

NAMES TO KNOW-SUN BELT

LOUISIANA RAGIN' CAJUNS

Top Play: RB Chris Smith

Potential Bust: QB Levi Lewis

Sleeper: RB Emani Bailey

Impact Transfer: RB Jacob Kibodi

Dynasty Prospect: RB Emani Bailey

Fantastic Freshman: RB Montrell Johnson



Running back is and will always be the most sought-after position to target in CFF with head coach Billy Napier at the helm, and **Chris Smith** is next in line. BUT, I must throw caution to anyone out there who thinks he could lead the nation in rushing or garner 250+ touches because of all the vacated production with Elijah Mitchell and Trey Ragas no longer around. How many times did Mitchell top 20+ carries in a game in four seasons with UL, you ask? Three. This will always be a split backfield under Napier, the Cajuns should have ample depth behind Smith with talented redshirt freshman **Emani Bailey** and JUCO transfer **Jacob Kibodi**, formerly of Texas A&M. Bailey had the upper hand coming out of spring ball, though we will keep tabs here to see if that changes once Kibodi has a better grasp of the playbook. RB2 has averaged 151 carries and 10 TDs in the last three years since Napier arrived. Four running backs were added in this year's recruiting class with Terrence Williams being the highest-rated of the group. Off first glance, I might prefer **Montrell Johnson** over Williams as he was only a few percentage points lower on the grading scale per 247Sports and had far more P5 interest on his offer sheet. Could be telling. Normally, I wouldn't suggest **Levi Lewis** as a potential bust because his cost should be minimal given how much Louisiana prefers to run the football. But currently, Lewis' ADP is QB30 which is exponentially too high for a quarterback that averaged just 21 fantasy points in 2020 and isn't likely to see a major uptick in volume either throwing or rushing.

SOUTH ALABAMA JAGUARS

Top Play: WR Jalen Tolbert

Potential Bust: RB Kareem Walker

Sleeper: WR Caullin Lacy

Impact Transfer: WR Allen Dailey

Dynasty Prospect: WR Caullin Lacy

Fantastic Freshman: WR Jayjuan Townsend



Its all about the wide receivers in a Major Applewhite offense that has proven capable of producing two, or even three, fantasy-relevant options at the position in a single season. **Jalen Tolbert** is the obvious name of note here who should thrive in a system that fielded four-straight 1,000-yard seasons during Applewhite's time at Houston as the OC/HC, with the lowest reception total in the span being 75. Top 10 CFF WR lock this season with WR1 overall upside. Expect this to change at some point as more individuals dive into preseason research, but the WR2 under Applewhite has typically been productive as well, averaging 58 receptions and seven touchdowns per year between 2015-18 – much of that production fostered from the slot with the likes of Linell Bonner, Demarcus Ayers and Marquez Stevenson. That's where redshirt freshman **Caullin Lacy** will likely start, and is a player who practically free at this point with no ADP data attached to his name on Fantrax. A third WR being relevant is unlikely but we've seen a 50+ reception season from the WR3 at Houston in 2016, and USA did add Kentucky transfer **Allen Dailey** who will compete with the suspended Jalen Wayne for the second outside spot. Zero interest in the South Alabama ground attack as their offensive line was one of the worst in the country a season ago, and Applewhite's RB1 averaged just 157 carries at Houston. Former Michigan and Mississippi State transfer **Kareem Walker** was added earlier this month, but has flamed out at each stop.

LOUISIANA-MONROE WARHAWKS

Top Play: QB Rhett Rodriguez

Potential Bust: n/a

Sleeper: QB Rhett Rodriguez

Impact Transfer: WR Dariyan Wiley

Dynasty Prospect: QB Rhett Rodriguez

Fantastic Freshman: WR Justin Kimber



Rich Rodriguez as a primary playcaller in the Sun Belt will be hell of a good time...eventually. The roster is in a dismal state, the offense in particular, which averages a league-worst 16.3 PPG last season. Four transfers were added to the mix, including Rich's son **Rhett Rodriguez** who appears to be the favorite as it currently stands given the Dad's preference for a dual-threat. 128 carries per game for the QB1 in the last five seasons under Rodriguez, but how much running room will be available for anyone behind the worst offensive line group in the Sun Belt. Minimal cost too for Rodriguez who hasn't been selected enough on Fantrax to generate any ADP data to date, and has multiple years of eligibility remaining so not the worst dynasty addition either. ULM added three wide receivers via the portal, and it was **Dariyan Wiley**, a 6-foot-3 UMass transfer who had the biggest splash in the spring with two TDs in the final scrimmage. True freshman **Justin Kimber** matched that with two touchdowns of his own and a name to monitor down the road.

ARKANSAS STATE RED WOLVES

Top Play: WR Corey Rucker

Potential Bust: WR Corey Rucker

Sleeper: WR Jeff Foreman

Impact Transfer: QB James Blackman

Dynasty Prospect: WR Corey Rucker

Fantastic Freshman: QB Wyatt Begeal



I currently have **Corey Rucker** as WR17 in my rankings and his ADP sits at WR18 according to Fantrax so, in my opinion, he is being drafted accordingly to where he should be landing. I can also admit to the wide range of possible outcomes for the 6-foot-2 sophomore who has just one game of production to his name, albeit an elite bullet point on his resume, after posting 9-310-4 in the season finale vs. ULM last season. Offensive coordinator Keith Heckendorf remaining on staff boosts the chances we could have yet another Arkansas State WR1 become an elite fantasy asset like we saw with Jonathan Adams and Omar Bayless. The depth on the outside with the likes of **Jeff Foreman**, TCU transfer Te'Vailance Hunt and 7th-year senior Dahu Green also presents some risk here, as well as the one game of evidence we have from Rucker. Foreman, who is 53 spots lower amongst WRs on Fantrax's ADP, should not be dismissed as he was equally impressive to close last season with three straight 100-yard performances. Arkansas State needed depth at the QB position behind Layne Hatcher, so it makes sense adding **James Blackman**, but don't be surprised if he factors into the competition once he arrives on campus. The new staff is throwing a lot more on Hatcher's plate this year in terms of pre-snap reads, on-field adjustments, etc. and that is far from his strength. Hopes are high for incoming FR quarterback **Wyatt Begeal** who I believe is the highest-rated prospect Arkansas State has ever signed at the position.

TROY TROJANS

Top Play: RB Kimani Vidal

Potential Bust: RB Kimani Vidal

Sleeper: WR Reggie Todd

Impact Transfer: QB Taylor Powell

Dynasty Prospect: WR Tez Johnson

Fantastic Freshman: RB Jarris Williams



This is Chip Lindsey's offense, so while there was an OC change, expect the scheme to rival what we've seen from Troy the last two seasons. That means a split backfield between **Kimani Vidal**, B.J. Smith and a host of others with everyone returning at the position. Unfortunate because they found a true diamond in Vidal who averaged 5.1 YPC as a true freshman with four rushing touchdowns and 26 receptions in two games. Smith's return likely means there is a two-headed backfield, at minimum, and erases any chance of seeing Vidal truly breakout. An option in PPR formats only. Kaylon Geiger's transfer to Texas Tech bumps everyone up a peg on the depth chart, meaning **Reggie Todd** now slides into the coveted WR1 role in an offense that's averaged 40 passing attempts over the last two seasons. Todd has been going largely undrafted in mock's I've participated in, but curious to see how much his ADP changes following Geiger's departure. Worth taking a shot on, though Troy will use 5-6 receivers pretty regularly so the volume may be dispersed. **Taylor Powell** comes over from Missouri and should at least push Gunnar Watson for the QB1 mantle as this Troy offense lacked explosive plays LY in the passing game. Redshirt freshman **Tez Johnson** is expected to slide into Geiger's role in the slot that has accounted for 189 targets over the last two years. We have multiple years of evidence, from Geiger to Ryan Davis (Auburn) to Casey Martin (Southern Miss) where the slot receiver under Lindsey has wound up as the WR1. Worth a dart throw at the end of drafts.

TEXAS STATE BOBCATS

Top Play: WR Marcell Barbee

Potential Bust: QB Brady McBride

Sleeper: WR Javen Banks

Impact Transfer: QB Ty Evans

Dynasty Prospect: RB Calvin Hill

Fantastic Freshman: n/a



Marcell Barbee led the Bobcats in targets (71), receptions (40) and touchdowns (10) last season with an ADOT of 13.2 that was also the highest on the team. The 6-foot-2 junior only converted on 56 percent of his targets with four drops, but was a consist force over the second half of last year with six touchdowns in the final six games. Coming off the board as WR52 per Fantrax's ADP which is probably around the range he should be selected, though I think there is a good chance he outperforms that ranking. 114 vacated targets needing to be replaced with Jah'Marae Sheread and Jeremiah Haydel no longer around, and Jake Spavital's WR1s have averaged over 68 receptions the last seven seasons. Fellow junior **Javen Banks** could also be a name to monitor after notching a touchdown in each of the last four games to close the year and will start opposite Barbee on the outside. While we love the passing game under Spavital, we'll tend to stray away from running backs in his system as the RB1 averages just 138 carries per season. Redshirt freshman **Calvin Hill** is probably the favorite to start here, but will fight for carries with Brock Sturges and Jahmyl Jeter. Should be an effective ground attack, but one to avoid in CFF redraft. Three-man QB race will continue throughout the summer, but **Brady McBride** put his stamp on the competition with three TDs in the spring game. Injuries and inconsistent play last year led to multiple QBs getting starts, and now we can add another name to the mix in former 3-star and NC State transfer Ty Evans. Multiple QBs have started games in each of the first two years Spavital has been with Texas State. Texas State signed just a single recruit in this past – ONE.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN EAGLES



Top Play: RB J.D. King

Potential Bust: RB Amare Jones

Sleeper: RB Logan Wright

Impact Transfer: QB James Graham

Dynasty Prospect: RB Gerald Green

Fantastic Freshman: QB Cam'Ron Ransom

Four starters back up front for the Eagles who fielded one of the better offensive lines in the Sun Belt last season as they ranked third in the conference in Line Yards (19th nationally). As is always the case with Georgia Southern, they will run it and run it often, keeping it on the ground 77 percent of the time in 2020 – third in the country – and return key contributors **J.D. King** and **Logan Wright** who should shoulder the load in the backfield. King recorded at least one touchdown in five of his seven games played before tearing an ACL in November, but is expected to be healthy for the regular season. The 225-pound Wright stepped in with three touchdowns in the final four games and landed on the All-Sun Belt second team. Tulane transfer **Amare Jones**, was running with the third-team offense in spring ball, and is listed as a WR in the Athlon preview magazine. Zero interest there. Georgia Tech transfer **James Graham** was thought to be the prohibitive favorite to start at quarterback but was away from the team during the spring for undisclosed reasons. If you have ample roster space on a dynasty squad, I think it would be a good idea to stash away sophomore Gerald Green who displayed a burst that the other GSU backs lack in the bowl game vs. Louisiana Tech, rushing for 108 yards and a TD. With King, Wright and Jones all being seniors, Green should start in 2022.

APPALACHIAN STATE MOUNTAINEERS

Top Play: RB Camerun Peoples

Potential Bust: RB Camerun Peoples

Sleeper: WR Corey Sutton

Impact Transfer: QB Chase Brice

Dynasty Prospect: RB Nate Noel

Fantastic Freshman: QB DC Tabscott



As is the case literally EVERY SINGLE SEASON, producing a 1,000-yard rusher in every season at the FBS level, an Appalachian State running back is the top play in CFF drafts with **Camerun Peoples**. I do have some concerns, though, and feel his ADP standing as RB17 is higher than where I'd be comfortable selecting him. Major offensive line turnover with three starters lost from last year's group, and one of the returnees will be switching positions. While most indications are that Peoples will be RB1 this year, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the amount of capable depth behind him with Daetrich Harrington, sophomore **Nate Noel** and Notre Dame transfer Jahmir Smith. Because of the depth at the RB position this year, I'm more than comfortable waiting on Peoples to see if he drops, but may not have many shares at his current price point. Noel rushed for 510 yards and a 6.2 YPC average as a freshman and has a bright future. Could snag him very late in a startup dynasty, with the potential to start as quickly as 2022. **Chase Brice** was the worst QB in FBS last season, completing 54.8 percent of his passes, threw more interceptions than touchdowns, and fumbled eight times. I'll monitor on waivers if he progresses at a lesser level in the Sun Belt. For a team that has run the ball 64.2 percent of the time over the last three seasons, I will not be drafting any App State receivers, but this might be the best corps in the Sun Belt, if not all of G5. All three starters are back from a year ago, and return former WR1 **Corey Sutton** who led the team in touchdowns in 2018 and was a preseason first-team All-Sun Belt selection last year before opting out.

GEORGIA STATE PANTHERS



Top Play: RB Destin Coates

Potential Bust: RB Destin Coates

Sleeper: WR Cornelius McCoy

Impact Transfer: WR Ja'Cyais Credle

Dynasty Prospect: WR Ja'Cyais Credle

Fantastic Freshman: WR Jaylin Tolbert

Georgia State graded out poorly last season along the offensive line, ranked as the 7th best group in the Sun Belt, but should hopefully benefit from the return of all five starters. That bodes well for **Destin Coates** who topped 100 rushing yards in five of the nine games he played in last year. At 18.4 attempts per game, he was on par with a similar workload that Tra Barnett had the previous season, who wound up rushing for 1,453 yards and 12 TDs. Coates notably struggled against top-tier conference opponents, though, accumulating just 11 combined fantasy points against Coastal Carolina and App State. Sam Pinckney is the preferred choice of the two, but wouldn't dismiss **Cornelius McCoy** who is 69 (nice) spots lower according to Fantrax ADP and averaged more targets per game than Pinckney did in 2020. 6-foot-4 **Ja'Cyais Credle** joined the Panthers after one season with UCF, and should fight for the No. 3 role alongside McCoy and Pinckney.

COASTAL CAROLINA CHANTICLEERS



Top Play: QB Grayson McCall

Potential Bust: RB Reese White

Sleeper: RB CJ Beasley

Impact Transfer: n/a

Dynasty Prospect: RB CJ Beasley

Fantastic Freshman: RB Max Balthazar

Not a whole lot to discuss here that we don't already know as Coastal Carolina brings back 10 of 11 starters on offense. **Grayson McCall** was the biggest breakout in CFF in 2020, averaging over 30 fantasy points per game, and there really shouldn't be a reason that can't continue this upcoming year. We already mentioned the returning personnel, as every pass-catcher of importance is back, and there are zero roadblocks on Coastal Carolina's schedule with just one team ranked in the Top 25 in Defensive SP+. The Citadel, Kansas, UMass and Buffalo out of the gate before entering conference play, and then closes the season facing Georgia State, Texas State and South Alabama in the fantasy playoffs – all three teams ranked 100th or lower. Am I changing my own mind now ranking him as QB12? As of now, sophomore **Reese White** is projected by most to start as the RB1 in place of CJ Marable who averaged north of 21 FPPG last season. With that said, the name I've seen mentioned most in a few publications this offseason is redshirt freshman **CJ Beasley**, who was actually singled out in a Top 25 ranking article on the Athletic. Could be nothing? But those are the tea leaves you have to throw in the back of your mind when drafting, particularly in dynasty with Beasley being a redshirt freshman. *"CJ Beasley... had a pretty good spring that was better than anticipated," Chadwell said. "I think it's put him in a situation to where he's got a chance to be a good contributor for us, per head coach Jamey Chadwell.* For a team in Coastal that runs it 62 percent of the time (10th highest in nation) and often utilizes the backs as pass-catchers, we need to prioritize figuring out who the RB1 will be. Incoming 3-star FR running back **Max Balthazar** had offers from Kentucky, Tennessee and Toledo, but ultimately chose to sip on Mai Tai's on Myrtle Beach...when he's of age of course.