



For Immediate Release
Aug. 27, 2019

Mike Kern

Illinois State • Indiana State • Missouri State • North Dakota State • Northern Iowa
South Dakota • South Dakota State • Southern Illinois • Western Illinois • Youngstown State

1818 Chouteau Ave. • St. Louis, MO 63103 • (314) 444-4326 • (314) 435-4779 [Kern cell]



2019 Valley Football Standings (thru Saturday, Aug. 24)

Team	MVFC		Points		Overall		Points		H	A	Stk.
	W-L	Pct.	For	Opp	W-L	Pct.	For	Opp			
Youngstown State	0-0	.000	0	0	1-0	1.000	45	22	0-0	0-0	W1
Illinois State	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	W1
Indiana State	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	W5
Missouri State	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	L5
North Dakota St.	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	W21
Northern Iowa	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	L1
South Dakota	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	L1
South Dakota St.	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	L1
Southern Illinois	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	L3
Western Illinois	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	.000	0	0	0-0	0-0	L2

Schedule/Results

Saturday, Aug. 24

Youngstown State 45, Samford 22 (FCS Kickoff)

Thursday, Aug. 29

Southern Illinois at #17 SE Missouri State
Cape Girardeau, Mo. • 6:30 pm CT [ESPN+]
RV Western Illinois at North Alabama
Florence, Ala. • 7 pm CT [ESPN+]
#3 South Dakota State at RV Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn. • 8 pm CT [FS1]
Missouri State at RV Northern Arizona
Flagstaff, Ariz. • 8 pm CT [Pluto 539]

• • Media Services • •

Players of the Week

Each week a panel will select players of the week for offense, defense, newcomer, offensive line and special teams.

MVFC Media Vault

By Wednesday of each week, the league will collect school weekly coach press conferences (audio/video links) and PDF links to weekly notes in the MVFC Media Vault.

Statistics

Interactive school and league statistics are available, courtesy of the league's partnership with SIDEARM.

Weekly Features

The league produces weekly video segments (Two Minute Drill and The Extra Point) and a bimonthly audio podcast (First and Goal). Each is available by visiting the league's web site (valleyfootball.org) - under the Multimedia tab on the main menu bar.

www.valley-football.org



facebook.com/ValleyFootball



@valleyfootball • @FCS_Insider

@ESPNCFB • @NCAA_FCS

@FCS_STATS • @HeroSportsNews

#MVFC_35 #FCS_CFB150

News/Notes

Another FBS Win for the MVFC

Thanks to Illinois State's 35-19 win at Colorado State on Sept. 22, 2018, the Conference has had at least one FBS win in each of the last nine seasons. The MVFC recorded a 1-7 mark vs. the FBS last year. Below is a list of MVFC wins against FBS programs in the past nine seasons. The Conference has 44 FBS wins in its history.

There are nine MVFC-FBS games on the schedule this year, including four this week.

2010	North Dakota State at Kansas (6-3)
2011	Indiana State at Western Kentucky (44-16)
	North Dakota State at Minnesota (37-24)
2012	Youngstown State at Pitt (31-17)
	North Dakota State at Colorado St. (22-17)
	Illinois State at Eastern Michigan (31-14)
2013	North Dakota State at K-State (24-21)
	UNI at Iowa State (28-20)
2014	North Dakota State at Iowa State (34-14)
	Indiana State at Ball State (27-20)
2015	South Dakota State at Kansas (41-38)
2016	Illinois State at Northwestern (9-7)
	North Dakota State at #11 Iowa (23-21)
	UNI at Iowa State (25-20)
	Western Illinois at Northern Illinois (28-23)
2017	South Dakota at Bowling Green (35-27)
	Western Illinois at Coastal Carolina (52-10)
2018	Illinois State at Colorado State (35-19)

This Week's MVFC/FBS Schedule

South Dakota St. at Minnesota (Thurs.)
Indiana State at Kansas
UNI at #21 Iowa State
Illinois State at Northern Illinois



MVFC Celebrates 35th & 150th

The 2019 season is an anniversary for the Missouri Valley Football Conference as it celebrates its 35th birthday this year (founded in 1985 as the Gateway Conference). The 2019 season also is an anniversary season for college football as it celebrates its 150th birthday. League schools will be donning a CFB150 patch on uniforms this year.



ESPN APP is MVFC Digital Home

The ESPN App curates all of ESPN's incredible content into a personalized experience unique to each fan's tastes. All MVFC home games will be available through the App and airing on ESPN3 or ESPN+

2019 Missouri Valley Football Conference Weekly Release (August 27)

vs. Non-Conference (1-0)

Home: 0-0 / Away: 0-0 / Neut: 1-0

NCAA FCS Teams (1-0)

Big Sky	0-0
UC Davis	0-0
Idaho State	0-0
Montana	0-0
Montana State	0-0
Northern Arizona	0-0
Northern Colorado	0-0
Southern Utah	0-0
Weber State	0-0
Big South	0-0
Kennesaw State	0-0
North Alabama	0-0
CAA Football	0-0
Delaware	0-0
Independents	0-0
North Dakota	0-0
Mid-Eastern Athletic	0-0
Howard	0-0
Northeast	0-0
Duquesne	0-0
Long Island	0-0
Robert Morris	0-0
Ohio Valley	0-0
Eastern Illinois	0-0
Eastern Kentucky	0-0
SE Missouri State	0-0
UT Martin	0-0
Tennessee Tech	0-0
Pioneer Football	0-0
Butler	0-0
Dayton	0-0
Drake	0-0
Morehead State	0-0
SoCon	1-0
Samford	1-0
Southland	0-0
Houston Baptist	0-0

NCAA FBS Teams (0-0)

American	0-0
Tulane	0-0
Big Ten	0-0
Minnesota	0-0
Big 12	0-0
Iowa State	0-0
Kansas	0-0
Oklahoma	0-0
Independents	0-0
UMass	0-0
Mid-American	0-0
Northern Illinois	0-0
Mountain West	0-0
Colorado State	0-0
Sun Belt	0-0
Arkansas State	0-0

vs. Ranked (FCS) Teams (0-0)

SIU at #17 SEMO (8/29)
#25 Montana at USD (8/31)

vs. Ranked (FBS) Teams (0-0)

UNI at #21 Iowa State (8/31)



Zeroing In

Youngstown State opened up the 2019 campaign in Week Zero, defeating Samford at a neutral site in the Guardian Credit Union FCS Kickoff in Montgomery, Ala. It marked the third time an MVFC team has been featured on ESPN in Week Zero. North Dakota State fell to Montana, 38-35, in the first-ever Week Zero contest on Aug. 29, 2015. The Bison also played in Week Zero in 2016, defeating Charleston Southern in Fargo, ND, on Aug. 27, 2016.

This year, YSU rushed for 277 yards and forced four turnovers in a 45-22 season-opening victory over Samford. The Penguins (1-0) intercepted three passes, had three sacks and returned a fumble for a touchdown. The Penguins built a 31-7 advantage early in the fourth quarter.

5 MVFC Teams Ranked

Two-time defending national champion North Dakota State headlines a list of five MVFC teams ranked in preseason top-25 polls this season.

Team	STATS	AFCA	HERO	AGS	Athlon
NDSU	1	1	2	1	1
SDSU	3	4	5	4	3
ILS	15	13	9	14	12
INS	16	16	18	19	15
UNI	18	20	--	15	17

MVFC - vs. Other Leagues

Youngstown State knocked off Samford (SoCon) in Week Zero, giving the MVFC an all-time record of 13-15 against teams from that league. Notably, though, the MVFC is 11-2 in the last 13 meetings. The league has a winning all-time record against every other FCS conference. Here's how the MVFC has fared against teams from leagues it faces in 2019:

Big Sky Conference	62	41	.602
Big South	10	3	.769
CAA Football	24	18	.571
Mid-Eastern Athletic	21	1	.955
Northeast Conference	22	0	1.000
Ohio Valley (also one tie)	139	67	.675
Pioneer Football League	40	2	.952
Southern Conference	13	15	.464
Southland (also two ties)	56	49	.533
American	0	2	.000
Big 12	6	48	.111
Big Ten	4	58	.064
Mid-American	18	35	.340
Mountain West	2	5	.286
Sun Belt	2	3	.400

2018 - Another Title Game Trip

An MVFC member has reached the FCS championship game 13 times since 1997. Last year, NDSU extend the MVFC's FCS record for having a title-game participant to eight-straight seasons. The Bison beat Eastern Washington, 38-24. NDSU enters the 2019 season with a 21-game winning streak - that's tied for sixth-best all-time in the FCS (NDSU holds the record at 33.)

Jacks Open at Minnesota

South Dakota State will face an FBS opponent for the first time since 2016 when it travels to Minnesota on Thursday. Last season's scheduled opener at Iowa State was canceled five minutes into the first quarter due to inclement weather. The Jackrabbits have opened the season against an FBS opponent five previous times, starting with the 2008 opener at Iowa State. SDSU is 1-4 when opening against an FBS foe, including a 41-38 victory at Kansas in 2015.

League schools are 4-58 all-time against members of the Big Ten Conference.

Big Sky-MVFC Challenge Series

Last year, the MVFC captured the second annual Big Sky-MVFC Challenge Series, 5-3. (The MVFC also won the 2017 series, also by a 5-3 edge.) The home team won all eight games last year. Seven of the eight games in 2018 featured at least one ranked team (in two of the games, both teams were ranked.) The MVFC conducted one previous challenge series (with the OVC) and the MVFC won all three season series against the OVC (2003, 2004, 2005) with a combined record of 20-2 in those games. The two playoff matchups last year did not count toward the series.

Ten MVFC-Big Sky matchups are on the slate this year, including two this week.

Aug. 29 - Missouri State at Northern Arizona
Aug. 31 - Montana at South Dakota
Sept. 7 - Southern Utah at UNI
Sept. 14 - Montana State at Western Illinois
Sept. 21 - Idaho State at UNI
Sept. 21 - Northern Arizona at Illinois State
Sept. 21 - South Dakota at Northern Colorado
Sept. 21 - UC Davis at North Dakota State
Sept. 21 - Southern Utah at South Dakota State
Sept. 28 - Northern Iowa at Weber State



STATS FCS All-Americans

The Missouri Valley Football Conference has 16 total selections on the STATS pre-season All-America Team, which is highest among conferences. South Dakota State's five selections are the national high among schools, and North Dakota State's four are tied for the second-most.

2 on STATS Payton Watch List

Two MVFC student-athletes represent the league on the STATS FCS Walter Payton Award Watch List, announced on July 31. WR Cade Johnson of South Dakota State and RB James Robinson of Illinois State are among the 25 on the initial list.

4 on STATS Buchanan Watch List

The STATS Buchanan Award Watch List includes four student-athletes from the MVFC. Representing the MVFC on the list are LB Jabril Cox of North Dakota State; DL Darin Greenfield of South Dakota; LB Jonas Griffith of Indiana State; and LB Christian Rozeboom of South Dakota State.

Preseason Poll, Revisited

North Dakota State has been tabbed as the MVFC pre-season favorite; NDSU has earned the league title for eight-straight years, four times sharing it with another league school.

Team (first-place votes)	Points	Last Year
1. North Dakota State (32)	392	1st
2. South Dakota State (4)	348	2nd
3. Illinois State (3)	289	t6th
4. Indiana State (1)	279	t3rd
5. UNI	266	t3rd
6. South Dakota	176	t6th
7. Youngstown State	153	t6th
8. Western Illinois	128	5th
9. Southern Illinois	89	10th
10. Missouri State	80	9th



MVFC in the NFL

NFL teams must make its final roster cuts by 3 pm CT on Saturday, Aug. 31. A total of 49 former student-athletes from MVFC institutions have dotted NFL rosters in the 2019 preseason. Last year's opening day NFL rosters had 28 former student-athletes from MVFC institutions on them.

Home-Opening Win Streaks

North Dakota State, with 20-straight wins in home-opening games, leads the FCS. The Bison open this year's schedule with a neutral site game in Minneapolis (vs. Butler). NDSU's first home game vs. North Dakota on Sept. 7 at the FargoDome. South Dakota is also among the Top 10.

20 – North Dakota State (1999-present)

19 – Central Arkansas (2000-present)
18 – Wofford (2001-present)
18 – Harvard (2001-present)

16 – South Dakota (2003-present)

16 – James Madison (2003-present)
15 – Montana (2004-present)
14 – McNeese (2005-present)
13 – Richmond (2006-present)
13 – Jacksonville State (2006-present)

Against Ranked FCS Teams

The MVFC opens the 2019 season against two Top-25 opponents this week. Last year, in non-league play, the league was 2-2 during the regular season against ranked FCS teams, marking the 16th time in the league's 34-year history with multiple regular-season top-25 non-conference wins. Since 2014, league schools have combined for a 43-19 record against non-conference top-25 teams (counting the playoffs).

Years with Multiple Regular-Season Top-25 Wins

Year	Reg-Season	Playoffs	Total	MVFC Bids
1989	4-2	2-2	6-4	2
1992	2-5	2-1	4-6	1
1993	3-6	0-1	3-7	1
1996	*5-3	2-2	7-5	2
1997	3-8	5-1	8-9	2
1998	3-6	2-2	5-8	2
1999	3-3	*6-2	9-5	2
2000	3-3	0-2	3-5	2
2003	4-0	3-4	7-4	4
2007	3-3	3-2	6-5	2
2011	2-0	5-1	7-1	2
2014	*5-1	*6-1	*11-2	*5
2015	4-2	5-2	9-4	*5
2016	3-2	*6-3	9-5	4
2017	2-2	*6-3	8-5	*5
2018	2-2	4-1	6-3	3

*represents league record in each category

Title Town

North Dakota State has a league-record eight-straight Conference titles (shared or outright), and that is second-only to UNI's 16. The Panthers had a streak of seven-straight titles from 1990-96.

Total Titles	Last
UNI	16 2011
North Dakota State	8 2018
Southern Illinois	5 2009
Western Illinois	5 2002
Illinois State	3 2015
Eastern Illinois	2 1995
Missouri State	2 1990
Youngstown State	2 2006
South Dakota State	1 2016
Western Kentucky	1 2002
Indiana State	0
South Dakota	0

Possession Game

Youngstown State had a lopsided edge in time of possession in its win against Samford in the FCS Kickoff, controlling the clock for 41:27 in the 45-22 victory. North Dakota State led the league in TOP last year, ranking 10th nationally. YSU was second in the MVFC and ranked 18th in the FCS.

FCS Leaders - 2018 Time of Possession

Rank, Team (Conf.)	TOP
1. Cal Poly (Big Sky)	34:48
2. Portland State (Big Sky)	34:15
3. Wofford (SoCon)	33:14
4. Yale (Ivy League)	33:09
5. The Citadel (SoCon)	33:01
6. Colgate (Patriot)	32:57
7. Eastern Kentucky (OVC)	32:54
8. Jacksonville (Pioneer)	32:54
9. Kennesaw State (Big South)	32:47
10. North Dakota State (MVFC)	32:46
18. Youngstown State (MVFC)	32:13

2019 Valley Football Teams in the Top 25

Team	Pre	S2
Illinois State	13	
Indiana St.	16	
Missouri St.	--	
NDSU	1	
UNI	18	
S. Dakota	rv	
SDSU	3	
S. Illinois	--	
W. Illinois	rv	
Youngstown	rv	

*Rank represents highest position in the two polls (STATS or AFCA FCS Coaches polls)



ILLINOIS STATE **REDBIRDS** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A31	at Northern Illinois	ESPN+	6:00 p.m.
S7	Morehead State	NBCSCH/ESPN+	6:30 p.m.
S14	at Eastern Illinois	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
S21	Northern Arizona	ESPN+	6:30 p.m.
O5	*North Dakota State	NBCSCH/ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
O12	*at Southern Illinois	ESPN3	6:00 p.m.
O19	*at Western Illinois	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
O26	*Indiana State [HC]	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N2	*UNI	NBCSCH/ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
N9	*at South Dakota State	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N16	*Missouri State	NBCSCH/ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
N23	*at Youngstown State	ESPN+	11:00 a.m.

*MVFC game

Stepping Up

Illinois State has played FBS opponents seven times previously since 2009 under the leadership of head coach Brock Spack and will play a big-time opponent for the eighth time in his tenure when the Redbirds face off against the Huskies. ISU is 3-4 overall in those contests against teams from the MAC, Big Ten and Mountain West, with three of those wins coming in the five games against FBS opponents. The Redbirds picked up a convincing 31-14 win at Eastern Michigan in 2012, before heading to the FCS playoffs and then 'Birds defeated Northwestern by a score of 9-7 in 2016 on way to another FCS playoff appearance. Their most recent success was last season at Colorado State, when the Redbirds dominated on the offensive side of the football in a 35-19 win over the Rams.

A Winning Tradition

The Redbirds' 6-5 overall record in 2018 was the ninth .500 or better effort in the last 10 seasons under the leadership of head coach Brock Spack, who began his tenure at ISU with 6-5 records in both 2009-10. That consistency of winning has not been seen at Illinois State since the 1940's, when the Redbirds posted seven winning seasons in eight years from 1943-50 under the guidance of coaches Howard Hancock and Edwin Struck. Overall, the Redbirds have amassed a 74-45 (.622) record under the leadership of Spack, the highest winning percentage of any football head coach with more than one season at the helm.

Oh Captain, My Captain

Voted on by the team at the conclusion of fall camp, the Redbirds selected senior safety Luther Kirk, junior quarterback Brady Davis and junior punter JT Bohlken as their captains for the 2019 season. They will be joined each game by selected seniors voted on each week by the coaching staff as game captains.



INDIANA STATE **SYCAMORES** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A31	at Kansas	FS Indiana Plus	12 p.m. ET
S7	Dayton	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
S14	Eastern Kentucky	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
S21	Eastern Illinois	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
O5	*at South Dakota	ESPN+	3:00 p.m. ET
O12	*Western Illinois [HC]	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
O19	*South Dakota State	ESPN3	1:00 p.m. ET
O26	*at Illinois State	ESPN3	3:00 p.m. ET
N2	*Southern Illinois	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
N9	*at UNI	ESPN+	5:00 p.m. ET
N16	*Youngstown State	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
N23	*at Missouri State	ESPN+	3:00 p.m. ET

*MVFC game

Sycamores Begin 2019 Ranked

Indiana State is ranked 16th in both the AFCA Coaches Poll and the STATS FCS Poll entering the season opener with Kansas. The Sycamores entered the Top-25 last season for the first time since 2016 after reeling off five-straight wins in the Missouri Valley Football Conference. ISU wrapped up the year ranked 24th after finishing with a 7-4 overall record and a 5-3 mark in conference play. Among conferences, the MVFC is the top-rated league in the FCS (Sagarin Rankings), and also ranked ahead of a two FBS leagues, including Conference USA (both the East and West divisions), and the Sun Belt (West Division).

With Michigan Backgrounds

Both head coaches in Saturday's matchup are University of Michigan alums with Les Miles graduating in 1976 and Curt Mallory in 1992. Both coaches played for the Wolverines with Mallory playing on three Rose Bowl teams and Miles playing on two Big Ten Championship teams. Miles was also an assistant coach while Mallory was a player.

Griffith Named to Buchanan Watch List

Redshirt senior Jonas Griffith was named to the Buck Buchanan Watch List this preseason. Griffith is one of 25 nominees to earn the recognition, presented by STATS to the most outstanding defensive player in the nation. The Louisville, Kentucky native was named a Pre-season All-American by HERO Sports and STATS FCS. The linebacker earned All-American status from three different publications as well as All-MVFC honors following the conclusion of the 2018 campaign after leading the Sycamores and ranking fifth nationally in tackles. Over his career, Griffith has seen action in 32 games, recording 276 tackles. He has made 21.5 tackles-for-loss and recorded 10 sacks, two interceptions and three forced fumbles.



MISSOURI STATE **BEARS** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A29	at Northern Arizona	Pluto	8:00 p.m.
S14	at Tulane	ESPN3	7:00 p.m.
S21	Kennesaw State	KOZL/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
O5	*at Western Illinois	ESPN+	3:00 p.m.
O12	*South Dakota	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
O19	*at North Dakota State	ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
O26	*UNI [HC]	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N2	*South Dakota State	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N9	*at Southern Illinois	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N16	*at Illinois State	ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
N23	*Indiana State	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

For Openers

Missouri State opens its 108th season Thursday at Northern Arizona. The Bears are 1-3 under head coach Dave Steckel in season openers with all three defeats coming to FBS foes. The Bears have averaged 30.0 points per contest in their last two season openers and are playing a fellow FCS opponent in the season opener for the first time since 2014 – a 34-27 win at Northwestern State.

Mad Skills

The Bears return six offensive starters in 2019, including five skills players. Led by preseason All-MVFC selection Tyler Currie and senior quarterback Peyton Huslig, Missouri State boasts 2,189 all-purpose yards from its returning skills starters. Huslig also passed for 2,113 yards last fall to rank fifth all-time on MSU's single-season passing chart.

Tackling the Issues

MSU returns nine of its top 10 defensive tacklers from last season, including preseason All-MVFC honoree Angelo Garbutt and fellow linebacker McNeece Egbim. The tandem brought down 99 and 96 ball carriers, respectively, a year ago to lead all players. The Bears return seven defensive starters in all and have 20 returning lettermen on the defensive side of the ball.



NORTH DAKOTA STATE **BISON** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A31	vs. Butler (at Minneapolis)	NBC ND/ESPN+	3:00 p.m.
S7	North Dakota	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
S14	at Delaware	NBC ND/FloSports	12:00 p.m.
S21	UC Davis	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
O5	*at Illinois State	NBC ND/ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
O12	*UNI [HC]	NBC ND/ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
O19	*Missouri State	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
O26	*at South Dakota State	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N2	*at Youngstown State	ESPN+	5:00 p.m.
N9	*Western Illinois	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
N16	*South Dakota	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
N23	*at Southern Illinois	NBC ND/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

NDSU Plays Target Field's First D1 Game

North Dakota State plays Butler at 3 p.m. Saturday at Target Field in Minneapolis presented by Pioneer. It will be the first Division I game and second football game played at the Major League Baseball home of the Minnesota Twins. Minnesota rivals St. John's and St. Thomas played at Target Field on Sept. 23, 2017, before a Division III-record crowd of 37,555 fans. With more than 30,000 tickets sold and a capacity of 38,544, the game will be either the ninth or 10th largest crowd in Bison football history.

Freshman Lance to Quarterback Bison

Trey Lance, a 6-foot-3, 221-pound redshirt freshman from Marshall, Minn., will be North Dakota State's starting QB. Lance played in two games last year against North Alabama and South Dakota completing his only pass attempt and rushing for two touchdowns. He will be the seventh starting quarterback for the Bison dating back to the start of NDSU's Division I era in 2004. Five of the six previous QBs won their first start.

First Start as NDSU Quarterback

2015 – Easton Stick, at Indiana State (W, 28-14)

2014 – Carson Wentz, at Iowa State (W, 34-14)

2010 – Brock Jensen, South Dakota (W, 38-16)

2009 – Jose Mohler, Missouri State (L, 17-21)

2008 – Nick Mertens, Austin Peay (W, 41-6)

2004 – Steve Walker, Northwestern State (W, 30-17)

Bison Return Seven Full-Time Starters

North Dakota State returns three offensive starters and four defensive starters from last year's 15-0 national championship team. Tackles Dillon Radunz and Zack Johnson return with tight end Ben Ellefson on an offensive unit that will have a new quarterback and lost 65% of its rushing yards, 80% of its receptions and 84% of its receiving yards. On defense, the Bison return their leading tackler in Buck Buchanan Award candidate Jabril Cox at linebacker, second-leading sack-getter in defensive end Derrek Tuszka, leading pass defender James Hendricks at safety, and cornerback Marquise Bridges.



NORTHERN IOWA **PANTHERS**

(0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A31	at Iowa State	FS1	11:00 a.m.
S7	Southern Utah	PSN/ESPN3	4:00 p.m.
S21	Idaho State	PSN/ESPN+	4:00 p.m.
S28	at Weber State	Pluto	7:00 p.m.
O5	*Youngstown State [HC]	PSN/ESPN3	4:00 p.m.
O12	*at North Dakota State	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
O19	*South Dakota	PSN/ESPN+	4:00 p.m.
O26	*at Missouri State	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N2	*at Illinois State	ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
N9	*Indiana State	PSN/ESPN+	4:00 p.m.
N16	*at South Dakota State	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N23	*Western Illinois	ESPN3	1:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

Milestone Win on the Horizon

Head coach Mark Farley is just one win away from the 150-win plateau. He is the winningest coach in UNI and his next will make him the 10th coach in FCS history with 150 FCS victories.

New Starter at QB

The Panthers will open the season with a new signal-caller after the graduation of three-year starter Eli Dunne. Will McElvain will take the helm of the UNI offense with zero starting experience, but a load of talent on his side of the ball, including preseason All-American Briley Moore at tight end.

Stars Return After Injuries in 2018

A pair of injured Panthers return to the field in Isaiah Weston and Kris Kolarevic. Weston was a freshman All-American before injuries in the preseason a year ago and Kolarevic was the Panther's leading tackler before going down after week six.

Target Practice

UNI returns its top six receivers from 2018, including Briley Moore (39 rec., 536 yds, 4 tds) Jaylin James (38 rec., 400 yds, 3 tds), Deion McShane (36 rec., 482 yds, 2 tds), Nick Fossey (29 rec., 276 yds, 3 tds), Trevor Allen (25 rec., 256 yds) and Jalen Rima (21 rec., 337 yds, 3 tds.)



SOUTH DAKOTA **COYOTES**

(0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A31	Montana	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
S7	at Oklahoma		6:00 p.m.
S14	Houston Baptist	Midco/ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
S21	at Northern Colorado	Pluto	3:00 p.m.
O5	*Indiana State [HC]	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
O12	*at Missouri State	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
O19	*at UNI	ESPN+	4:00 p.m.
O26	*Southern Illinois	Midco/ESPN+	4:00 p.m.
N2	*at Western Illinois	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
N9	*Youngstown State	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N16	*at North Dakota State	Midco/ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
N23	*South Dakota State	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

Home in the Dome

South Dakota is opening at home for the first time since 2013 and for just the second time since 2010. The Coyotes have won 16 consecutive home openers since 2003, which is tied for the fifth-longest active streak in the FCS. This is the ninth time South Dakota and Montana have met in a season opener.

Simmons Back Under Center

Austin Simmons, an honorable mention all-Valley pick last year, led the MVFC and ranked fourth nationally with 3,124 yards passing during the regular season. That total is second-highest in program history. Simmons returns nine of his top 10 receivers from a year ago including senior Dakarai Allen, a second-team all-MVFC honoree who led USD with 48 catches for 703 yards and five touchdowns in 2018.

Greenfield Heads the Defense

Of the returners to the MVFC this year, no one has recorded more sacks and tackles-for-loss than Darin Greenfield over the last two seasons. A two-time All-American and first-team all-MVFC honoree, Greenfield had 9.0 sacks and 19.5 TFL in 2017. He played through injury to rack up 6.0 sacks and 14.5 TFL in 2018. He is also South Dakota's third-leading tackler in that span.

Under New Coordinator Travis Johansen

Travis Johansen is the new defensive coordinator at South Dakota following six years at Grand View University in Iowa. In those six seasons, the Vikings were 61-11 with five conference championships, six NAIA playoff appearances and the 2013 national title with a 14-0 record. Grand View finished in the top 15 of the national rankings in all six seasons under Johansen and was in the top 10 four times.



SOUTH DAKOTA ST. **JACKRABBITS** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A29	at Minnesota	FS1	8:00 p.m.
S7	Long Island	Midco/ESPN3	6:00 p.m.
S14	Drake	KELO/ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
S21	Southern Utah	Midco/ESPN+	6:00 p.m.
O5	*Southern Illinois [HC]	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
O12	*at Youngstown State	KELO/ESPN+	5:00 p.m.
O19	*at Indiana State	ESPN3	12:00 p.m.
O26	*North Dakota State	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N2	*at Missouri State	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N9	*Illinois State	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
N16	*UNI	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N23	*at South Dakota	Midco/ESPN+	2:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

Gibbs to Make First Career Start

For the first time since 2015, South Dakota State will have someone other than Taryn Christion start a game at quarterback. Redshirt freshman J'Bore Gibbs has been tabbed to start the Aug. 29 season opener at Minnesota, in what will be his first collegiate action. Christion started 41 consecutive games at quarterback at SDSU, a streak that began in the Jackrabbits' 2015 playoff game at Montana.

Johnson Nears Receiving Top 10

Junior wide receiver Cade Johnson is poised to move into the SDSU top 10 for career receiving yards early in the 2019 season. Johnson comes into the Aug. 29 season opener with 1,650 career receiving yards, 183 away from passing Glen Fox (1,832 yards from 2006-09) for 10th place in program history. Johnson already ranks in a tie with Jason Schneider (2011-14) for sixth place in career touchdown receptions with 20. Johnson set a new Jackrabbit single-season record with 17 touchdown receptions in 2018.

Vinatieri Approaches Scoring Record

Senior Chase Vinatieri begins the 2019 season 28 points away from setting a new Jackrabbit career standard for most points via kicking. Vinatieri enters the 2019 season opener with 294 kicking points, trailing the record of 321 set by Parker Douglass from 2004-07. Vinatieri made 38 field goals his first three seasons and has tallied 180 extra-points. Vinatieri's career scoring total is actually 306 points as he has scored a pair of rushing touchdowns on fake field goal attempts. He put together consecutive 100-point seasons as a sophomore and junior with respective totals of 103 and 114 points. Prior to Douglass setting the career kick scoring record, Chase Vinatieri's uncle, Adam, held the record with 195 points from 1991-94. Adam Vinatieri has since gone on to set the NFL career scoring record with 2,600 points while playing for the New England Patriots (1996-2005) and Indianapolis Colts (2006-present).



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS **SALUKIS** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A29	at SE Missouri State	ESPN+	6:30 p.m.
S7	at UMass	FloSports	2:30 p.m.
S14	UT Martin	ESPN+	6:00 p.m.
S21	at Arkansas State		6:00 p.m.
O5	*at South Dakota State	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
O12	*Illinois State	ESPN3	6:00 p.m.
O19	*Youngstown State [HC]	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.
O26	*at South Dakota	ESPN+	4:00 p.m.
N2	*at Indiana State	ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
N9	*Missouri State	ESPN3	2:00 p.m.
N16	*at Western Illinois	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
N23	*North Dakota State	ESPN+	2:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

Old Rivalry Renewed

The Salukis and SEMO have the oldest rivalry in each school's history, dating back to 1909. The schools are separated by just 45 miles and the Mississippi River. Last year, a ship's wheel became the series' trophy with the creation of the War For The Wheel rivalry. During the last 16 years, SIU has a 10-3 series advantage, including a 5-1 mark in Cape Girardeau. The loss came in 2015. SEMO head coach Tom Matukewicz has SIU ties, having served as linebackers coach under Jerry Kill from 2001-07. Defensive coordinator Bryce Saia also coached at Southern from 2004-07.

Labanowitz to Make First DI Start

QB Stone Labanowitz (5-10, 187, So.) will make his first Division I start at SEMO. In 2017, he was 9-1 as the starting quarterback for ASA College (N.Y.), and passed for 2,275 yards and 23 touchdowns with a 71.9 percent completion rate. Last season, he redshirted at SIU after appearing in one game at Ole Miss and completing one pass for six yards. Labanowitz edged out junior college transfer Karé Lyles (6-1, 225, Jr.) and redshirt freshman Nic Baker (5-8, 191, rFr.) in a three-way training camp competition.

Chinn on Senior Bowl Watch List

Preseason All-American S Jeremy Chinn (6-3, 212, Sr.) is one of five FCS safeties on the Senior Bowl watch list. Last season, Chinn led the team in interceptions (3) and pass breakups (9) and also forced two fumbles and blocked a field goal. A starter since his freshman season, he ranks among the school's career leaders in three categories — interceptions (13th/9), pass breakups (3rd/24) and forced fumbles (2nd/6).



WESTERN ILLINOIS **LEATHERNECKS** (0-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A29	at North Alabama		7:00 p.m.
S7	at Colorado State		3:00 p.m.
S14	Montana State	ESPN+	3:00 p.m.
S21	Tennessee Tech	ESPN3	3:00 p.m.
O5	*Missouri State [HC]	ESPN+	3:00 p.m.
O12	*at Indiana State	ESPN+	12:00 p.m.
O19	*Illinois State	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
O26	*at Youngstown State	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
N2	*South Dakota	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
N9	*at North Dakota State	ESPN+	2:30 p.m.
N16	*Southern Illinois	ESPN+	1:00 p.m.
N23	*at UNI	ESPN3	1:00 p.m.

*MVFC game

Season-Opening Success

The Leathernecks have a history of success in season-opening games against FCS opponents. In the last 15 openers, Western has 13 wins with the only losses occurring in a 26-23 decision to Montana State last year and a 20-6 loss at Sam Houston State in 2011.

Nuggets from 2018

- Defeated a pair of nationally-ranked opponents in 15/16 Montana and 17/23 Northern Iowa
- Finished the year 5-6 overall, 4-4 in Missouri Valley Football Conference play
- Ranked 'Top 25' in the FCS in the following categories: passing of offense (No. 21 / 271.9 yards per game); team tackles for loss (No. 20 / 7.5 per game); total defense (No. 23 / 327.9 yards per game); team sacks (No. 5 / 3.27)
- Six games were decided by a touchdown or less, and four were settled in the fourth quarter. Western went 3-3 in close games last season, and maintain an overall record of 62-48.

Captains

The letter "C" will be stitched into the uniforms of five Leathernecks – Eric Carrera, Jared Drake, Clint Ratkovich, Tom Rehfeld, and Connor Sampson. Ratkovich enters his second year of captaincy while the others were voted into the position ahead of the 2019 season.

New Kids on the Block

Western brought aboard 17 true freshmen and eight transfers from four-year institutions. Transfers include: Marquis Smith (Cincinnati); Bryce Cross (Georgia Southern); Deontez Thompson (Richmond); Keyshawn Canady (East Carolina); Justin Hall (Northern Illinois); Kevin Johnson (Richmond); J.T. Wahee (Norfolk State); Brandon Frazier (Kentucky); Gabe Angel (Ole Miss).



YOUNGSTOWN STATE **PENGUINS** (1-0, 0-0 MVFC)

A24	vs. Samford	W, 45-22	1-0, 0-0
S7	Howard	ESPN+	2:00 p.m. ET
S14	Duquesne	ESPN+	2:00 p.m. ET
S28	Robert Morris	ESPN+	6:00 p.m. ET
O5	*at UNI	ESPN3	5:00 p.m. ET
O12	*South Dakota St. [HC]	ESPN+	6:00 p.m. ET
O19	*at Southern Illinois	ESPN+	3:00 p.m. ET
O26	*Western Illinois	ESPN+	2:00 p.m. ET
N2	*North Dakota State	ESPN+	6:00 p.m. ET
N9	*at South Dakota	ESPN+	3:00 p.m. ET
N16	*at Indiana State	ESPN+	1:00 p.m. ET
N23	*Illinois State	ESPN+	12:00 p.m. ET

*MVFC game

Pounding the Rock

The Penguins' offensive rushing distribution was impressive in the season-opening win over Samford. Four players had at least 11 carries and 50 yards against the Bulldogs. QB Nathan Mays led the way with 13 carries for 90 yards. Among the tailbacks, Christian Turner had 13 carries for 89 yards and a touchdown, Joe Alessi had 56 yards on 14 attempts and Braxton Chapman carried the ball 11 times for 50 yards and a pair of one-yard touchdown runs. In total, YSU had 277 yards rushing on 61 carries.

New Faces Make an Impact

In his first game with the Penguins, safety Zaire Jones intercepted two passes and had five tackles to help lead an outstanding defensive effort against Samford. Redshirt freshman defensive tackle DeMarko Craig had five total stops, including four solos in his YSU debut. True freshman defensive back Dee Ford started and had five total tackles as well, including four solo stops. Also making an impact were two Penguins who missed all of last year with injuries. Safety Kyle Hegedus returned to the lineup to lead the team with six total tackles and defensive end Justus Reed had five stops, including 2.5 sacks.

Success on Third Down

The Penguins converted 10-of-17 third-down opportunities while holding Samford for just 2-of-9 on third down. In the first half, YSU was an impressive 8-of-11 on third-down plays and gained 127 yards while scoring both of their offensive touchdowns. In the fourth quarter, YSU converted both of its third downs on the same drive. Remove an 0-for-4 stretch in the third quarter and the Penguins went 10-of-13 on third downs in the game. Samford did not convert a third down for a first down until the 13:37 mark of the fourth quarter.