

DELAWARE 2019 PREVIEW

After finishing just 4-7 in 2016, the Blue Hens 3rd straight losing season, Delaware hired away Richmond HC Danny Rocco, who had led the Spiders to 3 straight playoff appearances. In 2017, the Blue Hens were 7-3 but lost the season finale 28-7 at Villanova and just missed the playoffs.

Last year expectations were up. They were upset by Rhode Island in the opener, as they failed to convert a 2 pt conversion with 6:45 left 4Q and lost 21-19. They cruised past both Lafayette (37-0) and Cornell (27-10). They trailed 38-0 in the 4Q at North Dakota St before scoring 2 TD's in the final 4:12 including a 92 yd FR. They never trailed Richmond, leading 43-10 late 3Q before allowing 3 TD's. They trailed #5 Elon 16-14 into the 4Q but scored 14 unanswered to pull the upset. They led New Hampshire 31-7 into the 4Q and won 38-14. Delaware took their first lead 33-28 over Towson with 8:17 left and scored the GW TD with :30 for a 40-36 win. They had another 4Q come from behind win over Albany, scoring the GW TD with :18 (21-16). They were ranked #11 but trailed #12 Stony Brook 10-0 into the 4Q, but got no closer than 10-3 in a 17-3 loss. Still ranked #17, their only lead was 7-0 over Villanova as they trailed 28-21 into 4Q and lost 42-21. For a the 2nd straight season they lost the season finale to finish 7-4 but this time made the playoffs for the first time since 2010. After avoiding James Madison in the regular season, they drew them in the first round and trailed 12-0 2Q in a 20-6 loss.

HC Rocco and DC Chris Cosh both return for a third season. The Blue Hens bring in new OC Jared Ambrose, who was the OC at Towson the last 6 years. They also add former Delaware WR and Western Michigan & Illinois HC, Bill Cubit, as asst-HC.

Delaware returns 6 starters from the CAA's #7 scoring (24.4 ppg) & #10 Total Offense (300 ypg). New OC Ambrose is bringing in an up-tempo offense, with run/pass options. They return starting QB Pat Kehoe (2075, 49.3%, 17-9) and backup QB Nolan Henderson (152, 60.0%, 1-0). They lose 2 of their top 3 rushers in RB Kani Kane (8 st, 595, 4.0, 10 td) and WR Joe Walker (120, 5.7, 1 td). They return RB DeJoun Lee, who led with 606 (4.9 2 td) despite starting just 4. The receiving corps will need to be rebuilt as they lose their top 6 receivers, who combined for 2,147 yds (17 td) including 3rd tm CAA WR Joe Walker (670, 4 td) & AA TE Charles Scarff (498, 11.6, 7 td). Their top returning receiver is FB Owen Tyler (56, 6.2), who in the new offense moves to TE this year. Their top returning WR is Thyrick Pitts (31, 15.5). The OLine loses former Penn St transfer, 3rd tm CAA RT Noah Beh (12 st), C Colin Walsh (5 st) & a bkp (1 st). They return 4 OL who combined for 42 sts led by AA RG/C Mario Farinella (12 st). With their QB, top rusher & a solid OLine, the offense should have a solid run game but will need to rebuild their receiving corps, which may hamper the new offense, at least early in the season.

The Blue Hens return just 4 starters to the CAA's # 3 scoring (21.5 ppg) and #9 total defense (217 ypg). The DLine only loses DE Areman Ware (6 st, 15 tkl, 2 tfl). They return 8 of their top 9 including former Cincy transfer DE Caleb Ashworth (12 st, 56 tkl, 3.5 tfl), 3rd tm CAA DT Cam Kitchen (11 st, 47 tkl, 3.5 tfl), former Ball St transfer DE Frank Burton (3 st, 27 tkl, 3 sk, 2 tfl) & DE Branden Hall (6 st, 22 tkl, 4 tfl). The LB unit loses 4 who combined for 36 sts, 278 tkl & 24 tfl. Gone are former Penn St transfer, AA MLB Troy Reeder (131 tkl, 13.5 tfl), MLB Charles Bell (89 tkl, 1 tfl) & 3rd tm CAA OLB Ray Jones (78 tkl, 9.5 tfl). They return OLB Colby Reeder (11 st, 51 tkl, 4 tfl) but the next most experienced returning LB was Drew Nickles (11 tkl, 1 sk). They do add Penn St transfer Dae'lun Darien, who played 9 gms LY (4 tkl). The secondary also take some big losses as they lose 4 who combined 41 sts, 227 tkl, 26 pd. Their biggest loss is AA Tenny Adewusi (12 st, 87 tkl, 4 int, 7 pbu), who became the Blue Hens highest draft choice (#2 LAC) since Joe Flacco. Their top returnees are CB Nijuel Hill (5 st, 16 tkl, 2 int, 3 pbu) & S Joey Carter (6 tkl). While the DLine should be solid with the loss of 7 of their top 10 tkl'rs including their top 5, one of which a high draft pick, the defense will be in rebuild mode.

The ST unit loses K Frank Raggo (12-17 FG) & their top 3 PR's. They return 1st tm CAA P Nick Prichard (42.0 avg) and KO/K Jake Roth (1-1 Fg, 37 TB/62 KO) and should be Solid.

They have the advantage of avoiding both James Madison & Maine in CAA play but they must travel to Elon & Rhode Island. In non-conf play they host North Dakota St & play at Pitt. After finally getting back to the playoffs last year, expectations are high for Delaware this year. However with just 10 returning starters overall, the change in offense & the loss of 7 of their top 10 tkl'rs, all from the back 8 including a #2 DC, Delaware will need to come together quickly to make their 2nd straight playoffs.