



NORTHWESTERN BIO

National Championships - 0



Big Ten Championships: 7
(Last: 2000)

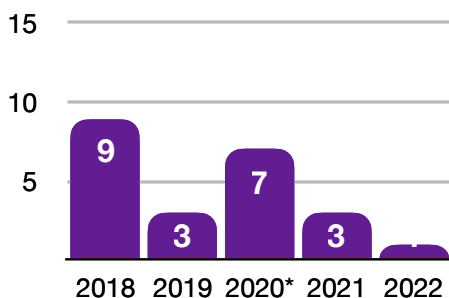
Location: **Evanston, IL**

All-Time Record: **550-689-40**

2022 Results: **1-11**

Head Coach: **David Braun**
1st Year (0-0)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Ryan Field (47,130)

Overcoming Off-field Disaster

The college football world was rocked by the news of a hazing scandal that had taken place at Northwestern over the past few years. Regardless of whether or not head coach Pat Fitzgerald was aware of what was happening behind closed doors, he was fired. Let's be very clear, the primary concern is for the victims who were affected. The far less pressing and secondary concerns are focused on the football field for the 2023 season. Fitzgerald was going to enter his 18th season and had long since been the face of the program and had been far and away the most successful coach in program history with a school record 110 wins, 10 bowl game appearances, and 2 West Division titles. Defensive coordinator David Braun was given the interim tag and must now steer the team forward through significant adversity. Due to the circumstances, Northwestern players were given the opportunity to transfer out of the school and several athletes obliged including a few members of the incoming recruiting class. Even now as I am sitting down to write this page there are still players who could enter the portal between now and when the season begins so I will do my best to accurately reflect the Northwestern roster but there may be a player or two mention here who is no longer with the team.

Last season, the Wildcats were one of the most offensively challenged teams in the country. They scored 31 points in the season opener in Ireland against Nebraska but never reached that point total again and had single digit points in six of the last eight games. The quarterback position was a revolving door and interceptions and turnovers were plentiful, resulting in the worst turnover margin of all 131 FBS programs. Transfer **Ben Bryant** will hopefully stabilize the offense. He's on his third team in as many seasons but was a starter at both Eastern Michigan and Cincinnati. Accuracy eluded him at times last season but he's got a big arm and will be an upgrade to the position from last season. Somehow, all four quarterbacks that saw action last season are all back so it could even turn into a very deep position group especially if everyone can stay healthy.

Both the leading rusher and receiver are gone from last year's team. Do-it-all running back Evan Hall departs and Malik Washington, who caught 65 passes for 694 yards, transferred to Virginia. **Bryce Kirtz** and **Jacob Gill** will need to step into bigger roles and they are joined by transfer **AJ Henning** from Michigan. The coaching staff is also high on freshman **Frank Covey**. Expect tight ends **Charlie Mangieri** and **Thomas Gordon** to get into the mix again. Running back **Cam Porter** had a terrific final three games of the 2020 season including a 142-yard, two-touchdown performance in a win over Illinois but an ACL injury cost him all of 2021. He mostly sat behind Hull last season and saw only 87 carries with an average of just 3.3 yards per carry but if he can capture the magic of those games in 2020 he'll have a much better year. The offensive line will be a work in progress especially with the departure of first round draft pick Peter Skronoski. **Josh Priebe** is arguably the most talented athlete on the line and will hold things down at left guard.

The defense has eight starters returning led by **Bryce Gallagher** at linebacker. **Xander Mueller** and **Rod Heard** form a strong linebacker corps that will likely be the strength of the defense, if not the entire team. The Wildcats need more pressure on the quarterback and they struggled mightily to stop the run and really need the front seven to pull through.

The Bottom Line: Northwestern was already one of the worst teams in college football last season and the circumstances this summer have only added to the challenges facing the Wildcats this season. However, perhaps the team can rally around one another and find a way to win a couple of games. Considering that the Wildcats enter the game on an 11-game losing streak, they'll take just about any win they can get. A week one Sunday game at Rutgers is a potential option but games against UTEP and (FCS) Howard are far more favorable. The Wildcats haven't won a true road game in two seasons and I unfortunately don't see that changing. I also wouldn't be surprised if they finish winless in conference play. I would love to be wrong and will certainly be rooting for this team. In the much bigger picture, I am hopeful that, because this situation came to light, other potential hazing issues from other parts of the country go extinct.













Projection: 2-10 (7th in American)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
13.8	125.1	210.3	-19
128th in FBS	98th in FBS	94th in FBS	131st in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
28.3	191.3	183.4	
83rd in FBS	110th in FBS	13th in FBS	



2023 Northwestern Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sun, Sept 3	 @ Rutgers
2	Sat, Sept 9	 vs. UTEP
3	Sat, Sept 16	 @ Duke
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. Minnesota
5	Sat, Sept 30	 vs. Penn State
6	Sat, Oct 7	 vs. Howard
7	Bye Week	
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ Nebraska
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Maryland
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. Iowa*
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ Wisconsin
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. Purdue
13	Sat, Nov 25	 @ Illinois

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 9: vs. UTEP - If the Rutgers game doesn't go well, the Wildcats will take a 12-game losing streak into their home opener. A game against UTEP may not seem notable to anyone on the outside looking in, but given the 4-20 record of the past two seasons, any win is a good one and this is a winnable game.

Sat, Nov 4: vs. Iowa - Expect Iowa to be as tough as ever, especially in the potentially frigid conditions of Wrigley Field in November. However, if the Hawkeye offense continues to struggle this season the Wildcats could keep the game close and interesting.

Sat, Nov 25: @ Illinois - The Illini have won the past two games by a combined 71 points. Can Northwestern respond in the season finale?

KEY PLAYERS

Ben Bryant - QB



Bryant hasn't played in the Power 5 but was the starter on last year's Cincinnati team that had a lot of pressure on them following a magical Playoff run, so he won't shy away from adversity. He'll face plenty of challenges but he's a tough quarterback with a good arm. Give him time in the pocket, and he'll make a lot of pretty throws.

Bryce Gallagher - LB

Gallagher has been the most consistent force on the Wildcats defense the past two seasons. After recording 90 tackles in 2021 he reached the 100 tackle threshold last season and added 1.5 sacks and a forced fumble. He'll lead an experienced linebacker group and his play will be incredibly important as the Wildcats look to bounce back from the 28.3 points allowed per game last season.



2022 RESULTS (1-11)

Nebraska (W 31-28)

Duke (L 23-31)
Southern Illinois (L 24-31)
Miami (OH) (L 14-17)
@ Penn State (L 7-17)
Wisconsin (L 7-42)
@ Maryland (L 24-31)
@ Iowa (L 13-33)
Ohio State (L 7-21)
@ Minnesota (L 3-31)
@ Purdue (L 9-17)
Illinois (L 3-41)

NORTHWESTERN

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

47th

(Via 24/7 Sports)