



UTAH STATE BIO

National Championships - 0



Mountain West Championships: 1
(Last: 2021)

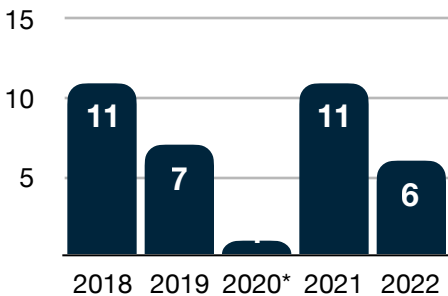
Location: Logan, UT

All-Time Record: 536-532-27

2022 Results: 6-7
Lost in First Responder Bowl

Head Coach: Blake Anderson
3rd Year (17-10)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Maverik Stadium (25,100)

Can Aggies Surprise Again in 2023?

In 2021, Utah State had one of the most successful seasons in program history. The Aggies won 11 games which tied a program record, won their first ever Mountain West Championship, and defeated a Power 5 opponent (Oregon State) in the LA Bowl. All of that was accomplished in Blake Anderson's first year despite a coaching transition and a 1-5 record in 2020. 2022 was, unfortunately, quite a different story for Utah State. The Aggies opened with a Week 0 win over UConn and were then (understandably) blown out by Alabama the next week. However, Utah State suffered a major embarrassment in a 35-7 loss over Weber State of the FCS ranks and they proceeded to lose their next two games. The Aggies ultimately did win three of their last four games to reach a second straight bowl game but were easily handled by Memphis in the First Responder Bowl. Injuries certainly played a part in the Aggies' relative downfall last season but with only nine returning starters, contention in the Mountain West seems like a bit of a long shot, although the same thing was said heading into the 2021 season.

Logan Bonner followed Blake Anderson over from Arkansas State and had a breakout season in 2021, throwing for 3,628 yards and 36 touchdowns. He was the obvious starter in 2022 but struggled to find the same success. He played very well in the opening win against UConn (20 for 29, 281 yards, 3 touchdowns) but couldn't get out of his own way in a three interception loss to Weber State followed by a five interception meltdown against UNLV. A foot injury ended his season after only four games and **Cooper Legas** stepped in. Legas himself had some turnover tendencies, especially late in the year, but the Aggies offense got into more of a rhythm with Legas running point. The Aggies posted a 5-3 record when he started at quarterback and he also brought an added wrinkle with his running ability. Bonner finished his six-season college career leaving Legas as the starter heading into 2023.

Brian Cobbs caught 76 passes for 923 yards last season and his production will be missed. **Terrell Vaughn** caught 56 passes for 624 yards and five touchdowns and becomes the de facto top option this season. Tight end **Josh Sterzer** added 11 catches for 129 yards but Vaughn and Sterzer are the only two returning players with double-digit catches. Stanford transfer **Colby Bowman** could start right away and so too could Colorado transfer **Grant Page**. The Aggies must also replace their top runner Calvin Tyler who scampered for 1,122 yards and 7 touchdowns. Even with his gaudy numbers, it may be easier to replace Tyler than those lost at receiver with talented **Robert Briggs** waiting in the wings. He added 353 yards as a freshman and should receive a much heavier dose of carries, perhaps even equal to the 253 rushes from Tyler last season. His effectiveness could be limited by an unproven offensive line that returns only **Wade Meacham** at guard.

Last year's defense featured only five returning starters and the points allowed jumped from 24.4 per game to 31.2. Likewise, this year's defense also has only five returning starters and two third-team All-Mountain-West defenders depart (linebacker AJ Vongphachanh and safety Hunter Reynolds). That leaves linebacker **MJ Tafisi** as the leading returning tackler with 69 and **Kaleo Neves** not far behind with 59. The defensive line also loses a star in Daniel Grzesiak but does bring back **Hale Motu'apuaka** at defensive tackle who figures to be one of the conference's best. Like Motu'apuaka, safety **Ike Larsen** was named to the All-Mountain-West second team and nabbed four interceptions. The Aggies bring in Joe Cauthen at defensive coordinator and he will rely on these returners to have productive seasons in order to avoid any more slippage on defense.












The Bottom Line: Even though the Aggies won the Mountain West Championship just two years ago and have two 11-win seasons in the last five years, expecting Utah State to finish the season at the top of the conference standings might be wishful thinking. The losses on both sides of the ball are significant and the Aggies draw the top four teams in our preseason rankings (@ Air Force, Boise State, Fresno State, @ San Diego State). I do think Utah State returns to a bowl for the third consecutive season and it's worth noting that Anderson completely exceeded expectations in 2021 so maybe he can do it again in 2023.

Projection: 6-6 (7th in Mountain West)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
22.2	159.2	195.2	-9
104th in FBS	61st in FBS	107th in FBS	121st in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
31.2	194.2	205.0	
106th in FBS	113rd in FBS	31st in FBS	

2023 Utah State Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 @ Iowa
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. Idaho State
3	Fri, Sept 15	 @ Air Force
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. J Madison
5	Sat, Sept 30	 @ UConn
6	Sat, Oct 7	 vs. Colorado St.
7	Fri, Oct 13	 vs. Fresno State
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ San Jose State
9	Bye Week	
10	Sat, Nov 4	 @ San Diego St.
11	Sat, Nov 11	 vs. Nevada
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. Boise State
13	Fri, Nov 24	 @ New Mexico

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 15: @ Air Force - The Aggies beat the Falcons as 9-point underdogs in 2021 and did it again in 2022 as 11-point underdogs. Air Force will almost certainly be favored at home so could Utah State complete the trifecta?

Sat, Sept 30: @ Connecticut - Utah State handled the Huskies in a Week 0 game in Logan last year but UConn has since had time to gel under head coach Jim Mora and the extra bowl practices only helped. The Aggies will need to stay sharp especially given the long travel to get to Storrs.

Sat, Nov 25: @ New Mexico - The Aggies have beat up on the Lobos and have won six straight by double digits. Will Utah State need this win to reach a bowl?

KEY PLAYERS

Cooper Legas - QB



Legas had his share of ups and downs last season but the Aggies offense did get into a decent rhythm beginning in October. The Orem native did seem to get more comfortable airing out the football late in the year although the interceptions increased, too. He'll need to take better care of the football but he was otherwise fairly accurate (61.1%) and there's a great opportunity for Legas to have his best season yet in his third year in Logan.

Hale Motu'apuaka - DT

The senior from Honolulu is emerged as a dominant force on the Utah State defensive line the past two seasons. In 2021 he made 26 tackles including 2.5 sacks. He doubled the sacks in 2022 while adding 35 tackles and he garnered second team All-Mountain-West honors. Motu'apuaka and fellow tackle Poukesi Vakauta are the lone returners on the defensive line and should wreak havoc this season.



2022 RESULTS (6-7)

UConn (W 31-20)

@ Alabama (L 0-55)
Weber State (L 7-35)
UNLV (L 24-34)
@ BYU (L 26-38)

Air Force (W 34-27)

@ **Colorado State (W 17-13)**
@ Wyoming (L 14-28)

New Mexico (W 27-10)

@ Hawaii (W 41-34)

San Jose State (W 35-31)

@ Boise State (L 23-42)
Memphis (L 10-38)

UTAH STATE™

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

117th

(Via 24/7 Sports)