

NAMES TO KNOW-INDEPENDENTS

Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Top Play: RB Kyren Williams

Potential Bust: WR Kevin Austin

Sleeper: WR Kevin Austin

Impact Transfer: QB Jack Coan

Dynasty Prospect: RB Chris Tyree

Fantastic Freshman: QB Tyler Buchner



Just three starters are back on offense for Notre Dame this year, including one lone returnee on the offensive line which does give me slight pause with the Irish's top CFF prospect **Kyren Williams**. Adding top transfer Cain Madden (Marshall) will help immensely, but this group struggled mightily in the spring game. As many as eight 4-star prospects on the ND projected two-deep, though, so this group is still loaded from a recruiting standpoint. Positive quotes from offensive coordinator Tommy Rees about Williams' potential usage in 2021, saying *"we're going to add even more to his plate"* and will scheme ways where he can line up all over the field. Williams moving around also helps get RB2 **Chris Tyree** involved more after averaging 6.79 YPC as a true freshman. **Kevin Austin** remains an enigma as the team's most talented receiver, but has never fulfilled on that promise due to a multitude of reasons, most recently injury as he broke his left foot twice last year. Brian Kelly has already stated that Austin will still not be fully healthy by the time summer rolls around. Worth a stab at the end of CFF Drafts, but also a candidate to be dropped from your roster by Week 1. **Jack Coan** will undoubtedly start the opener against Florida State in Week 1, and if I were a betting man, I'd guess he is still the starter at the end of the year as well. At the first sign of trouble when Coan eventually struggles, we know the calls from both the fanbase and Devy/C2C/CFF folks will be clamoring for star freshman **Tyler Buchner** – particularly after what he displayed in the spring game – but this should be the veteran's show in 2021 as long as the Irish are winning games. Sounds as though the plan is to gradually bring Buchner along after not playing his senior season in high school due to COVID-19, but could be featured in special packages utilizing his rushing ability.

Army Black Knights

Top Play: FB Jakobi Buchanan

Potential Bust: FB Jakobi Buchanan

Sleeper: FB Tyson Riley

Impact Transfer: n/a

Dynasty Prospect: FB Tyson Riley

Fantastic Freshman: QB Simeon Evans



Both Army and Navy run distinctive variations of the triple-option offense to where different positions are valued more than others. Whereas the run game revolves around the quarterback position for Navy, the carries are more dispersed for the Black Knights, and we typically put our focus towards the B-Backs, or fullbacks in layman's terms. Army rotated between three b-backs last season with Sandon McCoy leading the way with 10 rushing TDs. McCoy departs, leaving **Jakobi Buchanan** and Anthony Adkins as the initial candidates to assume the lead role, though Phil Steele threw a wrench into the mix, listing sophomore **Tyson Riley** as his starter. A quick google search provided little help as to why Riley was listed as a starter, so this becomes a storyline we should monitor during fall camps. Army is now on a string of five consecutive seasons in which a b-back has hit 10 or more rushing TDs.

BYU Cougars

Top Play: RB Tyler Allgeier

Potential Bust: TE Isaac Rex

Sleeper: WR Gunner Romney

Impact Transfer: WR Nacua Brothers

Dynasty Prospect: QB Jaren Hall

Fantastic Freshman: WR Isaiah Glasker



With BYU's transition at QB, might we see **Tyler Allgeier** featured a bit more this season than we did in 2020? The former linebacker turned running back rushed for 1,130 yards on just 150 carries (7.5 YPC) and has reportedly increased his speed during the offseason, confirming at BYU Media Day that he ran between a 4.39 and 4.44 40-yard dash. Impressive at 5-foot-11, 220 pounds. Will be some roadblocks, including a significant uptick in difficulty in BYU's schedule this year and some turnover along the offensive line, but Allgeier is undoubtedly the Cougars top CFF prospect. TE **Isaac Rex** was sensational last season as a first-year starter with 12 receiving touchdowns, and he is the complete package at tight end with his ability to run routes, as well as hold up at the point of attack as a blocker. I just feel that we are bound for extreme regression here when it comes to Rex's fantasy production with a new QB in place. Most receiving touchdowns by a BYU tight end in the six years prior to last – 4. Still a Top 20 option at the position for me, and potentially could see an uptick with his receptions, closer to what we saw out of Matt Bushman in prior seasons, but my money is on Rex's TD totals dropping significantly. Offensive coordinator Aaron Roderick called this one of the "most stacked" WR rooms this program has had as the return starters **Gunner Romney** and Neil Pau'u and added to the group with brothers **Puka Nacua** and **Samson Nacua** who will undoubtedly have a role this season. I will probably avoid this group with the added bodies and expected regression in the passing game, but Romney isn't even in the Top 75 among WRs in ADP on Fantrax. Well worth the risk at that price. We won't find out the QB1 for BYU until about two weeks leading up to the season according to Roderick, but the perceived favorite at the moment is sophomore **Jaren Hall** who is the best athlete of the three primary contenders for the job. Hall displayed plenty of promise in his extended action back in 2019, rushing for 83 yards and a TD on 16 carries vs. South Florida, and then completed 75 percent of his passes for 214 yards in another appearance vs. Utah State.

Massachusetts Minutemen

Top Play: RB Kay/Ron Adams

Potential Bust: RB Kay/Ron Adams

Sleeper: WR Tray Pettway

Impact Transfer: QB Tyler Lytle

Dynasty Prospect: RB Kay/Ron Adams

Fantastic Freshman: WR Michael Fitzgerald



All I care about when it comes to UMass is when they show up on the schedule for an opposing offensive player that is on my CFF roster who becomes an instant lock in my lineup facing this defense. Beyond that, it's tough to muster up words for a team that will have very little relevance in CFF. Rutgers transfer **Kay/Ron Adams** will be an immediate upgrade at running back, running behind a line that returns three starters and brings in a pair of transfers from North Texas and Michigan. The RB1 for the Minutemen rushed for 853 yards and 7 TDs in Walt Bell's first year as head coach so maybe Adams could replicate similar numbers if the offensive line comes together? Tough to do when the volume won't be there on a weekly basis due to poor game scripts. Colorado transfer **Tyler Lytle** is a player I know nothing about, but he will start at QB. UMass has averaged 168 and 120 yards per game through the air the last two seasons. 6-foot-3 JUCO transfer **Tray Pettway** caught a touchdown in the spring game.

New Mexico State Aggies

Top Play: RB Juwuan Price

Potential Bust: RB O'Maury Samuels

Sleeper: QB Jonah Johnson

Impact Transfer: WR Dominic Gicinto

Dynasty Prospect: RB Juwuan Price

Fantastic Freshman: WR Glynn Johnson



I can't say for certain if writing about New Mexico State is better or worse than what we just covered with UMass – both should be relegated to Division III. That especially holds true for the Aggies who cost me most of my betting bankroll in their spring defeat to Tarleton State, a team who was missing multiple starters and had just been promoted from Division III to Division II. I've promoted QB **Jonah Johnson** in the past as a possible sleeper, and I'll still say there is some potential there because of the volume quarterbacks have thrown it in the past under head coach Doug Martin. Johnson, unfortunately, was not impressive in those two starts this spring, tossing three interceptions to just one touchdown. Johnson did rush for 67 yards and two TDs in the second contest, a skillset he did utilize during his time at the JUCO level. If there was a bright spot in the spring, it was sophomore **Juwuan Price** who rushed for 174 yards and a touchdown in Week 2 vs. Dixie College and also caught five passes on eight targets in two games. RB1s have averaged 1,026 rushing yards, 37 receptions and 11 total touchdowns for New Mexico State between 2014-2019 so we do have a long line of historical production here. Price must fend off Michigan transfer **O'Maury Samuels** still who was reportedly the best player on offense last offseason for the Aggies. Missouri transfer **Dominic Gicinto** was added to what will be a deep WR corps that will be of little interest outside of maybe DFS.

Liberty Flames

Top Play: QB Malik Willis

Potential Bust: RB Joshua Mack

Sleeper: WR Kevin Shaa

Impact Transfer: RB TJ Green

Dynasty Prospect: QB Johnathan Bennett

Fantastic Freshman: QB Nate Hampton



Malik Willis is QB1 and No. 1 overall in CFF – end of story. I also said the same thing about Khalil Tate and D'Eriq King in the last five years and we know how those turned out. Different circumstances in those two cases, though, which included a coaching change and an opt-out. 10 of 11 starters are back on offense for Liberty and the schedule sets up wonderfully with just a single defense ranked inside the projected top 40 (UAB) in defensive SP+. If there is a knock to Willis' fantasy outlook, it would be the lack of a true gamebreaker at wide receiver, but depth should not be an issue with six of the top seven pass-catchers from last year all back. The Flames will boast one of the best rushing attacks in the country in 2021 with Willis, returning starter **Joshua Mack** and Utah transfer **T.J. Green** who made a strong impression during the spring. Unlikely to be a spot that I target often during CFF drafts as the RB1s under head coach Hugh Freeze rarely hit 200 carries in a season and are not featured much at all in the passing game. With Mack being in his final year, Green does sport some value in dynasty as a potential multi-year producer. Willis will also depart after this year as a potential first-round draft pick in the NFL, so there might be some incentive for targeting his backup **Johnathan Bennett** or true freshman **Nate Hampton** for 2022. The biggest issue there for me is if Freeze is still around after what could potentially be the best season in Liberty school history. You know the P5 schools will be calling.

Connecticut Huskies

Top Play: RB Kevin Mensah

Potential Bust: WR Kevin Mensah

Sleeper: WR Cameron Ross

Impact Transfer: RB Robert Burns

Dynasty Prospect: WR Cameron Ross

Fantastic Freshman: RB Max Modeste



Randy Edsall's best offenses have centered around his RB1, and he returns a two-time 1,000-yard rusher in **Kevin Mensah** who was the first UConn running back to accomplish that feat since 2009-10 with Jordan Todman. I have no idea how a team will come out and perform after sitting out a season due to a pandemic, and Mensah will be running behind an offensive line that returns just two starters from back in 2019 so there is some potential risk in selecting him. Edsall added Miami transfer **Robert Burns** to co-pilot the backfield alongside Mensah. Last two RB2s for UConn combined for 72 receptions in 2018-19, but I am unsure if Burns has that skillset in his arsenal. I don't have any confidence in the UConn QB situation as it stands today, but tough to say it could be any worse than it was in 2019 when Husky quarterbacks threw more interceptions than touchdowns. Reason I bring that up is even with poor QB play, freshman **Cameron Ross** turned in an outstanding debut season with 60-723-4, including five or more catches in 5-of-9 games played. Even if QB play is marginally better, might we see a 70+ catch season from someone who is essentially free at this point in CFF Drafts?