



# MIAMI REDHAWKS

2023 Record: 11-3

Mid-American Conference

Oxford, OH

FBS Ranking

68



**BRETT GABBERT – QB**

Photo via Hustle Belt

Miami has a reputation as being the “Cradle of Coaches” due to the number of legendary coaches who, at one point or another, spent time in Oxford. That list includes Bo Schembechler, Paul Brown, and Woody Hayes. Chuck Martin may not quite be on the level of those mentioned, but he’s quickly becoming a legend in his own right. By the time the season is over, he’ll be the all-time winningest coach in program history. He’s now brought two MAC titles to Oxford in the last five years including the one earned last season. In the last 63 years, the RedHawks have been to 15 bowl games, Chuck Martin now accounts for a third of those appearances. It’s been a long building process for Martin to get to this point. He didn’t have a winning season until his sixth season with Miami but he’s since had four straight bowl appearances (not including 2020 where the RedHawks played only three games) and he’s now built the program into a perennial MAC powerhouse.

He’s not a flashy coach, and he doesn’t pretend to be. In the MAC title game, he punted on a 4th and 2 from the Toledo 43 where analytics would scream to go for it. He doesn’t much care. Instead, he plays to his team’s strengths. In 2023, those strengths were an extremely stingy defense and superb special teams. Those strengths led Miami to their best season since the 2003 Ben Roethlisberger-led RedHawks claimed 13 victories. The MAC hasn’t had a repeat champion in over a decade, but Miami is poised to end that streak.

## OFFENSE

For a second straight season, the RedHawk offense had to operate without quarterback **Brett Gabbert** for much of the season. The former MAC Freshman of the Year returns for his sixth season in Oxford. When he plays, he’s the class of the MAC and he earned third-team All-MAC honors in 2023 despite playing in only eight of the team’s fourteen games. It’s obviously imperative that he stays healthy in 2024, but if he does, the RedHawk offense should hum, especially compared to the past two seasons. Aaveon Smith played backup to Gabbert and guided the RedHawks to several wins and the 2023 MAC Championship. He has since transferred leaving either **Maddox Kopp** or **Henry Hesson** to fill the gap, if necessary.

The RedHawks are used to replacing their top receiver and will do so for the third straight season. Gage Larvadain made an immediate impact on the Miami offense as a transfer and was a big play waiting to happen (as evidenced by a 99 yard touchdown against UMass). They’ll miss his explosiveness (transferred to South Carolina), but he did miss five games last season. **Cade McDonald**, a former transfer himself (Michigan State), is the leading returner with 355 yards. **Javon Tracy** recorded 348 yards and had a notable 123-yard performance against Buffalo as a freshman. **Jack Coldiron** has battled injuries the past two seasons, but when healthy, he has the potential to be one of the best tight ends in the MAC.

The running game takes a hit with the loss of Rashad Amos (first 1,000-yard back since 2005 who transferred to Ole Miss this offseason), but the offensive line is both experienced and talented led by returners **Will Jados**, **John Young**, **Reid Holskey**, and **Kolby Borders**. This unit could very well be the best in the MAC this season, which should help players like **Kenny Tracy** and **Keyon Mozee** to eat up yards on the ground.

## DEFENSE

“Defense wins championships” might as well have been the mantra for Miami last season. The RedHawks stifled opponents, allowing only 15.9 points and 330 yards per contest. The leader of the defense returns in **Matthew Salopek**. The reigning MAC Defensive Player of the Year is joined by fellow linebacker **Ty Wise** and the duo combined for 166 tackles, 11 sacks, and a pair of interceptions. Miami adds Ohio State transfer **Jackson Kuwatch** for additional depth and **Oscar McWood** made 23 tackles in 2023. It will be difficult for the defensive line to replace impact players like Austin Ertl and Caiden Woullard. **Brian Ugwu** had 8 sacks and should be disruptive but will see more attention from opposing offenses. **Corey Suttle** and **Kobe Hilton** can stop that from happening by stepping into bigger roles.

The secondary loses top corner Yahsyn Mckee, but the unit still has plenty of talent. **Raion Strader** saw a lot of experience as a freshman (12 starts) and he will be an integral part of the defense at cornerback. Safety **Eli Bakey** is back. Look for Mississippi State transfer **Luke Evans** to play a key role in the defensive backfield. The secondary is young, but has plenty of potential and it’s three years running that the RedHawks have allowed less than 250 passing yards per game.

Can RedHawks pull off rare MAC title repeat?

**HC: Chuck Martin**  
(11th Year, 56-62)

**OC: James Patton**  
(4th Year)

**DC: Bill Brechin**  
(11th Year)

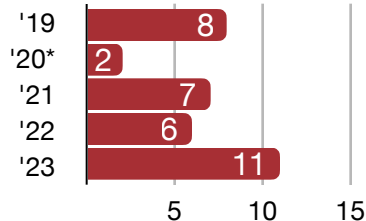
## 2024 Class Rankings

**Recruiting**  
**82**

**Transfer Portal**  
**128**

Via 24/7 Sports

## MIAMI WIN TREND



## 2023 Results (11-3)

- @ Miami (FL) (L 3-38)
- @ UMass (W 41-28)
- @ Cincinnati (W 31-24 OT)
- Delaware State (W 62-20)
- @ Kent State (W 23-3)
- Bowling Green (W 27-0)
- @ W. Michigan (W 34-21)
- Toledo (L 17-21)
- @ Ohio (W 30-16)
- Akron (W 19-0)
- Buffalo (W 23-10)
- @ Ball State (W 17-15)
- vs. Toledo (W 23-14)  
MAC Championship Game
- vs. App State (L 9-13)  
Cure Bowl

2024 Miami Schedule		
Wk	Date	Location
1	Sat, Aug 31	@ Northwestern
3	Sat, Sept 14	vs. Cincinnati
4	Sat, Sept 21	@ Notre Dame
5	Sat, Sept 28	vs. UMass
6	Sat, Oct 5	@ Toledo
7	Sat, Oct 12	@ E. Michigan
8	Sat, Oct 19	vs. Ohio
9	Sat, Oct 26	vs. C. Michigan
11	Tue, Nov 5	@ Ball State
12	Wed, Nov 13	vs. Kent State
13	Tue, Nov 19	vs. No. Illinois
14	Fri, Nov 29	@ Bowling Green

■ Home ■ Away

## Key Games

**vs. Cincinnati:** A wild overtime victory ended Cincinnati’s 16-game win streak in the Battle for the Victory Bell. This could be Miami’s final shot to defeat their rivals at Yager.

**@ Toledo:** A rematch of the MAC Championship game as well as a rematch of the regular season contest the Rockets claimed 21-17 after Gabbert went down with injury. This is the first meeting at the Glass Bowl since 2011.

**@ Bowling Green:** The RedHawks have won four out of the last five matchups but this year’s version of the Falcons might be the best in that stretch. In the midst of a big Friday of college football on rivalry weekend, don’t miss this one.

## Player Spotlight

Photo via SSN Sports



### MATT SALOPEK – LB

In the transfer portal era, it's not often that a team gets to keep a player who wins an award like the MAC Defensive Player of the Year Award. The RedHawks will benefit greatly from his return. The sixth-year veteran has recorded at least 110 tackles in each of the last three seasons and his impact goes far beyond his statistics, as gaudy as they are. He'll lead one of the MAC's best defenses in search for back-to-back titles.

**2023 Stats: 144 TKL, 3 SACK, 8.5 TFL, 1 INT**

Photo via Miami RedHawks Athletics



### CADE McDONALD – WR

The RedHawks are looking for a go-to playmaker with leading receiver Gage Larvadain leaving for the SEC, and McDonald might just fit that bill. More targets, especially from Brett Gabbert, should drastically increase his production. Against Kent State (in a game that Larvadain missed), he caught 4 passes for 62 yards including a nice tightrope catch on the sidelines. Expect more games like that for the senior.

**2023 Stats: 28 REC, 355 YDS, 3 TD**

Photo via MSA Design



**Yager Stadium (24,286)**

Photo via Miami Athletics



**Bryan  
UGWU**

### SPECIAL TEAMS

Chuck Martin relied heavily on all aspects of special teams play and for good reason. For one, he had the benefit of the eventual Lou Groza Award winner on his roster in Graham Nicholson. He bounced around the transfer portal this offseason until eventually ending up at Alabama. Punter **Alec Bevelhimer** made an All American team. Remarkably, he was the backup entering the season with **Dom Dzioban** as the returning starter. With Bevelhimer back, Dzioban slides over to place kick. He's 2 for 2 on extra points (both in 2021) but will be attempting his first collegiate field goals. Cade McDonald, **Kevin Davis**, and Keyon Mozee all split time in the return game.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

There's a reason why Miami is one of the favorites to win the MAC in 2024. The offense should be more balanced with a healthy Gabbert as long as weapons develop around him. Expecting the defense to place in the top 10 in college football in scoring defense again may be a little presumptuous. However, the defense should be one of the MAC's best yet again and special teams will continue to be a strength. So, the winner of the MAC will be in contention for the Group of 5 Playoff spot, correct? In theory, yes, but the non-conference schedule may dictate otherwise for the RedHawks in 2024. Even though Miami claimed upset victories over Northwestern and Cincinnati in their last respective meetings, facing both teams followed by a road trip to South Bend is an extremely difficult start to the season. Winning even one of those games would be a major success. That being said, bet against the RedHawks in the MAC at your own risk.

### Appointment Television



vs.



**Sat, Sept 14 - 12:00 PM ET ESPNU**

The Cincinnati/Miami rivalry is the longest active non-conference rivalry in the FBS. Unfortunately, the changing landscape of college football will likely see this series come to an end and this matchup is the last one currently scheduled in Oxford. The all-time series is tied 60-60-7 after Miami's dramatic overtime victory at Nippert Stadium. Those factors combined with the usual disdain the two have for one another makes a must watch.

### 2023 Statistics

Offense			Defense		
Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank	Statistic	Per Game	FBS Rank
Points	25.6	77	Points	15.9	8
Rushing	158.1	64	Rushing	132.2	34
Passing	165.4	118	Passing	198.1	27
Total	323.5	108	Total	330.4	26
Sacks	25	T-48	Sacks	35	T-33

**2024 Projection**

**8-4**

**1st in MAC**

### Trophy Case



**XO**



**XO**



**X17**

'48 '50 '54 '55  
'57 '58 '65 '66  
'73 '74 '75 '77  
'86 '03 '10 '19  
'23