

# WOFFORD TERRIERS

Wofford was actually in the Cigar Bowl vs Florida St way back in 1949. Mike Ayers was the head coach in 1988 when Wofford was a Division II independent and got them to the Division II playoffs twice in 7 years. Wofford was an FCS Independent for 2 years then joined the Southern Conference in 1997. The Terriers made it to the FCS playoffs for the first time in 2003, then again in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012. They were 5-5 in the playoffs in that stretch with 10 winning seasons in 11 years and a record of 81-40! Wofford went 5-6, 6-5 and 5-6 the next 3 years then went 6-2 in the SoCon and 10-3 making the playoffs in 2016 then 10-2 (7-1 SoCon) making the playoffs again in 2017. After his 30<sup>th</sup> season at the helm Ayers retired on top and the new man brought in was Josh Conklin. Conklin had been the defensive coordinator at Pitt for 3 years and was an assistant at Wofford from 2007-09. In his first year 2018 they began with SoCon wins over The Citadel and VMI and the team was 6-2 heading into November. A win over Western Carolina on November 10 secured a 6-2 mark in league play, which was good for a share of the Southern Conference Championship with Furman and ETSU. The Terriers secured the automatic bid to the NCAA FCS Playoffs with the tiebreaker. In the first round of the playoffs, Wofford defeated Elon 19-7 at Gibbs Stadium. In the second round, the season came to an end with a 13-10 loss to #4 seed Kennesaw State. Conklin was one of only three first-year head coaches to lead his team to the playoffs and he was the only one to earn a victory. In 2019, the Terriers lost the first two games of the season before winning the next five straight. Following a loss to Clemson, Wofford had wins over Mercer, Furman and The Citadel to finish the conference slate with a 6-1 record to claim the outright Southern Conference title. With the automatic bid to the NCAA FCS Playoffs, the Terriers were defeated 28-21 by Kennesaw State in the first round. After preparing for a fall season in 2020, the team took the field in February for an abbreviated spring slate of conference-only games. Wofford won the opener and were 1-1 when the next game was canceled. Returning to the field with a revamped defensive front, the Terriers dropped the final three games with each decided by a touchdown or less. In 2018 they were +126 ypg in SoCon play, +136 ypg in 2019 in conference play but -12 ypg in the abbreviated Spring season.

Wofford runs the triple option offense. In Conklins first year (2018) they had 445 ypg and 32 ppg in SoCon play. In 2019 they had 443 ypg and 36 ppg attempting just 12.6 passes per game. Last year it was down to 369 ypg and 26 ppg with the passes up to 18.4 per game. Their long time OC Wade Lang did retire so they have new co-OC's in Tyler Carlton and Dan Romero. Last year they had to replace their top QB who threw for 1150 and was the teams #1 rusher with 889. Jimmy Weirick led with 553 (57%, 3-2) and App St transfer Peyton Derrick threw for 131 (57%, 1-2) but has a strong arm. They also

add in true frosh Bryce Corriston who has a shot at winning the job. This unit should be much improved. Last year they had to replace their top 3 rushers (incl QB) with the RB's that were gone rushing for 751 (5.2) and 528 (10.2) Irvin Mulligan led with 342 (6.7) and Ryan Lovelace was #2 with 267 (4.8) while Nathan Walker was #3 with 219 (4.9). This year the top 3 are back and do only have 6 RB's on the roster which seems a little light to a triple option team. This unit is much more experienced and will be improved. TE Landon Parker led the team with 8 rec's (19.4). They do lose their top 3 WR's but they combined for just 320 total yards. The top WR figures to be RJ Khayo and Conklin calls it the best WR group he has had so I look for more production. Three starters return on the Offensive line led by 1<sup>st</sup> team preseason SoCon Tyler Smith and 2<sup>nd</sup> team AL Hogan. This unit should be much more productive provided they do not attempt 20+ passes per game this year.

Last year the defense was ravaged by injuries as they lost a lot of their to DL to injury and during the spring had just 3 scholarship DL available. They had to shift alignments due to the lack of bodies. This year they return to their normal alignments. Wofford had allowed just 319 ypg and 306 ypg in Conklin's first two years but gave up 381 ypg last year and 28 ppg. They have 9 starters back on defense and some of those DL that were injured are back and they add in some transfers. 17 of the top 18 tacklers return. The top players on this much improved defense are DL Michael Mason and super senior LB's in LB's Joe Beckett and John Beckley. Mason is first team preseason SoCon.

K Walker Gliarmis hit 5-5 FG's with a long of 43 and P Landon Parker had a super 45.0 avg with a net of 38.3. Both return. They do lose their top PR (just 3 yds) and top KR (29.8). This is still a solid unit.

Wofford was hit hard by Covid last year and were down to just 50 players for the final spring game but this year the roster stands at 113! Most of the injured players from last year should be back from the opener but a few might not be back until the Keenasaw St game. Wofford rates very high on my Stock Market Indicator and figures to be big time bounce-back team! They were picked 8<sup>th</sup> by the coaches and 7<sup>th</sup> by the media but I think this year has a great shot of moving to the upper half of the standing and actually contending for a playoff spot!