cross Wilkinson started all 3 games in spring and completed 61.3% while throwing for 400 yards (1-1). Wilkinson returns along with Nigel Summerville (85, 62.2%, 0-0). Alec Beesmer started the last 2 in '19 (437, 44.1%, 1-2). He didn't play in spring but returns for the fall. In '19 Zaythan Hill led with 396 (7.2) while Rayshawn Allen was #2 despite more than double the carries (334, 2.7). Nate Hope added 133 (2.3). Allen led in spring with 128 (3.4). Hill only had 55 (2.1). Only Hope departs this fall. Allen and Hill give Lehigh 2 experienced RB's. In '19 Devon Bibbens led with 859 (12.8) while Jorge Portorreal was #2 with 575 (11.1). Austin Dambach was #3 with 364 (12.6) while Alex Snyder added 355 (15.4). Dambach and TE Snyder returned in spring. Dambach led with 104 (13.0). Johnny Foley was #2 with 92 and Eric Johnson added 89 (12.7). Their top 3 all return this year along with TE Snyder (58, 9.7) with the only loss being De'Shun Mickens. Lehigh only rushed for 32 ypg (1.1) and allowed 15 sacks in 3 games with a ridiculous 16.7%. Their best OL, LT Christopher Fournier transferred to LA Tech and RT Justin Watson departs. The Mountain Hawks have 3 starters back and can't get worse after their awful production in the spring.

HC Tom Gilmore was a DC at both Dartmouth and here ('00-'03) so it's no surprise that Lehigh's defense improved significantly after he was hired. The Mountain Hawks improved from 35.1 ppg and 446 ypg allowed in '18 down to just 21.4 ppg and 346 ypg in Gilmore's first year. They only allowed 15 ppg and 253 ypg in the spring. Lehigh allowed over 200 rush ypg every year from 2012-2018 then only allowed 130 (3.7) in '19, holding 5 foes under 100 rush ypg. They gave up just 88 rush ypg (2.9) in spring and they get all 3 starting DLine back so this is a very solid unit with only Erik Slater (8 st) departing. LB's made up Lehigh's #1, #3 and #14 tkls in spring of '19. This year they get all 4 starters back and Pete Haffner (#1 tkls) leads a pretty good unit. Lehigh only allowed 165 pass ypg in spring (62.4%). This year all 4 starters return including the #2, #4, #6, #7, #9 and #10. This is another experienced unit but will face more tough passing competition during the season.

Dylan Van Dusen only made 1-2 fg's L/20 in spring. Daniel Simpson avg'd 40.3 ypp. Lehigh produced -8 PR yds and just 14.0 KR. This year they get both Van Dusen and Simpson back so they should be improved.

Lehigh has struggled offensively under HC Gilmore but the defense is much improved. He's got 20 returning starters and they get 6 home games but have to travel to Holy Cross.