



# OHIO BOBCATS

2023 Record: 10-3

Mid-American Conference

Athens, OH

FBS Ranking

101

Following two great seasons, can Ohio finally grab elusive MAC title?

HC: **Tim Albin**  
(4th Year, 23-16)

OC: **Brian Smith**  
(1st Year)

DC: **John Hauser**  
(1st Year)

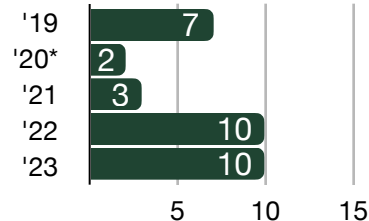
## 2024 Class Rankings

Recruiting  
**93**

Transfer Portal  
**107**

Via 24/7 Sports

## OHIO WIN TREND



## 2023 Results (10-3)

- @ San Diego State (L 13-20)
- Long Island (W 27-10)
- @ FAU (W 17-10)
- Iowa State (W 10-7)
- @ Bowling Green (W 38-7)
- Kent State (W 42-17)
- @ No. Illinois (L 13-23)
- W. Michigan (W 20-17)
- Miami (OH) (L 16-30)
- @ Buffalo (W 20-10)
- C. Michigan (W 34-20)
- @ Akron (W 25-14)
- vs. Georgia So. (W 41-21)  
68 Ventures Bowl



5thandGoalSports.com

Tim Albin has done a remarkable job in Athens since replacing a legendary coach in Frank Solich. Even Solich never accomplished what Albin has been able to do for two straight seasons: win double-digit games. The Bobcats have had a .500 record or better in 16 of the last 20 seasons. However, despite the regular season success, one thing has eluded them since 1968: a MAC Championship.

Last season, a home loss in the Battle of the Bricks rivalry against eventual MAC champ Miami knocked Ohio out of contention. Ohio responded by winning the final four games of the season including the 68 Ventures Bowl against Georgia Southern all by double digits. There's a lot of positive momentum entering 2024 after the success of the past two seasons, but the Bobcats are also facing the reality of replacing many of their key contributors.

### OFFENSE

Longtime quarterback Kurtis Rourke transferred to Indiana this offseason. He leaves Athens as the second all-time leading passer in program history (7,666 yards) just ahead of his brother Nathan. The Bobcats have been primarily led at quarterback by a Rourke brother since 2017 and that changes this season. Backup CJ Harris missed most of the season with health issues (and has since transferred) leaving **Parker Navarro** as the likely starter in 2024. He played in spot duty last year especially early in the season when Rourke was nursing an injury. He impressed in the bowl game as a starter, completing 11 of 16 passes while showcasing his legs for 15 carries and 71 yards.

Ohio will have to replace both pieces of their running back duo, Sieh Bangura and O'Shaan Allison. That tandem combined for 1312 yards and 10 touchdowns. Rourke was third in rushing with 219 yards and Navarro was fourth. That means the only returner with significant rushing production from last year is **Rickey Hunt**. He played in only three games last year, so he redshirted. However, one of those games was the bowl game where he exploded for 115 yards and 5 touchdowns! Albin also adds **Anthony Tyus** from Northwestern and **Nolan McCormick** could see a bigger role.

The receiving corps will look very different in 2024 after the seven pass catchers depart. The most significant loss is obviously Sam Wiglusz who was one of the best receivers in the MAC over the past couple of seasons and who is currently on an NFL roster this preseason. The leading returner is **Chase Hendricks** but he only had 11 catches. The Bobcats are hopeful that a player like **Coleman Owens** can become an impact player after several years spent at FCS Northern Arizona. The offensive line has been a strength in the past but **Parker Titsworth** and **Christophe Atkinson** are the only returning starters, so this group may be down a notch.

### DEFENSE

The Bobcat defense was simply elite last season. They finished top 10 in the nation in scoring defense, rushing defense, and total defense and they were excellent in many other categories. Ohio is +21 in turnover margin over the last two seasons thanks in large part to the defense for creating opportunities. However, that defense not only must replace several key players but their defensive coordinator Spence Nowinsky who is now a co-defensive coordinator at Memphis.

The linebacker tandem of Bryce Houston and Keye Thompson were major contributors and finding their replacement is nearly an impossible task. Tim Ablin and company have largely turned to the transfer portal for their answers at linebacker. The defensive line returns the most production with **Marcel Walker-Burgess** and **Bradley Weaver** on either end. MWB's experience came most recently at Nevada where he was a starter last season and collected 46 tackles and 4 sacks.

The secondary features safeties **Austin Brawley** and **Adonis Williams** who are the two leading returning tacklers for the Bobcats. **Tank Pearson** snagged an interception against both Florida Atlantic and Western Michigan. The Bobcats also add cornerback **Michael Mack** from Wisconsin although he hasn't played since 2022 when he was with Air Force and made 42 tackles, defended three passes and claimed an interception. Of the three units on the defense (line, linebackers, secondary), the secondary might be the strongest.



**PARKER NAVARRO – QB**

Photo via 24/7 Sports

### 2024 Ohio Schedule

Wk	Date	Location
1	Sat, Aug 31	@ Syracuse
2	Sat, Sept 7	vs. South Alabama
3	Sat, Sept 14	vs. Morgan State
4	Sat, Sept 21	@ Kentucky
5	Sat, Sept 28	vs. Akron
7	Sat, Oct 12	@ C. Michigan
8	Sat, Oct 19	@ Miami (OH)
9	Sat, Oct 26	vs. Buffalo
11	Wed, Nov 6	@ Kent State
12	Wed, Nov 13	vs. E. Michigan
13	Wed, Nov 20	@ Toledo
14	Fri, Nov 29	vs. Ball State

■ Home ■ Away

### Key Games

**vs. South Alabama:** The Bobcats dominated a Sun Belt team in the bowl game on both sides of the ball and now welcome in a Sun Belt opponent to Peden Stadium for the first time since 2019.

**@ Miami:** The "Battle of the Bricks" returns to Oxford where the Bobcats claimed a convincing 37-21 victory in 2022. Miami got their revenge in Athens in 2023, will it be three straight for the road team?

**@ Toledo:** The Rockets and Bobcats didn't play last season, so that means that this Wednesday #MAAction showdown is the rematch of the 2022 MAC Championship game. Toledo is tough at home with a 37-9 home record under HC Candle.

# Player Spotlight

Photo via HERO Sports



## AUSTIN BRAWLEY – S

Brawley is the team's leading returning tackler and he's hoping to increase his production even more in 2024 with a healthy season. In the non-conference slate alone, he recovered a fumble and snagged an interception against both Long Island and Florida Atlantic. Brawley and fellow safety Adonis Williams will patrol the secondary as the last line of the usually potent Bobcat defense.

**2023 Stats: 39 TKL, 0.5 TFL, 2 INT**

Photo via Ohio Bobcats



## PARKER TITSWORTH – C

The offensive line allowed only 15 sacks in 2023 after allowing 25 in 2022. Titsworth started all 13 games for the Bobcats last year and was a contributor to one of the best lines in the conference. That unit is far less experienced in 2024 and Ohio will be leaning on his experience even more. The O-line will need to play well to give Navarro time in the pocket, especially against teams like Syracuse and Kentucky.

**35 Career Starts (5 Seasons)**

Photo via Ohio Bobcats



**Peden Stadium (24,000)**



## Ricky HUNT

**SPECIAL TEAMS**

Photo via Hustle Belt

Gianni Spetic connected on 18 of 26 field goal attempts but didn't make a kick longer than 40 yards. The Bobcats also added **Jacob Lewis** from Minnesota. He didn't see playing time there, but he spent time in the MAC with Ball State and had a career-long 51 yarder during his time in Muncie. **Jack Wilson** returns after averaging 42.7 yards per punt. Both Keegan Wilburn and Tyler Walton are gone after returning punts and kickoffs, respectively.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Ohio has had two great seasons but it's hard to see a path to double digit wins in 2024 given the losses on both offense and defense. The schedule is much more difficult with non-conference road games against Syracuse and Kentucky (although the Bobcats did upset a "Power Four" opponent in Iowa State last season) and Ohio travels to both representatives of last year's MAC title game, Toledo and Miami.

Albin is a great coach and will make the most of his roster, but there are a lot of questions to be answered if the Bobcats want to end the season in Detroit. Parker Navarro will need to play well in order for Ohio to avoid a drop-off at quarterback and that's largely dependent on new weapons finding their footing quickly. The Bobcats may be a year away from contention in the MAC, but a third straight bowl appearance is a likely.

### Appointment Television



vs.



**Sat, Oct 19 - 3:30 PM ET (TV TBA)**

The road team has actually won the past two contests in the "Battle of the Bricks" rivalry. Last year, the RedHawks were held to just 50 rushing yards on 26 carries but found success in the air. The Bobcats gave up 313 passing yards, the most allowed in any game last season and they'll have to deal with RedHawk quarterback Brett Gabbert yet again in 2024. Completing only seven passes (like Ohio did last year) won't get the job done.

### 2023 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
<b>Points</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Rushing</b>	<b>144.4</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>Rushing</b>	<b>91.2</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Passing</b>	<b>203.6</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>Passing</b>	<b>182.4</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>348.0</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>273.5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sacks</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>T-15</b>	<b>Sacks</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>T-16</b>

**2024 Projection**  
**7-5**  
**5th in MAC**



**1953**  
**1960**  
**1963**  
**1967**  
**1968**

### Trophy Case