



PAC-12 CONFERENCE

Welcome Back PAC-12!

PROJECTED PAC-12 STANDINGS

- 1 **BOISE STATE** BRONCOS
- 2 **FRESNO STATE** BULLDOGS
- 3 **SAN DIEGO STATE** AZTECS
- 4 **TEXAS STATE** BOBCATS
- 5 **WASHINGTON ST** COUGARS
- 6 **OREGON STATE** BEAVERS
- 7 **COLORADO STATE** RAMS
- 8 **UTAH STATE** AGGIES

Photo via San Diego Union-Tribune



Lucky Sutton - RB - San Diego State

It may not look the same way it used to, and there may be only eight teams in the conference, and the league may not get an automatic bid to the Playoff, but it sure beats extinction. Washington State and Oregon State held down the fort for two years (not necessarily by choice) and now they have six new friends/enemies joining them, five from the Mountain West and one from the Sun Belt.

Even if it looks different, it's great to have the PAC-12 back!

A True Round Robin

While an eight-team conference is perhaps a bit smaller than those in charge would prefer, the smaller conference is actually somewhat of a breath of fresh air for more traditional college football fans who didn't necessarily sign up for the "super conference" era. In those bigger conferences, there is a *wide* variance of strength of schedule depending on the luck of the draw with which conference foes a team faces. As an example, take a look at the schedules for Ohio State and Penn State. Those teams play in the same conference, but their strength of schedules within the conference are wildly different (assuming that preseason predictions aren't too far off). That's not a concern in the PAC-12, every team will have their shot against every other team.

A smaller conference also solves some of the convoluted tiebreakers that are in play in some leagues (see: ACC in 2025). Head-to-head record is the first tiebreaker to decide PAC-12 championship followed by win percentage against the "next-highest-placed common opponent." That may sound complicated, but all that phrase means is that the round robin play will (hopefully) sort everything out neatly. The PAC-12 is the only conference in the FBS where every team will face off against every other team.

A Mysterious Final Week

As you jump into these preview pages, you'll notice that the opponent is "TBD" for every team in the conference during the final week of the season. Doing some quick math, the round robin conference schedule gives every PAC-12 team seven conference games. Rather than go through the potentially tenuous process of finding a fifth non-conference opponent to

schedule, the PAC-12 has opted for a "flex game" set up.

The final week of the season will serve as a non-conference game against a team from the PAC-12. During conference play, four teams will get to play four of the seven actual PAC-12 conference games at home, while the other four teams get to host three PAC-12 home games. The flex week will remedy this disparity by ensuring that teams with three conference home games get to host the home flex game.

Besides ensuring the specific home and away teams, the "flex game" process is as it sounds, flexible. The conference is hoping that the flexibility will give them at least an opportunity to schedule a premier matchup between two of their best teams to help boost Playoff potential. However, there are caveats to this. For one, a flex game won't feature a matchup of the two teams who will play in the PAC-12 Championship game which occurs the week after flex game week. Because the flex games are technically non-conference games, the PAC-12 championship matchup will be set before the flex games take place.

There's one other wrinkle in the process. The conference is hoping to avoid having one team make the same road trip twice to the same opponent. This actually causes a bit of an issue for the preseason favorite in the conference, Boise State. The Broncos are guaranteed to go on the road to play their flex game. However, of the four teams who will host a flex game, Boise State travels to three of them in the regular season. That means that Utah State is the only team Boise State can travel to in order to abide by all of the flex game rules the PAC-12 has instituted. However, there have been conflicting reports on how stringent those rules are and if the conference has the opportunity to send the Broncos somewhere other than Logan. Drama!

What's In A Name?

It's understandable if you're having a difficult time remembering which teams are in the Mountain West and which teams are in the new-look PAC-12. Just remember, if the team has a "State" in their team name, they're probably in the PAC-12 (sorry San Jose State).

Photo via KIVI-TV



Last 5 Conference Champions



'19 '20 '21 '22 '23

Offensive MVP



Brad Jackson - QB



Defensive MVP



Jayden Virgin-Morgan - DE



Top Newcomer



Oumar Diomande - LB



Top Freshman



Rasean Jones - WR



15 MUST-WATCH PAC-12 GAMES

Sep 5 - Wyoming @ Colorado State
 Sep 6 - Washington State @ Washington
 Sep 12 - Memphis @ Boise State
 Sep 12 - San Diego State @ UCLA
 Sep 12 - UTSA @ Texas State
 Sep 19 - Fresno State @ San Jose State
 Sep 19 - North Texas @ Texas State
 Sep 19 - James Madison @ San Diego State
 Sep 26 - Boise State @ Western Michigan
 Oct 10 - Boise State @ Fresno State
 Oct 17 - Washington State @ Oregon State
 Oct 17 - Fresno State @ San Diego State
 Oct 17 - Colorado State @ Texas State
 Nov 14 - Colorado State @ Washington State
 Nov 21 - Boise State vs. San Diego State

PAC-12 Championship Game
#1 Seed Campus Site
Fri, Dec 4 - 8:00 PM ET (CBS)



5th and Goal Preseason All-PAC-12 Team

First Team

QB	Brad Jackson - Texas State	Maddux Madsen - Boise State
RB	Dylan Riley - Boise State	Rayshon Luke - Fresno State
RB	Lucky Sutton - San Diego State	Sire Gaines - Boise State
WR	Beau Sparks - Texas State	Jordan Napier - San Diego State
WR	Josiah Freeman - Fresno State	Tony Freeman - Washington State
WR	Chris Dawn - Texas State	Rasean Jones - Boise State
TE	Juice Vereen - Colorado State	Matt Wagner - Boise State
OG	Roger Carreon - Boise State	Jonny Lester - Washington State
OT	Rolan Fullwood - Fresno State	Daylon Metoyer - Boise State
C	Nathan Elu - Oregon State	Jimmy Liston - Utah State
OT	Joseph Borjon - San Diego State	Brayden Walton - Fresno State
OG	Tyler Voltin - Oregon State	George Maile - Utah State
K	Manaki Watanabe - Fresno State	Colton Boomer - Boise State

Second Team

First Team

DE	Jayden Virgin-Morgan - Boise State	Stephon Wright - Colorado State
DT	Carson Tujague - Utah State	Malachi Finau - San Diego State
DT	Deijon Laffitte - Fresno State	Jacob Schuster - Oregon State
DE	JoLaison Landry - Texas State	Harrison Taggart - Utah State
LB	Oumar Diomande - Colorado State	K'Vion Thunderbird - Fresno State
LB	Bronson Olevao - Utah State	Terrence Cooks - Texas State
LB	Aidan Sullivan - Oregon State	Tano Letali - San Diego State
CB	Jaden Mickey - Boise State	Khamari Terrell - Washington State
CB	Trey Glasper - Oregon State	Sherrod Smith - Boise State
S	Brevin Hamblin - Utah State	Ryan Nolan - Texas State
S	Simeon Harris - Fresno State	Dalesean Staley - San Diego State
P	Tashi Dorje - San Diego State	Oscar Doyle - Boise State

Second Team



BOISE STATE BRONCOS

2025 Record: 9-5 (6-2 MWC)

PAC-12 Conference

Boise, ID



New Conference, Same Expectations

Boise State steps into a new conference, but the expectation of winning conference championships and battling for a Playoff spot remains. By Boise State standards, last year was a bumpy year and all five of their losses were by double digits, but the Broncos still hoisted the Mountain West trophy anyways.

Head coach Spencer Danielson is a perfect 3-0 in conference title games and his team has hosted the last two. He brings an experienced group back for another season including his starting quarterback, two very talented running backs, and some NFL-caliber athletes on defense. This program continues to play at a consistently high level and it's understandable why many people are picking the Broncos to win the new-look PAC-12 and to represent the Group of Six in the Playoff.

OFFENSE

Veteran quarterback **Maddux Madsen** prepares for his third year as the starter. When he starts and finishes a game, Boise State simply has not lost to a conference opponent. However, Madsen has had a hard time elevating his game against premier opponents. He threw four interceptions against Notre Dame and he struggled in a lopsided bowl defeat against Washington. Is there another level to his game that he can unlock, especially if he stays fully healthy? For that progress to take shape, he'll need solid offensive line play. That group loses an NFL draft pick, so the Broncos will be dependent on returners like **Roger Carreon**. Improvement from **Daylon Metoyer** will go a long way in solidifying the line.

The offensive line will also have an opportunity to pave the way for one of the most formidable ground attacks in the conference. It ended up taking two running backs to even resemble Ashton Jeanty's production in 2024, but **Dylan Riley** (1,125 yards) and **Sire Gaines** (811 yards) both had strong seasons, and both return in 2026. Clearly, either back is capable of 1,000 yards and Riley hit that mark last year almost out of the blue, but there's great depth at the position with the additions of transfers **Julez Goff** (Pittsburgh) and **Harry Stewart** (Kansas). When you consider Madsen can use his legs when needed, this running game should be able to wear opponents out.

However, the Broncos want to avoid being one-dimensional, something that got them in trouble a bit last season. Specifically, Boise State wants to develop a much more dangerous downfield passing attack. Madsen has to be able to hit his targets, but the Broncos have identified a couple key candidates who ideally will gain separation on the field and make Madsen's life easy.

Cameron Bates' speed has even been utilized in the run game, but there is expectation that he'll become that missing downfield threat. **Rasean Jones**, a local product, was the most consistent wide receiver throughout spring, and even though he is just a true freshman, he'll likely start from day one and make an immediate impact.

DEFENSE

The front seven could be one of the best in the entire Group of Six, and that group will look to get back to their 2024 form. In that Playoff season, the Broncos led the country with 55 sacks. However, that number dropped to just 27 sacks over 14 games last season, the lowest mark since 2020 (and Boise State played just seven games that season). The catalyst for extra chaos in the backfield this season is without question **Jayden Virgin-Morgan**. With nearly three dozen games in a Boise State uniform, he has NFL potential at his edge position. He does need some teammates to aid in the pass rush, and there isn't a returner besides Virgin-Morgan who brings back more than one sack from last season. **Max Stege** and tackle **David Latu** both have experience in this system. If there are injuries up front, this room gets young in a hurry.

The linebacker corps will be led by **Boen Phelps**, and the Broncos must sort out the playing time around him. **Jake Ripp** and **Logan Brantley** are two likely options to pair with Phelps.

The secondary is a question mark considering that there were nearly 3,000 career snaps lost at the cornerback and safety positions alone. The loss of leading tackler Ty Benefield is the biggest hurdle to overcome. Transfers will have to be to fill the gaps here perhaps more than any other position. Nickel **Jaden Mickey** is an exception and returns 38 tackles from last season.

HC: Spencer Danielson
(3rd Year, 24-8)

OC: Nate Potter
(2nd Year)

DC: Erik Chinander
(3rd Year)

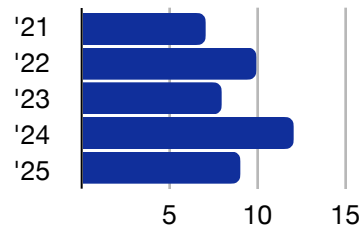
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
49

Transfer Portal
99

Via 24/7 Sports

BOISE STATE WIN TREND



2025 Results (9-5)

South Florida (L 7-34)
E. Washington (W 51-14)
@ Air Force (W 49-37)
App State (W 47-14)
@ Notre Dame (L 7-28)
New Mexico (W 41-25)
UNLV (W 56-31)
@ Nevada (W 24-3)
Fresno State (L 7-30)
@ San Diego State (L 7-17)
Colorado State (W 49-21)
@ Utah State (W 25-24)
UNLV (W 38-21)
Mountain West Championship
vs. Washington (L 10-38)
LA Bowl



JAYDEN VIRGIN-MORGAN – DE

Photo via Boise State Athletics

2026 Boise State Schedule

Wk		
1	Sat, Sep 5	@ Oregon
2	Sat, Sep 12	vs. Memphis
3	Sat, Sep 19	vs. South Dakota
4	Sat, Sep 26	@ W. Michigan
5	Sat, Oct 3	vs. Utah State
6	Sat, Oct 10	@ Fresno State
8	Sat, Oct 24	@ Washington St.
9	Sat, Oct 31	vs. Texas State
10	Sat, Nov 7	@ Colorado State
11	Sat, Nov 14	vs. Oregon State
12	Sat, Nov 21	vs. San Diego St.
13	Sat, Nov 28	@ Opponent TBD

■ Home ■ Away ■ Neutral

Key Games

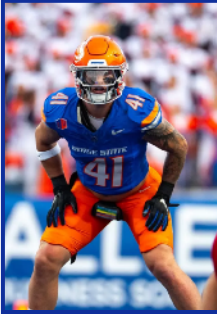
Sep 26 @ Western Michigan: The battle of the Broncos includes two conference champions from 2025 who both intend on repeating in 2026. This game marks the longest road trip of the season and directly precedes PAC-12 play.

Oct 10 @ Fresno State: The low point of last season was probably when Boise State was held to just seven points against the Bulldogs at home. They can right that wrong in 2026 against what might be their toughest PAC-12 opponent.

Sat, Nov 21 vs. San Diego State: The Aztecs come to town for the home finale. Unless, of course, Boise hosts the PAC-12 title game.

Player Spotlight

Photo via Boise State Athletics



BOEN PHELPS – LB

The defensive line is understandably getting a lot of attention in the preseason, but the linebacker corps could be equally talented especially if Phelps can elevate his game from an already strong level. He's the leading returning tackler and he is one of only a handful of players who also return an interception. He'll clean up a lot of plays for the Broncos and keep the defense strong.

2025 STATS: 66 TKL, 4 TFL, 1 SACK, 1 INT

Photo via Boise State Athletics

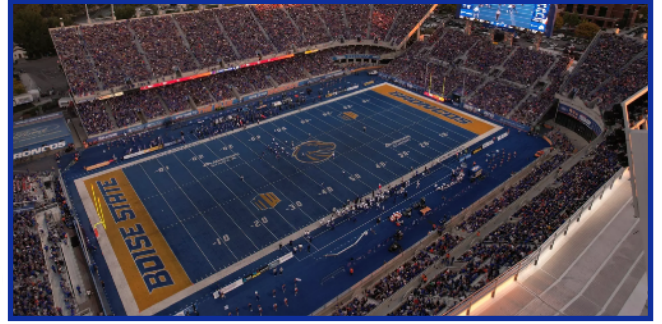


DYLAN RILEY – RB

Everyone knew that somebody needed to emerge as a replacement for Ashton Jeanty, but Riley wasn't an obvious choice heading into 2025. That changed quickly against Air Force when he ran for 171 yards, caught two passes for another 84 yards, and reached the end zone five times. He had three more games where he eclipsed triple digits including a 200+ yard game against UNLV. He's a premier talent in the PAC-12.

2025 STATS: 195 RUSH, 1,125 YDS, 10 TDS

Photo via Boise State Athletics



Albertsons Stadium (38,000)

Photo via Boise State Athletics



**Maddux
MADSEN**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Quality special teams play has eluded Boise State recently, giving fans heart palpitations and bad memories of critical special teams misses in key games during the BCS era. Issues bit the Broncos immediately last season when they allowed a 100+ yard kick return and a fake punt touchdown against South Florida in the opener. The good news is that one of the most aptly named kickers in the country, **Colton Boomer**, returns. He boomed a 52-yard field goal last season and made 11 of his 15 kicks overall, and rarely allowed a kick return. **Oscar Doyle** is back at his punter spot following a solid season.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Offensive line and the secondary are probably the biggest questions on the roster, but as a whole, Boise State is stacked once again. They'll need the full talent of the roster to come together to navigate a very difficult non-conference schedule that features Oregon, Memphis, and reigning MAC champion Western Michigan. A road trip to Fresno State takes place early in PAC-12 play, and the Broncos will also finish the season away from the Smurf Turf for the season finale "flex game."

If Boise State does navigate through all of those potential challenges, the other side of the coin is that they will have a lot of bullets they can add to their potential Playoff resume. To get back to the Playoff, a 10-2 record is probably required and there's the small detail of winning a PAC-12 championship after that. If the Broncos do all of that, Danielson will join Lincoln Riley as the only two coaches to win four conference champions in their first four years at a program. Pedigree, talent, experience, and coaching are all legitimate reasons why Boise State is tabbed to win the conference title yet again.

Appointment Television



VS.



Sat, Oct 10 - 10:30 PM ET (CW)

These two teams were the class of the Mountain West over the last decade and they expect to carry that tradition on in the PAC-12. As a result, the Broncos and Bulldogs have shared several seismic clashes and the 2026 edition figures to have high stakes yet again. If nothing else, Boise State would like revenge from an embarrassing performance in 2025 in which they scored just seven points and lost by 23 as 17-point favorites.

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	29.9	46	Points	24.1	62
Rushing	179.1	37	Rushing	162.1	86
Passing	244.9	51	Passing	175.6	15
Total	424.0	24	Total	337.6	39
Sacks For/Against: 27/26			Turnover Margin: +2		

2026 Projection
10-2
1st in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

**National
Champions**



XO

**PAC-12
Champions**



13-10

**Bowl
Record**



1

**Playoff
Appearances**



FRESNO STATE BULLDOGS

2025 Record: 9-4 (5-3 MWC)

PAC-12 Conference

Fresno, CA

Bulldogs Must Level Out Ups and Downs

It was a hot and cold season for Fresno State last season. The Bulldogs did win nine games which is no small feat, but there were plenty of twists and turns throughout the campaign. No two game stretch spelled this out more than games against San Diego State and Boise State. The Aztecs shutout the Bulldogs at home for the first time since 1980. Then, the Bulldogs turned around and decimated the Broncos (and eventual Mountain West champions) in Boise no less.

This season, second year Matt Entz returns several important pieces from the nine-win squad and has one of the most experienced teams in the new-look PAC-12. If the Bulldogs can find more stability, the potential of what this group can accomplish goes way up.

OFFENSE

Given the program's rich history at quarterback, last year's play did not meet expectations. The starter was benched halfway through the season only to come back and play when the backup was benched. This year, the staff is hopeful that Maryland transfer **Khristian Martin** can elevate the passing game. He's a big athlete at 6'4" 230, and his frame alone gives the Bulldogs a change of pace from last season. He sat behind Malik Washington last year and saw only a handful of snaps. Also in the mix is **Jayden Mandal**, who would have played some last season for Fresno State had he not been dealing with multiple injuries. Whichever quarterback cements themselves as the starter in 2026 steps into a good situation with talent, depth, and experience at the skill positions.

A lot of Fresno State's ups and downs in 2025 directly correlated to how well the Bulldogs were able to run the ball. Importantly, the Bulldogs bring back both halves of their exciting "thunder" and "lightning" tandem. **Bryson Donelson** brings a physical presence while **Rayshon Luke** is a speedy, versatile threat. In addition to his team leading 702 yards and 6 touchdowns, Luke also caught 36 passes for 228 yards and 2 more touchdowns. There are other depth pieces who can help spell this duo, and the room will get an extra boost if **Brandon Ramirez** returns from injury at some point this season. That group will run behind a big offensive line, **Brayden Walton** and **Rolan Fullwood** might be the best tackle pairing in the conference.

Last year's top receiver, **Josiah Freeman**, is back. There were reports that major programs were making a late push to bring Freeman onto their campus, so Fresno State gets a major retention win here. The program has produced NFL pedigree at this position before, and if the Bulldogs are more effective at throwing the football in 2026, Freeman will really have a chance to show off his skills. After recording 255 yards last season, **Ezekiel Avit** could be featured more in the slot. **Harold Duval** started seeing snaps late in the season and could see his role expand. The tight end room could be a sleeping giant this season, the coaching staff believes there are several options who could emerge as a high end pass catcher in addition to their role in run blocking.

DEFENSE

Last year's defensive line was deep, and three of the starting four linemen in DC Nick Benedetto's 4-2-5 defense return. However, in order to improve on 25 sacks from last season, the Bulldogs will need to sure up the edge rusher position. There are a few options who could provide an answer. **Dylan Hampsten** had a very productive season at Sacramento State. **Sione Noa** is a veteran who took a medical redshirt last season. **Jahzon Jacks** is also a long-time member of the Fresno State program.

The biggest vacancy on the defense heading into 2026 is at linebacker where Jadon Pearson (106 tackles) patrolled. **K'Vion Thunderbird**'s 2025 season was off to a fast start before he was lost for the season. **Tytus Khajavi** filled in for Thunderbird and now both linebackers are expected to take the field next to one another.

Simeon Harris played great in the nickel role last season and hauled in five interceptions. He'll lead a secondary that has some questions at cornerback. **Kiontre Harris** wasn't even on the two-deep to begin the season but in a matter of weeks ended up as a starter in his freshman season. The Bulldogs didn't really address this position through the portal, so they're banking on players like Harris and **Loyall Mouzon** to show off their development in the offseason.



HC: Matt Entz
(2nd Year, 9-4)

OC: Josh Davis
(2nd Year)

DC: Nick Benedetto
(2nd Year)

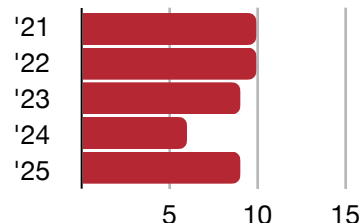
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
80

Transfer Portal
128

Via 24/7 Sports

FRESNO STATE WIN TREND



2025 Results (9-4)

@ Kansas (L 7-31)
Georgia So. (W 42-14)
@ Oregon State (W 36-27)
Southern (W 56-7)
@ Hawaii (W 23-21)
Nevada (W 20-17)
@ Colorado State (L 21-49)
San Diego State (L 0-23)
@ Boise State (W 30-7)
Wyoming (W 24-3)
Utah State (L 17-28)
@ San Jose State (W 41-14)
vs. Miami (OH) (W 18-3)
Arizona Bowl

BRYSON DONELSON – RB

Photo via Sports Illustrated

2026 FSU Schedule

Wk		
1	Fri, Sep 4	@ USC
2	Sat, Sep 12	vs. Sacramento St.
3	Sat, Sep 19	@ San Jose State
4	Sat, Sep 26	vs. Rice
5	Sat, Oct 3	@ Washington St.
6	Sat, Oct 10	vs. Boise State
7	Sat, Oct 17	@ San Diego State
9	Sat, Oct 31	vs. Oregon State
10	Sat, Nov 7	@ Utah State
11	Sat, Nov 14	@ Texas State
12	Sat, Nov 21	vs. Colorado State
13	Sat, Nov 28	vs. Opponent TBD

Home Away Neutral

Key Games

Sep 19 @ San Jose State: These long-time rivals will now face off as non-conference members for the first time since 1994. The Bulldogs have won the last two games in convincing fashion.

Oct 10 vs. Boise State: One of the biggest successes of the 2025 season was the Bulldogs' rout of Boise State on their own blue turf. Is this a potential PAC-12 Championship preview?

Oct 17 @ San Diego State: The Bulldogs will head to San Diego for the first time since 2023. When they were last there, they lost the season finale by 15 despite being favorites.

Player Spotlight

Photo via The Collegian



K'VION THUNDERBIRD – LB

After two seasons at Arizona State, Thunderbird was halfway through a season in which he was a full-time starter and major contributor, and then an injury ended all of that. Assuming he's back to full strength, he'll be given an even bigger role with a 100+ tackler gone from last season. He starred against Hawaii with eight tackles and a 59-yard pick six, and there should be more performances like that in 2026.

2025 STATS: 32 TKL, 1.5 TFL, 2 INT

Photo via Fresno State Athletics



MANAKI WATANABE – K

Special teams was a strength last season, but it has a chance to get even better in 2026. Watanabe led all Division II kickers with 21 made field goals, and he only missed one field goal all year which also made him the DII leader in kicking percentage. The pressure and the intensity of the environments he'll play in at the FBS level will certainly be a step up, but the field goal posts are the same dimensions as in DII.

2025 STATS: 21/22 FG, LONG 59 (Ashland)

Photo via The Vendry



Valley Children's Stadium (40,727)

Photo via @martinowusu on Instagram



**Martin
OWOSU**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Fresno State has the chance to produce the best special teams output in the conference. A lot of that success will come down to whether DII transfer **Manaki Watanabe** can approach his scintillating performance in 2025 that included making 21 of 22 field goals with a long of 59 yards. There are actually two former Fresno State starting punters in the mix this season, **Clay Lawrence** and **Nick Verdugo**, and both primary returners are also back for the Bulldogs.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Bulldogs have high expectations as they step into year one in the PAC-12. 13 returning starters builds expectation that Fresno State could be improved in 2026. Will that improvement show up in the win column? While the Bulldogs will face many of the teams they are used to seeing in the Mountain West, there aren't many "gimme" games since most of the top teams have migrated to the new PAC-12.

The opening three week stretch in October will likely illuminate the Bulldogs' fortunes in 2026. Games against Washington State, Boise State, and San Diego State in consecutive weeks will set the tone for the rest of the year. If the Bulldogs drop two of these games, they'll face an uphill battle in getting to the conference title game considering every PAC-12 team faces one another in true round robin style. However, if Fresno State pushes their way to a 3-0 mark, they'll be in the driver's seat and could even begin making noise in the Playoff discussion. The Bulldogs have lost at least three conference games in each of the last three seasons, and that mark will need to improve for this program to get to where they want to go.

Appointment Television



VS.



Sat, Oct 10 - 10:30 PM ET (CW)

This edition of "PAC-12 After Dark" could potentially be the game of the year in the conference. As dominant as Boise State has been, winning three straight conference championships, they haven't been able to overcome Fresno State since 2021. Can the Bulldogs maintain their advantage over the Broncos when they welcome them to Fresno? If they do, they'll continue to close the gap in the all-time series, which Boise State leads 17-10.

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	25.8	82	Points	18.8	16
Rushing	170.5	54	Rushing	131.9	42
Passing	183.4	112	Passing	153.8	2
Total	353.8	93	Total	285.7	10
Sacks For/Against: 25/19			Turnover Margin: +6		

2026 Projection

9-3

2nd in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

**National
Champions**



XO

**PAC-12
Champions**



18-15

**Bowl
Record**



0

**Playoff
Appearances**



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS

2025 Record: 9-4 (6-2 MWC)

PAC-12 Conference

San Diego, CA



Can Aztecs Build on Momentum?

After back to back losing seasons, Sean Lewis completed an impressive turnaround of San Diego State in 2025. The Aztecs claimed nine victories, posted a perfect record at home, and were a double overtime loss away in the season finale from reaching the Mountain West title game.

When San Diego State was at their best last season, the defense smothered teams and the offense exerted their will on the ground. Heading into 2026, there is a plethora of returning talent on offense, but the defense sees most of their production walk out the door either through graduation or the portal. Can Lewis keep this team competing at the top of the conference now that the Aztecs have moved to the PAC-12?

OFFENSE

Jayden Denegal is back at quarterback. The big 6'5" athlete excelled in the deep passing game but needs to develop on short and intermediate throws and his ability to layer the football and hit windows needs improving. He was also banged up last season, and if healthy, he could be a bigger part of the run game in 2026. The San Diego State offensive line typically boasts major size, and this year is no exception even with three starters gone from 2025. **Joseph Borjon** is a prime example at 6'8" and he'll move over to left tackle this season. His brother **Brian Borjon** is on the team now, too. Last year there were six true freshman linemen, and five of them return. This group along with transfers will help fill in the vacancies up front.

The star of the show is running back **Lucky Sutton**. He's a downhill physical runner who wants to improve his ability to break big plays which, if successful, spells disaster for PAC-12 defenses. A Maxwell Award watch list member heading into 2026, he's well on his way to becoming yet another prestigious San Diego State running back. Not only is Sutton back, but his backup **Christian Washington** (563 yards, 4 touchdowns) is as well. **Javion Kinnard**, a versatile pass catching threat, transfers in from Colorado State.

Few programs can boast that they bring back their top four pass catchers, but San Diego State is one of them. That comes with a bit of a caveat, leading wideout **Jordan Napier** was lost very late in the season with a knee injury, so time will tell if he'll be back at full health to begin 2026. **Jacob Bostwick** also suffered a season ending injury, so clearly health is paramount for this group. **Donovan Brown** led the team with 15.7 yards per catch and accumulated 518 yards in total. The receiver room adds a familiar face in a new role: **Bert Emmanuel**. The former Central Michigan quarterback took snaps at the position for the Aztecs but was used primarily as a runner. Now, he transitions to wide receiver. Three true freshman wideouts enrolled early, so there's really solid depth at the position, but who will emerge as a go-to target? There were only 15 combined catches from tight ends last season, and they'll continue to be primarily utilized as blockers.

DEFENSE

Last year's defense was strong, holding opponents to just 15.4 points per game. There are key departures at every level, so new defensive coordinator Demetrius Sumler will have his hands full. The good news is that he's very familiar with the program and he's been an assistant in San Diego for a decade. Last year's pass rush was led by a three-headed monster, and all three are gone after that group produced 23 of the team's 32 sacks. In total, six defensive linemen head out the door. **Brady Nassar** is a candidate as a top pass rusher on this team, but it's a position that could be a work in progress. The Aztecs may need to rely more on the interior to generate havoc with returner **Malachi Finau** and Colorado transfer **Gavriel Lightfoot**.

At linebacker, the Aztecs will eagerly await the return of **Tano Letuli** from injury. If he can stay healthy for a full season, he'll give the team a big boost in the middle of the defense. **Sione Hala** has quickly established himself as a leader after portaling in from Weber State.

All five starters in the secondary are gone, so Sumler's coaching expertise at the position will be needed here. The Aztecs bring in several FCS transfers who were highly productive at the prior schools. Safety **Isaiah Green** is a prime example, with 150 tackles over the last two seasons with Portland State, and he'll face his former team in week one.



LUCKY SUTTON – RB

Photo via Sports Illustrated

2026 SDSU Schedule

Wk		
1	Sat, Sep 5	vs. Portland State
2	Sat, Sep 12	@ UCLA
3	Sat, Sep 19	vs. James Madison
4	Sat, Sep 26	@ Toledo
5	Sat, Oct 3	vs. Texas State
6	Sat, Oct 10	@ Oregon State
7	Sat, Oct 17	vs. Fresno State
8	Sat, Oct 24	@ Colorado State
9	Sat, Oct 31	vs. Washington St.
11	Sat, Nov 14	vs. Utah State
12	Sat, Nov 21	@ Boise State
13	Sat, Nov 28	@ Opponent TBD

■ Home ■ Away ■ Neutral

Key Games

Sep 12 @ UCLA: The last Power 4 opponent that the Aztecs faced was California, and San Diego State plastered them in Snapdragon Stadium 34-0, although the Aztecs would take a win against the Bruins any way they could get it.

Oct 3 vs. Texas State: These two teams had opposite strengths last season. San Diego State leaned on their stingy defense while Texas State had a top 10 offense in the FBS. Which style wins out in 2026?

Oct 17 vs. Fresno State: The Aztecs have increased their series lead in the Battle for the Old Oil Can by winning the last two matchups.

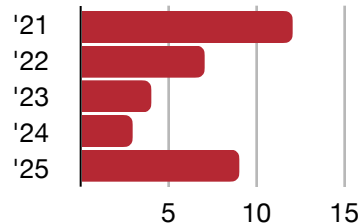
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
83

Transfer Portal
74

Via 24/7 Sports

SAN DIEGO STATE WIN TREND

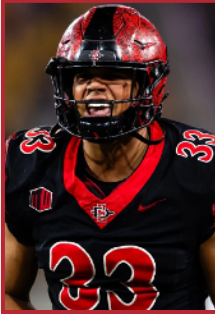


2025 Results (9-4)

Stony Brook (W 42-0)
@ Washington State (L 13-36)
California (W 34-0)
@ No. Illinois (W 6-3)
Colorado State (W 45-24)
@ Nevada (W 44-10)
@ Fresno State (W 23-0)
Wyoming (W 24-7)
@ Hawaii (L 6-38)
Boise State (W 17-7)
San Jose State (W 25-3)
@ New Mexico (L 17-23 2OT)
vs. North Texas (L 47-49)
New Mexico Bowl

Player Spotlight

Photo via San Diego State Aztecs



BRADY NASSAR – DE

The Aztecs have had at least 30 sacks in four of the last five seasons. However, there's a bit of a void at defensive end heading into 2026 in terms of proven production compared to what was lost in the offseason. San Diego State will welcome anyone who can find their way to the quarterback, and Nassar could be the right man for the job. He didn't claim a sack last season, but he did register eight quarterback hits.

2025 STATS: 20 TKL, 0.5 TFL

Photo via Sports Illustrated



BERT EMANUEL – WR

In a career that began in 2022 with Central Michigan, Emanuel has totaled 513 passing yards with five touchdowns, 1,137 rushing yards, and another 14 touchdowns on the ground. Now, he'll lean into his athleticism and move positions to wide receiver. It could take a few games for Emanuel to find his footing, but at 6'4" he'll give quarterback Jayden Denegal a tall target which could be especially useful in the red zone.

2025 STATS: 33 RUSH, 272 YDS, 2 TDS

Photo via Wikipedia



Snapdragon Stadium (35,000)

Photo via San Diego State Aztecs



**Jordan
NAPIER**

SPECIAL TEAMS

Somehow, San Diego State keeps finding punter after punter who can kick the ball to the moon, and they may have done it again. **Tashi Dorje** only took three punts as a freshman, but he averaged 50 yards on those attempts. Place kicking could be a different story, however. Kicking was a major concern in the spring and there was roster churn at the position ahead of fall camp. Until proven otherwise this season, field goal kicking goes from a strength to a weakness. **Jaylon Hawkins** will have an opportunity to showcase his speed as a returner.

THE BOTTOM LINE

San Diego State was *this* close to reaching the Mountain West Championship for the first time since 2021. This team will be highly motivated in 2026 and they are armed with real belief considering some of the successes they had last season, including a 34-0 rout of California.

There are similar opportunities in the non-conference schedule (UCLA, James Madison, and Toledo) for the Aztecs to build momentum heading into PAC-12 play. Emerging 3-1 from that stretch would be a big success and would actually give this team a shot at the Playoff if SDSU follows it up with a great run in conference. Now, that's a best case scenario. More practically speaking, it will be a challenge to replicate last year's success on the defense, and the offense will likely need to take one or two steps forward to compensate. Could that mean we'll see more games like the 47-49 score from the bowl game compared to when the Aztecs beat Northern Illinois 6-3 or Boise State 17-7?

Appointment Television



VS.



Sat, Oct 17 - 10:30 PM ET (CBSSN)

The Battle for the Old Oil Can dates all the way back to 1923. The trophy itself is a more modern invention, but the rivalry has now been played 63 times and San Diego State has an all-time lead of 32-27-4. After only playing twice in the last three seasons, it's possible that these two rivals could face off twice this season alone depending on how the flex game pairing shakes out in the PAC-12.

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	26.4	78	Points	15.4	6
Rushing	198.7	19	Rushing	129.5	39
Passing	157.7	125	Passing	164.2	6
Total	356.4	91	Total	293.7	11
Sacks For/Against: 32/18			Turnover Margin: +3		

2026 Projection

8-4

3rd in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

**National
Champions**



XO

**PAC-12
Champions**



10-10

**Bowl
Record**



O

**Playoff
Appearances**



TEXAS STATE BOBCATS

2025 Record: 7-6 (3-5 SBC)

PAC-12 Conference

San Marcos, TX



Defense Must Compliment Skilled Offense

The Bobcats are the new kids on the block in the PAC-12. Yes, technically there are six additions to the reshaped conference, but those teams have been playing against one another for decades. Texas State will have some learning to do in 2026 including how to best handle travel. However, their opponents aren't familiar with them either, could that work to their advantage?

The Bobcats' first three bowl games in program history have all come in the last three years under G.J. Kinne, and they've all been wins. Last year, his team had aspirations of competing for a Sun Belt title, but they lost four games by a combined 15 points including two overtime defeats. Now, he'll guide the program into a brand new challenge with hope that the Bobcats can make noise in year one.

OFFENSE

Texas State's prolific offense is led by quarterback **Brad Jackson**. He's a great distributor of the football in Kinne's "vertical choice" offense and makes quick decisions, getting the ball out early to multiple talented skill position players. What makes Jackson extra special is his tenacity and athleticism in the run game. Although he's only 6'0" even, Jackson isn't afraid of contact and he racked up a program record 17 touchdowns. Add together his passing yards and rushing yards, and that's also a program record. At his current pace, it's not hyperbole to say that he could be one of the all time greats in Texas State history. There's only two returning starters on the offensive line, **Justin DeLeon** and **Sully Burns**, but the coaching staff feels good about this group.

Texas State was the only program in the entire FBS to have two 1,000-yard receivers and what's even more impressive is that they return both **Beau Sparks** and **Chris Dawn**. Combined, that dynamic duo caught 149 passes for 2,207 yards and recorded 14 of the team's 21 touchdowns through the air. Those two will unsurprisingly be heavily targeted again. They'll line up very wide on the field, practically standing on the sidelines, which gives a unique and potentially confusing look for the defense which can cause alignment issues.

While it sounds like the Bobcats would want to throw the ball a ton with Jackson and that combo of wide receivers, Texas State actually ran the ball far more than they passed it, and by a fairly wide margin (559 rushes, 361 passes). Kinne has had a 1,000-yard rusher in each of his first three seasons, but achieving that mark again in 2026 could be tough. That's not because there's a lack of talent in the room. Rather, the running back role may be achieved more by committee this season. Kinne is a Gus Malzahn disciple and one of the tenants of that offensive scheme is to have multiple backs who are capable contributors in the run game. **Torrance Burgess**, **Taji Atkins**, and **Davian Jackson** are three likely candidates to see playing time. If there is a 1,000-yard back, ironically, QB Jackson could be the most likely candidate considering he secured 744 yards on the ground in 2025.

DEFENSE

Defense has simply not been on par with the offense. That statement has been true in almost every FBS season in which the Bobcats have played. However, it's become more painfully obvious in the last three seasons because the defense has ultimately held back this team from reaching their true potential and appearing in a conference title game. The challenge only gets tougher now that the Bobcats are in the PAC-12. Creating more turnovers in 2026 will be a key, Texas State has finished with a negative turnover margin in each of Kinne's seasons so far. That process starts with reliable pressure from players like **Jo'Laison Landry**. He suffered a season-ending injury only one half into the season but had 4.5 sacks the year prior.

The Bobcats will be portal reliant at linebacker and need someone to break through at the position. **Javante Mackey** could be a difference maker if he can stay healthy.

In the secondary, **Jayden Bradley** shined in the spring and will likely claim one of the starting safety roles, potentially alongside another redshirt freshman **Cordarian Powell**. **William Mitchell** was a track star in high school and will play the nickel role, called the "star" position in Will Windham's defense.

BRAD JACKSON – QB

Photo via Texas State Athletics

2026 Texas State Schedule

Wk		
1	Sat, Sep 5	@ Texas
2	Sat, Sep 12	vs. UTSA
3	Sat, Sep 19	vs. North Texas
4	Sat, Sep 26	vs. Incarnate Word
5	Sat, Oct 3	@ San Diego State
7	Thu, Oct 15	vs. Colorado State
8	Sat, Oct 24	vs. Utah State
9	Sat, Oct 31	@ Boise State
10	Sat, Nov 7	@ Oregon State
11	Sat, Nov 14	vs. Fresno State
12	Sat, Nov 21	vs. Washington St.
13	Sat, Nov 28	@ Opponent TBD

Home Away Neutral

Key Games

Sep 12 vs. UTSA: The Bobcats got off to a rough start in the I-35 rivalry, but Kinne has helped this team claim their first two victories in the series in each of the last two seasons.

Oct 3 @ San Diego State: After four games in Texas to start the year, PAC-12 play begins in earnest with a road trip to San Diego to face the Aztecs.

Oct 15 vs. Colorado State: Although the Rams come to San Marcos for the first-ever meeting between these two programs, Colorado State is the closest PAC-12 opponent geographically, so could a rivalry begin?

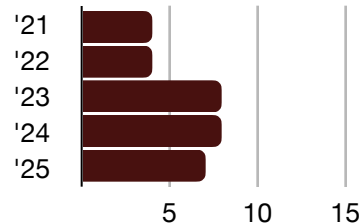
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
71

Transfer Portal
92

Via 24/7 Sports

TEXAS STATE WIN TREND



2025 Results (7-6)

E. Michigan (W 52-27)
@ UTSA (W 43-36)
@ Arizona State (L 15-34)
Nicholls (W 35-3)
@ Arkansas State (L 30-31)
Troy (L 41-48 OT)
@ Marshall (L 37-40 2OT)
James Madison (L 20-52)
@ Louisiana (L 39-42)
@ Southern Miss (W 41-14)
ULM (W 31-14)
South Alabama (W 49-26)
vs. Rice (W 41-10)
Armed Forces Bowl

Player Spotlight

Photo via NCAA Nation on X



CHRIS DAWN – WR

Dawn was part of one of the top wide receiver tandems in the sport last season. With both he and Beau Sparks returning, opponents will have a lot to deal with. Relative to his running mate, Dawn was more of the big-play threat and quickly showed that ability with two catches for 109 yards in a critical rivalry win against UTSA. He popped four more 100-yard games and ended the year with a brilliant bowl game performance.

2025 STATS: 65 REC, 1,007 YDS, 4 TDS

Photo via 247 Sports



LA'KEYLEON GRAVES – WR

You're looking at the highest ranked recruit to ever sign with Texas State out of high school. A four-star talent (depending on which publication you look at), Graves will probably find his way onto the field sooner rather than later. He's an amazing athlete and can play both offense and defense. He's most likely to spend time at wide receiver, but the coaching staff may utilize him as the "PAC-12's Travis Hunter"

2025 STATS: 11 REC, 125 YDS, 2 TDS (High School)

Photo via Texas State Athletics



UFCU Stadium (30,000)

Photo via Texas State Athletics



Beau SPARKS

SPECIAL TEAMS

Texas State is now on their third starting kicker in as many seasons. Reliable Tyler Robles is off after knocking down 21 of his 23 attempts, and replicating that kind of consistency will be a challenge, even though **Dylan Cunanan** has performed well at Toledo the last two seasons. The Bobcats will also be breaking in a new punter. **Jaylen Jenkins** ripped off a 100-yard return touchdown last season and should return to that role. Beau Sparks has handled punt returns in the past, but as his role continues to expand on offense, it could be a new face there in 2026.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The 25 wins secured in the last three seasons under GJ Kinne marks the best stretch of football Texas State has played in their brief FBS history, and it's not particularly close. However, at the same time, it feels like the Bobcats have left wins on the table, and a 3-5 record in the Sun Belt last year when they expected to be in conference title contention left a bit of a bad taste.

A jump to the PAC-12 may be unusual from a geographical perspective, but it's clear that there is serious investment into this program and that Texas State wants to compete at a high level. Four non-conference games all in the state of Texas could prove to be very helpful before they embark on four long road trips in conference. The offense should remain extremely dangerous, but once again, the overall success of the team will come down to how much improvement can be made on defense in 2026.

Appointment Television



vs.



Sat, Oct 3 - 10:30 PM ET (CW)

The Bobcats will get their "official" welcome to the PAC-12 when they travel to San Diego State for their first conference game. Both the Bobcats and the Aztecs have expectations that they can be serious contenders in the conference. A 1-0 start will be confirmation of those hopes, while an 0-1 mark will immediately put the loser's back against the wall. The Bobcats will get an immediate taste of "PAC-12 After Dark."

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	36.5	11	Points	29.0	95
Rushing	222.1	10	Rushing	164.8	91
Passing	250.8	31	Passing	218.1	61
Total	472.8	5	Total	382.9	79
Sacks For/Against: 27/27			Turnover Margin: -4		

2026 Projection

6-6

4th in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

National Champions



XO

PAC-12 Champions



3-0

Bowl Record



0

Playoff Appearances



WASHINGTON STATE COUGARS

2025 Record: 7-6

PAC-12 Conference

Pullman, WA



The Next New Coaching Era

The Cougars have made a bowl game in four of the last five seasons, and that's quite the achievement considering all of the transition that has happened both inside and outside of the program. Internally, Washington State is on their sixth coach in four seasons if you include two interim coaches who each led the Cougars into a bowl. Externally, Wazzou has had to deal with the uncertainties surrounding their conference and how they align in this new era of college football.

The answer to the conference uncertainty piece has been solved for the moment, and the answer at head coach is now Kirby Moore. Moore was most recently the offensive coordinator at Missouri and he brings renewed optimism to the Palouse. Yes, the Cougars made a bowl game last year, but 2025 was frustrating in a lot of ways. Washington State found a way to play Ole Miss, Virginia, and James Madison very close but lost each game by a mere four points or less. The offense was frustrating to watch and was a lot more bland than Cougar fans were used to. Can Moore improve spirits in Pullman?

HC: Kirby Moore
(1st Year, 0-0)

OC: Matt Miller
(1st Year)

DC: Trent Bray
(1st Year)

OFFENSE

When someone thinks of the Washington State offense, they probably think of the Mike Leach-inspired air-raid system. Last year's scheme looked quite a bit different, the Cougars ran the ball more than they passed it, and they didn't accomplish either option very effectively. Moore has retooled the quarterback room in attempt to make a better use of the passing game. There are three options who will compete for the starting job, but FCS All-American **Caden Pinnick** is the likely frontrunner. He posted strong numbers at UC Davis and he can run when needed.

The run game was the emphasis of the offense, but the Cougars ran the ball at only a 3.8 yard average. The good news is that last year's leading rusher **Kirby Voorhees** returns and **Maxwell Woods** and **Leo Pulalasi** round out a three-man group who each have their unique skill sets. Voorhees will probably see the most carries of the group while Woods and Pulalasi are both versatile backs who will feature in the passing game. The latter option did well to avoid a negative yard play last season considering the inconsistencies on offense. **Ashton Tripp** and **Jonny Lester** are two returners on an offensive line that needs to take a step forward this season.

Tony Freeman is the team's leading returning wideout and he returns 54 catches and 590 yards. Freeman was one of three players to tie the team high with three receiving touchdowns and returning tight end **Trey Leckner** was another. Incoming transfers **Darrius Clemons** (Oregon State) and **Daniel Blood** (Missouri) could be factors for the Cougars' passing game.

DEFENSE

Although last season was frustrating in many ways, the Washington State defense turned in one of their best performances in recent memory, holding opponents to just 20.2 points per game and allowing only 300 yards per game. The bad news is that almost every single player who was an integral part of that stingy unit has either graduated or transferred. New defensive coordinator **Trent Bray** is familiar with this program on account of facing the Cougars twice last year as the head coach of Oregon State. He'll stick with the familiar 4-2-5 system, but he'll be willing to mix up the formation from time to time when needed. Up front, **Linus Zunk** has an opportunity to be the primary pass rusher for the Cougars. He has three years of experience in the SEC and has five career sacks at Vanderbilt.

The defense as a whole is a question mark considering how many new faces must slot in at important positions, but the linebacker position is especially unknown. **Keith Brown** has been in college football since 2021 and was expected to suit up for Washington State last season, but an injury prevented that opportunity. If he can get back to full health and find his form from the 2024 season in which he recorded 26 tackles in 13 appearances for Louisville, he'll be a great building block for this defense.

Starting roles are up for grabs throughout the defense, but a safety pairing of **Jalil Tucker** and **Kamari Terrell** at corner seems like a sure thing. **Jaylen Thomas** joins the Cougars after 59 tackles with San Jose State.

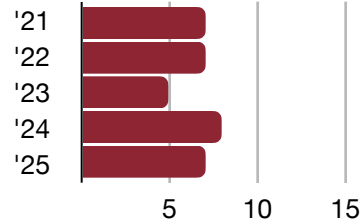
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
127

Transfer Portal
72

Via 24/7 Sports

WSU WIN TREND



2025 Results (7-6)

Idaho (W 13-10)
San Diego State (W 36-13)
@ North Texas (L 10-59)
Washington (L 24-59)
@ Colorado State (W 20-3)
@ Mississippi (L 21-24)
@ Virginia (L 20-22)
Toledo (W 28-7)
@ Oregon State (L 7-10)
Louisiana Tech (W 28-3)
@ James Madison (L 20-24)
Oregon State (W 32-8)
vs. Utah State (W 34-21)
Potato Bowl

KIRBY VOORHEES – RB

Photo via Union-Bulletin

2026 WSU Schedule

Wk	2026 WSU Schedule	
1	Sun, Sep 6	@ Washington
2	Sat, Sep 12	@ Kansas State
3	Sat, Sep 19	vs. Duquesne
4	Sat, Sep 26	vs. Arizona
5	Sat, Oct 3	vs. Fresno State
6	Fri, Oct 9	@ Utah State
7	Sat, Oct 17	@ Oregon State
8	Sat, Oct 24	vs. Boise State
9	Sat, Oct 31	@ San Diego State
11	Sat, Nov 14	vs. Colorado State
12	Sat, Nov 21	@ Texas State
13	Sat, Nov 28	vs. Opponent TBD

■ Home ■ Away ■ Neutral

Key Games

Sept 6 @ Washington: Is it a little strange that the Apple Cup is being played on a Sunday during the first week of the season? Yes, but at least the rivalry is continuing despite the recent conference realignment. The Cougars won this matchup the last time these two squared off in Seattle.

Oct 17 @ Oregon State: These two teams are very familiar with one another, and DC Trent Bray faces his former team.

Nov 14 vs. Colorado State: Washington State has had the Rams' number ever since the two teams met in an epic 2013 bowl game, which includes last year's 20-3 victory in Fort Collins.

Player Spotlight

Photo via KREM



CADENN PINNICK – QB

Pinnick had a stellar season with UC Davis and ended up finishing second in Jerry Rice Award voting, an award that goes to the top freshman in the FCS. He posted gaudy numbers with the Aggies, but maintained efficiency in the process. He led the Big Sky in a wide variety of categories and then led his team all the way to the quarterfinals in the FCS Playoffs. Can he keep his electric play going on the Palouse?

2025 STATS: 70% COMP, 3,206 YDS, 32 TDS, 10 INT (UCD)

Photo via The Daily Evergreen



JAYLEN THOMAS – CB

The Cougars are badly in need of experienced defensive talent, and Thomas offers exactly that in a secondary that could be the strength of the defense. With San Jose State, he started all 12 games at cornerback and found himself in the right place at the right time by recovering two fumbles. The Cougars will want to get his services on the field, so he could even slide over to safety.

2025 STATS: 59 TKL, 1 TFL (San Jose State)

Photo via Learfield



Martin Stadium (35,117)

Photo via 247 Sports



Tony
FREEMAN

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jack Stevens is back at kicker after connecting on 16 of his 19 field goals with a long of 49 yards. Max Dean transfers in from New Mexico State after averaging nearly 40 net yards per punt across 55 attempts.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's another year of upheaval for Washington State, but that hasn't stopped the Cougars from consistently posting winning seasons. Accomplishing that feat in 2026 will be a challenge simply due to the schedule. The Cougars face three Power 4 opponents in the first three weeks of the season and then they host a dangerous Fresno State squad right away to begin conference play. Unless Washington State is able to punch above their weight class, they could be staring at a 1-4 start to the season which will make reaching a bowl game an uphill battle.

In order to pull an upset or two, the offense will need to click under Matt Miller. He was last a wide receivers coach with Boise State, so perhaps that group in particular will be able to shine with an emphasis back on the passing game. A defense composed of mostly transfers will also need to gel and find its footing quickly. The Cougars were on the verge of three significant upsets last season, can they finally spring a big one in 2026?

Appointment Television



VS.



Sun, Sep 6 - 4:00 PM ET (NBC)

The 118th edition of the Apple Cup kicks off the season for these two schools. Since becoming non-conference opponents, these in-state rivals have split the last two games. The Huskies won in convincing fashion last season in Pullman, but when these two teams met in a neutral site clash in 2024, the Cougars emerged with a 24-19 victory. That "neutral site" happened to be Seattle, so can Wazzou make it two in a row in that city?

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	22.5	105	Points	20.2	26
Rushing	128.2	101	Rushing	125.2	33
Passing	210.5	89	Passing	174.4	13
Total	338.7	107	Total	299.5	15
Sacks For/Against: 31/22			Turnover Margin: -9		

2026 Projection
5-7
5th in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

National
Champions



X2

PAC-12
Champions

1997
2002



9-11

Bowl
Record



O

Playoff
Appearances



OREGON STATE BEAVERS

2025 Record: 2-10

PAC-12 Conference

Corvallis, OR



Beavers Must Establish Culture

There's hopeful optimism in Corvallis heading into the season, even despite a disastrous 2025 season. The 2-10 record included all kinds of issues, and ultimately, resulted in a head coach being fired mid-season. An anemic offense is what needs the most attention, but the Beavers will need a much better effort in all three phases.

JaMarcus Shephard steps in as the new man in charge. While he's never been a head coach before, he's been an assistant on Kalen DeBoer's staff at his most recent stops at Fresno State, Washington, and Alabama. He's eager for this challenge, and one of his many jobs will be establishing an identity in this program, something that has been sorely lacking the past couple of seasons.

OFFENSE

Determining who starts at quarterback this season is an interesting topic of conversation. **Maalik Murphy** started last season, but was eventually benched when the Beavers started poorly against FCS opponent Lafayette. Both of his eventual replacements have moved on, so Murphy rejoins a quarterback room that includes Mercer transfer **Braden Atkinson** and Western Michigan transfer **Brady Jones**. Murphy was a team captain last season, and for what it's worth, the program spent significant resources to bring him to campus in the first place. Atkinson posted very strong numbers in the FCS ranks (3,596 yards, 34 touchdowns) and will have every opportunity to win the starting job. The offense will resemble a West Coast style under offensive coordinator Mitch Dahlen, and running backs will featured in the passing game. Otherwise, the program has kept a pretty tight seal on what the offense will look like.

That running back room will be led by **Cornell Hatcher**. Reports indicate that the downhill runner will be the featured back, but Vanderbilt transfer **AJ Newberry** will be in the mix. He's a versatile runner with track speed. The offensive line could be more stable than last year and features two returning senior starters at the guard position. Tackle **Josiah Timoteo** has 15 career starts in the FBS.

As a whole, the coaching staff believes they have improved the speed and size of the wide receiver room. **Eddie Freauff** is good example of the latter and checks in at 6'4". On the speed front, there's excitement for true freshman **Jesse Legree**. Even if it takes him a little while to settle into life as a college football wide receiver, he'll probably make an immediate appearance as a kick returner.

DEFENSE

The defense could take a step forward simply by virtue of a more consistent Beaver offense. They'll also improve by building a much stronger pass rush. **Takari Hickie** should help in that regard. Although he returns only two sacks, that number was enough to lead the team last year. There's good size on the interior with **Jacob Schuster** plugging running lanes at 345 pounds, and he has 16 starts here in Corvallis. Depth is a question, and the Beavers need other legitimate pass rushers to emerge. Perhaps towering **Logan Knapp** (6'7") will provide disruption as a redshirt freshman.

Aiden Sullivan is the face of the 2026 defense after 72 tackles and a team-high six tackles for loss. The staff feels good about the depth that will surround Sullivan. **Dylan Layne** transfers in from Idaho with 137 career tackles under his belt in the FCS ranks.

In the secondary, the safety position is the primary concern and there's just not a lot of proven production there. Oregon State really needs **Noble Thomas** to stay healthy. His 21 career tackles are about as much expertise as there is from a safety on this roster. If you qualify nickel **Sails Vadrawale** as a safety, then the number to beat becomes 61 career tackles. Half of those came in 2025, and he added an interception as well. The cornerback position has been shaky over the last few seasons, but there's optimism heading into 2026. **Trey Glasper** got thrown into the mix as a true freshman, but that experience should serve him well heading into 2026. The defensive coordinator is Mike MacIntyre who was a head coach in the FBS for over a decade.

HC: JaMarcus Shephard
(1st Year, 0-0)

OC: Mitch Dahlen
(1st Year)

DC: Mike MacIntyre
(1st Year)

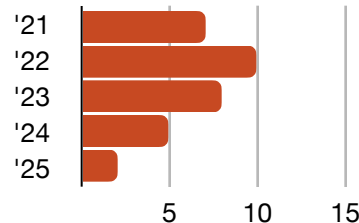
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
93

Transfer Portal
75

Via 24/7 Sports

OREGON STATE WIN TREND



2025 Results (2-10)

California (L 15-34)
Fresno State (L 27-36)
@ Texas Tech (L 14-45)
@ Oregon (L 7-41)
Houston (L 24-27 OT)
@ App State (L 23-27)
Wake Forest (L 14-39)
Lafayette (W 45-13)
Washington State (W 10-7)
Sam Houston (L 17-21)
@ Tulsa (L 14-31)
@ Washington State (L 8-32)

CORNELL HATCHER – RB

Photo via Oregon State University Athletics

2026 OSU Schedule

Wk		
1	Sat, Sep 5	@ Houston
2	Sat, Sep 12	vs. Texas Tech
3	Sat, Sep 19	vs. Montana
4	Sat, Sep 26	@ UTEP
5	Sat, Oct 3	@ Colorado State
6	Sat, Oct 10	vs. San Diego St.
7	Sat, Oct 17	vs. Washington St.
9	Sat, Oct 31	@ Fresno State
10	Sat, Nov 7	vs. Texas State
11	Sat, Nov 14	@ Boise State
12	Sat, Nov 21	vs. Utah State
13	Sat, Nov 28	@ Opponent TBD

Home Away Neutral

Key Games

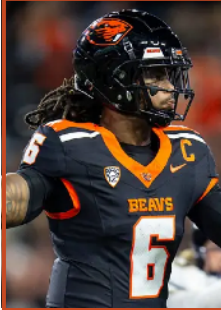
Oct 17 vs. Washington State: A matchup of the two teams who have held the fort down in the PAC-12, these teams played twice last season (and could play twice again this season) with the home team winning both games. In fact, the home team is 6-0 over the last six games in this series.

Oct 31 @ Fresno State: Both teams should be well rested as both the Bulldogs and Beavers have a bye week before their matchup.

Nov 7 vs. Texas State: The Beavers welcome the Bobcats to Corvallis for the first time ever. Oddly enough, this will be the fourth game of the year against a team from Texas.

Player Spotlight

Photo via Sports Illustrated

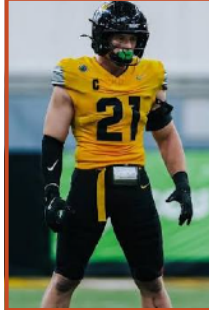


MAALIK MURPHY – QB

Murphy has had an up-and-down career with prior stops at Texas and Duke. With the Blue Devils, he nearly produced a 3,000 yard season, but he struggled in 2025. That struggle wasn't unique to Murphy, the team as a whole couldn't find their footing. Can a new coaching staff help get Murphy and the rest of the Oregon State offense on track? Limiting turnovers in 2026 will be key.

2025 STATS: 58.1% COMP, 1,805 YDS, 9 TDS, 8 INT

Photo via @dylanlayne_ on Instagram



DYLAN LAYNE – LB

Oregon State has a group of team leaders called the "unity" council. Typically, members are upperclassman who have been in the program for multiple seasons. However, when Lane got to campus after four years spent at Idaho, the team added him to the unity council almost instantaneously. His leadership will be critical for a rebuilding team, but he's also one of the most skilled options OSU has at linebacker.

2025 STATS: 88 TKL, 5.5 TFL (Idaho)

Photo via Hoffman Construction



Reser Stadium (35,548)

Photo via Oregon State University Athletics



**Aiden
SULLIVAN**

SPECIAL TEAMS

There's no other way to put it, special teams was a disaster last season and directly led to winnable games being lost. The good news is that there is really nowhere to go but up. A long snapper injury was what really sent things into a tailspin and the Beavers portal in two options for the job. **Jadyn Oh** transfers in from Syracuse and while his field goal statistics won't build a ton of confidence (2 for 5), perhaps a bigger sample size will net better results. **Caleb Ojeda**, last year's starter, is back as well. **AJ Winsor** has a strong leg, but the coverage was woeful and the Beavers ended up with only 32.5 net yards per boot. Only 13 of his 62 punts ended up inside the 20 yard line, but perhaps that speaks more to the fact that the offense struggled to actually move down the field.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Despite the disappointment of the 2025 season, Shephard doesn't inherit an empty cupboard like some coaches would in similar circumstances. Establishing a culture and identity needs to happen first, and more wins will hopefully follow. That new culture will get tested early against two Big 12 juggernauts Houston and Texas Tech. Winning games the next two weeks in order to begin PAC-12 play with a .500 record will be important. From there, this team will need to overachieve in conference play to reach a bowl game. The foundation needs rebuilt, and there's optimism in Corvallis that Shephard is the right man for the job.

Appointment Television



VS.



Sat, Nov 28 - Time TBD

Since the Beavers and Cougars were somewhat homeless in terms of their conference the last two seasons, they got to develop their own rivalry, playing twice in 2025. Although Oregon State scored only 18 combined points, they did just enough to take down Wazzou in Corvallis until the Cougars returned the favor in Pullman. It's very possible these two could rematch again at the end of the year in the final week "flex game."

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	18.2	125	Points	29.4	99
Rushing	123.9	107	Rushing	157.4	81
Passing	225.8	66	Passing	222.4	74
Total	349.8	95	Total	379.8	75
Sacks For/Against: 15/26			Turnover Margin: -11		

2026 Projection

4-8

6th in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

**National
Champions**



X1

**PAC-12
Champions**

2000



12-8

**Bowl
Record**



O

**Playoff
Appearances**



COLORADO STATE RAMS

2025 Record: 2-10 (1-7 MWC) PAC-12 Conference Fort Collins, CO



HC: Jim Mora
(1st Year, 0-0)

OC: Pryce Tracy
(1st Year)

DC: Tyson Summers
(3rd Year)

More Mora Magic?

Colorado State won the very first Mountain West championship and they wanted to bookend their stay in the conference with another title in 2025. The Rams opened the season playing a fairly competitive game against Washington. The following week, they were fortunate to get past Northern Colorado despite being 34-point favorites, and the season turned into a tailspin. What could go wrong did go wrong. Injuries were a big part of that equation, and it got to the point where the Rams were having difficulties fielding defensive lineman. Five of the six team captains were injured and Jay Norvell was eventually fired after a 2-5 start.

Sometimes, the interim head coach steps in and gives the program a jolt, but in the case of Colorado State, they lost the final five games of the season. So, the Rams bring in Jim Mora who performed an admirable turnaround at UConn. He brings a multitude of former Huskies with him to help institute another rebuild in Fort Collins.

OFFENSE

Shaky quarterback play was one of, but not the only, primary issues in 2025. Three quarterbacks saw playing time last year, and the Rams will turn the page with two transfers who are competing for the starting role. **Hauss Hejny** joins the program from Oklahoma State, but a broken foot limited his playing time in Stillwater. His athleticism jumps off the page, which could complement a heavy emphasis on the running back and tight end positions nicely. He's still pretty raw as a passer. UConn transfer **K'Saan Farmer** is potentially more developed in that area, but he hasn't had a lot of game action to prove it. Besides identifying a starting quarterback, the offense must also identify the five individuals who will protect the passer. All five starters are gone and under 5% of the snaps from last year's unit return. Most of those are brought back from center **Phillip Ocon**. Tackles **Quinton Harris** and **Troiyan Johnson** both provide major size at 6'8".

Expect a much heavier dose of run in 2026. Although all four running backs are gone from last season, Mora essentially swaps in his room from UConn which includes **Mel Brown**. He's a physical back with good burst and he's also the likely go-to option on kick returns. **Durell Robinson** and **Oliver Lundberg** are former Huskies and should work their way into the rotation. New offensive coordinator Pryce Tracy will lean on this group and he'll call the plays for the first time in his career.

The wide receiver position could be a work in progress, but one of the most targeted Rams last season, **Tommy Maher**, will be a featured option in the slot. The tight end position is one to watch, and it wouldn't be too surprising if **Juice Vereen** ends up with the most receptions on the team by the end of the season after scoring five times for UConn last season. **Pearce Spurlin** is a Georgia transfer at the same position and his journey to Fort Collins includes a remarkable recovery from heart surgery.

DEFENSE

After a whirlwind season for Tyson Summers which included stepping in as the interim head coach last year, Mora retains the aggressive-minded defensive coordinator. He's unafraid to send blitzes from all directions and a cornerback actually ended up as the team's sack leader. The defensive line was hit the hardest by injuries, so Summers had to get creative. In 2026, the hope is that there is more traditional production from this group. **Gabe Jones** was expected to be a big part of the 2025 unit, but suffered a freak injury at halftime of the opener and was lost for the season. **Stephon Wright** is one of the more veteran options up front. **Brandon Kelley** was actually a track star in high school which makes him a unique threat on the edge.

All the Rams must do is simply replace the FBS leader in tackles, Owen Long. As daunting as that sounds, Colorado State's biggest portal signing was **Oumar Diomande**, a 100+ tackler in his own right last season at UConn. If **Jaseim Mitchell** takes another step in his development and **Caleb Otlewski** makes a successful jump up to the FBS, linebacker could actually end up being a strength even without Long.

The secondary loses four seniors to graduation. **Jace Bellah** was thrown in the mix when injuries popped up and became a ball magnet, recording four interceptions. As a whole, the back end of the defense is a long, athletic group, but they are largely unproven.

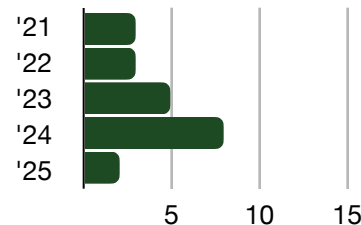
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
72

Transfer Portal
71

Via 24/7 Sports

COLORADO STATE WIN TREND



2025 Results (2-10)

@ Washington (L 21-38)
No. Colorado (W 21-17)
UTSA (L 16-17)
Washington State (L 3-20)
@ San Diego State (L 24-45)
Fresno State (W 49-21)
Hawaii (L 19-31)
@ Wyoming (L 0-28)
UNLV (L 10-42)
@ New Mexico (L 17-20)
@ Boise State (L 21-49)
Air Force (L 21-42)

JACE BELLAH – S

Photo via Loveland Reporter-Herald

2026 CSU Schedule

Wk		
1	Sat, Sep 5	vs. Wyoming
2	Sat, Sep 12	vs. Southern Utah
3	Sat, Sep 19	vs. BYU
4	Sat, Sep 26	@ UTSA
5	Sat, Oct 3	vs. Oregon State
7	Thu, Oct 15	@ Texas State
8	Sat, Oct 24	vs. San Diego St.
9	Sat, Oct 31	@ Utah State
10	Sat, Nov 7	vs. Boise State
11	Sat, Nov 14	@ Washington St.
12	Sat, Nov 21	@ Fresno State
13	Sat, Nov 28	vs. Opponent TBD

Home Away Neutral

Key Games

Sep 5 vs. Wyoming: One of the oldest rivalries in college football turns the clock back to 1967, the last time these two faced off as non-conference opponents.

Oct 3 vs. Oregon State: The Rams make their conference debut in the PAC-12. Both the Rams and Beavers had tumultuous 2-10 seasons that resulted in a midseason firing, so the winning team will feel as though they have a leg-up in their respective rebuild.

Nov 14 @ Washington State: A rematch of an epic 2013 bowl game, the Rams face Boise State the week prior while Wazzou has a bye week.

Player Spotlight

Photo via The Coloradoan



PHILLIP OCON – C

With all five starters on the offensive line gone from last season, just the fact that Ocon has been in the program the last two seasons makes him a focal point of the new unit. If there was any question about his toughness and competitive spirit, his answer was snapping the ball with his left hand when he broke his right hand so he could continue playing and to avoid missing practice.

2025 STATS: 8 GP

Photo via Colorado State Athletics

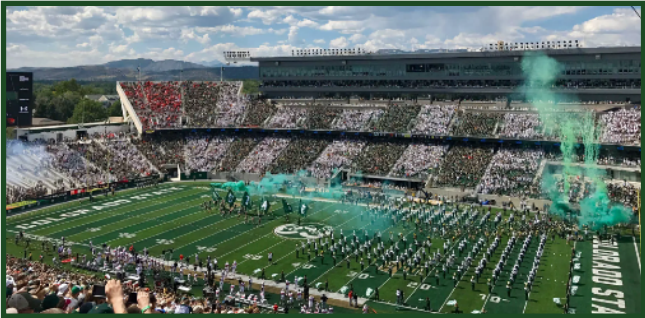


JUICE VEREEN – TE

Vereen is one of many UConn transfers, but he might be one of the most physically talented former Huskies. At 6'4", he proved just how lethal of a threat he can be in the red zone, and in 2025 he snagged 5 touchdowns. He proved he can overcome Power 4 defenses when he posted four catches, 82 yards, and 2 touchdowns against Boston College. That could come in handy when BYU comes to town in Week 3.

2025 STATS: 22 REC, 310 YDS, 5 TDS (UConn)

Photo via Colorado State Athletics



Canvas Stadium (41,000)

Photo via @tmaheer on Instagram



Tommy MAHER

SPECIAL TEAMS

It was a coin flip last year if a field goal was going to go through the uprights or not. This year, the Rams bring in **Kali Nguma** from North Texas. While his field goal percentage was barely over 50%, he did go a perfect 70 for 70 on extra points. Wofford transfer **Cavan Craig** steps in at punter.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jim Mora is pushing back on the concept that the 2026 season is simply “year one” in the overall rebuild. Instead, he expects to have this program in bowl contention right away. He guided a floundering UConn team towards the right track, and the Huskies went bowling in three of his four seasons, so he’s proven he can quickly elevate a program in the past. However, it’s understandable why some on the outside of the program view the upcoming season as a likely rebuilding year considering the choppy, turmoil-filled season of 2025.

The non-conference schedule is far from a cakewalk, and the season starts with a bang immediately when Wyoming comes to town. Dates against BYU and UTSA won’t be easy, either. Is it possible to emerge out of the non-conference with a 2-2 record? On the bright side, there are seven homes games for the third season in a row, and the Rams will need to hold serve at Canvas Stadium to have a shot at six wins. If Colorado State finds success this season, it’s probably because the offensive line and running back positions clicked and a host of new faces on both sides of the ball quickly developed chemistry.

Appointment Television



vs.



Sat, Sep 5 - 6:00 PM ET (USA)

When the general college football fan hears a rivalry by the name of the “Border War”, they may think of the Kansas/Missouri series. but, the Colorado State/Wyoming Border War has been played more. The 2026 edition is the 118th rendition, and it also happens to be the earliest this game has ever been played. The home team has won the last three games.

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	18.5	124	Points	30.8	113
Rushing	108.3	120	Rushing	204.9	127
Passing	215.9	86	Passing	221.1	70
Total	324.2	117	Total	426.0	124
Sacks For/Against: 16/32			Turnover Margin: -4		

2026 Projection
4-8
7th in PAC-12

Trophy Case



XO

National
Champions



XO

PAC-12
Champions



6-12

Bowl
Record



O

Playoff
Appearances



UTAH STATE AGGIES

2025 Record: 6-7 (4-4 MWC)

PAC-12 Conference

Logan, UT



Aggies Seeking Winning Season

Technically, the Aggies are in the midst of a four year streak of losing seasons, but the fact that Bronco Mendenhall got his team to a bowl game in his first year at the program was a success. He guided the Aggies to a 5-1 home record, their best mark since they went perfect in Logan back in 2018. There's more returning talent on the roster now than there was this time last season which is good news as the Aggies adjust to life in the reborn PAC-12.

The Aggies' final three games of the 2025 season came to teams that are all in the PAC-12 now. Utah State went 1-2 in those games including a Potato Bowl loss to Washington State. Can the Aggies fare better in 2026 and not just make a bowl game, but claim a victory to snap a three-game postseason losing streak?

OFFENSE

The services of Bryson Barnes and his team leading 2,803 passing yards, 740 rushing yards, and 28 total touchdowns have departed via graduation. For his replacement, the Aggies will turn to a familiar face, **McCae Hillstead**. As a true freshman, he was thrown in the proverbial fire in Logan and had an up and down season typical of a true freshman. He didn't see a lot of playing time at BYU over the last two seasons, but he grew up and learned from solid players and coaches alike. The hope is that his play will be significantly upgraded from the last time he was here, and he blends a smooth throwing motion with ability in the run game.

Barnes was the leading rusher, but only by 14 yards. Miles Davis tallied 731 yards and 8 touchdowns and he too is gone. That leaves **Javen Jacobs** with an opportunity to be even more involved in the offense. He ran for 429 yards last season, but he's one of the most versatile running backs in the country and he was used as a pass catcher almost as much as a runner (43 receptions, 379 yards). He'll line up all over the field, even including the slot. **Sesi Vailahi** spent time at Oklahoma State and could be the main player to spell Jacobs.

Most of the pass catchers (who weren't running backs) are gone. **Anthony Garcia** is an exception, and could be a primary target. **Javon Robinson** is an experienced slot receiver and most recently recorded 595 yards with Georgia State. The offensive line has a lot of growth to do after allowing 42 sacks last season even despite having a mobile quarterback. Three returning starters are back including the vocal leader of the unit, center **Jimmy Liston**. He has great balance and awareness and could be an important catalyst for improved play up front. New offensive coordinator Robert Anae has a system in mind (which may even include the "rhino" or fullback position), but he'll cater that system based on the skill of his team. He reunites with Mendenhall for a third time.

DEFENSE

Improvement on defense last year was a big reason why the Aggies went to a bowl game, and that group got better as the season went along. Three of the top five tacklers are back, and there are legitimate stars at each level of the defense. With John Miller gone and his 118 tackles and eight sacks, the hunt is on to find reliable production on the edge. **Chris Joe** had a great season as a true freshman and added muscle this offseason. He'll likely slide into the stand-up lineman/linebacker hybrid position in Nick Howell's defense. The interior could be a strength with senior **Tyree Morris** bringing back four sacks, and **Carson Tujague** accumulated an impressive 72 tackles in the middle in 2025.

Bronson Olevao will play all over the field, and he broke out last season with 90 tackles, 4 sacks, 7.5 tackles for loss, and 2 interceptions. After three years in the Power 4, **Harrison Taggart** could be a huge addition at linebacker. He is extremely athletic which allows him to get from sideline to sideline to make plays, and he can drop back in coverage when needed, too.

Cornerback is a potential question, but there should be a lot of support from safety. One option at corner is **Antonio Bluiett** who had a very high PFF grade in the FCS. **Brevin Hamblin** flew around the field last year and had a pick six and a forced fumble in addition to his 114 tackles. **Chapman Lewis** brings in legitimate starting experience from Texas Tech. He has three career interceptions, and he registered three sacks in his true freshman season. There are additional Power 4 transfers at this position.

HC: Bronco Mendenhall
(2nd Year, 6-7)

OC: Robert Anae
(1st Year)

DC: Nick Howell
(2nd Year)

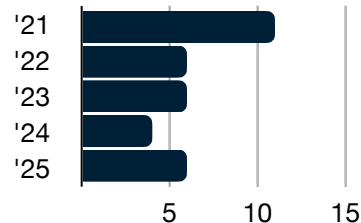
2026 Class Rankings

Recruiting
97

Transfer Portal
86

Via 24/7 Sports

UTAH STATE WIN TREND



2025 Results (6-7)

UTEP (W 28-16)
@ Texas A&M (L 22-44)
Air Force (W 49-30)
McNeese (W 48-7)
@ Vanderbilt (L 35-55)
@ Hawaii (L 26-44)
San Jose State (W 30-25)
@ New Mexico (L 14-33)
Nevada (W 51-14)
@ UNLV (L 26-29 2OT)
@ Fresno State (W 28-17)
Boise State (L 24-25)
vs. Washington St. (L 21-34)
Potato Bowl

JAVEN JACOBS – RB

Photo via 247 Sports

2026 Utah State Schedule

Wk		
1	Sat, Sep 5	vs. Idaho State
2	Sat, Sep 12	@ Washington
3	Sat, Sep 19	@ Utah
4	Sat, Sep 26	vs. Troy
5	Sat, Oct 3	@ Boise State
6	Fri, Oct 9	vs. Washington St.
8	Sat, Oct 24	@ Texas State
9	Sat, Oct 31	vs. Colorado State
10	Sat, Nov 7	vs. Fresno State
11	Sat, Nov 14	@ San Diego State
12	Sat, Nov 21	@ Oregon State
13	Sat, Nov 28	vs. Opponent TBD

■ Home ■ Away ■ Neutral

Key Games

Sep 26 vs. Troy: Considering the likely challenge of facing both Washington and Utah in back to back weeks, a home date against Troy will be critically important for a potential 2-2 start.

Oct 3 @ Boise State: A meeting against the Broncos could bookend games against PAC-12 opponents, but an October trip to Boise is certain, and the Aggies will be searching for their first win on the blue turf since 1996.

Nov 7 vs. Fresno State: An upset bid of the Bulldogs in Fresno clinched a bowl game last season. That win continued a streak of four years in which the road team has won this matchup.

Player Spotlight

Photo via @anthonygarcia on Instagram

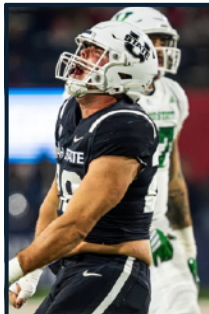


ANTHONY GARCIA – WR

Garcia posted quite the stat line last year. His most normal “role” is that of a wide receiver, and he had the best yards per catch average of anyone who had at least 10 catches. The Aggies utilized his speed in the run game too, giving him 11 carries which he took for 75 yards and a touchdown. However, he also completed an offensive trifecta when he completed six of his seven passes, and four of those went for TDs!

2025 STATS: 20 REC, 348 YDS, 2 TDS

Photo via NCAA Nation on X



CARSON TUJAGUE – DT

A defensive tackle often has to do lots of dirty work so that his teammates can come free and make tackles. Tujague did plenty of that throughout the season, but he had also had a remarkable nose for the football and made 72 tackles, an astounding number for his position. One of his best games statistically came in the win against Air Force where he had nine total tackles, three of them solo.

2025 STATS: 72 TKL, 4 TFL, 0.5 SACK

Photo via Utah State University Athletics



Maverik Stadium (25,513)

Photo via Utah State University Athletics



**Brevin
HAMBLIN**

SPECIAL TEAMS

If **Kian Afrookhteh** can replicate his kicking performance where he connected on 15 of his 19 field goals at Coastal Carolina, he'll boost the field goal percentage of last year's Utah State unit. It is worth noting, however, that three of his misses came inside 40 yards last season. **Landon Rehkow** is back at punter after a 38.5 net average in 2025.

THE BOTTOM LINE

In order for Utah State to get back to a bowl game and have a shot at winning their first postseason game since 2021, they'll have to survive a front-loaded schedule. The first three road games are against Washington, Utah, and Boise State, so winning the first three home games against Idaho State, Troy, and Washington State could end up being a necessity to reach the six win mark.

For the Aggies to maximize their potential, they'll have to show that the passing game won't take a step back with a new quarterback, a new host of receivers, and a new offensive system. The tough non-conference schedule doesn't give a lot of opportunity to figure things out. However, the defense has the chance to build on their improvement from 2025 and there are several key pieces who will benefit a lot from season two in Nick Howell's system. Reaching a bowl game would be a success in 2026 and anything beyond is a bonus.

Appointment Television



VS.



Sat, Oct 3 - 7:30 PM ET (CBSSN)

If there's any game from last year that Utah State would like to have back, it's their one point loss in the season finale to Boise State, a meeting in which they led for most of the game. A win would have snapped a 9-game losing streak to the Broncos. If Bronco Mendenhall can defeat Boise State, it would be a huge feather in his cap and it would be the first time Utah State has won in Boise since 1996.

2025 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	30.9	36	Points	28.7	90
Rushing	162.5	62	Rushing	181.2	110
Passing	247.0	48	Passing	258.8	125
Total	409.5	40	Total	440.1	131
Sacks For/Against: 29/42			Turnover Margin: +6		

2026 Projection
3-9
8th in PAC-12



XO

**National
Champions**



XO

**PAC-12
Champions**



6-12

**Bowl
Record**



0

**Playoff
Appearances**

Trophy Case