HARVARD 2019 PREVIEW

Tim Murphy enters his 26th season as HC of the Crimson. He has the 2nd most wins of any Head Coach in the Ivy, along with 9 Ivy League Titles. After finishing with at least 7 wins every year from 2001-2016, Harvard slipped back to just 5-5 in '17 and were -64 ypg in Ivy League play. Last year they had 15 starters back including 10 on offense and improved to 6-4. Three of their losses came by 7 points or less, and they outgained Ivy League Champ Princeton in an 8 point loss. Harvard improved to +106 ypg in Ivy League play.

Harvard's offense slipped to just 22 ppg in 17 but they had 10 starters back last year. Jake Smith started 8 of the last 9 as a freshman (1154, 57%, 5-9) then beat out Tom Stewart for the starting job in camp. Smith started the first 4 but hit just 3 of 11 passes vs Cornell and was benched. Stewart took over and started the last 6 including throwing for 312 against Yale. He finished with 1,614 (53%, 14-2, 154 rush). Smith added 726 (60.9%, 4-4). Stewart has transferred to Rice, so Smith returns as the starter. Last year Harvard returned their top 4 rushers including 2nd Tm All-Ivy Charlie Booker (733, 5.2 '17) and Aaron Shampklin (318, 4.3 '17). This time it was Shampklin who was the star, rushing for 1,053 (6.1). Devin Darrington was #2 with 435 (6.2). Booker played in just 6 games and slipped to 213 (5.2). This year they lose Booker but get back 1st Tm All-Ivy Shampklin and Darrington. Last year their top 8 receivers all returned, but their best guy, Justice Shelton-Mosley was OFY after just 4 games (299, 12.5). Adam Scott led with 435 (12.1). Jack Cook was #2 with 390 (18.6). Henry Taylor added 388 (14.9). In '18 6 WR's topped 100 yd receiving. The only one returning in '19 is Cook. Gone are Scott, Taylor, Shelton-Mosley (Transfer to Vanderbilt), Tyler Adams (278, 15.4, 131 rush) and Brian Dunlap (125, 13.9). This unit needs nearly completely rebuilt with their starting TE also gone and the next best WR only recording 1 catch LY. In 2017 Harvard lost their RG Larry Allen III (son of NFL's Larry Allen) in pressn and their usually dominant run game dipped to 170 ypg (4.4). Last year they got Allen back along with 4 starters returning, making this the strength of the offense. Harvard stayed completely healthy (all 5 Oline started all 10 gms) rushed for 203.8 ypg (5.1). This year they lose 1st Tm All-Ivy LT Tim O'Brien, C Ben Shoults, and 3x All-Ivy RG Allen. Only 4 starters return on offense, but they do have experience at QB. Still, it will be tough to match last year's impressive 30.4 ppg.

Harvard's defense has been impressively consistent through the years, allowing between 307 to 368 ypg each year since 2010. In 2017 Harvard allowed 20.9 ppg and 335 ypg. They had 5 starters back on defense last year. In '17 their stout run D allowed over 100 ypg for the first time since 2010, at 122 (3.4). The Crimson returned 3 Dline starters and 6 with starting experience but only improved to 115 ypg (3.5). This year they lose 3 starters incl both DT's Richie Ryan (#5 tkl'r, 3.5 sk), 1st Tm All-Ivy Stone Hart (#6 tkl'r, 8.5 tfl) and DE John Pirrmann (13 tkl, 3 tfl). Also gone are DE's Scott Garrison (4 st, #11 tkl'r, 6.5 tfl) and Alex White (2 st, 11 tkl). Harvard had to replace 2 staring LB's last year and they slipped slightly to allowing 21.8 ppg. This unit is the strength of the defense this year, returning all 3 starters 6 with starting experience (#1, #7, #10, #14, #17 & #18 tkl'rs). Last year Harvard suffered their biggest losses in the secondary, losing 3 starters incl their #2, #3 and #4 tkl'rs. Despite the losses they actually improved to #3 in the Ivy in pass eff D, allowing 217 ypg (54%, 10-12). This year the Crimson return 3 starters in the secondary. They do lose FS Zach Miller (#2 tkl'r, 3 int) but Max Jones (3 st, #3 tkl'r) should easily step into a starting role and they also get their #4, #8 and #9 tkl'rs back.

Last year Harvard suffered a big loss when Justice Shelton-Mosley (18.2 PR '17) was inj'd after 4 games. Jake McIntyre made 13 of 15 fg's (L/42) last year. Jon Sot avg 41.1 ypp (34.8 net). This year both Sot and McIntyre return so this will again be a strong unit.

Harvard gets 11 starters back, plus they have experienced QB in Jake Smith. They have a solid RB unit but will be running behind a rebuilt Oline. The defense should be solid with 6 of their back 7 starters returning and 10 of their top 14 tkl'rs are back. They get 4 Ivy League home games but they travel to both Yale and Princeton.