



UTAH BIO

National Championships - 0



PAC-12 Championships: **2**
(Last: **2022**)

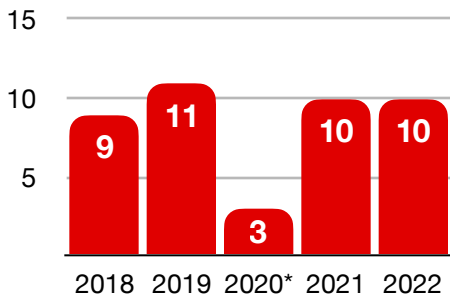
Location: **Salt Lake City, UT**

All-Time Record: **680-454-30**

2021 Results: **10-4**
Won PAC-12 Championship
Lost in Rose Bowl

Head Coach: **Kyle Whittingham**
20th Year (154-74)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Rice-Eccles Stadium (45,807)

Utes Aim for PAC-12 Three-Peat

The back-to-back defending PAC-12 champs will have an uphill battle in their quest for a three-peat this season. Doubtful each year since joining the conference, Utah has been the model of consistency under Head Coach Kyle Whittingham and their physical brand of football has been an Achilles' heel for their opponents. Last season's lofty expectations of a College Football Playoff were quickly dashed in their brutally close loss to Florida. Whittingham's teams tend to improve drastically throughout the year. That point was proven when the Utes regrouped in time to make the PAC-12 title game where they defeated the favored USC Trojans for a second time that season. Unfortunately, the Rose Bowl game ended similarly to the year before: an injury to starting quarterback **Cam Rising** that potentially cost the team an opportunity to win in the second half. The up-and-down season will certainly be remembered as a success in Salt Lake City, but some will wonder "what could have been" with one of the most talented rosters in program history.

Cam Rising's recovery from his ACL tear in the Rose Bowl against Penn State has been on the top of everyone's mind in Salt Lake City this offseason. The senior quarterback has been crucial with his rugged play style and leadership qualities since taking over during the 2021 season. Without Rising, not only do the chances of winning the conference seemingly evaporate but early season clashes in the non-conference get far more nerve-wracking. **Bryson Barnes**, the near hero of the 2022 Rose Bowl game will need to be ready to play despite being listed as the third string quarterback after backup **Brandon Rose** suffered a significant injury in practice. Unfortunately, Rising's stubborn, but heroic playing style has caused a lot of injuries in the past, so Barnes may be called upon throughout the season to fill in. What is perceived as a strong offensive line (led by **Sataoa Laumea** at tackle) and a deep running back unit will need to carry the load no matter who is taking snaps under center this season. Look for **Ja'Quinden Jackson**, who switched from quarterback to running back last season, to be an x-factor, especially if the Utes need to get creative on offense. The two leading wide receivers both return in **Devaughn Vele** (55 receptions, 695 yards) and **Money Parks** (26 catches, 414 yards) but the depth behind those players is relatively unproven.

In addition to the questions surrounding Rising's availability, the Utes will need to replace some cornerstone players that left for the NFL including tight end Dalton Kincaid and cornerback Clark Phillips. The replacement for Kincaid is obvious in **Brant Kuithe**, who was actually ahead of Kincaid on the depth chart last year before injury. The reliant Kuithe has NFL potential himself with 50 receptions in the 2021 season. On defense, the Utes will rely on **Karene Reid** who was a second-team All-PAC-12 linebacker with 72 tackles and 5 sacks. Cornerback **Cole Bishop** should shine again in 2023. The defensive line could be flat out elite (if they weren't already) and return two-deep experience and talent. Whittingham's defense has been the model of consistency since arriving in the PAC-12 and with nine starters back on that side of the football, don't expect anything to change.

The Bottom Line: Winning back-to-back conference championships is an incredible feat, especially for a school that only joined a "Power 5" conference in 2011. In each of those seasons, Utah lost early in the year and was written off by much of the country. Meanwhile, the Utes would slowly get better throughout the season until they peaked at the perfect time to win the PAC-12. This year, the same themes could be true. The Utes are once again not the favorite to win the conference and they have tough non-conference games to start the season. After challenging matchups against Florida and Baylor in the first two weeks of the season, Utah then eventually faces the other top six teams in conference and play three on the road. There are a lot of challenges facing the Utes this season including the loss of key starts and uncertainty at the quarterback position due to Rising's health. While I have the Utes pegged for a slight drop off, doubt the Utah and Kyle Whittingham at your own peril.

Projection: 8-4 (5th in PAC-12)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
38.6	217.6	249.2	+6
11th in FBS	11th in FBS	50th in FBS	T-31st in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	
21.4	111.4	205.0	
27th in FBS	18th in FBS	31st in FBS	

2023 Utah Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Thu, Aug 31	 vs. Florida
2	Sat, Sept 9	 @ Baylor
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. Weber State
4	Sat, Sept 23	 vs. UCLA
5	Fri, Sept 29	 @ Oregon State
6	Bye Week	
7	Sat, Oct 14	 vs. California
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ USC
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Oregon
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. Arizona State
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ Washington
12	Sat, Nov 18	 @ Arizona
13	Sat, Nov 25	 vs. Colorado

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

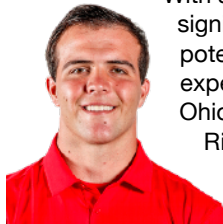
Sat, Sept 9: @ Baylor - All eyes will be on the Florida game on a Thursday to kick off week one, but Baylor could be a superior team to the Gators especially with the game taking place in Waco.

Sat, Oct 21: @ USC - The Trojans will be out for revenge after losing twice to the Utes last season. While a trip to Los Angeles isn't typically the most harrowing of experiences, it will still be a tough task to beat the Trojans if Caleb Williams is healthy for the matchup.

Sat, Nov 11: @ Washington - Could this late season clash be decisive in crowning a PAC-12 champion? The matchup of Penix against the vaunted Ute secondary should be fascinating.

KEY PLAYERS

Bryson Barnes - QB



With starting and backup quarterbacks dealing with significant injuries, Barnes finds himself as the potential week one starter against Florida. His main experience came in the 2022 Rose Bowl against Ohio State where he played admirably. Even if Rising is good to go for the start of the season, history tells us that Barnes will be called upon at some point this season and will need to stay ready to keep the team afloat.

Cole Bishop - S

The secondary won't be quite the same without the contributions of cornerback Clark Phillips but safety Cole Bishop should help ensure there's not as much of a drop-off as you might think, even though they play two different positions. He had both an interception and a sack against Arizona State but it's his constant presence around the football that makes him a dynamic weapon on defense. He led the team with 83 tackles and was named to the All-PAC-12 third team.



2022 RESULTS (10-4)

@ Florida (L 26-29)
Southern Utah (W 73-7)
San Diego State (W 35-7)
@ Arizona State (W 34-13)
Oregon State (W 42-16)
 @ UCLA (L 32-42)
USC (W 43-42)
@ Washington St. (W 21-17)
Arizona (W 45-20)
Stanford (W 45-20)
 @ Oregon (L 17-20)
 @ Colorado (W 63-21)
USC (W 47-24)
 Penn State (L 21-35)

UTAH

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

21st

(Via 24/7 Sports)