

THE CITADEL

Brent Thompson enters his 6th season as head man here. In 2015 with Mike Houston as the head coach the Citadel were SoCon champs and went 9-3 with a playoff win vs Coastal Carolina and a loss to Charleston Southern. In Thompson's first year they were quite a story as he won his first 10 games and the SoCon title before losing to North Carolina 41-7 in a throw away game. They got matched up against Wofford in the playoffs. During the regular season they had won by 3 but were outgained 343-240 winning with +3 TO's. It was the reverse in the playoff as they lost 17-3 despite a 355-256 yard edge. Those two playoff berths were the first first since 1992! In 2017 they took a step back to 5-6 (actually 3rd 5-6 record in 5 years). In 2018 they improved to 6-5 and did cover vs Alabama (+51) losing 50-17 in a game they were TIED 10-10 at half with a 209-173 yard edge!! In 2019 The Citadel opened up 7-3 and in contention for a playoff spot but lost to Chattanooga by 1, they Wofford by 20 and finished 7-5. Last year they played 4 games in the fall and 8 conference games in the spring. The Citadel returned their QB Brandon Rainey (1195 pass, 897 rush), 3 of their top 4 RB's, top 2 WR's and 3 starting OL. They had 5 of the top 10 tacklers back. The Citadel opened at South Florida and Citadel had a 203-195 yard-edge at half but 3 drives into the red zone resulted in 2 FG and a SOD. USF had one red zone drive for a TD and led 7-6. UC bobble snap punt and USF catch in EZ TD 13-6. USF 60/5 TD 2:41 20-6. USF 4th drive 2H 86/7 TD Citadel punt, fum punt, int last 4 drives 27-6. Clemson led them 49-0 at half and (298-36 yd). They hosted ECU and surprisingly lost at home 37-14 with -3 in TO's as they were only outgained 428-383. They wrapped up the fall season with Army and they know how to defend the option. They were only outgained 228-218 in a 14-9 loss. Since they are a military academy they lost a bunch of players prior to the spring season including QB Rainey and the top 2 RB's in Emeka Nwanze (158, 3.7) and Keefe White (151, 6.3). The now young team opened up the spring at 0-5 after a blowout loss to Samford 55-7 with 3 of their losses by 1, 7, and 7. They rebounded to beat Wofford and Furman before a loss to league champ VMI in the final. It was a tough 2-10 season but was well worth playing and they are a much more veteran group than they were in the spring.

In 2019 the offense put up 401 ypg in conference play and 31 ppg led by QB Brandon Rainey who threw for 1195 (51.2%) with a 14-4 ratio and was the leading rusher with 897 (3.8). Clay Harris was the top RB with 699 (3.9) and the top WR was Raleigh Webb 9617, 20.6, 10 td). All three returned for the fall last year but they had just 262 ypg and 7 ppg playing Clemson and Army (knows option) among their 4 foes. Harris did not play in the spring so Emeka Nwanze (158, 3.7) and Keefe White (151, 6.3) were the top rushers in the 4 games. All 3 of them were gone in the fall. The Citadel improved a little with the softer competition but the young offense only had 304 ypg in SoCon play which

was their lowest since 2011! Soph QB Jaylan Adams is back after starting all 8 spring games and throwing for 279 (43%, 3-3) while being the #1 rusher (742, 4.1) the triple option offense (last FCS with 49.4 ypg pass). The top 2 RB's in the spring were both frosh in BB Nathan Storch (536, 3.7) and AB Cooper Wallace (423, 5.0) with Clay Harris (#2 rusher '19 (699, 3.9) missing the spring but being #4 rusher (264, 4.3). RB Nwanze also returns. Old reliable Raleigh Webb is back after leading the team in receiving each of the last 3 seasons with a combined 1284 (17.3) in those years. Ryan McCarthy was #3 in 2018 and #2 the last two years with a combined 421 (19.1) in the 3 years and both are back. The offensive line returns 6 lettermen including 2nd Tm preseason SoCon Haden Hass. Jon Barrett Lewis was an 11 game starter in 2018. The rest of the line is made up of frosh and soph in the spring and is much more experienced. This should be a vastly improved offense in the fall.

The defense is in their 3rd season of moving from the 4-3 to the 3-4. They went from allowing 283 ypg in SoCon play in 2016 to 342 in '17 and 388 in '18 but trimmed it to 358 in '19. Last year they allowed 354 ypg and 29 ppg in SoCon play. This year they return 23 of the top 27 tacklers including 14 of the top 15 tacklers. The biggest losses are DB Sean-Thomas Faulkn (#7 tklr 4 tfl), DB Jay Howard (#16 tklr, 2 pbu) and Gunner Covey (9 tkl, .5 tfl). 1st team. First team preseason SoCon LB Willie Eubanks III returns after leading the team in tackles (#2 SoCon, 112) in '19 and was #2 in '20 (69, 6 tfl). LB Anthony Britton Jr is 2nd team preseason SoCon (#1 tklr 7.5 tfl). Other key returnees are LB Andy Davis (#4 tklr, 3 int, 4 pbu and LB Marquise Blount (#3 tklr, 4 sk, 4.5 tfl). That is the best LB corps in the SoCon! DB Patrick Beverly was 2nd team All SoCon in 2019 and opted out last year but returns. This should be a much -mproved defense

K Colby Kittner hit just 5-13 FG with a long of 46 and one miss from 50+ as a frosh and should improve and has the leg. Matt Campbell had 54 punts (41.6) and Ben Steele had 3 (44.0) with the team net 37.1 and both return. Dominick Poole was the top PR (2.0) and Cooper Wallace was the top KR (21.4) and both return. This was a below average unit last year that can only improve.

Turnovers=Turnaround likes the Bulldogs this year as they were -12 in TO's last year. They also lost a lot of players from the fall to the spring but return almost everyone from the spring and had 3 close losses and won 2 of their last 3 games. I think they will be much better off this year after soldering thru the fall and playing with a young roster in the fall. They were picked 8th by the Media in the preseason poll out of 9 teams and 7th by the coaches. The Bulldogs were -51 ypg in SoCon play last year after being +42 ypg in 2019. This team will be improved but it will be a climb to get back to the upper half of the standings.

