



WASHINGTON STATE BIO

National Championships - 0



PAC-12 Championships: 4
(Last: 2002)

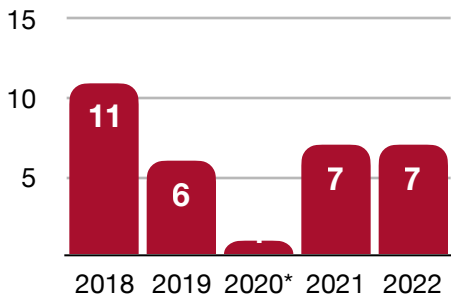
Location: Pullman, WA

All-Time Record: 496-540-38

2022 Results: 7-6
Lost in LA Bowl

Head Coach: Jake Dickert
2nd Year (11-9)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Martin Stadium (32,952)

Washington State vs. The World

Anyone with a deep love for college football enters this season with part of their heart cheering for the Cougars (assuming you're not a Washington fan). Programs like Washington State have been the unfortunate casualties of conference realignment and with the effects of the moves coming next year, savor this season. Washington State had a solid first year under first year head coach Jake Dickert. Finishing 7-6, the Cougars won every game in which they were favored and lost every game in which they were not favored outside of a nice upset win over Wisconsin in week two. There were plenty of other close calls including a three-point and four-point loss to Oregon and Utah. Generally, the vibes were good in Pullman until a disappointing Apple Cup and blowout loss to Fresno State. Quarterback **Cameron Ward** had both brilliant and brutal moments in his first season starting after transferring from Incarnate Word. His dual threat abilities make him dynamic, but his propensity for ill-timed turnovers sunk the Cougars several times. If he's able to be consistently accurate and mistake free in the passing attack and protect the ball both in the air and on the ground as a runner, he'll have a chance to join an extremely crowded room of elite PAC-12 quarterbacks.

The hope is that Dickert and his starting quarterback will be a little more settled in their second year together at Washington State. The Cougars could better support Ward this season by developing a more reliable run game after averaging just 106 yards on the ground last season. The offensive line was certainly partly to blame if their 46 sacks allowed are any indication. **Fa'Alili Fa'Amoe** shoe be the anchor of that unit with three starters gone. Senior running back **Nakia Watson** averaged 5.3 yards per carry last season will need to be a larger part of the offense in 2023 to take some of the pressure off the passing game and allow Ward to have running lanes himself. The top four pass catchers for the Cougars are gone, leaving a substantial void at receiver. Transfers will need to make an immediate impact here including a couple of former Mountain West wideouts **Kyle Williams** (UNLV) and **Josh Kelly** (Fresno State).

Defensively, the Cougars lose star linebacker **Deiyan Henley**, but one of the strongest pass rush tandems in the league return. Defensive ends **Ron Stone Jr.** and **Brennan Jackson** helped the team combine for 33 sacks in 2022. Stone had two sacks and was second-team All-PAC-12 while Jackson added six sacks and was first-team All-PAC-12. Winning the line of scrimmage and making the game ugly could pay dividends against the high powered offenses of the PAC 12. It almost goes without saying, but getting reliable pressure on the quarterback will be crucial with so many talented signal callers playing in this conference. At the same time, many of the conference's top teams are breaking in new pieces on their offensive lines, so the pass rush could be a huge key to victory against superior opponents.











The Bottom Line: It would be fair to expect more out of Dickert and his team in year two, but this is the deepest the conference has ever been. The PAC-12 contains multiple teams that could make the College Football Playoff and quarterbacks who could lift the Heisman at the end of the year. Washington State and Ward don't appear to be either of those things so the thought process is to be the "next best" team, and fight to finish in the top half of the league and make a bowl. Week two of the season against Wisconsin will set the tone for the season. Finding a conference victory against Oregon State, Oregon, or Washington would be a boon to the season. There were close calls in the middle of last season that could turn into wins this season with better situational awareness and overall play. Expect what was a young team last year to show maturity and pull off some of those tight games this year. Perhaps the "us against the world," mantra could actually be applicable and used to motivate the team. If Ward and company are consistent, the Cougars have a real shot at ruining the goals of the conference elites and they should land in their eighth bowl game in the last nine seasons.

Projection: 6-6 (7th in PAC-12)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
26.1	106.8	253.8	+3
80th in FBS	118th in FBS	45th in FBS	T-51st in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
22.9	134.6	267.7	
38th in FBS	42nd in FBS	114th in FBS	

2023 Washington State Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 @ Colorado State
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. Wisconsin
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. No. Colorado
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. Oregon State
5	Bye Week	
6	Sat, Oct 7	 @ UCLA
7	Sat, Oct 14	 vs. Arizona
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ Oregon
9	Sat, Oct 28	 @ Arizona State
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. Stanford
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ California
12	Fri, Nov 17	 vs. Colorado
13	Sat, Nov 25	 @ Washington

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

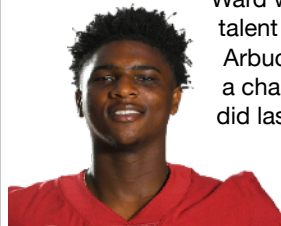
Sat, Sept 9: @ Wisconsin - A victory in Madison last year jump started the season. An opportunity at a repeat awaits against a Luke Fickell-led Badgers team.

Sat, Sept 23: vs. Oregon State - One of the goals this season for the Cougars should be to finish in the top half of the conference standings. To do so, they'll have to pull off an upset or two and the conference opener is as good a time as any.

Sat, Nov 25: @ Washington - This could be the last Apple Cup for the foreseeable future and it will mean *everything*. There will be a lot of emotion coming from the Cougars' side and they could ruin a magical season for their arch rival.

KEY PLAYERS

Cameron Ward - QB



Ward was occasionally erratic last season but the talent and ability are undeniable. With Ben Arbuckle at offensive coordinator, Ward will have a chance to throw downfield even more than he did last season and he could potentially post monster numbers. Eliminating some turnovers and throwing the ball away when the situation calls for it will be simple measuring sticks to see how far Ward has progressed.

Brennan Jackson - DE

Jackson anchored the Cougars' defensive line last season and accounted for six sacks on his own. The Cougars allowed 267.7 yards through the air alone last season so a strong pass rush is even more necessary. Expect Jackson to have another stellar, productive season to cap off his career in Pullman before he gets a shot at the next level.



2022 RESULTS (7-6)

Idaho (W 24-17)
 @ Wisconsin (W 17-14)
 Colorado State (W 38-7)
 Oregon (L 41-44)
 California (W 28-9)
 @ USC (L 14-30)
 @ Oregon State (L 10-24)
 Utah (L 17-21)
 @ Stanford (W 52-14)
 Arizona State (W 28-18)
 @ Arizona (W 31-20)
 Washington (L 33-51)
 Fresno State (L 6-29)

COUGARS

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

63rd

(Via 24/7 Sports)