

# GAME ON!

**FIRST-YEAR COACH  
JEFF SCOTT LEADS  
USF INTO A NEW  
ERA**



**BULLS FOOTBALL  
PREVIEW 2020**

**THE ORACLE**





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# 2020 SCHEDULE



Saturday, Sept. 12 at 7 p.m.  
ESPN+  
vs. The Citadel  
Raymond James Stadium



Saturday, Sept. 19 at 2:30 p.m.  
USA  
@ Notre Dame  
Notre Dame Stadium, South Bend, Ind.



Saturday, Sept. 26 at 6 p.m.  
CBS Sports Network  
@ Florida Atlantic  
FAU Stadium, Boca Raton



Saturday, Oct. 3 TBA  
TBA  
@ Cincinnati  
Nippert Stadium, Cincinnati



Saturday, Oct. 10 TBA  
TBA  
vs. East Carolina  
Raymond James Stadium \*HOMECOMING\*



Saturday, Oct. 17 TBA  
TBA  
@ Temple  
Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia



Friday, Oct. 23 at 7:30 p.m.  
ESPN  
vs. Tulsa  
Raymond James Stadium



Saturday, Nov. 7 TBA  
TBA  
@ Memphis  
Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium,  
Memphis, Tenn.



Saturday, Nov. 14 TBA  
TBA  
@ Houston  
TDECU Stadium, Houston



Saturday, Nov. 21 TBA  
TBA  
vs. Navy  
Raymond James Stadium



Friday, Nov. 27 TBA  
TBA  
vs. UCF  
Raymond James Stadium



# 2020 Roster

0	Daquan Evans	DB	So.	32	Spencer Shrader	K	So.
0	Noah Johnson	QB	Gr.	33	Odunayo Sriki	RB	Sr.
1	Johnny Ford	RB	So.	35	Jabreel Stephens	DE	Jr.
2	Darrian Felix	RB	Jr.	36	Bailey Purcell	DB	Fr.
2	Nick Roberts	DB	Jr.	38	Sean Atkins	WR	R-Fr.
3	Vincent Davis	DB	Jr.	38	Randal Copeland	LB	So.
3	Jordan McCloud	QB	So.	39	Trent Schneider	P	Gr.
4	Le’vontae Camiel	DE	Fr.	40	Jason Vaughn	DE	So.
4	Omarion Dollison	WR	Fr.	42	Lubens Ervil	DB	Fr.
5	Antonio Grier	LB	Jr.	43	La’Javier Turner	DB	Fr.
5	Randall St. Felix	WR	Jr.	44	Camp Gobler	LB	R-Fr.
6	Demaurez Bellamy	LB	So.	45	Darrien Grant	DE	Jr.
6	Cade Fortin	QB	So.	46	Ryan Thaxton	DE	Jr.
7	Sincere Brown	WR	Fr.	48	Andre Beardall	LS	So.
7	Mike Hampton	DB	Gr.	49	Ian Deneen	LS	Jr.
8	Christopher Townsel	DB	Fr.	51	Stacy Kirby	DL	So.
8	Latrell Williams	WR	Jr.	52	Michael Wiggs	OL	Sr.
9	KJ Sails	DB	Sr.	53	Nkemakolam Asomba	DT	Fr.
10	Kelley Joiner	RB	So.	53	Dakota Trice	LB	Jr.
10	Kevin Kegler	DT	Sr.	57	Joshua Blanchard	OL	R-Fr.
11	Dwayne Boyles	LB	Jr.	57	AJ Franco	LB	Jr.
11	Jordan Smith	QB	Fr.	59	Andrew Mims	LB	Jr.
12	Ben Knox	CB	Fr.	60	Patrick Manconi	OL	Fr.
12	Katravis Marsh	QB	Fr.	61	Troy Fields	OL	Jr.
13	Christian Helms	WR	R-Fr.	62	Matthew McDuffie	OL	R-Fr.
13	Tramel Logan	DE	Fr.	64	Demetris Harris	OL	Jr.
14	Jah’Quez Evans	WR	So.	65	David Anderton	OL	Fr.
14	AJ Hamilton	CB	Fr.	67	Demontrey Jacobs	OL	Jr.
15	Jayden Curry	DB	R-Fr.	68	Antonio Spanolios	OL	Sr.
16	Brendan Cyr	QB	Fr.	70	Sebastian Sainterling	OL	So.
16	Brock Nichols	DB	Sr.	71	Uriah Greene	OL	Fr.
17	Blake Green	DT	Sr.	73	Donovan Jennings	OL	Jr.
17	Holden Willis	TE	Fr.	74	Brad Cecil	OL	Jr.
18	Devontres Dukes	WR	Gr.	75	Jean Marcellus	OL	Jr.
18	TJ Robinson	DB	R-Fr.	76	Jarrett Hopple	OL	Sr.
19	Bryce Miller	WR	Jr.	77	Cesar Reyes	OL	Fr.
20	Bentlee Sanders	DB	Jr.	78	Alec Valet	OL	R-Fr.
21	Brian Battie	RB	Fr.	79	Dustyn Hall	OL	R-Fr.
21	McArthur Burnett	DB	Gr.	80	Terrence Horne	WR	So.
21	Dave Small	LB	Jr.	81	Garret Reynolds	WR	Fr.
22	Mekhi Lapointe	DB	Jr.	82	Michael Cucci	WR	Fr.
23	Thad Mangum	DT	Gr.	83	Logan Berryhill	WR	R-Fr.
24	Mac Harris	S	Fr.	84	Xavier Weaver	WR	So.
24	Coby Weiss	K	Sr.	85	Jacob Mathis	TE	Sr.
25	Kenny Scribner	P	R-Fr.	86	Flaubert Akepeu	TE	R-Fr.
26	Keyton Helton	LB	So.	87	Frederick Lloyd	TE	Jr.
26	Yasias Young	RB	Fr.	88	Chris Carter	TE	So.
27	Leonard Parker	DB	R-Fr.	89	Mitchell Brinkman	TE	Gr.
28	Jared Sackett	PK	Jr.	91	Rashawn Yates	DL	Jr.
29	Brian Norris	LB	So.	93	Tyrone Barber	DT	Jr.
30	Isaiah Cromarty	DB	Jr.	96	Kelvin Pinkney	DT	Sr.
31	Cody Gentry	DB	Jr.				



# What to expect at USF games



Nolan Brown

SPORTS EDITOR

College football is just around the corner, but there's still a major question mark that remains — how will fans in the stands be handled?

A number of teams already have answers. But for USF, a plan is still in the works.

It was announced via an open letter from Vice President of Athletics Michael Kelly that fans would not be allowed at the season opener against The Citadel on Sept. 12.

USF is planning on allowing fans at the remaining home games, however, starting with the homecoming game against East Carolina on Oct. 10. There is no word on whether tailgating will be allowed.

"The number of fans we will be able to welcome to Raymond James Stadium this fall and the measures put in place to provide a safe and enjoyable experience will be communicated soon," Kelly wrote.

Fans who are season ticket holders will be prioritized when single-game tickets go on sale.

Local officials and Tampa Sports Authority, the company that manages Raymond James Stadium, will hold a stake in the final say on whether fans are allowed in for games.

Nothing is set in stone, but the numbers are likely going to



If fans are permitted at Raymond James Stadium on Oct. 10, expect a limited capacity. It's estimated that around 10,000 fans or fewer will be allowed in attendance. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/MARC AVERETTE

be low, according to the Tampa Sports Authority — likely one-third of the average USF attendance.

In early August, the Tampa Sports Authority estimated

that 10,000 spectators would be allowed at the stadium that seats 65,000. USF games averaged around 32,000 fans in attendance last season.

Those numbers could change,

however, as the Tampa Sports Authority was conservative with its estimate.

"With all the uncertainty during these unprecedented

See RAY JAY on PAGE 14

# The Weis legacy



Hannah Halili

STAFF WRITER

From watching his dad help coach the Patriots to a Super Bowl win to being an offensive assistant for Florida at age 18, Charlie Weis Jr. has pretty much seen it all.

Despite being born and bred in and around football, Charlie Weis Sr. gave some harsh advice when his son told him he wanted to follow in his footsteps.



Charlie Weis Jr. (center), 27, is one of the youngest coordinators in college football, with his coaching career starting when he was just 18 years old. Weis Jr. is now carrying on the Weis legacy with USF football. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

"He really said that you're an idiot if you decide to do it," 27-year-old Weis Jr. said.

Weis Sr., an NFL and college football vet, was the head coach for Notre Dame from 2005 to 2009

and the Kansas Jayhawks from 2012 to 2014. He also served as offensive coordinator for the New

York Jets, New England Patriots and Kansas City Chiefs.

During Weis Sr.'s tenure as Florida's offensive coordinator, Weis Jr. was hired as an offensive quality control coach at age 18.

Weis Jr. followed his father when he became the head coach of the Jayhawks in 2012. After graduating from Kansas, Weis Jr. joined the Alabama coaching staff as an analyst in 2015.

He then accepted a position as a tight ends coach in 2017 for Florida Atlantic. Shortly after, he was hired by the Atlanta Falcons as an offensive assistant. He was then named in 2018 the offensive coordinator and quarterback coach at Florida Atlantic where

See WEIS on PAGE 14



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# STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

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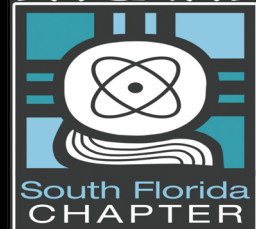
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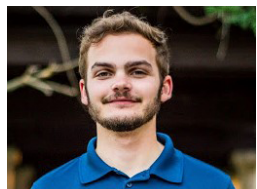
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# 'The Mayor' of Tampa



Nolan Brown

SPORTS EDITOR

In early June, defensive back KJ Sails stood on the steps of Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, tears streaming down his face while the rain continued to fall on the crowd gathered in front of him.

The Unity Walk on June 6 led him and hundreds of USF and Tampa Bay community members to congregate at the heart of Central Park Village.

There, Sails made a promise — rebuild the community he once called home.

"I made a promise that whenever I am in a place of power I will bring back Central Park Village the right way, and I will build the neighborhood back the right way, and I will go and help other neighborhoods around the Tampa, Florida area," he said earlier this week.

Once a hub for Black businesses and entertainers, Central Park Village fell victim to racial and economic struggles in the 1960s and the once-booming neighborhood came to a screeching halt.

On the surface, it's a community rocked by neglect and disenfranchisement. For Sails and many others, the neighborhood is where families grew. Sails' own family lived there, and he spent a good portion of his youth in the community.

"I remember being there when I was a young boy going to the



In the front, from left, KJ Sails, Jeff Scott and Jordan McCloud lead the Unity Walk, followed by hundreds of USF players, fans and members of the community. Sails lives up to his nickname 'The Mayor' with aspirations of one day becoming the mayor of Tampa. ORACLE PHOTO/NOLAN BROWN

Boys and Girls Club across the street," he said.

It was by no means a wealthy neighborhood, but it was rich in family, and it was called home by so many.

"In the projects back in the day, if you knew how it looked, it wasn't too clean then, but it was a place that us African Americans could call home and we lived there for years, and years and years," Sails said. "It was a big family atmosphere."

Despite a tight-knit community, Sails began to question the crumbling infrastructure and lack of thriving businesses.

"Nobody ever asked those people, 'How are you guys living, what is your experience like?' I guarantee you it's not a good experience sometimes, and that's because of the environment that they're living in," he said.

The origins of his political aspirations stem from his desire

to take action.

"If you change that [the infrastructure], if they know that people care about them and the way they live, then they'll have better lives," Sails said.

Known as 'The Mayor' of Tampa, Sails has channeled his on-field success into ambitions of actually leading the City of Tampa one day.

Quarterback Jordan McCloud, someone who Sails said is "like a brother," believes in Sails' goal.

"We've just got one goal. And that's just to lead this great community in the right way, in a positive way," McCloud said. "That's why I'm fortunate to know somebody that wants to be a mayor, and I believe he has a shot to be a mayor 'cause of the things he's very passionate about."

"I'm standing right there by his side."

Quite literally did he stand by Sails' side at the Unity Walk that

day in June. Also standing with Sails was coach Jeff Scott.

"[Scott] came to me and said, 'You're a good football player, and you're going to be successful with whatever you do but outside of football is what I'm most excited about,'" Sails said. "Not only is Scott a football coach, but he's also a coach of life skills."

Since his arrival, he's fostered leadership skills that go beyond football.

"For him to tell me that, that was something huge because I know that I'm more than just an athlete," Sails said.

Aside from the leadership he's shown in the community, Sails has taken the formal steps toward his goal of becoming mayor of Tampa. He joined the Lee Roy Selmon Mentoring Institute, which connects USF athletes with leaders of the Tampa community.

In Sails' case, he's being mentored by Tampa Mayor Jane

Castor.

"This program actually works and it actually puts student-athletes in a position to be successful," Sails said. "When I meet with Jane, we're going to talk about shadowing her and learn more about becoming a man in a position of leadership."

Sails said he wants to create a legacy at USF. In terms of on-field success, that's clear — win a trophy. But off the field, he's hoping his future political career and passion for rebuilding his community speaks the loudest for his time at USF.

"I want to be remembered for that person who wasn't scared to speak out for the community, who wasn't scared to leave North Carolina and come back home to my family," Sails said.

"I wasn't scared to show that, and I continue to show that because it doesn't stop here."

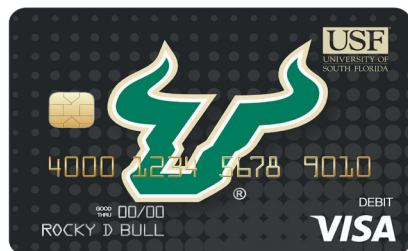


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# College football amid the coronavirus



Francisco Rosa

CORRESPONDENT

College football has been a Saturday staple for decades, and for the most part, it's remained unchanged. The long-standing traditions, raucous student sections and tribalistic rivalries are a few reasons why college football is beloved and cherished by so many.

All of the quirks that make college football great are now luxuries of a pre-coronavirus world, and in the current state of the country those luxuries can no longer be afforded. The novel coronavirus has undoubtedly made a resounding impact on the college football landscape.

Several major conferences have either canceled or postponed their seasons, others are planning to play without fans in attendance, and some of the biggest names in the sport are deciding to sit out. It goes without saying, this season will be unlike any other in the 150-year history of the game.

Here are a couple of factors that could change the outlook of college football in the near future and beyond.

## Health of players, coaches and fans

Football has always been and continues to be a game of risk. Every time a player steps onto the gridiron, they risk breaking bones, tearing ligaments and sustaining multiple concussions

that can lead to long-term brain damage.

This upcoming season, however, is one that comes with an unprecedented risk for all those involved, including players, coaches and fans as they are potentially exposing themselves to the novel coronavirus.

Without the safety of a bubble that has allowed the NBA, WNBA, MLS and NWSL seasons to continue without an outbreak, college football remains compromised and constantly on the brink if there is an increase in infections among players and coaches.

There have already been multiple outbreaks on college football teams, such as Clemson that saw 37 of its players test positive in June.

Considering the possible side effects of the coronavirus, contracting the disease could be even more detrimental to the athletes.

At least 10 Big Ten players who tested positive for coronavirus developed a heart condition called myocarditis, one of the virus' known side effects, according to The Athletic.

Myocarditis is a condition that "affects your heart muscle and your heart's electrical system, reducing your heart's ability to pump and causing rapid or abnormal heart rhythms," according to the Mayo Clinic. It is also advised that in mild cases, athletes should avoid competitive sports for at least three to six months.

There have been several other cases of heart damage across college football, a couple of which resulted in players opting out of the season. One such case was Houston defensive lineman Sedrick Williams, who decided to



College football will certainly look different on the surface this season. Things behind the scenes are bound to change as well. ORACLE PHOTO/BRIAN HATTAB

opt out after hearing of the death of Micahel Ojo, a former FSU basketball player who died of a heart attack after recovering from coronavirus.

"I've had my mind up for a min now, but hearing this story made it even easier," Williams said on Ojo's death in a statement on Facebook.

Although it is still unclear whether Ojo's heart attack is directly related to his battle with coronavirus, "myocarditis is one of the leading causes of sport-associated sudden cardiac death in the group of athletes under 35 years of age," according to the European Heart Journal.

The doctors advising the NCAA also realized the danger the condition poses to the athletes.

"One case of myocarditis in an athlete is too many," Dr. Colleen Kraft, who is on the NCAA advisory panel, said to the Chicago Tribune on Aug. 14.

## Money Loss

It is no secret that college football brings in the most

revenue of all the intercollegiate sports. For several Power Five, football makes up more than half the revenue for their respective athletic departments.

In 2018, Texas made \$219 million in annual operating revenue — the most in the country — during the fiscal year, according to USA Today. Of that total revenue, \$114.5 million is contributed to football, with more than \$32 million consisting of ticket sales, contributions and other means of income.

"Anywhere from 75 up to almost 85 percent of all revenue to our departments are derived directly or indirectly from football, Oregon State athletics director Scott Barnes told ESPN. "The impact of not playing a season is devastating. It would rock the foundation of intercollegiate athletics the way we know it.

"Frankly, I'm not trying to solve for that because it would be such a devastating circumstance that we'd have to get a whiteboard out and start over."

Since that article came out in May, the Pac-12 and the Big Ten became the only Power Five

conferences to postpone all fall sports, including football.

Patrick Rishe, the director of the sports business program at Washington University in St. Louis estimated that if Power Five schools canceled the football season, then they would collectively lose more than \$4 billion in revenue, approximately \$62 million per school, according to ESPN.

Schools like Ohio State, Michigan and Oregon who are constantly leading the nation in total revenue brought in by their athletic departments are likely to have the resources to withstand a scenario where the football season is canceled, but Group of Five schools may not be as lucky.

Power Five schools generate about 24 percent of their revenue from media rights deals, but Group of Five schools' media rights deals only made up 2 percent of their total revenue, according to data from Syracuse.

Smaller schools rely heavily upon a variety of other methods to bring in football revenue, such as ticket and merchandise sales, which are bound to be impacted by regulations put in place to limit stadium capacity.

The MAC was the first FBS conference to postpone all fall sports, and teams are already feeling the repercussions of that decision.

Most of the programs in the conference make the majority of their athletic revenue from university subsidies and student fees, according to USA Today.

Member schools like Central Michigan and Akron have already dropped their men's track, men's golf and women's tennis programs to help with the financial fallout caused by COVID-19. Aside



# Leadership through humility



Quarterback Noah Johnson just wanted to win the locker room over when he arrived at USF. He didn't expect to be seen as the leader he is now. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO



Hannah Halili

STAFF WRITER

He has finally made it home and without intention, made an impact on his team.

After arriving at USF, quarterback Noah Johnson garnered praise from fellow players and coaches even before he tossed a football.

"The guys have covered him real well when he first got here," fellow quarterback Jordan McCloud said. "He's a leader to them now as a quarterback.

"People look up to him."

Offensive coordinator Charlie Weis Jr. has also been impressed since Johnson's arrival.

"His leadership ability for a guy that came in super late, he's come in here and the guys look up to him as one of the leaders on the team and on the offense," Weis Jr. said. "He's done a great job of showing he's going to work hard, he's going to do everything the right way [and] he's going to practice the right way. I know he's got a lot of ability as a runner,

a passer and he is a true dual-threat guy."

A transfer from Alcorn State, Johnson came to USF as the 2018 SWAC Offensive Player of the Year and Offensive MVP of the 2018 conference championship game.

His accolades are notable, but Johnson didn't return to Tampa to establish his name right away.

"When I first came in, I just wanted to win over the guys," Johnson said. "Just do hard work and not try to step on anybody's toes. Just show these guys that I'm not just a one-year guy trying to come in and earn a name or anything like that.

"This is who I am, I work hard and take pride in what I do."

He may not have planned it, but Johnson's natural leadership abilities have shined through with his willingness to work hard and speak up.

"I feel like the guys have seen that and I've been able to say things and be vocal around them," Johnson said. "I just kind of fit in. I feel like it's been a perfect match with the coaches, my teammates and myself, so it's been great."

Since coming to USF, Johnson said the culture of the team is a bit surprising. Behind the competition is a layer of love that the players all share.

"These guys compete. Every single day, day in and day out," he said. "But it's all love at the end. You would think that we hate each other but we're trying to make each other better."

It is undoubtable that Johnson reached his original goal of fitting in. However, he said the moment he realized it significantly was during a locker room talk. At that moment, he knew USF was home.

"One time in the locker room we were all talking about high school football," Johnson said. "Being able to understand those conversations, because I'm from Tampa, was like a breath of fresh air. Like 'I'm around some guys that I know and speak the same language.' It was a time where I felt like I was 'fitting in with the guys.'

"It felt like home."

Now that the Tampa native is back home, Johnson is mainly looking forward to finally being able to get out on the field with his new USF family, especially after missing most of the 2019 season with a separated shoulder.

On Saturday, Johnson could be set to play his first game in a full calendar year. Needless to say, he's ready.

"I'm just looking forward to getting back out there and having fun with the guys and teammates and coaches," he said.

from subsidies, student fees and a small amount of TV revenue, MAC schools make the rest of their money from nonconference football games against Power Five opponents. This season alone, members of the MAC were set to make \$10.5 million from non-league games against schools in the Big Ten.

The financial crisis that is looming over many athletic departments and conferences can change the entire structure of college football for years to come. Many of the luxurious amenities of the sport may need to be left behind for the sake of its future, according to Louisville athletics director Vince Tyra.

"I'm not saying it gives us the opportunity to hit a reset button, but I think it's definitely going to cause people to pause as they think about what they're doing with their capital projects, high-salary individuals. Including athletic directors, and whether your institution has proper reserves," Tyra told ESPN.

## Recruiting and the Draft

Recruiting and the NFL draft have been an intrinsic part of the college football cycle for decades.

Just like the rest of college football, however, recruiting and the draft have both fallen victim to the influence of coronavirus and will be altered for the foreseeable future.

The draft has already had to make adjustments with this year's event going completely virtual for all three days.

This year's rendition of the draft has been further complicated by conferences postponing or canceling their season and multiple high-profile college players electing to opt out and prepare for the NFL instead.

On July 26, Pro Football Network's draft analyst Dalton Miller released his mock draft for the 2021 draft class, and of

## COVID

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the players that he is projecting to be selected in the first round, 18 will not be playing this fall. The big names within that group include Ohio State quarterback Justin Fields, Oregon offensive tackle Penei Sewel, Penn State linebacker Micah Parsons and LSU wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase. Along with the draft, the combine, senior bowl and pro days will also feel the effects of coronavirus, making the evaluation process even more difficult.

"Now you're in a situation where you don't have any contact with these college kids and you haven't seen them," NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah said. "You don't know what they look like or how they move."

On the other end of the spectrum, college recruiters, and the recruits themselves, are facing their own set of problems.

Relationships are the foundation on which recruiting is built, and in a COVID-19 world, forming bonds with recruits has become more important and more arduous than ever.

Without the luxuries of on-campus and in-home visits, coaches have remained committed to forming relationships with their recruits by interacting via a variety of virtual channels.

"The actual contact has not stopped," Rob Harris, coach of Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington D.C., said to NBC Sports Washington. "The engagement through social media is prevalent. The engagement through phone call and text is up. They've [college coaches] still been reaching out.

"It's not as close contact as we may want or that we're used to, but everybody is just making the adjustment based on the situation."





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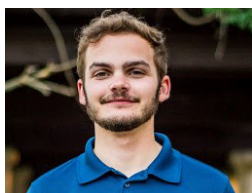
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# Players to watch in each position



Nolan Brown

SPORTS EDITOR

Naturally, a lot of excitement is building up around USF this season. The Bulls have an entirely new coaching staff, system, and of course, talented new players.

Adding to a list of transfers and freshmen, some returning Bulls have upped their game in the offseason and are expected to make a splash in 2020.

Here are some players that'll likely stand out this season.

## Quarterback - **Jordan McCloud**

Then-redshirt freshman Jordan McCloud was thrust into the starting role after an ankle injury left Blake Barnett out for the season after four games.

McCloud tried to be the quarterback USF needed, but it didn't quite work out that way — he averaged a conference-low 55.4 percent pass completion rate and threw for an average of 119 passing yards per game.

This year is set to be different, however. He's gotten better, faster and stronger — he weighed 183 pounds at the end of last season, and his target goal is 200 before the season opener.

Expect a vast improvement this season.

## Running back - **Darrian Felix**

Jordan Cronkrite was USF's go-to for rushing yards in recent years. He led USF with 687 yards on 136 carries and was a pivotal part of the Bulls' offense.



Oregon transfer Darrian Felix (2) has received high praise from USF head coach Jeff Scott. He's expected to play a major role in the Bulls offense this season. USF ATHLETICS PHOTO

Naturally, the one to watch next is the one who assumed Cronkrite's jersey number. And for good reason too.

Junior Oregon transfer Darrian Felix put up some of his best numbers with the Ducks last season, rushing for 197 yards and scoring two touchdowns in 34 carries. Also, he's impressed coach Jeff Scott during fall camp, which goes a long way.

"He has really good vision to what he's doing, and I'm really excited to get an opportunity to watch him play this fall," Scott said.

Felix is expected to make an impact as the new kid on the block, bringing Pac-12 experience to bring to the table.

## Wide receiver - **Randall St. Felix**

Collectively, receivers weren't a strong suit last season. They gained an average of 169.58 yards per game compared with USF's opponent's 189.5. Junior Randall St. Felix, who was publicly called out last season by former coach Charlie Strong for not producing, topped that list with 22 receptions for 261 yards.

With a new arsenal of

quarterbacks and an offseason to improve, St. Felix is now poised to thrive under offensive coordinator Charlie Weis Jr.'s new scheme and take over as one of, if not the most valuable receiver for USF this season.

## Tight end - **Mitchell Brinkman**

It's hard to replace Mitchell Wilcox, a guy who was often the heartbeat of USF's offense last season.

But take a guy with the same name and number, and you've got a good shot. Northern Illinois grad transfer Mitchell Brinkman's best season came last year — he played in all 12 games for the Huskies and scored three touchdowns in 445 yards.

The year before, Brinkman sat out most of the season with injury but came back in time to make a big impact in the 2018 MAC championship 30-29 win over Buffalo.

A then-career-high three catches for 42 yards in the championship game paved the way for his standout 2019 season. Plus, it established him as a trophy winner. USF could definitely benefit from someone

with that mentality.

## Offensive line - **Brad Cecil**

USF's offensive line was not good last year. The Bulls ranked dead last in the AAC for sacks against (45) for 246 yards.

The addition of new offensive line coach Allen Mogridge is set to change things.

Last season, Mogridge led a Florida International line that only gave up 14 sacks for 84 yards.

Under Mogridge's tutelage, the Bulls' O-line is set to undergo a metamorphosis, and junior center Brad Cecil will quite literally be in the middle of it.

Cecil has already garnered significant praise for his leadership by offensive coordinator Charlie Weis Jr.

"Brad Cecil is a guy who I think really took that group and had a lot of pride about it in getting it right and making sure to have a great season this year," Weis Jr. said.

Expect Cecil to take the reins of the line this season.

## Defensive line - **Kevin Kegler**

USF is now without arguably two of the best defensive linemen

the program has ever seen — Greg Reaves and Kirk Livingstone.

No doubt a significant blow, USF has the veteran leadership to make up for the loss.

Defensive tackle Kevin Kegler is one of those vets. He racked up 12 tackles with 4.5 for loss last season. Kegler has the USF tenure to carry the leadership mantle.

## Linebacker - **Dwayne Boyles**

Junior Dwayne Boyles was one of the shining beacon's in USF's defense — he led the team last season with 75 total tackles with 12.5 for a loss of 45 yards. In the conference, Boyles ranked 12th in tackles for loss and 17th in tackles, making him the highest-ranked returning USF defensive player.

Tabbed to the preseason All-AAC defensive team by College Football News, Boyles is set to make an explosive impact once again for USF's defense.

Boyles was nationally recognized last season, and there's no reason to think he won't turn some heads again this season.

## Defensive back - **KJ Sails**

"The Mayor" of Tampa, as he is so aptly nicknamed, is noted for his off-field leadership. His performance on the field is just as notable.

Last season, KJ Sails led USF in interceptions with three for 68 yards. He contributed significantly to a pass defense that topped the AAC and ranked 15th nationally — the Bulls made 12 interceptions and limited their opponents to 189.5 passing yards per game.

Sails has already made an impression in the offseason,



## WEIS

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he stayed until moving to USF this summer.

Having so much experience at such a young age was a major factor in coach Jeff Scott's decision to hire Weis Jr.



Weis Jr. with Florida Atlantic in 2019. PHOTO COURTESY OF FAU ATHLETICS

"That was part of the decision process with him, obviously being a younger coach," Scott told Forbes. "The places he has been in a very short window in his career definitely added to his profile and experience."

As young Charlie shadowed his father throughout his career, experiencing football games at such a young age was an experience like no other.

Weis Jr.'s most vivid memory was the Super Bowl XXXVI.

"We won our first Super Bowl with the New England Patriots in 2001 against the Rams," he said. "I think I was like, maybe eight or nine-years-old. [I remember Weis Sr.] holding me up as they're holding the Super Bowl trophy. I mean, seeing something like that as a young kid you're like, 'man!'"

Although coaching was always in the back of his mind, he didn't make the decision to pursue it fully until he began college. Recognizing lasting relationships with players initially sparked his interest.

"Growing up with my dad and him being a coach it was always a certain thing that I thought I wanted to do, but I didn't really decide to do it until my freshman year of college," Weis Jr. said. "I went to the University of Florida

and got to work there as a student assistant under my dad.

"Getting to do that, having the relationships with the players, getting to work with some of the freshmen there at the time, and then watching them have success on the field is what did it for me."

Even though Weis Sr. wasn't originally thrilled about the idea of his son following in his footsteps and becoming a coach, Weis Jr. said he still supported and encouraged him to continue working hard.

"What he told me is that there's highs and lows," Weis Jr. said. "We experienced Super Bowl victories and we experienced getting fired with him at two different places. No matter what, through the highs and lows, the most important thing is the relationships and the bonds that you create with the players over time."

The relationships between coaches and players are the ones Weis Jr. treasures most of all. After seeing the ones his father developed, he was inspired to do the same.

"When you get to work with players and take them as a freshman, you might have a kid who's immature and doesn't know exactly how to act," he said. "For myself in that position and watching them grow, learn from their mistakes and just become better people and seeing them graduate, all those things are special to me."

After nine years in the business, he openly believes that coaching is more than just football. He is unveiling and leading players to find themselves and reach their full potential.

"Taking a player that may have come from a tough situation, watching him go into a school, work his tail off and then see him graduate...That's what's rewarding to me. Watching a story like that happen is so much more than any football play I could call."

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## RAY JAY

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times, all we can do is make conservative estimates," Bobby Silvest, vice president of marketing and communications told the Tampa Bay Times. "We don't know what capacity will be for Bucs or USF at this time."

For USF's rivals up Interstate 4, UCF will allow 25 percent capacity at The Bounce House for the Knights' first home game on Oct. 3. Florida will also play its home opener on Oct. 3 and will allow for 20 percent capacity. FSU is limiting Doak Campbell Stadium to 20-25 percent capacity.

Since the Tampa Sports Authority's estimate, the Tampa Bay Bucs announced they wouldn't have fans in their first two home games on Sept. 20 and Oct. 4.

Plans are still being finalized to create a coronavirus-resistant atmosphere, and the month delay before fans are expected to attend

gives USF and the Tampa Sports Authority more time to create a water-tight gameday-procedure.

In July, The Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners approved plans to allocate \$10.4 million to upgrade Raymond James Stadium with coronavirus-related upgrades.

Those upgrades won't be scheduled to be completed until Oct. 31, however, and by that point, USF will have already played seven of its 11-game schedule.

For fans who don't feel comfortable attending live games, other options are on the table.

Thanks to a 12-year deal between the American and ESPN signed last March, all AAC games will be available on ESPN's primary TV networks — ABC, ESPN, ESPN 2 and ESPNU. Select games will be shown on ESPN+.

On the airwaves, all USF games will be broadcast on the BullsUnlimited digital radio network and 95.3 WDAE.

## PLAYERS

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having been listed on the Athlon Preseason All-Conference First Team and the Wuerffel Trophy Watch List.

It's likely USF's secondary will continue its hot streak this season, and 'The Mayor' will continue to lead it.

### Punter - Trent Schneider

The Aussie punter was invaluable last season, and coming up big in clutch situations is his forte. His 61-yard punt against BYU set up a defensive stop that led to a USF 27-23 win.

An average of 46 punting yards per game last season had him ranked as the 11th best punter in the nation.

Trent Schneider's preseason accolades speak for themselves — he's been added to the Ray Guy Award Watch List and he's a William V. Campbell Trophy Candidate. Needless to say, he's one of the program's best punters.

Undoubtedly, Schneider's big boot will continue to swing well for USF.

### Kicker - Jared Sackett

USF made a measly 7-of-14 field goals last season, finishing at the bottom of the barrel in the AAC. Plagued by injuries and inconsistencies, USF struggled to find a reliable kicker.

Arkansas junior transfer Jared Sackett is set to inject some much-needed consistency this season. Sackett is 33-of-41 on career field goal attempts and he's 13-of-20 from 40 yards or more.

He's already made an impression after being named to the Lou Groza Award Watch List and will likely improve a position that was severely lacking last season.