

WILLIAM & MARY 2019 PREVIEW

Coming off a playoff appearance in 2016, the Tribe, despite a 34-13 win over #7 Richmond in the "Oldest Rivalry in the South" in the season finale, finished a disappointing 5-6 in 2016. They started 2017, 2-1 but then lost their last 8 for a second straight losing season.

Last year they needed a 4Q 75 yd td pass to get by Bucknell 14-7. After an expected blowout loss to Virginia Tech, their home game vs Elon was canceled due to the approach of Hurricane Florence. They suffered 2 straight shutouts against #2 James Madison (51-0) and #23 Colgate (23-0). They trailed Albany 22-10 mid-4Q before scoring 2 TD's including the GW with :50 left (25-22). They led #18 Towson 13-10 at HT but lost 29-13. They shocked eventual CAA Champ #20 Maine 27-20, thanks in part to a 90 yd IR TD, handing the Black Bears their only conference loss. Against Rhode Island, W&M turned the ball over 6 times including 4 in the 1Q alone and lost 21-10. Up 24-7 into the 4Q, the Tribe hung on for a 24-17 win over Villanova. In the season finale they came up short (10-6) to Richmond. It was HC Jimmie Laycock's finale game as he retired after 39 yrs as HC, leading William & Mary to 10 playoff appearances and finishing with 249 career wins.

This year they bring in Mike London, who was the DL cch here from 1991-94. He led Richmond to their FCS Championship in 2008. He was the HC at Virginia from 2010-15 and spent the last 2 yrs as HC at Howard. London brings both of his coordinators with him from Howard in OC Brennan Marion and DC Vincent Brown. The Tribe returns 14 starters but have their first new HC in 40 years and will be learning new systems on both sides of the ball.

The Tribe returns 6 starters to the CAA's #12 scoring (13.6 ppg) & #12 total offense (242 ypg). They return all 3 QB's who started last year in Shon Mitchell (6 st, 1281, 59.3%, 6-6), Ted Hefter (3 st, 424, 48.7%, 2-4) and Dean Rotger (1 st, 157, 1-0). They add Coastal Carolina transfer Kilton Anderson, who made 14 career starts for the Chanticleers. Last year in 6 starts, Anderson threw for 1,010 (58.0%, 8.3) and rushed for 251 (4.5). They lose #2 RB Nate Evans (208, 3.0) who started 8 of 10 gms. They return 4 of their top 5 RB's including Albert Funderburke (3 st), who led with just 261 (3.0) and 3rd tm CAA FB Tyler Crist (6 st, 37 rec), whose 1 rush for 27 yds made him their #5 rusher. They lose their top 3 receivers in 3rd tm CAA WR DeVonte Dedmon (7 st, 605, 15.1, 6 td), WR Nick Muse (3 st, 453, 15.1), who transferred to South Carolina, & WR Jack Armstrong (9 st, 195, 10.8). The OLine loses 1 starter in RG Brooks Norris (10 st). They return three 10 gm starters along with 3rd tm CAA LT Mark Williamson (9 st). Despite switching to a high-tempo offense, after finishing last in the CAA in scoring, rushing & total offense, there is only 1 way for this unit to go.

W&M returns 8 starters to the CAA's #8 scoring (26.2 ppg) & #9 total defense (366 ypg). The DLine loses 1 starter in DE Joe Suarez (7 st, 15 tkl) and with the change from a 4-3 to a 3-4 defense, DE Gavin Johnson (6 st, 17 tkl, 3 tfl) moves to LB. They return their top 3 DL in 2nd tm CAA DT Bill Murray (10 st, 48 tkl, 4.5 sk, 5 tfl), DT Will Kiely (10 st, 43 tkl, 3 sk, 4.5 tfl) and DE Carl Fowler (6 st, 28 tkl, 6 tfl). The LB corps loses 1 starter (#5 tkl'r) in WLB Josh Dulaney (7 st, 51 tkl, 5.5 tfl). They return 4 of their top 5 LB including 2 starters in MLB Nate Arkins (10 st, 68 tkl, 5.5) & SLB Arman Jones (10 st, 59 tkl, 5.5 tfl). The secondary loses starting CB Raeshawn Smith (62 tkl, 9 pbu) and a backup CB (12 tkl, 1 pbu). They return 4 of their top 5 DB led by 3rd tm CAA FS Isaiah Lester (65 tkl, 4 int, 1 pbu) & 3rd tm CAA CB Corey Parker (10 st, 42 tkl, 10 pd). The defense returns 11 of their top 13 tacklers and should improve despite learning a new system should improve. The only major concern is if the high-tempo offense struggles, as that could put the defense right back on the field with the danger of fatigue.

The Special Teams unit only loses their top PR's but will need to improve as while their 2 K's combined for 14 TB/31 KO's they hit just 6-13 FG and P Will Michael had just a 36.2 avg. They will be under new STC Josh Zidenberg, who was the STC at Western Illinois last year.

The Tribe is going through some big changes this season as for the first time since 1980 they will have a new HC walking the sidelines. In fact after 31 yr strength and conditioning cch John Sauer left for the same position at Montana St in July, the only hold over from Laycock's staff is 5th yr ILB cch Bo Revell. While they avoid Delaware and Stony Brook they host JMU & must travel to Maine. With a non-conf schedule that contains 2 FBS foes & a Colgate team that finished #8 last year, they may find it tough to break their streak of 3 straight losing seasons.