

FORDHAM 2019 PREVIEW

In 2013 Fordham won 12 games, reached the FCS playoffs and lost in the 2nd round to eventual runner-up, Towson. The Rams have seen their win total decrease each year since (11, 9, 8, 4, 2). Last year, Head Coach Joe Conlin took over after the Rams slipped below .500 for the first time since 2011. Conlin was Yale's OC from '14-'17 which including an Ivy League Title in his final year. Last year the Rams had 14 returning starters back. The Rams dropped their first 5 games, all by double-digits before beating Lehigh. They lost their next 4 games, though they were more competitive, with 3 losses by 8 points or less before they beat Bucknell in the finale despite being -137 yds.

From 2013-'16 Fordham averaged 39 ppg and 487 ypg. Last dropped to 372 ypg in '17 and ppg dropped by nearly 3 td's to 22 ppg. Seven starters returned last year and the personnel struggled under the new system, slipping further to 16 ppg and 251 ypg. In just 2 years, they saw their ppg drop by 24 ppg and 247 ypg. True frosh Tim DeMorat was their top QB last year. He started the last 8 games and threw for 1,633 (56.1%, 11-6). Luke Medlock started the first 3 and threw for 570 (46.6%) and had just a 1-7 ratio. DeMorat returns but they do lose some experience in Medlock. Austin King did start 1 game in '17 (365, 50%, 1-1) but didn't see action last year. Fordham returned their #2 and #3 rusher last year but it was Florida transfer Tyriek Hopkins who led with 476 (4.5). Naim Mayfield was #2 with 153 (3.5). No other RB topped 100 yds. This should be a much improved unit in '19 with Hopkins and Mayfield returning. They get '17's #2 rusher, D'Angelo Palladino, back from injury and they add Rutgers transfer Trey Sneed (PS#88, 96, 3.3 2Y). Fordham's top 6 WR's returned last year, making this the Rams most experienced unit on OFF. 2x All-Patriot WR Austin Longi led for the second straight season with 716 (11.7). 2x All-Patriot TE Isaiah Searight was #2 with 479 (11.4). Corey Caddle put up 349 (9.7). All 3 are gone in '19. Their top returnee is Joe Ferraro who had just 144 (11.1) so this unit goes from experienced to vastly inexperienced but they do have their #4, #5 and #6 guys all back. Last year 3 starters were back on their Oline from a unit that gave up 44 sacks while seeing their rush ypg drop nearly 100 ypg to 133 (3.5). This became one of the worst Oline's in the country, dropping their rush ypg to 51 (1.7) and sacks jumped to 50, as they gave up at least 4 sacks in all but 2 games. This year they lose LG Tristan Nevotne and C Dominic Lombard. Three starters are back and 5 have starting experience. There is only one way to go for this much maligned unit.

In 2017 allowed 35 ppg and 432 ypg but were much better in Patriot League play, only allowing 25 ppg and 378 ypg. Last year Fordham had 7 starters back. The Rams improved slightly, allowing 28 ppg and 409 ypg (22 ppg, 342 ypg in Patriot League play). The Dline was a feast or famine unit in '17 when they allowed 210 (5.8) rush ypg and 7 of their 11 opponents topped 215 rush yds while the other 4 were held to 70 yds or less. Last year was the same story. They dropped to 192 (4.3, 23 sk) ypg and their ypc dropped by 1.5 but they still allowed over 220 rush yds in 6 games while they held their other 5 foes to less than 100 yds. This year all 4 starting Dline are back. They do lose DE Max Roberts who was OFY after starting the first 4 last year (19 tkl, 3 tfl). Three starting LB's returned last year incl 2nd Tm All-Patriot Glenn Cunningham (#1 tkl'r). They improved by a td allowed per game from 35 to 28 ppg. This year they lose 2 starters in Noah Fitzgerald (#3 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl, 2 int) and Lawrence Menyah (#5 tkl'r). 1st Tm All-Patriot LB Cunningham (#1 tkl'r) returns and 2nd Tm All-Patriot Ryan Greenhagen led the team in sacks with 8 last year despite only starting 1 game. One starter departed in the secondary last year from a unit that finished 4th in pass eff D in '17 (56.7%, 18-10). They improved to 217 pass ypg allowed but actually slipped to 6th in pass eff D (60.2%, 15-10). This year they lose 3 starters including 1st Tm All-Patriot CB Dylan Mabin (#7 tkl'r, 10 pbu, 1 int), FS Bryce Petty (#6 tkl'r, 4 pbu) and SS Antonio Jackson (#2 tkl'r, 2 int, 5 pbu). They were more experienced last year but didn't perform as well. They will need the less experienced unit to show some improvement. They do have 3 backups that totaled 53 tkls back.

Last year Fordham returned their entire ST unit incl a 1st Tm KR and 3rd Tm PR. Andrew Mevis again handled all K and P duties, hitting 6-9 fg (L/54), avg 41.3 ypp (38.2 net) and 24 TB on 40 KO. They need to replace their top PR (5.3) and KR (22.2) but Mevis returns so this will again be a solid unit.

Fordham has 6 starters back on both sides of the ball in '19. HC Conlin will need significant improvement from his Oline. The strength of the defense is their front 4 and they've shown ability to dominate in spurts. Seven of their first 10 games are on the road incl trips to Ball St, Yale, Georgetown and Colgate. They should be much more competitive in Patriot play but won't improve much off of last year's 2 win season.