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FOOTBALL PREVIEW 2023

MINDEN PRESS-HERALD
AUG. 30, 2023



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Most teams eager to turn the page in 2023

With the notable exception of Glenbrook, the 2022 season wasn't one to remember for Webster Parish schools.

The Apaches rolled through the regular season 10-0, winning District 1-1A. In its first year eligible for the LHSAA playoffs, Glenbrook reached the select Division IV quarterfinals before falling to eventual champion Ouachita Christian 28-27. Of the other three teams, only Lakeside finished the regular season .500. The Warriors finished 5-5 after a 4-1 start. They made the playoffs, falling to No. 5 seed Avoyelles 60-0 in the first round. Minden was 4-6 and North Webster 2-8. Neither made the playoffs but both won their final two games.

Last year will be remembered for the shakeup in the playoffs. No more class champions. There were four select and four non-select divisions. That was, of course, the result of the LHSAA's decision to change the definition of a select school, causing many formerly non-select schools to move to select status.

According to media reports, nine schools from Rapides Parish and Monroe have filed suit against the LHSAA, alleging Executive Director Eddie Bonine and the committee didn't have the authority to change the definition under the LHSAA's constitution.

Two schools among the plaintiffs, Carroll and Wossman, are members of District 1-3A, which

includes North Webster.

Regardless, a new season is upon us. As always, there is reason for optimism.

While none of the four parish schools are favored to win their respective district championships, all have the potential to be title contenders or at least make a run at the playoffs.

Glenbrook lost many of the players who contributed to last season's success to graduation. They also lost Head Coach David Feaster.

But the cupboard wasn't completely left empty for new Head Coach Reagan Smith.



Easton Sanders, the Apaches' new starting quarterback, has a lot of potential. Landry Powell should be one of the most productive receivers in the district. Speaking of which, 1-1A remains strong. To win the title, teams will have to get through Homer and Haynesville. Glenbrook did that last year.

Minden returns one of District 1-4A's most exciting players in senior Jakobe Jackson. He will line up anywhere on offense from quarterback to running back to receiver. The District 1-4A schedule will again be a challenge.

North DeSoto, the 2022 non-select Division II runner-up, is the favorite to win the title. Northwood, which shared the title last year with the Griffins, should also be strong again. Ditto for Evangel Christian and Huntington.

But don't count Minden out. North Webster will be looking for a return to the playoffs after a one-year absence.

Last season, the Knights played in a new-look District 1-3A with Monroe-area schools. They went up against unfamiliar opponents.

The knowledge gained last season should be helpful.

Union Parish is the defending champion, but the Farmers won't have the state's all-time leading rusher, Trey Holley, now at LSU.

After a strong start, Lakeside found the going tough in District 1-2A. Four of the other five schools in the district made the playoffs.

Calvary Baptist is a heavy favorite to defend its title. But the Warriors should be improved. They should do well in non-district play again. That could carry over to district play.

The great thing is every team is 0-0 now. And high school football is very hard to predict. Hopefully, Webster teams will pull off some surprises this season.

By Russell Hedges
Sports Editor, Minden Press-Herald

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Head Coach

Reagan Smith (1st year)

Stadium

Apaches Field

Scouting report

Offense: Glenbrook will have a mostly new look on offense. Landry Powell, a first-team All-District 1-1A TE last season, is going to be used at WR. Chase Sentell and Jackson Waller will be counted on as well. The Apaches will be led at QB by junior Easton Sanders. He will have an experienced line to protect him. Seth Mangrum will take over at RB.

Defense: With most of the returning starters playing both ways, the experience is there. But there will be new starters and others in different positions than last season. Three linemen return. Glenbrook will have a senior-led linebacker corps including Jackson Lott, Spencer Brantley, and Garrett Brown.

Overall: The Apaches gained their first district title in LHSAA last year and made it to the quarterfinals of the select Division IV playoffs, falling to eventual champion Ouachita Christian by a point. Repeating those feats may be a challenge with so many new faces. Also, the Apaches play in the toughest district in Class A in the state. Four of the eight teams in the district made it to the quarterfinals last season. Haynesville is back on the rise and will be a contender again for district and state honors. Homer, the 2022 non-select Division IV runner-up, will be back strong again. Those teams are always a challenge. The Apaches are learning a new system under Head Coach Reagan Smith. But Glenbrook shouldn't be underestimated and should hold their own in the district.

By Shawn C. White



RUSSELL HEDGES/PRESS-HERALD

New Head Coach Reagan Smith watched two of his linemen go one-on-one during an August practice.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1 @ Cedar Creek
Sept. 8 Bossier
Sept. 15 @ Delta Charter
Sept. 22 @ Haynesville
Sept. 29 @ Arcadia
Oct. 6 Magnolia School of Exc.
Oct. 13 Ringgold
Oct. 20 Plain Dealing
Oct. 27 @ Homer

2022 RESULTS: 11-1

Cedar Creek W 12-6
Bossier W 42-14
Delta Charter W 56-8
Haynesville W 56-17
Arcadia W 53-20
Magnolia School of Exc. W 67-44
Ringgold W 48-8
Plain Dealing W 48-16
Homer W 21-14
River Oaks W 46-14
Catholic-P.C. W 42-21 (playoffs)
Ouachita Christian L 28-27 (playoffs)

PLAYERS TO WATCH IN 2023

► Landry Powell R/Flex, Sr.

A first-team All-District 1-1A selection at TE and second-team selection at flex, Powell is one of the area's best players. He should be one of the district's top receivers.

► Garrett Brown OL/LB, Sr.

Brown was a first-team All-District 1-1A selection at OT last season. He will also be part of a veteran LB group.

► Chase Sentell R/RB, Sr.

A second-team All-District 1-1A selection last season, Sentell will provide valuable experience and should be productive wherever he lines up.



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Head Coach

Michael Santelices (12-23, 5th season)

Stadium

Lakeside Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: This will be a rebuilding year for the Warriors with only four returning starters and only two seniors. Jamarcus Tellis is the sole senior on the line. He will have sophomore Bryce Parker returning to help get the fairly new line in order. Lakeside will be led by junior QB Taron Riley. He will have senior Jordan Case to carry the ball at RB. Junior James Maxie will be a go-to WR.

Defense: With only four starters returning and not a single senior, experience is going to be an issue. Junior Jamarion Evans is the sole lineman returning. Lakeside will rely on its LBs to stop their opponents. Three juniors carrying the load are Eli Santelices, Jacoby Rankin, and Trevor Tharpe.

Overall: The young Warriors compete in a tough District 1-2A which includes perennial powerhouse Calvary and always-strong Loyola and North Caddo. Lakeside has a manageable non-district schedule and could start the season at least 4-1 before the district. This could give them some momentum heading into the district opener against D'Arbonne Woods. The October schedule is tough with road games against North Caddo and Loyola. It ends with a home game against Calvary. A play-off game could be in the balance with the Green Oaks game. Lakeside was the last rung to make the playoffs last year. The Warriors are going to have to win the winnable games and not slip because the wins are going to determine their playoff life.

By Shawn C. White



RUSSELL HEDGES/PRESS-HERALD

Head Coach Michael Santelices talks to his players during practice earlier this month.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1 Arcadia
 Sept. 8 @ Ringgold
 Sept. 15 @ Plain Dealing
 Sept. 22 Block
 Sept. 29 Lincoln Prep
 Oct. 6 D'Arbonne Woods
 Oct. 13 @ North Caddo
 Oct. 20 @ Loyola
 Oct. 27 Calvary Baptist
 Nov. 3 @ Green Oaks

2022 RESULTS: 5-6

Arcadia L 26-12
 Ringgold W 46-12
 Plain Dealing W 46-6
 Block W 40-6
 Lincoln Prep W 34-28
 D'Arbonne Woods L 45-22
 North Caddo L 68-25
 Loyola L 41-14
 Calvary Baptist L 63-0
 Green Oaks W 42-36
 Avoyelles L 60-0 (playoffs)

PLAYERS TO WATCH IN 2023

► Tamarjah Ferrell WR/CB, Sr.

Ferrell was a first-team All-District 1-2A selection last year at DB. He will likely be a go-to receiver this season.

► Jordan Case RB, Sr.

A second-team All-District 1-2A selection last season, Case was the team's top rusher. He will be counted on to carry the load on the ground.

► Jamarcus Tellis OL, Sr.

Tellis is the lone senior on the line. He will be expected to play a leadership role in that group.

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Head Coach

Spencer Heard (61-49, 11th season)

Stadium

W.W. Williams Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: Minden will have a young team. The Tide will be led by sophomore QB Hudson Brown. He will work behind a senior-less line but will have Jakobe Jackson to target at the slot along with seniors Cameron Mitchell and Maurice Rabb. Jackson may also be worked into QB in some situations. Junior RB Dunovan Robinson and sophomore TE Kameron Harris are among the newcomers who should contribute.

Defense: Minden may be young on the offense but the Tide has a senior-led defense. Seven starters return including seniors Brian Turner and Brennan Benton at CB and seniors Nolan Garms and Omarion Cooley at LB. Jakobe Jackson could cause havoc at S. The line may be a little up-and-coming as Isayvion Emerson will be the sole senior. Two juniors and a sophomore are expected fill out the gap.

Overall: No doubt about it District 1-4A is a beast. Huntington, Northwood, Evangel and North Desoto will be vying for a district title. Minden's defense could cause some trouble on the deep routes. The Crimson Tide opens with tough games against 5A Parkway and 1A power Homer followed by parish rival North Webster. Minden could be middle of the pack in the district race, but don't be surprised if the Tide pull off a few upsets and claim at least a playoff spot.

By Shawn C. White



RUSSELL HEDGES/PRESS-HERALD

Tide linemen go through a drill during practice earlier this month.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1 Parkway
 Sept. 8 @ Homer
 Sept. 15 North Webster
 Sept. 22 @ North DeSoto
 Sept. 29 Huntington
 Oct. 6 @ Bossier
 Oct. 13 Northwood
 Oct. 20 @ Evangel Christian
 Oct. 27 @ BTW
 Nov. 3 Woodlawn

2022 RESULTS: 4-6

Parkway L 37-20
 Homer L 33-26
 North Webster W 39-27
 North DeSoto L 40-12
 Huntington L 60-33
 Bossier W 33-6
 Northwood L 21-12
 Evangel Christian L 48-21
 Booker T. Washington W 43-26
 Woodlawn W 43-20

PLAYERS TO WATCH IN 2023

► Nolan Garms LB, Sr.

Garms has made the transition from right tackle to linebacker. He is expected to be a leader of the defense.

► Cameron Mitchell WR, Sr.

An honorable mention All-District selection last season, Mitchell gives the Tide a big-play threat. He scored three TDs in a win over Woodlawn last year.

► Jakobe Jackson QB/R, Sr.

One of the best athletes in North Louisiana, Jackson is the type of player who can make plays that change the momentum of games. He will line up at a variety of positions.

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Head Coach

John Ware (67-59, 12th season)

Stadium

Baucum-Farrar Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: The Purple Knight have only one senior returning on offense, TE Xander Thomason. The offense will be moving back to the Wing-T commanded by sophomore Christian Whitlock. Whitlock will be protected by returning guards Kody Beshea and Sam Morgan. When he decides to let the ball fly, Whitlock will have a former Calvary WR, Xavier "Tutt" McGlothan, target. Camren Lewis is a newcomer to watch at WR. RB Braedon Robertson returns after a solid sophomore season. Speedster JKobe Lawson should complement Robertson in the backfield..

Defense: Not only is JKobe Lawson going to be a threat on offense but he could also cause havoc at CB. The Purple Knights return two seniors in DE Avante Curry and S Jaden Hill. CB "Tutt" McGlothan will also play on both sides of the ball. Sophomore Donte Owens, who had quite of bit of playing time his freshman year, takes over as starting S.

Overall: The lone Class 3A team in North-west Louisiana, North Webster had a rough run in the Monroe-based District 1-3A last season. The Knights will continue to face challenges in the hard-nosed district. North Webster also has a challenging non-district schedule that includes a much improved Haynesville team at home. North Caddo is not as potent as they were last season, but the Titans are still a viable opponent. They will be followed by parish rival Minden. A surprising four teams headed to the playoffs out of the District 1-3A last season. The Knights weren't among those. If they can get off to a good start and pull some upsets in district, a return to the playoffs is a good possibility.

By Shawn C. White



RUSSELL HEDGES/PRESS-HERALD

The Knights battle Logansport in a scrimmage in May.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1 Haynesville
 Sept. 8 North Caddo
 Sept. 15 @ Minden
 Sept. 22 @ Richwood
 Sept. 29 Wossman
 Oct. 6 @ Union Parish
 Oct. 13 Carroll
 Oct. 20 @ Sterlington
 Oct. 27 Bastrop
 Nov. 3 Lafayette Renaissance

2022 RESULTS: 2-8

Haynesville L 29-28
 North Caddo L 40-18
 Minden L 39-27
 Richwood L 38-7
 Wossman L 36-6
 Union Parish L 55-17
 Carroll L 49-7
 Sterlington L 48-7
 Bastrop W 41-22
 Lafayette Rena. W 48-12

PLAYERS TO WATCH IN 2022

► JKobe Lawson QB/CB, So.

Lawson showed his athletic ability last spring as one of the area's top sprinters as a freshman. He has the potential to be a gamebreaker on offense. His speed will make him a tough DB to get past.

► Braedon Robertson RB, Jr.

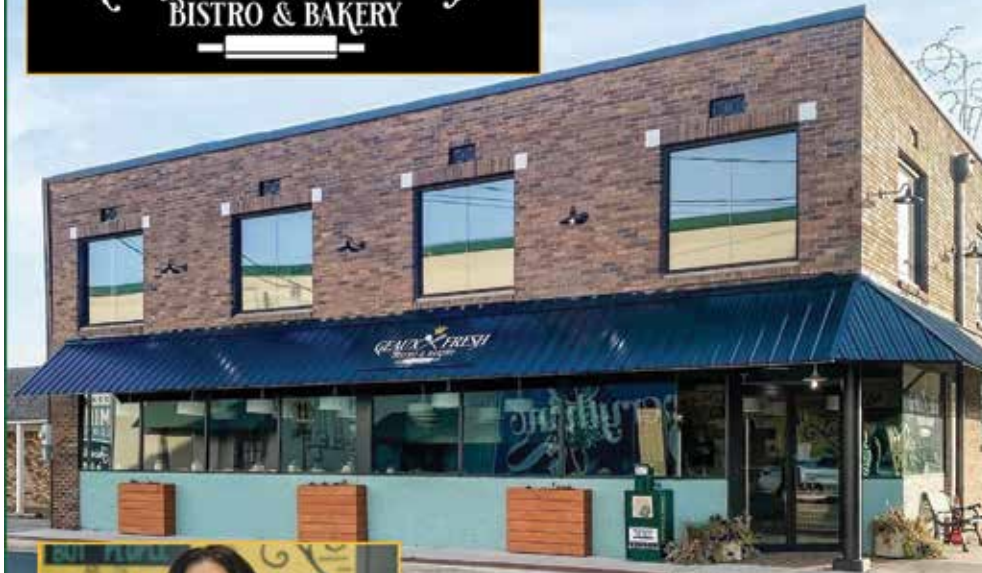
A returning starter, Robertson has the speed to rip off big gains. He rushed for 576 yards and scored four TDs last season.

► Donte Owens S, So.

Owens showed a lot of potential last year when he got playing time. This season he should be a leader in the secondary.



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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY TIGERS



CHAD KEITH/SPECIAL TO THE PRESS-HERALD

QB Jayden Daniels looks to pass against Tennessee last season.

Head Coach

Brian Kelly (10-4, 2nd year; career 273-100-2, 35th year)

Stadium

Tiger Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: QB Jayden Daniels returns to run the offense. He will have one of the nation's top receivers in Malik Nabers. Brian Thomas and Kyren Lacy will likely play bigger roles. Tight end Mason Taylor also returns. RB Logan Diggs, a Notre Dame transfer, should give the running game a boost. Josh Williams, Noah Cain and John Emery Jr. combined for 1,316 yards last season. The line should be a strength with four returning starters.

Defense: DT Maason Smith (6-6, 310) is back after suffering a season-ending injury early last season.

Linebacker Harold Perkins emerged as a star last season. Oregon State transfer Omar Speights is a key addition. The end position is a question mark but the Tigers got help from the transfer portal. Greg Brooks and Major Burns return in the secondary but several transfers will make an impact.

Overall: The Tigers are certainly in position to make a run at the SEC championship in Kelly's second season. Daniels should be even better this season, which means the offense has a chance to be more productive. The defense struggled at times last season, especially in the second half of the year. But the additions through the transfer portal make it stronger. As usual, the Alabama game looms large. This year it's in Tuscaloosa with the Tide out for revenge. Much can happen before, but the game could very well have national title implications.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 3 Florida State (Orlando, Fla.) 6:30
 Sept. 9 Grambling State, 6:30
 Sept. 16 @ Mississippi State, 11
 Sept. 23 Arkansas, TBA
 Sept. 30 @ Ole Miss, TBA
 Oct. 7 @ Missouri, TBA
 Oct. 14 Auburn, TBA

Oct. 21 Army, TBA
 Nov. 4 @ Alabama, TBA
 Nov. 11 Florida, TBA
 Nov. 18 Georgia State, TBA
 Nov. 25 Texas A&M, TBA

OUR PREDICTION: 11-1

2022 RESULTS: 10-4

Florida State L 24-23
 Southern W 65-17
 Mississippi St. W 35-16
 New Mexico W 38-0

Auburn W 21-17
 Tennessee L 40-13
 Florida W 45-35
 Ole Miss W 45-20
 Alabama W 32-31 (OT)

Arkansas W 13-10
 UAB W 41-10
 Texas A&M L 38-23
 Georgia L 50-30
 Purdue W 63-7

Players to Watch

► Jayden Daniels
 QB, Sr.

A preseason first-team All-SEC selection, Daniels had a breakout season in 2022 after transferring from Arizona State. He completed 266 of 388 passes for 2,913 yards and 17 TDs with three interceptions. He also rushed for 885 yards and 11 TDs.

► Malik Nabers
 WR, Jr.

Nabers led the team in 2022 with 72 catches for 1,017 yards and three TDs. He led the SEC in receptions and was No. 2 in yardage. He enters 2023 having caught a pass in 18 straight games.

► Harold Perkins
 LB, So.

A first-team All-SEC selection and Freshman All-American, Perkins had 72 tackles, including 13 for loss, and 8.5 sacks last season.



2023 SCHEDULE

Sun, Sep 3 @ **FLORIDA ST**
Sat, Sep 9 vs **GRAMBLING**
Sat, Sep 16 @ **MISSISSIPPI ST**
Sat, Sep 23 vs **ARKANSAS**
Sat, Sep 30 @ **OLE MISS**
Sat, Oct 7 @ **MISSOURI**
Sat, Oct 14 vs **AUBURN**
Sat, Oct 21 vs **ARMY**
Sat, Nov 4 @ **ALABAMA**
Sat, Nov 11 vs **FLORIDA**
Sat, Nov 18 vs **GEORGIA ST**
Sat, Nov 25 vs **TEXAS A&M**



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GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY TIGERS



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Lineman Sundiata Anderson.

Head Coach

Hue Jackson (3-8, 2nd year)

Stadium

Eddie G. Robinson Memorial

Scouting report

Offense: Alabama State transfer Myles Crawley will likely be the starting quarterback. The redshirt junior has very good size at 6-4. He completed 58 of 96 passes for 785 yards and four TDs with five interceptions last year. Sophomore Julian Calvez passed for 685 yards and five TDs last year. The Tigers will definitely looking for improvement after averaging only 22.6 points per game last season. Lyndon Rash, the team's top WR last season, is back. Sophomores Floyd Chalk IV and Chance Williams provide experience at RB.

Defense: The defense allowed 33 points per game last season, but it could be the Tigers' strength this season. Sundiata Anderson, a 6-5, 240-pound DL, was named the SWAC preseason Defensive Player of the Year. Junior LB Lewis Matthews and sophomore DB Mevin Thomas also earned preseason All-SWAC honors. Matthews was the team's leading tackler.

Overall: The Tigers struggled in Cleveland's first season. GSU has the potential to have a good offense. The development of the QB regardless of who wins the position will determine how good. The return of Rash is a big positive. As usual, the Tigers defense will be coming up against some powerful SWAC offenses. But that unit could be up to the challenge. If they are, Grambling State will finish much higher than the predicted fourth-place finish in the SWAC West division.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 @ Hampton, 2

Sept. 9 @ LSU, 6:30

Sept. 16 Florida Memorial, 2

Sept. 23 Texas Southern, 2

Sept. 30 Prairie View A&M (Dallas), 6

Oct. 7 @ Alcorn St., 2:30

Oct. 14 Alabama A&M, 2

Oct. 28 Bethune-Cookman, 2

Nov. 4 Alabama St. (Mobile, Ala.), 4

Nov. 10 @ UAPB, 8

Nov. 25 vs. Southern (New Orleans), 1

OUR PREDICTION: 6-5

2022 RESULTS: 3-8

Arkansas State L 58-3

Northwestern State W 47-21

Jackson State L 66-24

Bethune-Cookman L 36-19

Prairie View A&M L 34-14

Alabama A&M L 37-31 (2OT)

Florida A&M L 20-16

Alcorn State W 35-6

UA-Pine Bluff W 36-10

Texas Southern L 41-7

Southern L 34-17

Players to Watch

► Sundiata Anderson
 DL, Sr.

The 6-5, 240-pound Anderson was named the preseason SWAC Defensive Player of the Year. He was third on the team last year with 50 tackles, including 23 solo. He had a team-high seven sacks.

► Lewis Matthews
 LB, Sr.

A first-team preseason All-SWAC selection, Matthews led the team in solo tackles last season with 61. He was second in total tackles with 102, including 12 for loss.

► Lyndon Rash
 WR, Sr.

A second-team preseason All-SWAC selection, Rash led the team last season with 32 catches for 517 yards and five TDs.

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LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY BULLDOGS



MURPHY BAVINGA/LOUISIANA TECH SPORTS INFORMATION

Smoke Harris gives the Bulldogs a big-play threat at receiver.

Head Coach

Sonny Cumbie (3-9, 2nd year)

Stadium

Joe Aillet Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: Boise State transfer Hank Bachmeier, who entered the transfer portal after the fourth game last season, will likely be the starter at QB. He threw for 6,605 yards and 41 touchdowns with and 19 interceptions at Boise. Bachmeier will have some good targets, including Smoke Harris. The Bulldogs lost top receiver Tre Harris to Ole Miss. Marquis Crosby, the team's top rusher, is back. He has been tabbed as one to watch for the 2023 Doak Walker Award. Crosby will have help from Charvis Thornton taking carries for the Bulldogs.

Defense: One of the key reasons for the Bulldogs' 3-9 season was the defense. The Bulldogs ranked

128th out of 131 in average points against at 37.9 per game. The Bulldogs gave up 243.2 rushing yards per game, ranking 130th. They also gave up an average of 11.7 first downs per game and ranked 129th. It's a new year and the Bulldogs can look nothing but up. LB Hugh Davis, who led the team in tackles with 79, returns.

Overall: The Bulldogs are one of only five teams from last season's Conference USA lineup still in the league. Enter newcomers Jacksonville State, Liberty, New Mexico State and Sam Houston to the CUSA party. Western Kentucky is considered the conference favorite followed by last year's darlings Liberty Flames. Tech has been projected to finish fourth in the conference. The Bulldogs will at least be in a race for six wins and a bowl bid and could be contenders for the conference title.

By Shawn C. White

2023 SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 FIU, 8

Sept. 2 @ SMU, 11

Sept. 9 Northwestern State, 6

Sept. 16 North Texas, 6

Sept. 23 @ Nebraska, TBA

Sept. 28 @ UTEP, 8

Oct. 5 WKU, 7

Oct. 10 @ Middle Tennessee, 6

Oct. 24 New Mexico State, 6

Nov. 4 @ Liberty, 5

Nov. 11 Sam Houston, 2

Nov. 18 @ Jacksonville State, 1

OUR PREDICTION: 8-4

2022 RESULTS: 3-9

Missouri L 52-24

Stephen F. Austin W 52-17

Clemson L 48-20

South Alabama L 38-14

UTEP W 41-31

North Texas L 47-27

Rice L 42-41 (OT)

FIU L 42-34 (2OT)

Middle Tenn W 41-24

UTSA L 51-27

Charlotte L 26-21

UAB L 37-27

Players to Watch

► Smoke Harris

WR, Sr.

A first-team All-Conference USA selection last season, Harris led the Bulldogs in receptions with 66 catches and was second in receiving yardage with 635. He ranked seventh nationally as a punt returner with a 12.4 yards average.

► Marquis Crosby

RB, So.

As a redshirt freshman, Crosby rushed for 918 yards and nine TDs last season. He rushed for more than 100 yards in four games, including a season-high 197 against Stephen F. Austin.

► Hugh Davis

LB, Sr.

Davis led the team in tackles last season with 79, including 42 assists. He had four tackles for loss, three pass breakups, a QB hurry and a fumble recovery.

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NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY DEMONS



CHRIS REICH/NSU PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICES

Idaho State transfer Tyler Vander Waal looks for a receiver during an intrasquad scrimmage.

Head Coach

Brad Laird (16-35, 6th season)

Stadium

Harry "Rags" Turpin Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: The Demons brought in 27 players not including freshmen in the offseason. One of those is Idaho State transfer Tyler Vander Waal, who will be replacing QB Zachary Clement. Clement, the team's top rusher last season, transferred to SLU. The Demons do still have some talent, though. Senior Zach Patterson, the SLC Newcomer of the Year in 2022, returns at WR. Also returning is All-SLC TE Travon Jones. Kenard King, second on the team in average yards receiving at 15.7 per reception, is back. The Demons are also going to be very young on the line with no seniors.

Defense: NSU is filling some big holes on the defense. The Demons have to replace William Hooper, now

with the Green Bay Packers, Jacob Washington, PJ Herrington and Jarmond Valsin Jr., who accumulated 205 of the 792 total tackles. Tackle leader Jared Pedraza returns, though. A mix of up-and-coming freshmen like Fort Worth's Antonio Hall, Homer's Brendon Harris and Ruston's Christian Davis along with some transfers will all be expected to contribute.

Overall: The Demons took a surprising conference turn last season and were one game from claiming a three-way conference championship. NSU started SLC play 4-0 but then ran into eventual co-champions Southeastern Louisiana and Incarnate Word. The Demons start this season with Louisiana and Louisiana Tech on the road. If the newcomers gel, the Demons could be in the thick of the title chase down the stretch when they face favorites SLU and Incarnate Word.

By Shawn C. White

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 2 @ UL Lafayette, 6:30

Sept. 9 @ Louisiana Tech, 6

Sept. 16 Stephen F. Austin, 6

Sept. 30 Eastern Illinois, 6

Oct. 7 @ Lamar, 3

Oct. 14 @ Nicholls, 3

Oct. 21 Southeastern La., 2

Oct. 28 @ McNeese, 7

Nov. 4 Houston Christian, 2

Nov. 11 @ UIW, 2

Nov. 18 Texas A&M-Commerce, 2

OUR PREDICTION: 6-5

2022 RESULTS: 4-7

Montana L 47-0

Grambling State L 47-21

So. Mississippi L 54-10

Lamar W 45-27

Nicholls State W 36-33

Eastern Illinois L 35-27

Houston Christian W 37-10

SW Missouri L 51-16

Texas A&M Comm W 41-14

Southeastern La. L 23-7

Incarnate Word L 66-7

Players to Watch

► Travon Jones
 TE, So.

A preseason first-team All-SLC selection, Jones had 20 catches for 265 yards last season. Those numbers should go up this season.

► Zach Patterson
 WR, Sr.

The SLC Newcomer of the Year in 2022, Patterson led the team with 83 catches, the second-most in school history, and 710 yards with five TDs.

► Kevin Davis
 DB, Jr.

A preseason first-team All-SLC selection, Davis tied for fourth on the team in tackles last season with 51.



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DALLAS COWBOYS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Houghton star Dak Prescott enters his eighth season as QB.

Head Coach

Mike McCarthy (30-19, 4th year; career 155-97-2, 17th season)

Stadium

AT&T Stadium

Scouting report

Offense: Former Houghton star Dak Prescott is entering his eighth season as the starting QB. Last season, he missed five games after suffering a significant hand injury in the season opener. He returned against Detroit and helped the Cowboys finish second in the NFC East. He threw a career-high 15 interceptions. He has vowed to throw under 10 this season. Cee Dee Lamb, the team's leading receiver, is back. The Cowboys added Brandin Cooks via a trade. Veteran RB Ezekiel Elliott is gone but Tony

Pollard is more than capable of having a big year. The loss of TE Dalton Schultz through free agency will hurt.

Defense: The defense could be the team's strength after a solid 2022 season in which it ranked 12th in yards allowed per game at 330.2. Edge Micah Parsons is among the best in the league. The same can be said of CB Trevon Diggs. The addition of CB Stephon Gilmore adds another element to the secondary. The linebacker corps, led by Leighton Van Der Esch and Jabril Cox, is strong.

Overall: The Cowboys again have what it takes to be Super Bowl contenders. A lot depends on Prescott and his ability to cut down turnovers. But it won't be a surprise if he has a big year. Prescott has always enjoyed proving the doubters wrong.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 10 @ N.Y. Giants, 7:20 (NBC)
 Sept. 17 N.Y. Jets, 3:25 (CBS)
 Sept. 24 @ Arizona, 3:25 (FOX)
 Oct. 1 New England, 3:25 (FOX)
 Oct. 8 @ San Francisco, 7:20 (NBC)
 Oct. 16 @ San Diego, 7:15 (ESPN)
 Oct. 29 L.A. Rams, noon (FOX)
 Nov. 5 @ Philadelphia, 3:25 (FOX)
 Nov. 12 N.Y. Giants, 3:25 (FOX)

Nov. 19 @ Carolina, noon (FOX)
 Nov. 23 Washington, 3:30 (CBS)
 Nov. 30 Seattle, 7:15 (Prime Video)
 Dec. 10 Philadelphia, 7:20 (NBC)
 Dec. 17 @ Buffalo, 3:25 (FOX)
 Dec. 24 @ Miami, 3:25 (FOX)
 Dec. 30 Detroit, 7:15 (ESPN)
 Week 18 @ Washington, TBD

OUR PREDICTION: 13-4

2022 RESULTS: 12-6

13-6 (2nd NFC East)
 Tampa Bay L 19-3
 Cincinnati W 20-17
 N.Y. Giants 23-16
 Washington W 25-10
 L.A. Rams W 22-10

Philadelphia L 26-17
 Detroit W 24-6
 Chicago W 49-29
 Green Bay L 31-28
 Minnesota W 40-3
 NY Giants 28-20
 Indianapolis W 54-19
 Houston W 27-23

Jacksonville L 40-34
 Philadelphia W 40-34
 Tennessee W 27-13
 Washington L 26-6
 Playoffs:
 Tampa Bay W 31-14
 San Francisco L 19-12

Players to Watch

► Tony Pollard
 RB

Pollard had a very good 2022 season, gaining 1,007 yards on 193 carries and scoring nine TDs. In his fifth season, the success of the running game will be on his shoulders with the departure of Ezekiel Elliott.

► Micah Parsons
 LB

Entering just his third season, Parsons has become one of the league's best players. Last year, he had 13.5 sacks and 13 tackles for loss, both team highs.

► Dak Prescott
 QB

The former Houghton star hasn't played a complete season since 2020. His 15 interceptions brought criticism. More will follow if the Cowboys don't make the playoffs or fail to advance. But Prescott likes a challenge.

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Saints QB Derek Carr.

Head Coach

Dennis Allen (7-10, 2nd year)

Stadium

Caesars Superdome

Scouting report

Offense: Will Derek Carr be the answer to New Orleans' QB issues that have been prevalent since Drew Brees retired following the 2020 season? The Saints certainly hope so after acquiring him in a trade with Las Vegas. WR Chris Olave is coming off an outstanding rookie season. The Saints are again hoping for a healthy Michael Thomas. Productive RB Alvin Kamara returns. He has been suspended for three games because of an off-the-field incident.

Defense: The Saints ranked fifth in the league last

season in yards allowed per game at 314.8. Joe Woods takes over as Defensive Coordinator. Cam Jordan is back on the edge but the line will have a mostly new look with rookies expected to fill holes. Demario Davis returns at MLB. The secondary has the potential to be very good with Marshawn Lattimore, Tyrann Matthieu, Bradley Roby and Marcus Maye.

Overall: As it does with just about every NFL team, the Saints' hopes likely will hinge on the performance of their quarterback. If Derek Carr performs up to expectations, New Orleans could return to the playoffs for the first time since 2020. If Michael Thomas returns to his form of a couple of years ago, the offense may really sizzle. The defense can carry the team only so far. The Saints lost eight games by 10 points or less last year. It won't take much, a few plays here and there, to turn that around.

2023 SCHEDULE

Sept. 10 Tennessee, noon (CBS)
 Sept. 18 @ Carolina, 6:15 (ESPN)
 Sept. 24 @ Packers, noon (FOX)
 Oct. 1 Tampa Bay, noon (FOX)
 Oct. 8 @ New England, noon (CBS)
 Oct. 15 @ Houston, noon (FOX)
 Oct. 19, Jacksonville, 7:15 (Prime)
 Oct. 29 @ Indianapolis, noon (FOX)
 Nov. 5. Chicago, noon (CBS)

Nov. 12 @ Minnesota, noon (FOX)
 Nov. 26 @ Atlanta, noon (FOX)
 Dec. 3 Detroit, noon (FOX)
 Dec. 10 Carolina, noon (FOX)
 Dec. 17 N.Y. Giants, (FOX)
 Dec. 21 L.A. Rams (Prime Video)
 Dec. 31 @ Tampa Bay, noon (FOX)
 Week 18 TBD

OUR PREDICTION: 10-7

2022 RESULTS: 7-10

(T2nd, NFC South)
 Atlanta W 27-26
 Tampa Bay L 20-10
 Carolina L 22-14
 Minnesota L 28-25

Seattle W 39-32
 Cincinnati L 30-26
 Arizona L 42-34
 L.A. Raiders W 24-0
 Baltimore L 27-13
 Pittsburgh L 20-10
 L.A. Rams W 27-20

San Francisco L 13-0
 Tampa Bay L 17-16
 Atlanta W 21-18
 Cleveland W 17-10
 Philadelphia W 20-10
 Carolina L 10-7

Players to Watch

► **Derek Carr**
 QB
 Carr completed 305 of 502 passes for 3,522 yards and 24 TDs with 14 interceptions at Las Vegas last season. This will be his 10th season.

► **Chris Olave**
 WR
 Olave had an outstanding rookie season, catching 72 passes for 1,042 yards and four TDs. The number of TDs should definitely rise this season.

► **Demario Davis**
 LB
 Davis led the team last year with 109 total tackles. His 6.5 sacks and 10 tackles for loss both ranked second. Davis is entering his 12th season, the last five with the Saints.

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