



KANSAS JAYHAWKS

2024 Record: 5-7 (4-5 B12)

Big 12 Conference

Lawrence, KS

Jayhawks Back to Bowling?

Lance Leipold had the Jayhawks ahead of schedule in their significant rebuild in 2022 and 2023 but they came crashing back to earth a bit in 2024. A rough start to the season spoiled any chance of improving upon a 9-4 season. Kansas was also playing their home games at Arrowhead Stadium and Children's Mercy Park, home of Sporting Kansas City, and it's certainly possible that the change of scenery and added travel could have made an impact. The Jayhawks return to a renovated David Booth complete with a wheat design in the end zones, and their roster will look pretty different in 2025, too.

What form will the 2025 season take? Will it look more like 2022/2023 where Kansas had their highest Top 25 ranking since the Todd Reesing era? Or will it look more like 2024? The answer is somewhere in between, most likely. Last year's rough 1-5 start included four losses by a combined 17 points. It will be critical for the Jayhawks to get off to a faster start to avoid missing a bowl game for the second straight year.

OFFENSE

Jalon Daniels is back at quarterback (again) - the super senior began his career back in 2020 and currently ranks second all-time in school history in passing yards. Injuries have plagued Daniels throughout his career and he's really only had two full seasons including last year. Relative to other seasons, Daniels did not play well last year and had 12 interceptions to just 14 touchdowns, but he did set a career high with 447 rush yards. **Cole Ballard** and **Isaiah Marshall** will serve as his backups.

Kansas hung their hat on the run game last year with star running back Devin Neal, but he's off to the NFL, a sixth round selection by the New Orleans Saints. Neal leaves as the all-time leading rusher in program history and his departure leaves Daniels as the team's leading returner from 2024. **Daniel Hishaw**, like Neal, posted a 5.8 yard average on the ground and he added 626 yards in 2023 so he will be the likely bell cow this season especially since he's been in the program since 2020. **LeShon Williams** brings more career yardage to the table than Hishaw from his two seasons at Iowa.

The main question on offense is the receiver room where Daniels loses every top target from last season. The 2025 group will be portal-heavy including **Cam Pickett** from Ball State (528 yards), **Emmanuel Henderson** from Alabama (82 yards), **Bryson Canty** from Columbia (760 yards), and **Levi Wentz** from Albany (621 yards). An offensive line that allowed only ten sacks all year will also need to be remade although center **Bryce Foster** is a strong building block.

DEFENSE

Over the last couple of seasons, Leipold and his staff have completely transformed the Kansas defense. That side of the ball was once a laughing stock when Leipold arrived in Lawrence (46.0 points allowed in 2020, 42.2 in 2021) but this group has been competitive in the past two seasons. There's still plenty of room to grow and that's where new defensive coordinator D.K. McDonald comes into the picture. He's an internal hire where he served as the cornerbacks coach; he was with the Philadelphia Eagles in that same capacity before arriving here.

His background in the secondary will be particularly needed this season with both Cobie Bryant and Mello Dotson gone at corner where they were superb, combining for nine interceptions. It will be quite the task to replace them and more than likely the secondary's overall performance will dip. **Jalen Todd** and **Taylor Davis** are sophomores and return to the field for Kansas at corner and safety, respectively. The other starting roles at those positions are up for grabs and will likely be settled in fall camp.

While the secondary has questions, they could be helped out with a more reliable pass rush from the likes of **Dean Miller** who had a standout season at defensive end with six sacks. **Justice Finkley** joins the team after spending three seasons at Texas and the hope is that he turns into an impact player. **Jayson Gilliom** provides a veteran presence at linebacker with 35 games under his belt. There are a handful of transfers who may fill the other starting slots including **Joseph Sipp** who turned in 79 tackles and seven sacks at Bowling Green as well as **Trey Lathan** from West Virginia (79 tackles).

Preseason Ranking

TBD

HC: Lance Leipold
(5th Year, 22-28)

OC: Jim Zebrowski
(2nd Year)

DC: D.K. McDonald
(1st Year)

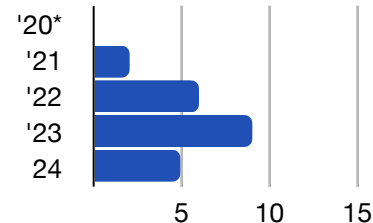
2025 Class Rankings

Recruiting
72

Transfer Portal
39

Via 24/7 Sports

KANSAS WIN TREND



2024 Results (5-7)

Lindenwood (W 48-3)
@ Illinois (L 17-23)
UNLV (L 20-23)
@ West Virginia (L 28-32)
TCU (L 27-38)
@ Arizona State (L 31-35)
Houston (W 42-14)
@ Kansas State (L 272-9)
Iowa State (W 45-36)
@ BYU (W 17-13)
Colorado (W 37-21)
@ Baylor (L 17-45)

KANSAS



DJ WITHERS – DT

Photo via 247Sports

2025 Kansas Schedule

Wk		
0	Sat, Aug 23	vs. Fresno State
1	Fri, Aug 29	vs. Wagner
2	Sat, Sept 6	@ Missouri
4	Sat, Sept 20	vs. West Virginia
5	Sat, Sept 27	vs. Cincinnati
6	Sat, Oct 4	@ UCF
7	Sat, Oct 11	@ Texas Tech
9	Sat, Oct 25	vs. Kansas State
10	Sat, Nov 1	vs. Oklahoma St.
11	Sat, Nov 8	@ Arizona
13	Sat, Nov 22	@ Iowa State
14	Fri, Nov 28	vs. Utah

■ Home ■ Away ■ Neutral

Key Games

Sept 6 @ Missouri: After a much-too-long hiatus, the Border War returns! One of the most competitive rivalries both in terms of ire for one another and the overall series record will resume in Columbia.

Oct 25 vs. Kansas State: Despite their recent success, the one thing that has eluded the Jayhawks is a win over the Wildcats. Can KU put an end to a 16-game losing streak?

Nov 22 @ Iowa State: The Jayhawks have claimed the last three games in this series including last year's 45-36 victory where they solved Iowa State's usually vaunted defense (532 total yards).

Player Spotlight

Photo via The Topeka Capital-Journal



DANIEL HISHAW – RB

Both quarterback Jalon Daniels and Daniel Hishaw have been in the Kansas program since 2020 and the 2025 season marks their final ride. Hishaw has largely played the backup role with only one season where he received more than 65 carries. However, that season he went for 626 yards and 8 touchdowns. With more touches, he'll take aim at Devin Neal's momentous 2024 numbers - 1,266 yards and 16 touchdowns.

2024 Stats: 65 RUSH, 376 YDS, 3 TDS

Photo via @DeanMiller25 on X

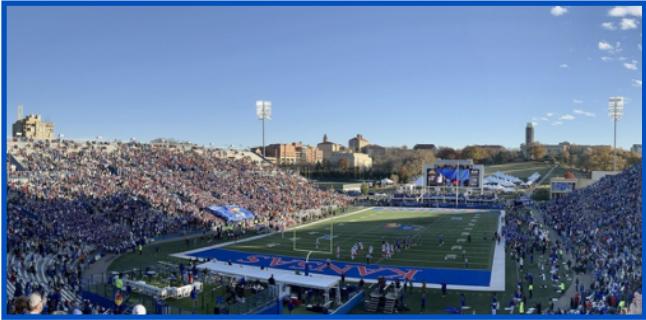


DEAN MILLER – DE

You wouldn't think a player with six sacks and nearly ten tackles for loss would have a chip on his shoulder, but Miller was snubbed from the Big 12 preseason media all-conference team despite his success in 2024. The start of Miller's career wasn't especially notable with some spot duty on special teams, but the 6'5" end has blossomed into a terrific pass rusher. By proving the doubters wrong, he'll become a future Sunday player.

2024 Stats: 32 TKL, 9.5 TFL, 6 SACK

Photo via College Gridirons



David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium (47,233)

Photo via KU Athletics



Bryce FOSTER

SPECIAL TEAMS

Special teams have been a bugaboo under Leipold (and before he arrived, too). It will be an entirely new unit for the Jayhawks in 2025 with their starting kicker, punter, and returners all gone. **Laith Marjan** joins the team from South Alabama to assume the place kicking duties while punter **Finn Lappin** transfers in from Mcneese.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Based on sound bytes from fall camp, the coaching staff feels like the 2025 edition of the Kansas Jayhawks is in a much better place in terms of health and overall connectedness even with a plethora of new faces. We've seen in the past what a difference maker Jalon Daniels can be at the quarterback position when healthy and there may not be as much of a dip in the run game as one might expect with Devin Neal gone. Inexperience at key positions on defense raises some concerns.

Kansas plays four of their first five games at their renovated home stadium and the lone road game is against old rival Missouri. It's imperative that the Jayhawks start the season strong as opposed to the disastrous 1-5 start of the 2024 season. The schedule ramps up significantly down the stretch. The difference between contention in the Big 12 and missing a bowl game is thin. Leipold has overachieved in the past and he'll need to do so again to guide Rock Chalk to their third bowl game in four years for the first time in program history.

Appointment Television



VS.



Sat, Sept 6 - 3:30 PM ET (ESPN2)

The "Border War" was one of the more costly casualties of conference realignment. These teams separated by less than 200 miles played every season from 1891 to 2011 but haven't played since, until now. Missouri holds the slimmest of margins in the all-time record (56-55-9) thanks to three wins in a row at the end of their time in the Big 12. A Kansas win would send Lawrence into euphoria and would set the table for a magical season.

2024 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	29.7	52	Points	26.0	T-75
Rushing	211.4	13	Rushing	153.5	75
Passing	208.8	90	Passing	239.1	103
Total	420.2	37	Total	392.6	92
Sacks	10	5	Sacks	28	T-44

2025 Projection
5-7
X in Big 12

Trophy Case



XO

National
Champions



XO

Big 12
Champions



7-7

Bowl
Record



O

Playoff
Appearances