

## TOWSON 2019 PREVIEW

After 3 straight playoff appearances including a loss in the 2013 Championship game, the Tigers crashed to a 4-8 season in 2014. They rebounded with a 7-4 season in 2015 but missed the playoffs. The Tigers started a disappointing 1-7 in 2016, but finished the season winning their final 3. After a 2-1 start in 2017, they dropped 4 of their next 5 before winning their final 2, to a disappointing 5-6.

Last year in the opener Towson only trailed Morgan St 7-6 in 2Q but led 17-7 & HT and won 36-10. They were tied with Wake Forest 14-14 after 1Q but trailed 38-20 at HT & lost 51-20. They trailed Villanova 14-0 but led 35-21 at HT and held on for a 45-35 win. They were ranked #25 and never trailed in a 44-27 win over the Citadel. Against #13 Stony Brook they led 21-0 after 1Q and won 52-28. They moved up to #17, but trailed William & Mary 13-10 at HT but scored 19 unanswered in 2H. They led Albany 38-21 at HT & 56-21 late 4Q before allowing a td with :22 left. At #10 they led #21 Delaware 18-6 at HT but Delaware took a 33-28 lead with 8:17 left 4Q. They took a 36-33 lead but allowed a 47 yd KR that setup the GW TD with :30 left. While they never led against #23 Maine, the Tigers tied the game at 28 with 5:15 left 4Q but allowed a final play GW 38 yd FG. Down to #20 they shocked #5 Elon 41-10 scoring the final 20 pts. In the season finale they were tied at 7 with #7 James Madison after 1Q but trailed 24-10 at HT & lost 38-17. They were ranked #16 and returned to the playoffs. They led Duquesne 10-0 at home in 2Q but allowed 31 unanswered to finish just 7-5.

HC Rob Ambrose returns after leading the Tigers to their 4th playoffs & 5th winning season in his previous 10 years. Ten year OC Jared Abrose left for the same position at Delaware. Two year DC Lydon Johnson switches hats moving to STC. Two year RB cch Scott Van Zile, was promoted to Pass Game Coor. The new DC is Eric Daniels, who was the DC at Briar Cliff University last year.

The Tigers return 6 starters to the CAA's #1 Scoring (34.5 ppg) and #1 Total Offense (465 ypg). A big part of their offensive success was former Western Michigan/Rutgers transfer QB Tom Flacco (Joe's brother). He was the CAA OPOY, throwing for 3,251 (61.3%, 28-11) and also led the Tigers with 742 rush (4.4, 4 TD). Backup QB Ryan Stover (5-5-49-1-0) also returns. Towson only loses a backup RB (18, 2.0) & returns their top 3 RB in 1st tm CAA RB Shane Simpson (711, 4.7, 6 td, 356 rec), Kobe Young (455, 6.3, 3 td) & Yeedee Thaenrat (250, 5.2, 5 td). They lose 2 of their top 5 receivers in WR Sam Gallahan (458, 13.1, 2 td) & WR Brent Richardson (353, 12.6, 2 td). They return 5 of their top 7 receivers including their top 2 in 1st Tm CAA WR Shane Leatherby (10 st, 885, 13.2, 7 td) & WR Jabari Allen (7 st, 751, 14.2, 8 td). They add Pitt transfer WR Darian Street (PS#136). The OLine takes the biggest losses as they must replace three 10+ game starters including 1st tm CAA RT Matt Kauffman (12 st, 34 car sts). They return two 12 gm starters in 3rd tm CAA LG Aaron Grzymkowski & LT Andrew Garnett along with a backup RG (2 st). They also add Temple transfer Darian Bryant (PS#204). As long as the rebuilt OLine comes together, the Tigers should again have one of the top offenses in the CAA, despite losing their 10 yr OC. .

Towson returns 8 starters to the CAA's #10 scoring (28.8 ppg) & #12 Total Defense (390 ypg) under new DC Daniels. The DLine loses 3 of their top 6 that combined for 22 sts, 92 tkl, 7 sk & 6 tfl including DT Zain Harps Upshur (36 tkl, 7 tfl). They return 4 of their top 7 who combined for 27 sts, 129 tkl, 12 sk & 20.5 tfl led by DE Bryce Carter (12 st, 52 tkl, 6.5 sk, 7.5 tfl) & former Oklahoma transfer DE Ricky DeBerry (34 tkl, 9.5 tfl). They also add South Carolina transfer Jesus Gibbs (PS#140). The LB unit only loses their top backup (25 tkl, 2.5 tfl). They return all three 12 gm starters, who were the top 3 tkl'rs including 2nd tm CAA LB Robert Heyward (99 tkl, 10.5 tfl) & 3rd tm CAA LB Diondre Wallace (89 tkl, 4.5 tfl). The unit also add Nebraska transfer Quayshon (PS#79). The secondary loses their top DB, Monty Fenner (12 st, 71 tkl, 10 pd) and a bkp (1 st, 16 tkl, 2 int). They return 5 of their top 7, who combined for 35 sts, 165 tkl & 21 pd led by Mantriel Reaves (52 tkl, 5 pd) & Terrill Gillette (40 tkl, 3.5 tfl, 9 pbu). They add Kansas transfer DB Robery Topps (PS#216). Overall the defense returns 9 of their top 11 tkl'rs including their top 3 and add 3 Power 5 transfers. While they have a new DC, they really have only 1 way for them to go.

The Special Teams unit has a new DC and loses P/KO Pat Toomey (40.1 avg, 5 TB/59 KO). They return K Aiden O'Neill (22-29 FG, L/50) & CAA STPOY & AA RS Shane Simpson (24.0 KR, 1 td, 6.9 PR).

The Tiger's schedule is not easy as they face Florida in non-conf play and face Maine, James Madison & Stony Brook on the road. They host both Delaware and Elon which should help them make the playoffs for a 2nd straight season.