

RICHMOND 2019 PREVIEW

In 2016 the Spiders made their 3rd straight playoffs, finishing 10-4 for a 2nd straight season but then 5 yr HC Danny Rocco was hired away by Delaware. In 2017 Richmond hired away Chattanooga HC Russ Huesman, who had led the Mocs to 3 straight playoff appearances. The Spiders started 4-2 but dropped 3 of their next 4 needing to win their season finale to finish with a winning season (6-5).

Last year they led Virginia 10-7 1Q but lost 42-13. They dominated Fordham, leading 52-0 into the 4Q. Against St Francis in a game with 9 lead changes, the Spiders scored a GW TD with :02 left & then added a 29 yd FR td on the KO to win 35-27. They led #19 Stony Brook 3-0 1Q and only trailed 16-10 3Q but lost 36-10. Despite 337 yds of offense, they were -4 TO's and lost 63-10 to James Madison. They trailed Delaware 43-10 in 3Q before scoring the final 18. Against Albany the game was tied at 7, 14 & 24 but the Spiders hit a GW FG w/:06 left to win 27-24. They tied #11 Elon 21-21 early 3Q but lost 38-28. They never led vs Villanova, but only trailed 20-14 early 3Q before falling 45-21. They trailed #16 Maine 28-3 in 3Q before scoring a TD w/2:10 left. They led rival William & Mary 10-0 into 4Q & held on despite allowing a TD w/:47. They finished a disappointing 4-7 their worst record since 2011 (3-8).

Usually a HC's 3rd season is a big year but HC Huesman will have just 10 returning starters to work with. OC Jeff Durden & DC Adam Braithwaite both return for their 3rd season but they will have a new STC in Bobby Maffei, who spent the last 2 yrs as a special teams & defensive QC cch at Baylor.

Last year Richmond had the CAA's #3 Total Offense (374 ypg) but just the #9 Scoring Offense (22.1 ppg) as they were last in the CAA with 27 offensive TO's (tied for last CAA -9 TO margin). This year the offense returns just 4 starters but add 2 FBS transfers. They lose top QB Kevin Johnson (6 st, 1297, 54.9%, 5-8), who started the F/5 gms last year before a concussion & decided to transfer in April. They return QB Joe Mancuso (4 st, 1185, 58.4%, 7-10), who was their leading rusher (354, 5.3) & QB Reid Chenault (1 st, 354, 60.9%, 1-0, 72 rush). They add Air Force transfer QB Beau English (PS#142). They lose #2 RB Gordon Collins (5 st, 208, 3.5) & #4 RB Jay Palmer (95, 3.1). They return top RB Deontez Thompson (225, 4.0, 60 rec) & #3 RB Aaron Dykes (1 st, 154, 4.8). The Spiders lose their top 7 receivers who combined for 2,582 (89% of rec yds) including 2nd tm CAA WR Cortelle Simpson (7 st, 651, 18.1, 5 td). Their top returning receiver is TE Andrew Tsangeos (90, 11.2). They add Northwestern transfer WR Charlie Fessler (PS#153, 101, 10.1) & Duke transfer WR Keyston Fuller (PS#90). The OLine loses 3 who combined for 18 sts LY including 2nd tm CAA RG John Yarbrough. They return 5 who combined for 37 sts including two 11 gm str's in LT Tim Coleman & LG Seyoum Settepani. They are more experienced than you would expect for just 4 starters back, except at WR but they do add 2 FBS transfers to help fill the void. The key to improvement will be cutting down on the TO's especially at QB (15-18 ratio) as the only player with a positive pass ratio was a WR (2-0).

The Spiders return 7 starters to the CAA's #12 scoring (32.6 ppg) & #11 Total Defense. (375 ypg). The DLine loses a cornerstone in 1st tm CAA DT Andrew Clyde (33 tkl, 7 sk, 3 tfl), who started 50 straight gms for the Spiders. They return 4 of their top 5 who combined for 33 sts including DT Colby Ritten (11 st, 49 tkl, 3 sk, 5 tfl), DE Darius Reynolds (11 st, 47 tfl, 3.5 sk, 3 tfl) & AA DE Maurice Jackson (10 st, 46 tkl, 10 sk, 5 tfl). They lose 2 of 3 starting LB's in Justin Rubin (10 st, 70 tkl, 7.5 tfl) & Dale Matthews (8 st, 54 tkl, 6 tfl, 2 int) along with 2 bkp's (1 st, 15 tkl). They return top LB Billy Caughell (7 st, 74 tkl, 7.5 tfl) & 3 bkp's (2 st, 29 tkl). They add Illinois transfer LB Jimmy Marchese, who made 3 sts there the L/2 yrs. The secondary loses CB Samari Springs (8 st, 44 tkl, 4 pd) & SS Augustus Lee (12 tkl), who sadly passed away. They return 5 DB who combined for 37 sts led by SS Daniel Jones (11 st, 86 tkl, 3 int, 5 pbu) & CB Markus Vinson (11 st, 47 tkl, 12 pd). They also add Duke DB Brandon Feamster (7 st, 37 tkl, 5 pd). They return 12 of their top 16 tkl'rs & add 2 FBS transfers, which should mean improvement but they really only have 1 way to go

The ST unit loses their top PR Tyler Wilkins (6.9), #2 KR Dejon Brissett (51.5), who had their only return TD despite just 4 KR. They also lose K/KO Griffin Trau (12-17, L/43, 3 TB/44 KO), who is #2 in career scoring (248 pts) & has is Richmond's career leader in FG % (81.0%, 47-58). They return P Micah Breckenridge (34.4 vag), top KR Aaron Dykes (25.3) and Griffin's brother Duncan (0 TB/6 KO).

The Spiders schedule is not easy, with trips to Boston College, Maine, Delaware & JMU & home games vs Elon & Stony Brook. Richmond brings in a healthy influx of FBS transfers to fill some holes, but how well those additions gel with the 11 returning starters, especially on offense, will determine if the Spiders can get back to their winning ways.