

STETSON HATTERS

When the Hatters take the field in the fall of 2021, they will be under the direction of new head coach Brian Young, who was named the 10th head coach in Stetson history in June. Young replaced Roger Hughes (31-50 overall, 18-42 in the Pioneer Football League), who took over the reins when Stetson resurrected its football program in 2013 following a 57-year hiatus. Young spent the 2020 season as the Senior Defensive Analyst at Georgia Southern and returns to DeLand where he served as Stetson's defensive coordinator for eight years. The Hatters ranked 1st or 2nd in pass defense in the PFL six times under Young's tutelage. He will be looking to turn around a program that has only finished better than 5th in the conference once (2nd in 2018) as the Hatters finished 7th or lower in the PFL in six of eight seasons since returning to the gridiron.

After five consecutive losing seasons from 2013-2017 in its return to college football, Stetson went 8-2 overall and finished 2nd in the PFL with a 6-2 mark in 2018. The Hatters followed that up with a 7-4 record in 2019 (4-4 in the PFL) to post back-to-back winning seasons before going winless in the spring of 2020 with an 0-4 record in a Covid-shortened season. In the season opener vs Davidson, the Hatters trailed 26-7 in the 4th quarter before scoring a pair of TD's in the final 3:50 to pull within one score in a 6-point loss. However, Stetson went on to drop double-digit losses to Morehead State (31-14), Presbyterian (26-3) and San Diego (34-10), respectively, to close out the year. The Hatters were outgained by 68 ypg on the season, but that average was skewed due to the season finale vs Presbyterian (outgained by 214 yards) as Stetson was only outgained by 19 ypg in the other three contests (outgained Davidson in the opener).

The Hatters' offensive is anchored by two of the league's best OL in redshirt juniors OL Billy Corte and Antonio Derry, who both earned 1st Team All-PFL honors. QB Alex Piccirilli returns under center after starting all 4 games last season throwing for 521 yards (52.9%) but had just a 3-8 td/int ratio. Piccirilli was also second on the team in rushing with 171 yards (3.1 ypc) and scored all 3 of the team's rushing TD's on the season. Leading rusher Jordan Younge-Humphrey returns after posting 359 yards on the ground in the spring (6.5 ypc) while logging a pair of starts, as does Jalen Leary who chipped in with 114 yards (2.8 ypc) and started the last two games. Ten of the 11 players who caught a pass last season for the Hatters return including the receiving trio of Jalen Mason (13 rec), Michael Carley (12 rec) and Connor Becker (10 rec) who all had double-digit totals in receptions. Becker's 159 receiving yards led the team, as did his 15.5 ypc average.

DE Fermon Reid earned 1st Team All-PFL honors and headlines the DL unit after racking up 32 tackles (2nd on the team) with a team-high 4 sacks and 3.5 tackles for losses last season. LB Ethan Hull returns after posting a team-high 38 tackles (2 tfl) last year. DB Rassie Littlejohn led all DB's in tackles with 32 and recorded two of the Hatters' three interceptions on the season to go along with 1.5 tfl, 1 forced fumble and 1 fumble recovery.

Redshirt junior Jaylon Johnson earned 1st Team All-PFL honors (special teams) and highlights Stetson's special team unit. Johnson averaged 23.6 ypr (long of 40) on kick returns and 4.8 ypr

on punt returns while also making four starts as a defensive back where he posted 16 tackles (8th on the team) and 2.5 tfl. Kicker Cameron Gillis is back after connecting on 2-3 FG's (long of 33) and was successful on all five PAT's while splitting kickoff duties. Punter Matt Clements also returns and avg 40.0 ypp (36.6 net) with a long of 70 and placed six punts inside the 20.

Stetson was picked to finish tied for 9th with Marist in the PFL preseason poll.