



ARIZONA BIO

National Championships - 0



PAC-12 Championships: 1
(Last: 1993)

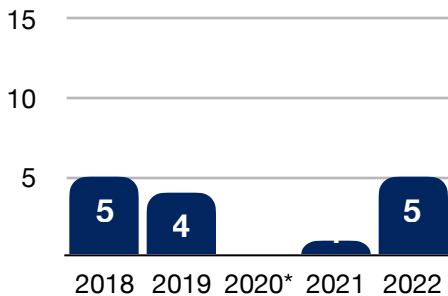
Location: **Tuscon, AZ**

All-Time Record: **496-453-23**

2022 Results: **5-7**

Head Coach: **Jedd Fisch**
3rd Year (6-18)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Arizona Stadium (57,400)

Can Fisch Solve Wildcat Defensive Woes?

Have you ever heard the phrase “a team on the rise that has severely underutilized their resources in the past”? This could be said of many programs across college football including the Arizona Wildcats. With strong high school football within the state and a geographical aid being located between California and Texas, there is no excuse as to why Arizona has achieved so little in football. Perhaps the pressure of joining a conference hell-bent on winning football games (the Big 12) will help in the future. For now though, what Tucson does have is a legitimate program builder in head coach Jedd Fisch. In only two seasons, Fisch has turned around a bottom dweller with very little hope for change to a respectable team that is capable of surprising teams on any given Saturday. That improvement played itself out last season when the Wildcats went into the Rose Bowl last season and defeated a very good UCLA team. Unfortunately, that win wasn’t enough to propel the team to a bowl game, but claiming five wins in 2022 after just one the previous two seasons combined was an enormous success. They were even able to hold their own against the elites of the conference like Washington and USC. What sank their opportunity to get to .500 and make a bowl game was an early season loss to a poor California squad. In a different world, if that game would have been played later in the season perhaps the Wildcats are able to pull off the victory. If the Wildcats want to go bowling for the first time since 2017, those are the types of games that they will be unable to drop.

A key to success for the coming season will be the return of 10 starters on offense who ranked 20th in total offense a season ago. Led by quarterback **Jayden De Laura**, the potent Wildcat offense kept them in games against superior opposition. Finishing 9th in the entire nation plays of 20 yards or more encapsulates the nature of this explosive team. A rare returning offensive coordinator in the PAC-12 should provide the stability needed for this potent offensive attack to continue into 2023. In the receiving room losing leader Dorian Singer to USC will hurt, but expect little drop off from this talented unit with NFL-caliber wideout **Jacob Cowing** leading the way.

Another reason for the quick turnaround has been Fisch’s focus on keeping the state’s high school talent home. There will be thirty players on the roster this coming season from the state of Arizona. While many of these players are still young, the Wildcats have replenished recruiting and added much needed depth at key positions. Yet, at times, their youth has shown, specifically on the defensive side of the ball. Arizona finished 125th in total defense last season, surrendering 468 yards a game. Clearly, this vulnerability completely undid the brilliance of the offense and often put the team in a position where shootouts were the only path to victory. Fisch has gone into the transfer portal to gain more leadership and quick fixes to the porous defense. The hope is that transfers such as **Taylor Upshaw** from Colorado can be instant contributors to help get that side of the ball back to being respectable. Oregon transfer **Justin Flowe** is a former 5-star who was ranked the top inside linebacker recruit in the entire 2020 class. He battled injuries with the Ducks, but the talent and potential is off the charts if he can stay healthy in with the Wildcats. Arizona had just 16 sacks a season ago, so increasing their pass rush is paramount.













The Bottom Line: Expectations have risen in Tucson for this team as Fisch seems to be building a strong culture and foundation for the future. The issue in attempting the “next jump” this season is the increasing quality of the PAC 12. 2023 might be the best the conference has ever been at the top with numerous high powered offenses leading the way. The weakness of the Wildcats is the strength for the teams at the top. Their defense should improve this year, but it’s unlikely that the improvement is enough to add another four wins to their record like they did last season. A difficult trip to an undervalued Mississippi State team will be a good marker for how the season will go. They have an absolute gauntlet in the middle of the season that includes facing PAC-12 favorites Washington and USC back-to-back. Arizona will have to win the games they’re favored in as well as find a couple upsets on the schedule to sneak into a bowl game, but it’s entirely possible.

Projection: 6-6 (8th in PAC-12)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
30.8	143.5	318.4	-6
48th in FBS	71st in FBS	6th in FBS	T-109th in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
36.5	209.1	258.6	
126th in FBS	124th in FBS	107th in FBS	

2023 Arizona Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. No. Arizona
2	Sat, Sept 9	 @ Mississippi St.
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. UTEP
4	Sat, Sept 23	 @ Stanford
5	Sat, Sept 30	 vs. Washington
6	Sat, Oct 7	 @ USC
7	Sat, Oct 14	 @ Washington St.
8	Bye Week	
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Oregon State
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. UCLA
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ Colorado
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. Utah
13	Sat, Nov 25	 @ Arizona State

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 9: @ Mississippi State - Even though Mississippi State is going through a change in offensive scheme due to the tragic passing of head coach Mike Leach, the Bulldogs are a quality program and there could be some offensive fireworks in this intriguing matchup.

Sat, Nov 4: vs. UCLA - To finish the season with a winning record, defeating "mid-table" teams like the Bruins at home will be critical.

Sat, November 25: @ Arizona State - For those outside of Arizona, this won't be a marquee game since both programs have struggled in recent years. For these teams, however, the "Territorial Cup" means everything especially if a bowl berth is on the line.

KEY PLAYERS

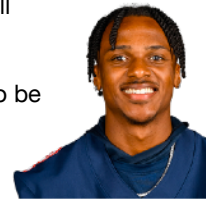
Taylor Upshaw - DE



Upshaw has had a long road to Tuscon after previous stops at Colorado and Michigan. He will be one of many new faces that will be asked to get the Wildcats' defense (one of the worst defenses in the country last season) back to respectability. If he can get pressure on the quarterback frequently, that will be a great start.

Jacob Cowing - WR

Much will be asked of the Arizona offense this year as the defensive rebuild continues. The Wildcats will need to score early and often to stay in games. Luckily, Cowing brings back his 85 catches and 1,034 yards from last season and will continue to be a focal point of the offense. With De Laura back at quarterback, Cowing should have an excellent final season and will almost certainly find his way on an NFL roster after the 2023 campaign concludes.



2022 RESULTS (5-7)

@ San Diego State (W 38-20)

Mississippi State (L 17-39)

North Dakota (W 31-28)

@ California (L 31-49)

Colorado (W 43-20)

Oregon (L 22-49)

@ Washington (L 39-49)

USC (L 37-45)

@ Utah (L 20-45)

@ UCLA (W 34-28)

Washington State (L 20-31)

Arizona State (W 38-35)

ARIZONA

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

38th

(Via 24/7 Sports)